

Hall, Angela Child Minding

Larkhall

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 December 2024

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2008970836

Service no:
CS2008181343

About the service

Angela Hall provides a childminding service from her property in a quiet residential area of Larkhall, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a service for a maximum of six children up to the age of 16. Numbers are inclusive of members of the childminder's family.

The children are cared for in the downstairs of the property with access to an enclosed rear garden. The garden is temporarily inaccessible to children due to refurbishments within the property. Good use is made of places in the local area to ensure children continue to have access to physical and outdoor play experiences. The service is close to nurseries, primary schools, parks, shops and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 9 December 2024 between the hours of 09:45 and 11:30. 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service and received two questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was kind, caring and nurturing in her interactions with children throughout the inspection.
- Detailed personal plans were in place. These were reviewed with families every six months or sooner if required or requested to ensure they reflected and supported children's individual care and support needs.
- Children had sufficient space to play and could independently access a variety of toys and resources suitable for their age and stage of development throughout the inspection.
- Indoor and outdoor environments had been risk assessed to ensure children's safety while the refurbishment of the property was underway.
- Keeping abreast of current guidance and continuing to source, attend and evaluate training, webinars and reading materials would contribute to the ongoing development of the service.

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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident and relaxed in the childminder's care. The childminder knew the importance of building trusting relationships with children and their families, some of whom had recently joined the service. Children confidently shared their toys and interacted with us, as they investigated blocks, saying "yellow, blue, red," while joining blocks together. Parents told us, "I have a good relationship with my childminder who keeps in regular contact via photos to show the different activities they are involved with."

The childminder was aware of children's individual stages of development, preferences, routines and any changes in their lives. This was reflected in individual detailed personal plans, which were devised and reviewed with parents in line with legislation. Activities were both planned and responsive and a variety of resources were accessible to children. This ensured children's care, support, interests and development needs were met.

Policies and procedures for storing and administering medication which may be required by children while attending the service had been improved and met an area of improvement from the last inspection. This contributed to children's health and wellbeing.

Fresh drinking water was available to children throughout the inspection. Individual water bottles placed on low surfaces meant children could access these independently to remain hydrated. A range of healthy options for snack and meals, highchairs and a low table and chairs were provided by the childminder. This contributed to the provision of positive mealtime experiences to support child development, develop key social skills as well as healthy eating habits. The childminder should contact the local authority again to register as a food business as the service provided snacks and meals for children. Parents who completed our questionnaire agreed their children could choose from a healthy range of snacks and meals that reflected their individual cultural and dietary needs.

Children's views were respected. They were asked if they wanted to have their nappy changed, lifted to look out the window when they excitedly heard a bin lorry outside and offered choices in activities. They were cuddled, praised and supported throughout the inspection. This contributed to children feeling safe and loved.

The childminder understood their roles and responsibilities for child protection and keeping children safe. To refresh their knowledge and confidence in this area, plans were in place to source relevant training.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun as they investigated construction materials, floor games, books, a toy kitchen, sit on and interactive push along toys. These resources supported their stage of development and interests. They could make choices independently from low level storage boxes, with support and encouragement from the childminder as required. This provided active play and learning opportunities, early language, literacy and numeracy development and built children's confidence.

Although the back garden was inaccessible at the moment, there were opportunities for daily outdoor play, exploring places in the local community and making friends. This included regular visits to parks, 'bookbug' sessions at the library for stories, rhymes and songs and meeting with other childminders and their minded children. This ensured children had fresh air and physical play opportunities, a sense of belonging within the community, sociable interactions with others and opportunities to become familiar with the local area. Parents told us, "Angela takes the children to the park where they can interact with each other and other children" and "They go to the library, toddler classes and park."

The childminder shared photographs of children's play and learning experiences with their parents through an app. This enabled families to be included and involved in their child's day. Continued observations, interactions and effective use of questioning would extend children's thinking, develop their skills and assist in identifying next steps in play and learning. The childminder should now expand gathered information to fully evaluate children's progress and achievements. This would ensure all children were consistently supported to meet their full potential.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Care was provided from the downstairs of the childminder's property. The childminder's home was in the final stages of home renovation. Risk assessments had been undertaken to ensure all work was carried out outwith childminding hours. Areas children could access were made safe prior to children's arrival each day. The conservatory and rear garden were temporarily inaccessible to children and used to store tools and materials. This ensured children's safety. The childminder responded positively to our suggestion of a safety gate between the living room and hallway, as a temporary measure. This would further contribute to children's safety and enable children to play freely in the large living room/dining space.

Although the property had been risk assessed prior to work being carried out, we informed the childminder of the required notification to be submitted to the Care Inspectorate prior to any refurbishment of the property. This is to ensure children's and families safety and wellbeing had been fully considered and families notified prior to renovations taking place. We sent guidance "Records childminding services must keep and notification reporting" to assist the childminder in the future.

The living room was homely, cosy and inviting with couches, cushions and a soft rug. This offered children comfortable spaces to rest and relax. There was sufficient clear floor space for children to crawl, explore and play with resources such as sit on toys, large blocks and floor games.

Effective hand hygiene procedures were undertaken as and when required throughout the inspection. Disposable gloves and aprons were worn and correct procedures followed for nappy changing. Children's belongings were stored out of children's reach within the kitchen. This contributed to maintaining a safe, hygienic environment and was in line with good infection prevention and control guidance.

Children's personal details were stored and managed safely in line with general data protection requirements (GDPR). To contribute to children and families safety, the service was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This ensured the childminder was fully informed of their responsibilities in storing and protecting children's and families' personal information.

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.

Quality Indicator: 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There were shared values and aims for the service provision. Families' views had been sought through daily conversations and parental questionnaires for new and existing families. This respected and included their views and suggestions. We discussed ways to feedback the results of questionnaires to parents to ensure they knew their views were valued, respected and responded to. Parents who completed our questionnaires agreed they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. They added, "I have completed forms to give feedback on any areas that I like/dislike to ensure the service fits my needs."

Overall, parents were happy with the care and support their child received in the service. There were mixed comments about communication and being able to come into the service when dropping off or collecting children. The childminder agreed to have a discussion with parents to ensure they knew they were welcome to come into their home at any time. This would respect parents' individual views and preferences and continue to build good relationships.

To support more robust quality assurance, the childminder planned to continue their review and update of the aims, policies and procedures for the service. This would ensure these were a current reflection of the service provided and in line with any recently updated information. We emailed the childminder some recently updated guidance and Care Inspectorate documentation to assist with this.

As part of the improvement priorities, the childminder planned to source and attend more training. This would contribute to keeping abreast of current good practice and guidance and improving the childminder's knowledge, skills and professional development. Devising a brief written improvement plan and self-evaluation records would assist the childminder in tracking the overall service developments, progress and achievements.

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.

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was kind, caring and responsive to children's care, support needs and interests. Respectful and responsive interactions supported children's wellbeing and helped to build secure attachments. As a result, children were relaxed, happy and confident.

The childminder had good experience in caring for children, through previous childcare roles and being a childminder for many years. They had recently completed a First Aid course. This had refreshed their skills and knowledge in this area. They planned to source and complete further training to support their knowledge and professional development. The childminder should now consider devising and maintaining a professional development/training record. This would enable them to record their needs, interests and evaluate the impact of any reading, research or training undertaken. This would support positive outcomes for children, families, themselves and the ongoing development of the service.

A supportive network of local childminders had enabled the childminder to discuss and share best practice, guidance and knowledge and arrange training opportunities as a group, as well as providing social opportunities for children. This contributed to maintaining a good quality service.

One family who had recently left the service added, "We can't thank you enough for making our child part of the family. They say it takes a village and you have been a vital part of this. You've exclusively shown our child patience, kindness and love and we will be forever grateful."

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

To support children's health, safety and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure parents provide any medication required for their child's health and wellbeing and complete parental consent forms to enable the childminder to administer medication. Procedures and storage of medication should be in line with current guidance, 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.'

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 22 August 2023.

Action taken since then

There were currently no children in attendance who required medication to be administered in the service. However, blank parental consent forms were in place for completion should these be required in the future. We emailed a link to the updated "Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services" to assist the childminder in reviewing and updating their policy and procedures going forward.

This area for improvement has been Met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To maintain a safe environment and ensure children's safety, the childminder should ensure all indoor and outdoor areas are checked prior to children arriving. This would identify any potential hazards and the appropriate actions to be taken.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 22 August 2023.

Action taken since then

All areas were checked prior to children arriving at the service. Visual risk assessments had been undertaken and actions taken to ensure children accessed a safe environment during this period of property refurbishment. The childminder was receptive to suggestions to make the indoor play space safer.

This area for improvement has been Met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support the provision of a well managed service, the childminder should submit all required notifications and applications. This should include, but is not limited to, an application for a disclosure for an adult household member and a variation to remove a time-lapsed condition on the registration certificate.

This to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 22 August 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder submitted the required applications and notifications following the previous inspection. A notification regarding the refurbishment of the property was not submitted to inform us of their plans, as required. We discussed this in full and emailed the relevant guidance to the childminder after the inspection.

The childminder was now clear about the required notifications to be submitted to the Care Inspectorate. We are reassured they will adhere to this going forward.

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	5 - Very 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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