

Louisa's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Keith

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 December 2024

Service provided by:
Louisa Morrison

Service provider number:
SP2022000102

Service no:
CS2022000143

About the service

Louisa's Childminding is registered to provide a childminding service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family.

The childminder's home is in a rural village in Moray. The service is within walking distance of local schools, nurseries and other amenities within the village. Children are cared for in a playroom within the home and have access to a fully enclosed garden. They have access to the family kitchen, the bathroom and two bedrooms.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday, 9 December 2024 between 11:00 and 13:30. One inspector carried out the inspection. 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 the childminder about the service they provided
- Spoke with children during their play
- Observed practice and children's experiences
- Reviewed documents related to the service
- Gathered the views of parents and carers of children who attend the service.

Key messages

- Positive and caring relationships with children and their families ensured children's individual needs were well supported and respected.
- Children benefitted from quality play and learning experiences both within the home and in their local community.
- The childminder had begun to involve children and families in evaluating the service and identifying areas for development.
- The childminder was committed to their own professional development and had undertaken training that supported positive outcomes for children.

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

Children were nurtured and supported through their daily experiences with warm and caring interactions. The childminder followed the children's lead as they played, giving gentle reminders about what the children would be doing next, and how to keep themselves and each other safe. This helped the children to feel secure and confident, and promoted their overall wellbeing. Parents strongly agreed that their child was well cared for, with one parent saying, "Louisa offers my child a safe, secure and stimulating environment and I go to work in the knowledge that he is being cared for and treated like extended family."

Children benefited from a childminder who knew them, their needs and family preferences well. For example, she followed children's cues when they were tired and helped them to settle down for a nap. The childminder offered safe and quiet places for each child to sleep, using travel cots or sleeping mats in separate bedrooms. This, along with regular exchanges of information with parents around sleeping arrangements, ensured that their needs were being met.

The childminder supported personal care with kind and nurturing interactions. She followed family preferences to support continuity of care, for example when supporting children to use the toilet. Children were familiar with good handwashing routines and older children were supported to wash their own hands. This helped them to build independence and develop important life skills.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable, with children gathering round a low table in the kitchen. At lunchtime, children chose foods from packed lunches provided by parents. Foods were placed on to plates which made mealtimes homely. The childminder ensured that children were kept safe at all times. She sat with the children as they ate together, and was familiar with best practice guidance on preparation of fruit and vegetables. This helped to minimise the risk of choking. Children were gently reminded throughout the day to drink water and this helped them to stay well hydrated.

Children's care and wellbeing was supported by effective personal planning. Information was gathered about each child prior to them joining the service, and the childminder offered individualised settling-in sessions for new children. Parents told us that they valued this flexible and personal approach. One parent said, "Louisa is very flexible, professional and approachable." Plans were stored securely online and contained information shared by parents as well as the childminder. The childminder regularly asked children their views on aspects of their care, for example snack choices, and how they like to spend their time with the childminder. This helped children to feel that their views were valued. Parents told us that they regularly had conversations with the childminder about changes to routines and preferences. We asked the childminder to consider how best to capture this information so that the personal plans reflected each child's current needs and next steps. We discussed the importance of children and families being central to this review process. To support with this, we signposted the childminder to best practice guidance on personal planning and the management of medication.

The childminder had started to build effective links with other childcare professionals. For example, they worked closely with other childminders to offer additional opportunities for children to socialise and play

together. They had also supported children's transitions into local nurseries. This was helping children to achieve their full potential.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun exploring the toys and resources in the living room and the kitchen. The children could access these freely, with the childminder letting play unfold and supporting the youngest children at appropriate times. This meant that children were actively involved in leading their play, and this promoted choice and independence. For example, when some children showed an interest in the books on offer, the childminder offered to read with them. When she saw cues that their interest had moved on, she supported them to explore other resources.

More structured play opportunities were offered through craft activities in the home and daily trips into the local community. This included attending local toddler groups and visits to the train station and the park. The childminder explained that visits to the station were planned as a result of a child showing an interest in trains. This demonstrated that children's needs and interests were placed at the centre of planned play experiences. We discussed with the childminder, ways in which children could continue to be involved in planning structured activities. This would help to ensure that the overall service remains children-led, to promote effective learning and development.

Children benefited from play resources that helped to engage their imagination, and supported the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, the childminder had gathered natural, open-ended materials which children used in a variety of ways. There was a well-stocked book corner and children enjoyed joining in with stories, songs and rhymes throughout the day. This was supporting the children to develop their language skills and confidence. The childminder shared that she is keen to further develop her resources and we suggested that gathering views of the children and families could support this aim.

Children and families benefited from the information the childminder shared about their day and their progress. Parents told us that they valued the observations and photos shared on the digital platform, which enabled them to celebrate their child's successes and achievements. For example, the childminder shared when children learned skills such as using cutlery independently, and when they said new words for the first time in the service. Another parent told us, "She tells me exactly what they are planning to do that day and updates the app with what they have done." We suggested that the childminder could enhance opportunities for learning by reviewing progress and next steps in learning, alongside children and families.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Children benefited from a home that was welcoming, comfortable and clean. The living room and kitchen provided spacious play spaces which offered a wide range of inviting and developmentally appropriate resources. The resources reflected children's current interests, such as the kitchen role play corner where one child was busy baking. There was a securely enclosed garden with plenty space to run and play, and a range of play equipment and large loose parts such as tyres and planks. This gave children opportunities for imaginative and energetic play. The layout of spaces indoors and outdoors were inviting and accessible, giving children a sense of ownership and belonging.

The home was safe, secure and well maintained. The childminder had carried out risk assessments for the home, garden and trips into the community, and encouraged children to assess risks during their activities. This helped to keep children safe whilst enabling fun and challenging play experiences. Children's information was stored securely on a digital platform. This ensured that each child's personal circumstances and information was kept private.

Effective measures to prevent the spread of infection were in place. This included well established routines for nappy changing, during which the childminder used gloves and apron appropriately. Children were familiar with when to wash their hands and were supported effectively.

How good is our leadership?

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 had started to develop her approach to self-evaluation. For example, following a discussion with a peer childminder around resources, she had carried out a review of the toys and materials available in her home. As a result, she had increased the range and quantity of natural and open-ended resources on offer. We discussed simple ways of reflecting on such improvement work so that the impact on outcomes for children could be identified and shared with families. This has the potential to ensure that high quality learning through play is at the heart of improvement planning.

Children were meaningfully involved in some aspects of developing the service. For example, the childminder had used pictures and symbols to consult children on their food preferences at snack time. Parents were kept informed about day to day aspects of the service via messages and conversations. The childminder had started to gather their views via annual questionnaires. We advised the childminder to further consider ways of consulting families about developing particular aspects of the service. We discussed how reviews of policies, and vision, values and aims, as well as other aspects of the service could involve families and children. This would support the childminder to ensure that any such changes reflect families preferences and what they expect from the service.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place to support her to offer a quality service to children and families. This included effective and timely procedures for dealing with accidents. We advised the childminder to review all such policies and procedures regularly, and whenever best practice guidance was updated, so that they remained current and useful for families. To support the childminder with this we signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate document, 'Registering and running a childminding service: what you need to know.'

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 had created a warm and welcoming ethos within the service. Her kind and nurturing interactions helped children to feel loved and secure. She was responsive to children's interests and this helped to promote and support their curiosity. This meant that children were having quality, fun experiences.

The childminder had built strong and positive relationships with children and families, and parents told us that they valued the childminder's compassionate approach. For example, when introducing new children

into the service she offered a variety of settling in sessions, including over mealtimes and nap times. This approach enabled responsive care that considered children and families' changing needs. One parent told us, "I'm so, so happy with our childminder. I have never had any doubts about how happy and safe my child is when he is there."

Children benefited from a childminder who was committed to her own continued professional development. She had completed a variety of training courses and gave examples of how her practice had changed as a result. The childminder had identified aspects of child development that she wanted to study further. We suggested that these reflections could be linked to self-evaluation, which would help to identify future improvements to her service. This in turn could lead to enhanced outcomes for children.

The childminder had established close working relationships with other childminding colleagues within the community. This enabled her to offer a wider range of experiences for children. She was proactive in keeping up to date with new developments and best practice guidance. This indicated a dedicated and professional approach to their role which was focused on supporting children to reach their potential.

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
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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