

Stewart, Geraldine Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 October 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2004917065

Service no:
CS2004060796

About the service

Geraldine Stewart is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 8 children up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than six are under 12 years; of whom no more than six are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than two are under 12 months when the childminder is working together with an assistant.

Where the childminder is working together with both assistants they may care for a maximum of 12 children up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than nine are under 12 years; of whom no more than nine are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than three are under 12 months.

Where the childminder or the assistant is working alone they may care for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than six are under 12 years; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate.

Jennifer Legowski, Nicola Lang and Lucy Higgins are employed as assistants.

No overnight care will be provided.

The service operates from the childminder's family home in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire. The service is close to a local school, nursery, shops, parks, woodland areas and public transport links. Children have access to a dedicated playroom, lounge and kitchen/dining area. They can also access the garden at the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 07 October 2024 between 09:10 and 12:20. We returned to the service on 09 October 2024 between the hours of 10:00 and 12:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- Spent time with eight young children using the service.
- Spoke with the childminder and two assistants.
- Received feedback from seven parents/carers.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were mostly happy, relaxed and confident in the setting. They had fun and enjoyed spending time with their friends, the childminder and assistants.
- The childminder and assistants knew children well and were mostly responsive to their needs.
- Children were cared for in a safe, homely environment.
- Children benefitted from participating in a range of child led play experiences which reflected their interests.
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes had resulted in improvements being made in the service.
- Personal plans were in place for each child. These could be further developed to provide a current information about children's routines and involve parents/carers.
- Some areas of the childminding environment would benefit from further consideration.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 - Nurturing care and support.

The childminder and assistants had developed positive relationships with the young children who were present. Interactions with children were kind and caring, which supported them to feel safe and secure. A parent/carer told us that the childminder and assistants were "very, approachable, kind, patient and nurturing."

Children were comfortable and confident in the setting. They received praise and their achievements were acknowledged, which supported them to develop self-esteem and confidence. Children were mostly provided with cuddles, comfort and reassurance, however we found at times tasks were prioritised which resulted in young children not always being comforted when they needed it. This is discussed further in key question four.

The childminder and assistants knew minded children well and they spoke to us about how they supported individual children's care and development needs. Children who were new to the service were able to settle at their own pace. A parent/carer commented, "I have built a good relationship with my childminder. They know me well."

Important information about children's health, personal preferences and routines had been recorded in their personal plan prior to them starting the service. Online learning journals captured some meaningful information about their learning and development and how this was being progressed. A parent/carer told us that that there was, "great communication and when any arrangements are made for child's targets or parents evenings. Geraldine make it easy and this helps us assist our child."

However, we suggested ways in which personal plans could be improved, for example, ensuring information about children's routines and personal preferences are current and ensuring parents/carers are involved in reviewing these. This would help the childminder to support children's changing needs more effectively and meet the requirements of legislation (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder had not administered medication often since the last inspection. Appropriate systems were in place to ensure medication was being managed effectively in the service. This contributed towards the health and safety of children who may require medication while attending the service.

Children benefitted from home cooked meals and having access to fresh water throughout the day. Children enjoyed their lunch and mostly ate this well. A child told us, "this is yummy." Parents/carers and children had been consulted about menu planning and the childminder was familiar with best practice guidance to support this. While children were seated safely and comfortably, we noted there was scope for mealtimes to be more relaxed and nurturing. We discussed this with the childminder following our first visit and we acknowledged the actions taken to improve this when we returned. This resulted in a more positive experience for the children. The childminder agreed that further improvements were needed to ensure children consistently experience a high quality mealtime experience. This should include, promoting children's independence more effectively and giving further consideration to food equipment children might

need, for example side plates for sandwiches and fruit. The childminder should ensure that adults are less task focussed and spend time sitting with the children, being positive role models and engaging in conversation.

Children who required a nap were comfortable and safe. Positive changes had been made to improve this experience for children, which contributed to their safety and wellbeing.

1.3 - Play and learning.

The young children played happily with their favourite toys and their play was mostly supported well by some positive adult interactions. The childminder had changed the approach to supporting play and children were now able to mostly lead with their ideas. The childminder advised this was having a positive impact on children and that they were more engaged in activities as these reflected their interests. A parent/carer commented, "I like that I know my children and safe and loved in the care of my childminders I like that my children are given a range of learning experiences."

We observed children having fun playing with toys which stimulated their imagination, singing their favourite nursery rhymes and making junk models. Play experiences and some skilled adult interactions supported the young children's social, language and physical development. A parent/carer told us, "There are numerous daily learning and fun activities that are different every day."

We acknowledged that child led play was still at its early stages. The childminder was committed to further embedding this approach in practice. We suggested that having access to more natural, sensory, real life and open-ended materials would support children's curiosity, problem solving and creativity. We also asked the childminder to ensure that there are always a wide range of toys and equipment accessible to children. The childminder agreed to consider this further.

Opportunities for outdoor play and experiencing green spaces in the local and wider community were a particular strength in this setting. Children told us they loved going to the local woodland areas where they could take their toys and snacks. Their comments included, "we love going to meadows. We can run about and play with the trees and sticks" and "we take toys with us to the meadow."

The childminder had recently attended training with park rangers to promote storytelling outdoors using natural resources and advised that this was having a positive impact on children's engagement with stories and developing literacy and numeracy skills. A parent/carer commented, "my child is out of the house at least once a week and gets garden play time every day, whatever the weather." another told us, "my child loves going to the meadow. He talks about play dough and different topics when they have done something new."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should further develop personal plans which should be reviewed regularly with parents/carers and children (if appropriate).

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'My personal 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).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were relaxed, comfortable and confident in the setting. Areas they used were suitably furnished, clean, tidy and well maintained. The children had access to a dedicated playroom, nearby toilet and nappy changing facilities.

Comfortable sofas and some soft furnishings provided children with cosy spaces to rest when they were tired and wished to relax. Toys and resources were clean, safe and well maintained.

The enclosed garden could be accessed through the kitchen/dining area. This had recently been renovated and provided children with different surfaces to practise key skills, for example, outdoor apparatus provided children with opportunities to balance, climb, develop co-ordination and take risks in their play. We noted that some children found it difficult to access the top part of the garden. The childminder has agreed to give further consideration to ensuring this is accessible to all.

Nappy changing was carried out sensitively and respectfully and appropriate personal protective equipment was used. This demonstrated that children were respected and valued.

We found some areas within the environment that needed some attention. For example:

Hand hygiene could be improved across the service. While children were confident in handwashing routines, they needed support and accessible materials to enable them to do this well.

The play spaces available to children should be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of all children, for example ensuring babies have access to cosy spaces, providing a curious environment for them to explore and ensure they have space to develop skills for walking.

Consideration should also be given to maximising spaces available to all children at key times. For example, ensuring children have spaces to play when younger children are sleeping.

On the first day of our visit we noted that the playroom was dimly lit. The childminder took positive steps to address this when we returned to the service. We encouraged them to give these areas further consideration (see area for improvement 1.)

The childminder had a pet dog that was not normally present during childminding hours. We met the dog during our visit. While it was settled when we arrived, it became unsettled once it was aware that there was a new adult in the house. We were satisfied with the approaches taken by the childminder to manage this. The childminder has agreed to revisit their pet policy and risk assessment to ensure it fully reflects how pets are managed in the service and share this with parents/carers.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should ensure children experience a nurturing environment, which meets their needs and where the risk of spread of infection is minimised. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring good hand hygiene is practised.
- Reviewing spaces used by children to ensure their needs and stage of development are supported effectively.
- Ensuring areas used by children are suitably lit and adapted when needed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience and environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24)

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder was well experienced and enthusiastic about their role. They wanted the very best for the children and families who attended and were committed to improving the service.

Important information about the service was shared with parents/carers, including aims and objectives, policies and procedures. This helped them to understand the childminder's vision and ensured they were well informed about the service they received.

Sharing information when children arrived and departed the service and using social media apps and learning journals, helped keep parents/carers informed about how their child spent their time at the service and helped them feel included. A parent/carer commented, "Geraldine is always available for a chat and is even flexible about how we communicate."

The childminder told us that parents/carers views were important to them. These were mainly shared informally during daily chats. Regular contact with parents/carers and the use of questionnaires meant families had opportunities to influence the care provided.

Parents/carers told us they were happy with the communication methods used by the childminder. They confirmed that the childminder was very approachable and welcomed their suggestions. We asked the childminder to ensure that any actions taken as a result of their suggestions are shared with them. We could also see that children were able to influence their experiences, for example menu planning, activities and outings. A parent/carer told us that the childminder "communicates clearly with us, gives us daily updates, parents nights and is always available on the phone or email if we have a concern."

We suggested that the childminder review current arrangements for involving parents/carers in the setting and highlighted the importance of families being physically present in their child's setting as part of their daily experiences. We signposted them to some helpful best practice guidance to support with this, including, 'Me, my family and my childcare setting: A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships' and Realising the Ambition: Being Me, which can both be accessed from the Care Inspectorate HUB. This could support and strengthen connections with children and their families.

The childminder worked in partnership with their local authority to provide funded early learning and childcare. As part of this arrangement the childminder had developed a improvement plan which highlighted some key aspects of practice that they wished to develop further. This included further

developing child led play and improving the environment. This reflected some of our findings from this inspection. The Locality Lead Officer from the local authority also provided regular support visits and provided feedback the service's strengths and areas that could be improved.

We encouraged the childminder to continue on their improvement journey and ensure the impact of any improvements are captured. We highlighted some best practice guidance which could support with this, including, 'A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' and 'Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide.'

The childminder had appropriate insurance for the safety and wellbeing of service users. Appropriate aims and objectives had been developed for the service which had been shared with parents/carers. The service's policies and procedures had recently been reviewed. We provided information which could help develop them further.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder and assistants were well experienced and wanted the very best for the children and families who used the service.

The childminder and assistants had a good understanding of each child's individual needs and personalities. They knew families well and described positive relationships. A range of communication methods were used by the childminder to involve parents/carers in their child's care. This helped establish positive links between home and childminding setting, which helped support continuity of care for children. A parent/carer commented, "each day I get an update on my child's learning experiences, as well as a forward plan that is shared weekly."

The childminder and assistants communicated well with each other. Children were appropriately supervised and childminder and assistants were fully involved in all aspects of the children's day. While we observed some respectful and caring interactions, this needed to be more consistent. For example, at key times, the childminder and assistants were task focussed which took their attention away from the children. This meant that some children were not comforted or soothed when needed. We discussed with the childminder the importance of being attuned and responsive to children's needs, to ensure they consistently feel safe and secure.

Being a member of the Scottish Childminding Association, receiving updates from the Care Inspectorate and engaging with early years colleagues helped the childminder and assistants keep up to date with new developments and explore topical issues.

Both childminder and assistants were clear about their role in protecting children and knew who to contact for advice and support. Their knowledge had recently been refreshed through attending child protection training relevant to their roles.

All adults involved in caring for children held an early years qualification and we could see they were committed to their professional development. They were able to share how some training had impacted positively on children's experiences, for example, sensory storytelling, supporting children with additional support needs and developing their knowledge of aces and trauma informed practice.

Since the last inspection the childminder and assistants kept a record of training they had attended. Going forward this approach could be used to record reflections on training and how this supports their work with children.

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

The childminder and both assistants should complete child protection training relevant to their role in the service. This would refresh their knowledge in this area and contribute to children's health, safety and wellbeing.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state, I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities (HSCS 3.20)

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2019.

Action taken since then

Both the childminder and assistants had participated in child protection training since the last inspection and we were confident that they had a good understanding of their role and who to contact if they had concerns.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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