

Janet's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Fort William

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 April 2025

Service provided by:
Janet Melvin

Service provider number:
SP2016988510

Service no:
CS2016351109

About the service

Janet's Childminding Service is registered to provide a day care of children 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. The numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own family. Three children were present during the inspection.

Other conditions unique to the service:

2. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.
3. Overnight care will not be provided.
4. The front garden is not to be used for childminding purposes.

The service is provided in a terraced house in the residential area of Claggan in the town of Fort William. Children have access to an enclosed back garden, living room, kitchen and bathroom facilities. The childminder's home is located close to local primary schools, parks and natural areas of woodland.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 April 2025 between 12:15 and 14:15. 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 three children using the service;
- spoke with the childminder;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from six families;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children's needs were effectively met through the nurturing and responsive interactions they received. This supported them to feel loved, safe and secure.
- Children's literacy, language and numeracy development was promoted through experiences which captured the children's sense of fun and enjoyment.
- Children benefited from a varied range of play experiences within their local community.
- Families commented positively on the care and support their children received from the service.
- A more formal approach to self-evaluation to effectively assess the quality of the service would support the childminder to identify strengths and areas for development to improve outcomes for children and families.

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 attending the service were happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. Their needs were met through nurturing and responsive interactions, which helped children feel loved, safe and secure. For example, the childminder was very responsive to children's cues and provided physical comfort and reassuring words and actions at necessary times. These actions nurtured children's security and confidence and promoted positive relationships between the children and the childminder. Families told us: "They feel safe and secure to be themselves but still develop into a confident, independent and kind person with Janet's guidance which is in line with our families' values." and "Janet is genuinely a family away from home, everyone feels like we are valued and our children are always cared for."

Personal plans were in place for all children and contained important information that supported meeting children's needs. For example, details about their care and health needs as well as likes and dislikes. The childminder spoke with parents regularly about the individual needs of children. This approach supported effective communication and consistency of care for children. All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: 'I am fully involved in my child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan'. As a result, children received the care that was right for them and tailored to their individual needs.

Lunchtime was unhurried and relaxed, which ensured a caring and positive experience for children. The childminder recognised that mealtimes were a rich opportunity to promote close attachments and develop language and used this time to support nurturing conversations together. The younger children were encouraged to develop their self-feeding skills which supported their independence and confidence with food. As a result, children were given opportunities to develop their independence and skills for life.

Whilst no children attending the service required regular medication, we reviewed procedures and paperwork in place. We were satisfied that safe administration of medication procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

The childminder recognised the importance of rest and sleep for children's overall development. Arrangements were in place to provide sleep experiences and routines were in place which reflected children and families' wishes. This contributed to children's emotional security. However, the childminder also shared that children sometimes slept in buggies and that there were limited opportunities for children to sleep safely in other ways. Through discussions and sharing of information, the childminder agreed to review practice with regards to where children slept. This would ensure that children can sleep in an area that is comfortable, not restrained, supports their privacy and dignity, and keeps them safe and effectively monitored.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were provided with a good range of activities which supported their play and learning. They were able to choose from a selection of toys and play equipment, that met their stage of development and interests. For example, children had access to various resources to support their curiosity and problem solving skills. These included construction materials, small world toys, books of interest, transport toys, mark making materials and jigsaws. One of the children enjoyed imaginative play whilst exploring resources to make a cup of tea in the role play kitchen. The childminder supported this child sensitively, noticing and responding to their invitation to join their play. As a result, children had fun as they engaged in experiences which supported their interests and curiosities.

Play experiences promoted the development of children's literacy and language and numeracy. The childminder used skilled interactions, modelling and repeating the use of new words for children as they experienced their day to day routines and as they played. Stories and songs were shared which children eagerly listened to and joined in with. Children expressed laughter and joy listening to and joining in the actions and words for number rhymes with the childminder. These experiences promoted the children's sense of fun and enjoyment as they explored words and numbers through play.

The childminder had a flexible approach to planning as they followed children's interests and responded to their choices. Children's experiences and progress was shared each day with families through an online app and at pick up and drop off times. All families who responded to our survey shared that their children can always be involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development. Parents commented: "Janet always gives feedback about what the girls have been up to...we regularly take home things they have made at Janet's. She always lets us know if she has a particular activity planned for the children and knows what they will enjoy. My children feel like Janet is part of their family." and "Janet provides a daily sheet saying what they have been up to. They are regularly out and about in the community, enjoy walks and being busy. Toys in the house are rotated regularly. My daughter has a range of opportunities with her.". This demonstrated families were valued and included as partners in their children's learning.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community. They took part in regular walks, visiting local parks and the nearby woods which gave children opportunities to play in natural outdoor environments. Trips to areas of interest such as the local shops, the Fire Station, Caol beach and Nevis Range extended children's knowledge and understanding of their local area and sense of place. Regular visits to the library for Bookbug sessions as well as meeting up with other childminders provided occasions to promote children's social skills and develop their confidence.

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

Children benefited from a homely environment that was well furnished, comfortable and offered lots of natural light and ventilation. Resources were easily accessible at the children's height which enabled them to self-select and make their own choices. The childminder shared that resources were often rotated and changed to take account of children's individual interests and curiosities. This gave children a strong message that they were valued and their views mattered.

The childminder understood the benefits of outdoor play in supporting children's overall development. At the time of the inspection, the back garden was not accessible as improvements were underway to landscape the area and add resources to enhance children's experiences and better meet their needs. At this time, the childminder facilitated regular opportunities for children to explore and play outdoors in the local environment. This provided children with more physical play experiences to develop their gross motor skills.

Indoors, children benefited from a good range of resources that reflected their interests and curiosities. These included construction toys, small world play, games, books and puzzles. This supported children's choice and overall sense of wellbeing. We spoke to the childminder about further developing the availability of loose parts and open ended resources to support children's creativity and curiosity further. We signposted best practice guidance 'Growing my potential: Promoting safe, responsive, nurturing care and learning experiences and environments for babies and young children aged 1 and 2 years' and the 'Loose Parts Play Toolkit' to support the review and development of resources further.

The property was well maintained indoors. Risk assessment strategies were implemented to ensure that children's safety was promoted and potential risks were minimised. For example, the childminder undertook a visual inspection of the indoor space each day to ensure safety. Stairgates and cupboard locks were in place to keep areas safe for children. Overall, the service was clean with appropriate infection control procedures in place. These measures all contributed to delivering a safe environment for children.

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

Children and families experienced a warm and welcoming environment, where aims and objectives were shared so that a clear vision was in place for the service and expectations agreed. Policies and procedures were in place to keep children safe and support their health and wellbeing. These were shared with families prior to starting at the setting. We suggested some changes to current policies to reflect best practice guidance.

The childminder provided opportunities for meaningful communication with families. Children's play experiences and achievements and other important information was shared with parents through a variety of methods. These included through daily written information, online messages and face to face discussions. This helped the childminder to maintain clear and effective communication with families. Some families commented: "Constant and open communication always made to feel welcome, respected and included. Even after my oldest son left 5 years ago and before my second we were still included in Christmas parties.", "Janet is a great communicator and always has time for chat about anything. She keeps us well up to date with what she has been doing".

The childminder respected the views of children and parents and used their views to improve the service. The childminder gathered verbal feedback from families and children to reflect on the type of experiences they were having. This helped them develop informal plans and reflect on the care and activities provided. From our online questionnaire feedback, all families strongly agreed with the statement: 'My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service.'. Families commented: "I can give my opinion and Janet always listens. She is very flexible. For example, I requested no screen time and Janet happily follows this." and "Janet discusses changes, new children, ideas for activities with us.". This demonstrated that the views of families were valued and included within the service.

The childminder was aware that there was a need for a more formal approach to self-evaluation in order to effectively assess the quality of the service. We signposted the Care Inspectorate document, 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' to support the childminder to identify and record strengths and areas for development to improve outcomes for children and families.

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

Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the responsive interactions we observed with the childminder. This supported the development of strong relationships with the children. The childminder understood what children needed to help them grow and develop, and responded to their needs in a caring manner. This helped children build strong attachments and positively supported their wellbeing. Families commented: "He loves Janet, he is happy to be left with her when I go to work, which makes me believe he feels safe and cared for." and "She is fantastic and I trust her wholeheartedly with the care of my son".

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining their skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. They had attended training in food hygiene as well as practical paediatric first aid. The childminder had a good knowledge of child protection procedures and understood the appropriate steps to take if they had a child protection concern.

The childminder is a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and has supportive links with local childminders. This has provided opportunities for sharing ideas, developing knowledge and reflecting on practice, contributing to positive outcomes for children.

The childminder had not recently accessed further professional learning to enhance their skills and knowledge and enhance outcomes for children. We spoke with the childminder about the importance of keeping up to date with current guidance and best practice through professional reading, or wider training. We discussed ways the childminder could document the impact of professional learning on children's experiences.

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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