

McGuire, Elaine Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 September 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2004936570

Service no:
CS2003053302

About the service

Elaine McGuire is registered to provide care for a maximum of 6 children under the age of 16, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one child is less than twelve months old.

The childminder operated her childminding business from the family home in Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire. The property is close to local parks, schools and nurseries. The childminder has a semi-detached house with a lounge, dining room and kitchen used for childminding purposes. There is also a safely enclosed rear garden which is suitable for outdoor play. The childminder also uses parks and walks and regularly travels further afield to ensure that children have daily access to outdoor learning, fresh air and exercise.

About the inspection

This was a full inspection which took place on 21 August 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- looked at the feedback survey returned by five parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder had a very good understanding of her professional responsibilities. She worked within her conditions of registration and had appropriate policies and procedures in place to support her practice. As a result, children received a very good level of care.
- Children were happy, settled and relaxed in the childminder's care. Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through nurturing, caring interactions.
- Children's play and learning was supported by the childminder's knowledge of child development and the benefits of outdoor learning.
- Children were cared for in a warm, comfortable and homely environment which helped them feel welcome, safe and secure.
- The childminder demonstrated a positive commitment to improving her service; she regularly sought the views of the children and families.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

1.1. Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and relaxed in the childminder's care. The childminder was very responsive to children and we observed caring interactions, for example, giving cuddles and assistance with activities. It was obvious that good attachments had been formed and children felt loved and secure in the childminder's care. The childminder had developed very strong relationships with the families she provided care for and she worked hard to build supportive partnerships with the parents by being open and approachable. This was confirmed by parents whose comments included:

"Elaine is very honest with great communication and always so happy to see our little girl. She is so approachable and nothing is ever an issue".

"I feel like Elaine's like another mum to me. She's encouraged us to be strong when it came to ages & stages, gave helpful tips when its come to walking".

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through nurturing, caring interactions. The childminder encouraged children to be friendly and respectful to each other. She modelled positive behaviour, actively listening to children and giving praise.

Children were given time to play and were encouraged to build relationships with each other. One parent commented:

"Elaine makes sure our daughter is out of the house nearly every day building relationships with other children. She takes them in the car on trips".

We sampled children's personal plans and found that the childminder had completed these in partnership with parents. Plans were updated at least every six months to ensure that they reflected children's individual needs and preferences. An 'all about me' was completed for each child giving the childminder information about the child's likes and preferences. A record of children's progress was recorded in a diary and WhatsApp was used each day to text parents, giving an update on their child's day with photographs and comments.

Each child had a folder where their learning and development was linked to the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators from Scottish Government guidance 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). This meant that children were given the right support at the right time.

A wellbeing report was written every six months and a two year review was completed. Parents comments on reviews were very constructive and supportive. We discussed the value of the two year review as it provided the same information as the six monthly reviews.

An album was completed for each child from the day they were cared for by the childminder and was given to parents when the child left the service. This included photographs of children enjoying a range of activities and experiences.

The childminder regularly used the website, childcare.co.uk, for training and to collect useful information. This helped her to improve practice in tracking children's individual development, progress and next steps for learning.

Parents comments included:

"Elaine has folders for the children and evaluates their needs regularly. She keeps us updated with this".

"Anything we felt our child may have been slower on Elaine reassured us not to worry and weekly messages showed they where doing tasks etc".

The childminder explained how they provided continuity in children's homely routines such as changes to nap times, in keeping with parents' wishes. Parents provided all food and snacks for their children and this was stored hygienically and safely to prevent children from becoming ill due to eating contaminated food. Healthy choices were encouraged by the childminder. Children's allergens were recorded, and children were supervised while eating, which helped keep them safe. Meal times took place in the dining area, depending on children's age and ability. The childminder chatted to the children and offered support when needed. This supported an unhurried and sociable experience for children.

No children had special diets or required medication at the time of inspection. The childminder had medication forms and a policy in place should they be asked to administer children's medication. This contributed to children's wellbeing and safety.

The childminder had participated in child protection training in 2023 and was aware of her role and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. This ensured that children were kept safe and enabled the childminder to respond to any concerns in a timely and sensitive manner.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were supported to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. This was supported by daily outdoor play and learning and visits to a wide range of play activities. Children were empowered to make decisions about their play through the skilled interactions of the childminder. The childminder had carefully selected toys that reflected children's interests and children knew where to find additional resources. A well organised large cupboard with labelled boxes and toys was accessible to children.

Children's play and learning was supported by the childminder's knowledge of child development and the benefits of outdoor learning. The childminder was familiar with current national guidance on outdoor play. She visited outdoor areas, for example, a wood at the end of her street was used for nature trails, supporting children to learn about the natural world. Local play parks provided opportunities for physical and imaginative play. Children had recently enjoyed an outdoor teddy bears picnic with the local playgroup.

Children could make independent choices about where they wanted to play and what they wanted to play with. This was supported by an environment which contained a wide range of toys, games, books and craft materials.

Children's play was enhanced by the range of toys and activities on offer and there was a good balance of children's choice and adult led activities. For example, the childminder had 'loose parts' play materials which are natural, open-ended materials that support children to develop their curiosity, imagination and problem-solving skills. She also had a range of craft materials to support the interests of the children.

Over the last three years the childminder had completed a range of training, for example, the importance of play, literacy and numeracy, realising the ambition best practice guidance, supporting behaviours that challenge, in the right place for learning, literacy and maths, understanding autism, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and food hygiene. This helped the childminder to develop competence in supporting children to learn and develop.

A parent who responded to our survey strongly agreed that children had opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences.

"Elaine tells us when our child has been working on numbers, colours or letters for example and we continue this at home".

"Picnic with bears recently. Reading the book, going on a Picnic with friends (& and Teddy bears), learning to share snacks and taking in the surroundings".

"Arts and crafts, outdoor play at the park, football, online quizzes and riddles, board games sometimes too".

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a warm, comfortable and homely environment which helped them feel welcome, safe and secure. Play spaces were clean, bright and well ventilated. They had been carefully planned to meet children's needs and help them to feel included.

The childminder's setting was homely, as the main areas used by children were the lounge and dining room. These rooms had plenty of soft furnishings and natural light. This contributed to children feeling welcomed, settled and safe.

Children benefitted from accessing a variety of toys such as books, puzzles, games, imaginary play. Toys and resources were well organised and stored and were easily accessible to children. We observed children independently choosing toys that interested them. The toys available helped develop the children's imagination and fine motor skills. The childminder was aware of children's interests and toys were changed to meet their needs or choices. We saw children having lots of fun as they played imaginatively. Children also enjoyed a range of play and learning opportunities in the local community. This positively contributed to children's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Parents who responded to our survey strongly agreed that their children had access to a good range of quality toys and play materials. They believed their children were safe within the childminding setting.

The childminder explained how they made sure their home was fit for the care of children through day-to-day cleaning and children's personal hygiene routines. The childminder understood the importance of wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent the spread of infection when changing children's nappies. Handwashing facilities with liquid soap and individual towels were available for children in the downstairs toilet. This prevented the risk of cross infection and kept children healthy and safe.

The childminder's house was very well maintained. Risk assessments were in place to identify hazards and put appropriate measures in place to reduce risks. Written permission had been sought for activities such as travel by car and visits to community facilities.

The childminder could tell us about other risks they had identified for children within their setting and outdoors and actions they had taken to minimise these, for example, surveying woodland areas to ensure safety for play.

The childminder had recently completed first aid training so that they were able to respond appropriately to accidents involving children, which supported children's health and wellbeing. The childminder recorded accidents/incidents and ensured that correct information was exchanged with parents and there could be continuity in children's care.

Parents commented:

"Elaine has a back garden with loads of outdoor toys. Parks/soft play/play groups are very close by. Fields for running about in *Farm Close to home".

"Our daughter is outside most days with Elaine and goes to the park most days to play".

How good is our leadership?

6 - Excellent

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The childminder was committed and passionate about her role. She communicated well with families to ensure positive outcomes for children. Welcome information was given to parents/carers before starting to ensure they knew what to expect. Families were given regular updates about their child's development through daily conversations, progress reports and regular reviews of children's care and learning plans.

Families valued the relationships that the childminder had built with them. They strongly agreed that the setting was well managed and that they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the setting.

The childminder had organised information about their service to help families understand how it was regulated and that their children would be kept safe. For example the childminder's registration certificate, public liability and car insurance were presented in an easily accessible folder. The childminder had service aims and policies available for parents.

The childminder demonstrated a positive commitment to improving her service; she regularly sought the views of the children and families, for example, through questionnaires and informal discussions with parents. This helped the childminder to identify areas for improvement and enabled parents to be meaningfully involved in the service and influence change.

We could see from parent's survey responses that they were very happy with the overall quality of the service provide. One parent commented;

"I couldn't ask for a better service with Elaine. Looking at all aspects of my child I couldn't be more happier with his knowledge, speech and communication" .

The childminder took opportunities to reflect on her practice.

She used Education Scotland's best practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition' to evaluate her practice, ensuring that children experienced high quality play and learning.

In February 2023 the childminder joined 'Scottish Childminder's' Facebook page and worked together with a group of other childminders to explore one quality indicator each from the care inspectorate's 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare'. This children's rights and play based document is a very effective tool for self evaluation. The group collated information and feedback from this exercise and shared it with all other childminders.

The childminder also networked with other childminders through the local childminder's drop in group.

During our inspection visit the childminder was open to ideas for how they could develop their practice, therefore ensuring that they contributed to positive outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder's values were evident in the sensitive interactions we observed with children throughout the inspection. She had built nurturing relationships with children, which contributed to children's emotional wellbeing. The childminder was warm, kind and caring towards children which meant that they felt happy, safe and secure in her care. She was experienced and confident in her role and had developed a range of skills and knowledge that enabled her to support children's individual needs.

Parents who responded to our survey strongly agreed they were confident that the childminder had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their children and support their learning.

The childminder regularly met with other childminders in the area for shared activities with children. This also provided an opportunity for professional discussions in which the childminders shared their skills, knowledge and values around quality experiences for children.

The childminder was committed and motivated to learn and improve her practice, whilst promoting positive outcomes for children. She had completed a range of training. (See 1.3 Play and learning). She regularly accessed the Care Inspectorate Hub, an online resource library of best practice guidance, as a means of keeping up to date with best practice. We discussed how keeping records of professional development activities and evaluating training, personal reading and research would assist with identifying improvement in practice and could be included in the service self evaluation. The childminder was motivated to explore this.

The childminder had a very good understanding of her professional responsibilities. She worked within her conditions of registration and had appropriate policies and procedures in place to support her practice. As a result, children received a very good level of care.

Parents comments included:

"We feel so fortunate to have had our all of children cared for by Elaine".

"We trust Elaine completely with the care of our child. Our relationship is an open and honest one".

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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