

Stevenson, Pauline Child Minding

Bathgate

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 October 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2006957597

Service no:
CS2006117053

About the service

Pauline Stevenson provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Whitburn, West Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16 of whom:

- a maximum of six will be under 12 years
- no more than three are not yet attending primary school
- no more than one is under 12 months.

Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. At the time of our inspection, seven children were registered with the service

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the living room and kitchen, with access to the downstairs bathroom. Children also have access to a large enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 02 October between 10:00 and 12:30. 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. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service and received feedback from three families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

Children experienced genuinely warm, caring and nurturing interactions. Their individual needs and cues were understood and responded to effectively.

Food provided was plentiful, healthy and nutritious, which encouraged children to develop a healthy relationship with food.

The childminder should ensure that all children have a meaningful personal plan. This would enable them to support children's overall, care, wellbeing and learning needs.

The childminder should enhance the range of resources and toys available to ensure that children have a breadth of stimulating and interesting experiences to promote their curiosity, imagination and creativity.

Walks and visits to local parks allowed children to engage in energetic play and appreciate the benefits of being outdoors

To improve outcomes for children and ensure ongoing development in the service, the childminder should develop quality assurance processes. This would influence positive change to outcomes for 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were settled and happy because the childminder was nurturing and loving in their interactions with them. Children sought comfort from the childminder and were given reassurance and cuddles, which supported their emotional wellbeing. For example, the childminder comforted a child when an unfamiliar adult was in the service during inspection. Interactions throughout were warm, caring, and nurtured children's security, confidence and positive relationships.

Daily diaries were used to inform parents about their child's day. This helped parents to know how their child had been and what they had been doing in the service that day. Parents appreciated this and one parent said, "We always get a lengthy and well written report about the day."

All children had a personal plan, however, these were not regularly reviewed and updated in line with best practice guidance. All children should have a plan to inform and support the care provided. This should be agreed in partnership with parents, to ensure a consistent approach to caring for individual children. Personal plans should set out how a child's individual needs will be met, as well as their wishes and choices. The childminder should develop their understanding about the purpose of personal plans and introduce plans for all children which are meaningful, working documents. This is to support children's overall care, wellbeing, and learning needs. We signposted the childminder to Care Inspectorate guidance: Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare (Care Inspectorate, 2021) **(see area for improvement 1).**

Children sat at the table for meals and snacks, which created a social occasion where they could engage in conversation with friends. Food provided was plentiful, healthy and nutritious, which encouraged children to develop a healthy relationship with food. A parent told us, "Pauline makes the best breakfasts."

Children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing was supported through sensitive and respectful arrangements for sleep routines. Children's routines were reflective of family wishes. Children tended to sleep in pushchairs when in the service. To promote good habits around safe sleep the childminder should consider introducing sleeping facilities which would allow children to lie flat without restraints. This would allow them to safely and easily change position and be comfortable.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun and enjoying the companionship of the childminder. Children's language development was supported through supportive conversations with the childminder. Literacy opportunities could be further enhanced through children having more opportunities to independently access a wider range of books, creative materials and mark making resources. This could encourage children to develop a love for reading, writing and drawing.

We noted that most toys and resources offered were single purpose. We discussed the value of providing 'loose parts' for children. Loose parts are natural or open-ended materials, which help children to develop their imagination and problem solve as they explore different shapes and textures.

Introducing these materials could support children's natural curiosity and inquiry, and extend opportunities for children to be creative and explore innovative ideas. Through exploring properties of natural resources, children could develop numeracy and mathematical learning, such as counting, sorting and making patterns.

Observations of children could be recorded and used to plan experiences and next steps to support children to make good progress and development. This would support the childminder to plan appropriate high-quality play experiences, based on children's needs. We discussed the use of photographs of children at play when in the childminder's care. This would allow children to revisit and reflect on their learning, develop language skills, and support them to become involved in planning future play experiences. We signposted the childminder to the best practice guidance: *Realising the Ambition: Being me* (Education Scotland, 2020), and *Growing my potential* (Care Inspectorate, 2022) (see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should further develop personal plans for each child to show how their needs are being identified and met. This should include, but is not limited to, consulting with parents and reviewing plans when there is a significant change in a child's health, welfare, or safety needs, or at least once in every six-month period. To understand the purpose of personal plans, the childminder should refer to the best practice guidance, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare' (Care Inspectorate 2021).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

2. To ensure that future play experiences remain sufficiently challenging for young children as they grow and develop, the childminder should develop their skills in planning, observing, and recording children's development and learning through play. This should include, but is not limited to, using the best practice guidance: *Realising the Ambition: Being me* (Education Scotland, 2020) and *Growing my potential* (Care Inspectorate, 2022). The childminder should use their observations to reflect and plan new learning opportunities in consultation with children and parents.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem, and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1:31).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children's wellbeing was promoted from being included in a homely setting. The childminder's home was warm, clean, and well-ventilated with plenty of natural light. The childminder had created an environment where children felt welcome. Children had space to play and to rest and relax on soft furnishings. There was a welcoming entrance area where children's photos and the values of the service were displayed. This helped to give children and families a clear message that they are valued and respected. One parents said, "Pauline is so approachable and communication is great." and, "We are often asked if we are happy about our children's care and if there is anything that could be improved."

Infection prevention and control procedures supported a safe environment. For example, children had individual bags with changing mats and nappies and used individual one-use towels for drying hands. This meant that the risk of cross infection was reduced to support children staying healthy.

There was a broad range of play materials for various stages of development. However, these were kept in a bedroom upstairs which was not accessed by children. The childminder should consider having different types of play materials to support children to independently access resources which can enhance their learning. This should include resources to support literacy, numeracy, imaginary play, creativity, and problem solving.

(see area for improvement 1).

Outdoors, children enjoyed time in the secure and inviting garden. They were able to be active and develop their physical confidence using the slide and ride-on toys. Play materials were taken from indoors to the garden to allow continuation of play in different play spaces. As a result, children's experiences were enhanced as they engaged in active play opportunities in the fresh air. Weekly visits to rhyme time sessions at the local library supported children's developing literacy and social skills as well as a sense of belonging to their local community. Walks and visits to local parks allowed children to engage in energetic play and appreciate the benefits of being outdoors. Parents were happy with the outdoor opportunities that their children receive. One parent shared that, "Children are very often out and about with Pauline, going to swing parks. They are often out playing in the garden when we pick them up."

Areas for improvement

1. For children to be able to independently choose and access a range of play materials, the childminder should ensure that children know what resources are available, and have a broader variety of play materials to hand to lead their own play. This should include, but is not limited to, resources to support literacy, numeracy, imaginary play, creativity, and problem solving.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem, and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1:31).

How good is our leadership?**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. They engaged with families and children, and asked for feedback about the service through informal chats. This helped parents to feel included. Parents appreciated this and one parent told us, "Pauline would always welcome any suggestions on change or improvement."

There were limited systems in place to evaluate the quality of the service and identify areas for improvement. As a result, experiences for children were not always being developed. We discussed the benefits of making use of the Care Inspectorate's improvement website, called 'The Hub', for ideas and guidance in providing a quality service. The bitesize videos about self evaluation could be used as a starting point in reflecting on what was working well, and where improvements could be made. **(see area of improvement 1).**

Moving forward, the childminder could consider recording planned improvements. This could demonstrate and measure the impact that improvements had made to enhance positive outcomes for children. This may help them to reflect on where changes had positively impacted play experiences, and support them to plan further improvements.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure a high-quality service for children and families; the childminder should develop a system to enable them to identify improvements and be able to demonstrate their impact. This will help to raise standards and to drive and sustain improvement. This should include, but not be limited to, a record of ongoing participation and involvement of children and their families, and children's personal plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills knowledge and values

The childminder's warmth and kindness towards the children enabled them to feel valued, loved and secure. Parents were unanimously happy with the care provided and one parent told us, "My child has been with Pauline since they were very young and I would not want to have them anywhere else. The care Pauline gives is brilliant." Through our discussion it was clear that the childminder was attuned and responsive to the individual needs of the children. For example, helping children's speech to develop, at a pace which was appropriate for their stage of development.

Since the last inspection, the childminder had developed their knowledge and understanding by attending several training courses. This included advanced child protection and first aid, helping them to know how to keep children healthy and protected from harm.

To enhance practice to ensure best outcomes for children, the childminder should engage in more development opportunities. This would help them to enhance their knowledge of best practice, current guidance, and legislation. This could include the Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare (Care Inspectorate, 2021) to develop their understanding about the purpose of personal plans.

The childminder should consider recording post training evaluations to include a detailed reflection of learning. Reflections of learning would enable the childminder to revisit and reflect on how learning developed their practice. This could support children's wellbeing and further enhance positive outcomes.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

It is recommended that the childminder review and update the policies and procedures used to direct her practice to ensure they are consistent with current best practice guidance.

The following should be considered as a priority:

- Control of infection
- Positive behaviour/behaviour management , currently referred to as "unacceptable behaviour policy"
- Management of medication.

Guidance is available at: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1538/infection-prevention-and-control-in-childcare-settings.pdf>

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/nurture/six-principles-nurture>

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/189567/childrens-service-medication-guidance.pdf>

This would ensure her practice is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:

I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice. (HSCP 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 29 April 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had updated policies accordingly. As a result, children's medical needs were safely met, and they experienced a clean environment.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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