

Simpson, Laura Child Minding

Forfar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 April 2025

Service provided by:
Laura Simpson

Service provider number:
SP2011982859

Service no:
CS2011301053

About the service

Laura Simpson provides a childminding service in Forfar. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of five children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than five 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.

The service is located within a residential area of Forfar and is close to parks, and local shops. The home of the childminder consists of a lounge, kitchen/dining space and an enclosed back outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 April 2025 and was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service was registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service;
- received four completed questionnaires from parents and carers;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment;
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors;
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met; and
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Relationships and interactions were warm, nurturing, kind and caring.
- Children had fun and were engaged in their play and learning.
- The approach to personal planning was under review and we encouraged the childminder to continue developing this area.
- Children had regular opportunities to take part in play and learning within the local community.
- The childminder had developed positive relationships with families who were very happy with the quality of care provided.

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?	5 - Very 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

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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

Interactions between children and the childminder were kind, caring and nurturing. The childminder was down at children's level and taking part in their imaginary play and fun. Discussions, smiles and cuddles provided children with a sense of security and importance. One parent told us "My child likes their childminder because she is kind, friendly and has lots of fun". A child told us "Laura makes me feel really happy and safe".

Children's independence and life skills were developed through mealtimes and play experiences. Lunch time was observed to be a relaxed time where children sat together.

Personal care was respectful, and children were asked if they would like to have their nappy changed or needed help at the toilet. Children were in the early stages of learning how to go to the toilet and this was done sensitively and respectfully. We observed lots of praise, reassurance and encouragement as children were learning this new skill.

Personal plans were in place for each child and included contract, permissions and basic information about children's likes and routines. These were reviewed with parents at least six monthly. We discussed with the childminder how this area could be improved. For example, plans included information that was no longer relevant and sections of plans were incomplete. We discussed the importance of ensuring consents are in place for all children and up to date specific needs were recorded within plans. We encouraged the childminder to also record how they would support individual needs. The childminder told us they intended to review the format of the plans going forward so all children used the same forms and templates.

During our inspection a child slept on the sofa. We discussed with the childminder the importance of children's wellbeing being better considered through safe and sensitive sleep routines. The childminder outlined her awareness around the importance of creating a safe sleep spaces and shared how this was not normal practice we observed. Children had access to a travel cot and we encouraged the childminder to use this to support children access rest and sleep when needed. One parent answered "sometimes" around our statement 'My child can rest, sleep or relax when they need to' with another parent telling us "Laura is always making sure my child is safe, I have never had any issues with my child's care".

The childminder had completed child protection training. This supported her with knowledge in safeguarding children.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder had very good knowledge of children's interests and supported them to engage in their play and learning. For example, the childminder was supporting a child to be creative with large building blocks. The connections and being down at the child's level during play supported and extended learning through thinking and problem-solving skills.

Language, literacy and numeracy were naturally incorporated into children's play through counting, recognising colours and story sharing. The childminder shared how they had extended children's interest, creativity and artwork based from a recent story children had read.

Observations and children's experiences were shared with families through daily conversations and WhatsApp messages. Parents told us "Laura has provided our children with so many experiences, groups, opportunities to learn and develop, we can't thank her enough" and "Laura is always doing things with my child which keeps them active and engaged".

A Floor book was used to share learning and children's experiences. The book included children's voice and links to various trips and outings. Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their outdoor environment and wider community. For example, children regularly visited local parks, woodland areas, soft play and met up with friends who were minded by other childminders.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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.

The childminder's home was a nurturing environment with spaces being welcoming, homely and spacious. One parent told us "I always feel welcome in Laura's home". Children were free to move around freely and access to resources that were well organised and easily accessible. This supported choice, freedom and high quality play and learning.

Children were observed to be busy and engaged throughout our visit. They benefited from accessing toys and resources such as small world figures, dolls and loose part resources. Parents told us "My child has opportunities to learn, communicate and develop social skills" and "Laura is really great with helping children to develop and meet their targets".

Safety was considered through the safe storage of resources, doors being locked and the childminder raising awareness of the Care Inspectorate keeping children safe - Look, Think, Act campaign. For example, fun activities and positive conversations had taken place with children using SIMOA the elephant. SIMOA (Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act)

Risk assessments were in place and completed for the childminder's home, specific activities, and key tasks. These were regularly reviewed and were working documents. Fire safety was also considered through the childminder having clear procedures in place. For example, smoke detectors were regularly reviewed and checks were recorded. This ensured children, equipment and emergency procedures were effective and safe.

Infection control measures provided a safe environment for children. For example, the toilet was clean with soap available for handwashing and hazards were out of reach for children. We observed the childminder and the children practice good, effective handwashing routines at appropriate times.

The safe storage and confidentiality of children's personal information was considered. Processes were in place to enable appropriate access to necessary information, whilst maintaining security and confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led

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.

Positive relationships had been developed between the childminder and children and their families. One parent told us "Laura always looks for feedback and information". Children and families' views were sought through questionnaires, verbal communications and messaging platforms.

An improvement plan was in place which identified priorities. These included working in partnership with parents, planning and children's learning. The focus areas were at the early stages of development, but the childminder showed a desire and commitment to continually improve the service provided. Tools such as floor books, questionnaires and use of a diary supported the childminder prioritise key areas of improvements.

Policies were in place to support safe practice. The childminder told us that the policies were currently under review to reflect current practice.

The childminder accessed support from the Local Authority and consulted with other childminders. Sharing best practice and engaging in events through the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) helped the childminder deliver positive outcomes and experiences for children. One parent shared with us that the childminder is always informative and wants to know things about children outside of the time with her. The positive relationships developed with families and the professional dialogue throughout the inspection demonstrated the childminder's commitment to improving their service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

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.

The childminder provided a very warm and caring environment for children. She was kind and respectful. Throughout our visit children's needs and interests were skilfully balanced between tasks while maintaining quality interactions.

The childminder was an experienced childminder and had engaged in various learning and training. Parents told us "I think it's great that she does online courses to develop her knowledge and understanding" and "We honestly don't know how we would manage without her".

As a member of the SCMA the childminder could engage in continuous professional development. They frequently kept up to date with changes in guidance and legislation through alerts from the SCMA, Care Inspectorate and completed qualifications relevant to their role.

The willingness and commitment to improve and maintain quality of practice and provision was evident. For example, the childminder had participated in a self-evaluation tool kit session, book bug webinar, supporting autism training, solihull approach awareness, child protection and first aid. All this had a positive impact on the outcomes for children. We discussed how consistently reflecting on professional learning could support and enhance children's care, learning and development further.

The approach and value shown towards children ensured children were secure, valued and respected. One parent told us "My child feels comfortable and happy to be around Laura".

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	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.