

Mann, Claire Child Minding

Stonehaven

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 November 2024

Service provided by:
Claire Mann

Service provider number:
SP2007965603

Service no:
CS2007154930

About the service

Claire Mann provides a childminding service from their property in the residential area of Newtonhill. The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time 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.

The service is close to a local primary school, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the sunroom, kitchen/diner, family area and downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden all year round.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 November 2024 between 09:15 and 14:15. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Made contact with four parents of children who attended
- spoke with the childminder and children
- observed daily life and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care which supported them to feel valued, loved, and secure.
- Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them well.
- The childminder had developed and maintained strong relationships with families. They routinely shared information to ensure children's care and learning needs were met and reflected families' preferences.
- The childminder should now take time to evaluate improvements and document the impact of these.
- The childminder should continue keeping a record of training which would support them to evaluate any learning undertaken and identify future training needs.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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.

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder was warm and nurturing in their approach to caring for children. Cuddles and closeness were provided when needed. This contributed to secure attachments having been established which supported children to feel safe and loved. The childminder was consistently attentive to children's needs and responded to children's cues and requests which gave the message that they mattered.

Personal plans were in place for each child. These were created in collaboration with families, identifying children's likes, preferences, health, and care routines which helped to promote continuity and consistency of care. We noted however that not all six-monthly reviews had been shared and signed by parents. We discussed the importance of ensuring information within personal plans is current to ensure the children's care and support is right for them. We highlighted the benefits of incorporating the wellbeing indicators into children's plans. This would improve the quality of information gathered and ensure children's care and support was individualized, enabling the childminder to help them reach their full potential.

The childminder had introduced chronologies since our last inspection. These captured significant events in children's lives. They highlighted that the childminder was aware of potential safeguarding and wellbeing issues arising and appropriate actions had been carried out. This ensured children were kept safe and well.

No children in the setting required medication at the time of the inspection. However, following our last inspection the childminder had reviewed and updated their policy in line with best practice guidance, stating how they would effectively store and manage the administration of medication. This contributed to children's health and wellbeing.

Children enjoyed mealtimes sitting at a small table together. The childminder provided snack and lunch, giving the children choice while taking account of their preferences and dietary needs. They sat beside the children, promoting a sociable mealtime experience. The childminder took a respectful approach to supporting children asking them if they wanted help. Young children were encouraged to be independent, confidently using spoons to eat their soup. We discussed how older children could be supported to develop more independence by helping to prepare snack and set the table for mealtimes thus developing important life skills. Parents told us that their children could choose from a range of healthy snacks and meals, that reflected their individual, cultural and dietary needs.

Nappy changing was relaxed, nurturing experience for children. The childminder took a respectful approach to children's personal care and chatted to them as they changed their nappy. Appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) was used. We highlighted the benefits of children washing their hands with the childminder after nappy changing and following mealtimes, to support good hand washing routines. This would also contribute to children being kept healthy, safe and well.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted by the availability of homely, comfortable spaces to rest and relax. In accordance with safe sleeping practice, safe sleeping spaces were available when children required a nap, including the availability of a travel cot.

We suggested other methods, such as the use of buggies, be documented within children's personal plans. This would highlight that routines from home were being followed, taking account of parents' preferences. Parents told us that their children can rest, sleep or relax when they need to.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

The childminder was responsive in their approach to planning children's play and learning. A balance of spontaneous and planned experiences took account of children's interests and development needs. The childminder had a good knowledge of children's interests and provided resources and planned activities to support these. This meant that play was meaningful. Children confidently led their own play, exploring their interests and curiosities through a range of resources. These included role play, construction, singing and games.

Children had opportunities to develop their skills in language, literacy, and numeracy through their daily experiences. The childminder played alongside children and chatted with them during their play, modelling positive use of language and vocabulary. The use of open questions such as "How do you think they're feeling?" during an emotions game supported children's understanding and thinking. This contributed to the development of the children's literacy and numeracy skills and the foundations of lifelong learning.

Discussions with the childminder highlighted that they had a good understanding of child development. They used their knowledge to recognise children's achievements and identify where they required support. Children's learning had been captured in observations. We discussed carrying out shorter, significant observations more regularly while referring to the wellbeing indicators or the Curriculum for Excellence to support this. This would give a holistic overview of children's progress.

The local community was used well to extend children's experiences. They attended local groups and there were opportunities to explore nature through walks to different parks and woods. This encouraged children to develop their social skills and provided strong connections to their own and wider communities.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder's home was very clean, bright, and well-ventilated with direct access to the outdoors. The childminder had created a home-from-home environment for children. One parent said: "[The childminder] has created a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents." Another parent said; "Friendly, homely environment." This contributed to children feeling confident, safe, and secure.

Resources were very accessible, promoting children's independence and allowing them to choose how they spent their time. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, giving children time to play and learn.

Children were cared for in a stimulating environment which provided ample space for them to explore. Spaces had been planned well to account for children's interests and needs. During our visit children played indoors, exploring a variety of resources to support their age and stage of development. Children enjoyed transporting a variety of open-ended resources and building with stickle bricks, problem solving as they worked out how to join the pieces together to make a tower.

A range of open-ended resources and loose parts encouraged children's curiosity and problem-solving skills.

Children told us that they enjoyed playing outside and they liked the swings. Parents told us that their children always had the opportunity to play outdoors. One parent said; "Great back garden made for kids!" Another parent said; "[My child] gets the opportunity to play outside to explore her movement as [they have] just started to crawl."

The setting was very well maintained, indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments highlighted, potential risks, and identified measures to support children's safety. The childminder had reviewed these since our last inspection and was aware of the risk benefits. We discussed how they might document these and encourage children to be involved in risk assessing their own safety. This would support children's understanding of keeping themselves safe and well.

Infection prevention and control measures were very effective with regard to reducing the risk of infection spread. Effective cleaning practices and hand washing procedures were in place, encouraging children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. This supported good infection control measures.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder's aims and objectives clearly reflected the service provided, which included offering a loving, safe environment for children to play, have fun and reach their potential. This ethos was evident during our inspection as the childminder and children played and had fun together.

Positive relationships had been established with families. A range of communication methods supported effective information sharing. The childminder valued the views of families and sought these through regular conversations and service questionnaires. Feedback was positive and highlighted that parents were happy with the communication, food and routines. They felt their child's development was being well supported, such as the development of speech and social skills. Although there had been no suggestions for improvement, we discussed how the childminder might take these on board, reflecting on their practice and assessing if the service was meeting current needs. The feedback we received from parents highlighted that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the setting and their ideas and suggestions had been used to influence change. One parent said; "Regularly asked what my child enjoys in terms of play, activities and food. [The childminder] creates an open line of communication; allowing suggestions to be made that can overall develop the service." Another parent said; "questionnaires and conversations."

We acknowledged that the childminder had reflected on their practice and the service provided. The childminder was working towards gaining a recognised qualification and used their new knowledge and skills to bring about positive changes to outcomes for children and families. We discussed implementing a more formal approach to self-evaluation using 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged children.' This would help inform an improvement plan to ensure continuous improvement.

Since our last inspection, the childminder had reviewed their policies and procedures in line with best practice guidance to ensure parents were provided with up-to-date information. This supported children to have access to a quality service and experience care that is right for them.

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.

Quality indicator 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder was very warm, caring, and kind. Throughout our visit, we observed children's needs and wishes being met in a naturally responsive and nurturing way. It was clear that strong attachments had been formed. The childminder's gentle approach contributed to children feeling safe and secure.

Children and their families benefited from a childminder who was very committed to providing quality care. They worked well with families, who were warmly welcomed into the service and given time to discuss their child's needs and to share experiences. The childminder demonstrated that they knew children and their families very well. Personal preferences and personalities were taken account of which ensured care was provided on an individual basis and well considered to meet needs.

Parents told us they had a strong connection with the childminder. One parent said; "[The childminder] has built a strong relationship with our family and has always taken time to chat and listen to our concerns and milestones that my child has achieved." Another parent said; "We worked in partnership with [the childminder] to help our [child] transition into being at the child minder. I feel like [the childminder] knows] our child] really well." As a result, relationships were positive and parents felt valued.

The childminder was a funded provider and was aware of the importance of ensuring that they had the appropriate knowledge and skills to offer high quality care and experiences. They were currently working towards a recognised qualification, had undertaken training courses and accessed a range of best practice guidance to support their knowledge and understanding. At our last inspection, we discussed keeping a detailed record of training. The childminder had started to do this on their online SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association) account which was supporting them to evaluate any learning undertaken and identify future training needs.

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

1. To support the safety and ensure quality learning experiences outdoors, the childminder should ensure that:

- a) Risk assessments are in place for older children playing in the garden alone.
- b) Risk-benefit assessments have been considered which recognise the importance of benefits such as fresh air, exercise, socialising and learning.

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

"I make informed choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life" (HSCS 2.24).

This area for improvement was made on 13 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Risk assessments highlighted, potential risks, and identified measures to support children's safety. The childminder had reviewed these since our last inspection and was aware of the risk benefits. We discussed how they might document these and encourage children to be involved in risk assessing their own safety. **This area for improvement has been met.**

Previous area for improvement 2

1. To support improvement to the service and ensure good outcomes for children, the childminder:

- a) Should consider ways of supporting families to share their views and contribute to improvements within the setting.
- b) Should ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools, are fully embedded into practice.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 13 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder valued the views of families and sought these through regular conversations and service questionnaires. Feedback was positive and highlighted that parents were happy with the service. Although there had been no suggestions for improvement, we discussed how the childminder might take these on board, reflecting on their practice and assessing if the service was meeting current needs.

We acknowledged that the childminder had reflected on their practice and the service provided using best practice guidance. The childminder was working towards gaining a recognised qualification and used their new knowledge and skills to bring about positive changes to outcomes for children and families. **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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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