

Kelso, Sharon Child Minding

Stevenston

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 May 2025

Service provided by:
Sharon Kelso

Service provider number:
SP2009976929

Service no:
CS2009236952

About the service

Sharon Kelso is a childminding service registered to provide care for a maximum of six children aged under 16 years of age. At the time of our inspection, eight children were registered with the service.

Children had access to a living room, playroom, upstairs WC and fully enclosed secure garden. The service is situated in the town of Stevenston, North Ayrshire and is within close proximity to local parks, primary schools and early learning and childcare centres.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on Thursday 1 May 2025 between 11:15 and 13:30. 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 families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life for two young children
- 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 the following aspects;

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

Key messages

- The caring and loving relationships the childminder had established with children promoted their emotional wellbeing and sense of belonging.
- Nurturing interactions, praise and encouragement supported children to have fun.
- Close working relationships with the families allowed for open communication and effective information sharing.
- The childminder was experienced, knowledgeable and committed to training and professional development.
- The childminder should review and update their policies and procedures inline with current best practice guidance.

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

We evaluated different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder. They experienced warm and nurturing care and interactions which supported them to feel safe and secure. Strong connections formed with the childminder supported children's emotional wellbeing. All families who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed they had a good relationship with their childminder. Comments included; "Sharon is a friendly caring person who is easy to get on with."

Children's development was well supported through the childminder's knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs. The childminder spoke confidently about strategies used to support children in their care. For example, when encouraging young children's language development through their favourite songs and rhymes. The childminder worked closely with families to ensure individual routines and preferences were consistent with home. This informed each child's personal plan and enabled clear targets and strategies to be agreed with parents. As a result, children received the right support at the right time.

Children's milestones were well supported and celebrated. Examples included, toilet training, developing independence using physical apparatus and increasing vocabulary. These achievements were shared with families digitally using electronic platform 'WhatsApp'. This resulted in children feeling proud of their achievements and boosted their confidence.

Families provided snacks and meals from home and children enjoyed a relaxing mealtime where the childminder sat with them to ensure their safety. The childminder engaged children in verbal communication, supporting language development and social connections. To further enhance mealtimes the childminder should ensure young children are supported to consistently wash their hands before meals to support effective infection control practices through daily routines.

There were no children requiring medication on the day of our visit. The childminder spoke confidently of safe medication storage and appropriate documentation was in place should this be required. This meant children's medical needs could be met safely.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were confident and happily led their own play. They independently explored a wide variety of toys and resources including books, imaginative play items and blocks. Toys of interest to the children were easily accessible with some stored in low level baskets in the lounge and others in the playroom. Children enjoy exploring with play foods and building using blocks that were appropriate to their stage of development. As a result, children were supported to independently explore resources that captured their interest and encouraged imaginative play.

Play was spontaneous and child led with the childminder using their daily diary to record what activities children had enjoyed. This could be further strengthened to demonstrate how experiences were offered to

extend learning or introduce new concepts. We encouraged the childminder to continue with their plans outlined within their self-evaluation of introducing a planning book. This would ensure observations of children's learning are evaluated and next steps identified, to ensure children are make good progress in their development and learning.

The childminder's positive and skilful interactions encouraged children's development of early literacy skills. Singing played a key role in supporting children's communication and language. The childminder valued the importance of these interactions and children enjoyed traditional songs and rhymes, particularly the action song, 'little bunnies.' Children engaged well with these experiences and responded to the appropriate use of praise and encouragement with smiles, giggles and cuddles. This told us children were happy and having fun.

Children had access to a large, secure garden with wheeled toys, water play and large physical apparatus including a swing and pirate ship with slide. This supported physical and imaginative play. All Parents strongly agreed that their children had opportunities to play outdoors.

Children's outdoor learning was further enhanced through strong community connections that provided valuable experiences for the children. These included local walks, visits to parks, play group and book bug sessions. These experiences supported children to develop and extend friendships and build positive links with their community.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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

The childminder had created a warm and welcoming environment for families. Children accessed play spaces that met their needs and were clean, tidy and well ventilated. This included a designated play room, lounge and enclosed garden. There was ample space for children to play and rest. As a result, children were confident and relaxed within the childminder's home.

The playroom contained a large variety of toys to support children's creative and imaginative play. This included mark making items, a large dolls house, kitchen with cooking utensils and dressing up clothes. An Xbox and Nintendo switch supported older children to experience digital technologies. Various items of children's art work and photographs were on display and the designated space for storing personal items such as bags and coats, added to the welcoming ethos and supported children's sense of belonging.

Daily visual safety checks were carried out by the childminder prior to children arriving and throughout the course of the day to ensure areas were safe. Written risk assessments for specific areas within the home, garden and for community activities and outings were clear and identified potential hazards and actions to be taken to ensure children's safety. As a result, children were safe and enjoyed a variety of play and learning experiences within the childminder's home and the wider community.

The childminder stored families personal information appropriately, following best practice guidelines to protect their privacy. Their registration with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) demonstrated a commitment to responsible and secure data handling. We asked the childminder to develop a privacy

statement and to share this with families to ensure they were fully informed of how their personal information was maintained in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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

The childminder was passionate about the service they delivered. Prior to children's enrolment they shared with families the service aims and objectives as well as details of their own family. This supported parents in understanding the care provided, ensuring they chose a service that was right for them.

A positive approach to improvement was evident. A variety of consultation methods were used to seek the families views, including daily discussions, WhatsApp, and questionnaires. This gave parents and children opportunities to contribute their thoughts and influence service delivery to ensure it met their needs. All parents strongly agreed they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. One parent told us, "I often receive paperwork and questionnaires to keep up to date with my child's development and the care I would like them to receive." As a result of effective consultation, responsive improvements were made to provide positive experiences for children.

To support the childminder's ongoing development of their service, they had begun to explore the Care Inspectorate's 'Self-evaluation Guidance.' This had led to meaningful service improvements being identified. This included; refreshing knowledge of healthy eating guidance and improving planning by introducing a floor book. The childminder should now use their suggested improvements to inform an improvement plan outlining how they plan to make and sustain improvements. Self-reflection and improvement planning in a focused way supports meaningful change that promotes positive outcomes for children and families.

The childminder was kept informed by regular updates from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). The childminder should now use current practice guidance to inform their service policies and procedures. Updating policies will ensure information shared with parents fully reflects the service delivered and will contribute to children receiving high-quality care, informed by best practice.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very 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 benefitted from the childminder's warm and responsive approach, with positive interactions enabling children to feel respected. Parents were welcomed into the childminder's home which supported positive relationships to be formed. As a result, all children and families felt welcomed and included within the service.

Methods used by the childminder to stay informed about changes in the sector were accessing Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) updates and linking with other local childminders. This helped promote

professional discussion of new guidance, challenges and sharing achievements. This encouraged the childminder to reflect on their service and identify learning opportunities to support their development.

The childminder drew on their personal experience and professional learning to provide a high-quality service. They were committed to their ongoing professional development and had participated in a range of training. Professional learning undertaken included; SVQ Social services (children and young people), first aid, supporting children's behaviours and various safeguarding courses. The childminder would benefit from maintaining a log of training or self-directed study and by completing post learning reflection to identify how new knowledge could improve outcomes for children and their families.

The childminder understood their role in keeping children safe and protected. They completed online child protection training, and were confident in taking appropriate action should concerns arise regarding a child's welfare or wellbeing. This contributed to an environment where children were safe and nurtured.

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?	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

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