

Macmillan, Alice Child Minding

Isle of Lewis

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 October 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2007964998

Service no:
CS2007150263

About the service

Whilst working with the other named childminder, the childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of nine children at any one time under the age of 12, of whom no more than six are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than two are under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The childminding service was provided from the childminder's family home, a detached property in the village of Barvas on the west side of the island of Lewis. Children benefited from access to a well equipped and prepared playroom, kitchen dining room, downstairs toilet and large, secure garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 9 October 2024 between 10:00 and 13:00. 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:

- spoke with six children attending the service
- spoke with the two childminders
- received electronic feedback from parents
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- We observed very positive relationships between the children and the childminders.
- Both childminders had very good knowledge in relation to children's routines and supported children's care and support needs that reflected parents' personal preferences.
- Children had very good opportunities to play and learn in their local community.
- Both childminders were experienced and worked in partnership together to provide a quality service.
- The childminders were passionate and committed about continuing to evaluate and improve the service they offered.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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.

Throughout the inspection children present were very happy, settled and secure. We found them to be experiencing warm, caring, and nurturing interactions from both childminders. We observed very positive relationships between the children and the childminders through them actively listening and responding to children's individual needs and requests as well as supporting them emotionally through giving cuddles and reassurance which was supporting children to feel loved and secure. Parents who provided feedback were very positive about the care and support they and their children received from the childminders. Some of their comments included:

"Alice and Agnes Joan are very reliable. Communication is always excellent and they are always involving the kids in a great range of activities which has really helped my daughter's development - particularly from a social perspective as well as her speech. I have such confidence in them both providing exceptional care and are so nurturing with the kids." and "Alice is a wonderful childminder. Her home is a home away from home which is what I love most. My 2 year old is jumping with excitement when he arrives to see her and his peers. They are always experiencing and learning new things with days out, attending events and new activities. I love he is getting to spend time with children his age and learning important skills like how to share and socialise."

Both childminders spoke confidently about children's individual needs, interests, likes and dislikes. They had very good knowledge in relation to children's routines and supported children's care and support needs that reflected parents' personal preferences.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through personal plans that were in place for children attending the service. Information gathered supported the childminders to meet children's health, welfare, and safety needs. The childminders recognised that it was important to ensure that children's personal plans were kept up to date and regularly reviewed in order to ensure that children received the correct care at the correct time. We could see how parents were involved in setting and reviewing children's personal plans, some of their comments about personal plans included:

"We have regular communication and changes are made based on our child's needs." and "We are updated daily via a written report and then given the care plan to review at regular intervals."

Children experienced positive mealtime experiences at the childminders. They ate together around the kitchen table. During our inspection we with sat with children as they chose and enjoyed healthy snack options. Children enjoyed sitting around the table chatting with their friends and the childminders. The childminders enabled children to be independent where possible whilst being available and responsive when children needed support.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were supported to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. This was supported by activities daily indoors and outdoors. Children benefited from outings to places in their local community such as; Lews Castle grounds, local toddler group and childminder's group, play parks and shops. Engaging children in their local community gave them a sense of security and belonging as they explored their communities. Parents valued the opportunities that their children had to learn indoors and outdoors. Some of their comments included:

"They go on regular outings around the local environment, to shops and around the town to see the boats at the marina, to play parks, the castle grounds, to the mobile library. They regularly visit a local toddler play group and have regular opportunities to play outside. They have a range of indoor play activities too, matched to the children's age and stage of development. They provide excellent experiences to develop skills, including cooking and baking, storytelling and imaginative play."

"There's always a variety of activities and play happening - outdoor play is always encouraged and they are working on their outdoor project. We get updates regarding their different activities on different days and any outings - for example to the Callanish Alpacas. They also take the kids to local groups to encourage play with other children to work on socialisation. Quiet play/reading/independent play is also incorporated into their day which my daughter benefits from."

Children's play and learning was supported by the childminder's knowledge of child development and the benefits of outdoor learning. The childminder shared information of a project she had involved parents in about the benefits of loose part play. She had shared with families best practice guidance and sought their help in gathering loose parts for children to play with. As a result of this parents had a clear understanding of the value of using loose parts and natural resources in children's play, and children were benefiting from more opportunities to explore and be curious about their natural environment.

"Alice and Agnes Joan have got to know my daughter so well and are very in tune with where she is at developmentally. Development plans are up to date and we will have regular informal conversations as well regarding how my child is progressing."

The childminder told us that in the new term she planned to share best practice guidance about schematic play with parents. Schematic play happens when babies, toddlers and young children are involved in repeated actions or certain behaviours as they explore the world around them and try to find out how things work. The childminders' knowledge and understanding of schemas enabled her to provide the right types of resources and experiences to meet the individual needs and learning styles of young children.

Children's learning and development was recorded in their individual files. Photographs and quality observations highlighted the types of experiences children were engaged in and how they were progressing in their learning. Observations which were linked to national frameworks and best practice guidance were shared with parents who agreed next steps in learning for their children.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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.

The childminder's home was welcoming, clean, well-ventilated, and well maintained. The environment had been designed with children at the heart of their service. The childminders made good use of the space available to enable children to have free flow access to two playrooms, the kitchen area and garden. Children were confident, relaxed, and very much at home.

When children were not out and about learning in their local community they could play and benefit from fresh air and exercise in the childminders large, very well resourced garden area. Parents valued the opportunities their children had to play and learn outdoors. Some of their comments included:

"Alice has a great garden space which has lots of activities to enjoy." and "Outside in the garden, playparks, swings, water play outside, walks in our local castle grounds."

Children were able to sleep or relax comfortably in the childminder's home. Travel cots and linen were provided by the childminder to ensure children had a safe comfortable sleep. We observed the childminder responding to children who were tired. She comforted them, put them in their own sleeping bags which their parents had provided and ensured they had their comforters. Children were closely monitored and supervised as they slept to ensure their safety.

Effective safe procedures were in place to minimise the spread of infection. Childrens' hands were washed before and after mealtimes and after nappy changes. We liked how the childminders promoted learning through song at handwashing times, as children and the childminder sang a handwashing song in Gaelic. A nappy changing station was conveniently situated within the childminder's bathroom. We discussed with the childminder how bags of nappies could be stored more hygienically to minimise the spread of infection. The childminder provided the Care Inspectorate with evidence after the inspection that new procedures for the storage of nappies had been introduced.

The childminder told us that parents dropped off and picked up their children from the garden gate. Although we received feedback from parents that this system suited them and it worked well we discussed with the childminder the value of parents coming into the setting. We discussed how this could further strengthen relationships with families. We sign posted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate practice note "Me, my family and my childcare setting: A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships"

Some comments included:-

"The pick up and drop off at the gate has worked well since Covid in terms of reducing separation anxiety, in my opinion. We always have good chats at the gate and I know for sure that my husband and I would be welcome to go in if we had anything specific we wanted to discuss further."

"We don't tend to go into the house but we have regular conversations about my child's development and learning."

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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.

The childminders were committed to delivering a quality service for children and families. The service was valued by parents using the service and also by families whose children had moved onto school or nursery. Parents told us they were confident their children's health welfare and safety needs were at the heart of the childminder's approach in delivering a home from home experience for all children.

The childminder was very committed to their own personal development and the development and continuous improvement of the service. In order to evaluate and reflect on the service provided, the childminder used self evaluation toolkits and guidance. Having looked at the childminder's self evaluation book we could see that she was an honest and reflective practitioner. She had identified within the service's self evaluation and improvement plan aspects of the service that were working well, and those which they wanted to further improve on. By reviewing practice, and continuously reflecting, the childminders provided consistent high quality care and support to children and families.

The childminders valued and respected the ideas and opinions of parents. We saw various ways, such as questionnaires and through meetings that they gathered opinions from parents and children. Parents who provided feedback confirmed that they felt involved in the service and that their opinions mattered. Some of their comments included:

"Alice is always open to suggestions we have on what the children would enjoy."

"We have been given questionnaires periodically to give our opinions on the service and any developments we would like to see."

"Alice and Agnes Joan are very open and honest and encourage any feedback."

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff deployment

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.

The childminder worked with her mother who was a registered childminder. Both childminders were present during our visit. We observed very positive interactions between both childminders and the children present.

Parents who provided feedback about the childminders were very positive about the work they did together. Some of their comments included:

"We are very fortunate to have Alice and Agnes Joan as our childminders. The service they provide is second to none - a home from home, but with all the learning experiences and tracking of development that you would see in a nursery. They are excellent communicators and keep us informed every step of the way. They are warm and welcoming and also professional. Our child settled in immediately and is excited to go in every day. We are delighted with the care she receives here and how they are helping her develop so many new skills." and "Leaving our child in the care of anyone is daunting but we could not be happier with the service we receive from Alice and Agnes Joan. They have made it so easy from day one, allowing us to have some settling in sessions initially, to then keeping us updated every step of the way since then.

They are nurturing and extremely knowledgeable in the stages of child development and how best to support our child as she grows. They are flexible and professional at all times, with a happy and welcoming home which allows the children to feel safe and comfortable."

The childminders were clear about their roles and responsibilities. Both childminders were very confident, capable and experienced in supporting the children in their care. Tasks were shared equally between the childminders, they were each respectful of each others skills and expertise. For example, the childminder who held the registration for this service told us that she took a lead role in researching information online, best practice and training opportunities.

The childminder's values were evident in the sensitive interactions we observed with children throughout the inspection. They had built nurturing relationships with children, which contributed to children's emotional wellbeing. They were warm, kind and caring towards children which meant that they felt happy, safe and secure in their care.

The childminders were part of a local childminders group which met regularly. This enabled children to socialise with other minded children in their community outwith the childminder's home. It also provided opportunities for professional discussions in which the childminders shared their skills, knowledge and values around quality experiences for children.

The childminders were motivated and committed to keep up to date with current best practice. They regularly used the Care Inspectorate Hub and SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association) website to update their knowledge. Through discussion with the childminder we were able to evidence that the childminder had a very good knowledge and understanding of best practice as well as child development, theory and practice. The childminder was keen to help other childminders and share information. The childminder told us that she was registered to be involved in SCMA mentoring training. This training would further develop her skills as well as supporting fellow childminders on the island, across Scotland, as well as any newly registered childminders. During the programme, childminders will meet virtually, networking, sharing ideas and good practice.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.