

Bell, Sharon Child Minding

Kilmarnock

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 May 2025

Service provided by:
Sharon Bell

Service provider number:
SP2014985809

Service no:
CS2014324948

About the service

Sharon Bell provides a childminding service from her family home in the village of Hurlford, Kilmarnock in East Ayrshire. She is registered to care for a maximum of six children under the age of 16 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 are inclusive of children of the childminders family.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 1 May 2025 between 12:00 and 14:15. One inspector carried out the inspection from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Observed one minded child
- Spoke with the childminder
- Received feedback from three families
- Observed practice and children's experiences; 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:

- 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 their setting.

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

Key messages

- The childminder was caring and nurturing and had developed positive relationships with children and their families.
- Personal plan records were in place which supported the childminder deliver tailored care that met children's individual needs.
- The childminder provided a home from home setting that was well maintained and safe.
- Children and families benefitted from a childminder who was knowledgeable and demonstrated a desire to continually improve.
- Parents told us how important the childminder is to their 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

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.

Children experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches, supporting them to feel safe, valued and appreciated. The minded child was happy, busy and settled during our visit. We saw lots of positive interactions, such as praise and encouragement by the childminder. This helped the child to feel secure and confident. The childminder had developed trusting positive relationships with children and their families. Information sharing took place through message functions, online learning platforms and at drop off and pick up. As a result, families were included in the delivery of care and children's needs and choices were met. One parent told us, "Sharon has such a friendly and kind personality. It's clear she genuinely loves what she does. Her connection with my children has been amazing - she really seems to understand them, which I really appreciate."

Personal planning information reflected children's health, welfare, and safety needs. Families had been included across a range of documents such as 'My Baby's Day.' Information had been reviewed and plans were used as working documents. This supported continuity and consistency of care. Parents told us, "Sharon keeps me informed by updating the logs with pictures and details of what they've been doing." And, "Sharon has shown me my son's plan, it includes details of all personal development across his learning."

The childminder told us that snack time was an unhurried and relaxed experience for children, it supported opportunities for social interactions between children and the childminder. Children were supervised, ensuring they were safe whilst eating. Parents provided snack and lunches for the children in her care.

Whilst children did not need medication in the setting, the childminder had medication forms and systems in place. We were confident that this would be appropriately managed to ensure the wellbeing of children when needed.

The childminder was very aware of her responsibility to safeguard children. She had completed relevant training and had a good understanding of child protection. Nappy changing was carried out respectfully and took account age and stage of child. For example, kind, respectful interactions and singing took place which provided reassurance. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was used and hand washing took place. This helped minimise the possible spread of infection.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children could choose toys that were age and stage appropriate. Resources and toys were well organised and accessible for children to access. As a result, the minded child was happy, had fun and were engaged throughout our visit.

Children enjoyed outings within the local and wider community. For example, regular attendance at toddlers, parks, soft play and farm visits provided children with a range of fun activities, which promoted children's interests, development and connections with their community. Parents told us, "Sharon always takes my child out to parks, outdoor walks, and other adventures such as farm parks, museums and bus trips." "They go to the country parks, woodlands and walks to the park which I am all for."

We observed the childminder down at children's level and responding to the child's requests to play with particular resources. The use of open-ended questions were part of the childminder practice and supported children's thinking and learning. The childminder effectively supported and extended children's interests. For example, observations, linked to the child's interests. We seen that she was meeting the minded child's interests in lorries and cars. There was a wide range of toys for the child to access indoors and out to support and extend his current interest. The childminder's garden was very well maintained and resourced. The minded child showed us where his favourite toys were stored and brought them out for us, to see him making lorry noises.

Families were very happy with the progress their children were making and appreciated the variety of learning opportunities offered. Comments we received included, "A fantastic thing is the daily photographs...the information tells us what children had been learning and why" and, "We talk almost weekly about my boy's learning and I can see how he thrives in her environment."

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.

Children were cared for in a welcoming environment that was friendly and comfortable. The home was in good repair, clean and a good standard of health and safety was observed throughout. The set up delivered a strong message to children that they mattered.

Spaces were created for children to explore, relax and be creative. For example, within the home children had access to a large garage filled with toys, opportunities to participate in small world play, construction, reading books, role play as well as arts and crafts activities. This promoted a range of learning, creativity and development skills. The organised toys and resources and quality of furniture enabled children to lead their play and access spaces freely.

The entrance area stored children's belongings and displayed key information. This enabled children's independence and offered them a space that promotes inclusion. Measures were in place to minimise risk and support children to be safe. The childminder was confident about her responsibilities to keep children safe and had developed robust risk assessments for her home, garden and outings which recorded all identified hazards and control measures needed to keep children safe. Parents told us, "Sharon's house is very safe, with child locks and baby gates to keep areas safe." And, "My child feels happy and safe when they are with Sharon and that means that I do not worry."

Effective arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting, equipment and vehicles were consistently implemented. We confirmed that appropriate insurance policies were in place. The childminder confidently discussed how children's personal information was kept safe. Information about children and their families was secure and in line with general data protection regulations (GDPR).

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good****Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

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

The childminder aimed to provide a happy and safe environment for children to play and learn. She was committed to ensuring children had fun at the service and within their local community. Relationships with children and families was a strength of the service and the childminder wanted to ensure families' needs were met by offering a flexible service.

Families were kept up to date about their children's day through digital methods and photographs. Some families responded to the information and enjoyed the updates. We asked the childminder to remind parents that she records children's achievements and milestones in the My Babys Day app. This will help identify learning outcomes and share children's progress with families and parents can be more involved in choosing these, for the children who are young and do not have much language yet.

The childminder demonstrated a positive commitment to improving their service and they regularly sought the views of the children and families. For example, verbal conversations with parents helped the childminder to plan for any changes to the service. Daily communication with parents helped foster positive relationships and allowed the childminder to respond to any comments or requests. This promoted working together to ensure the childminder met the needs of children and families. Parents told us that Sharon was frequently asking them, what she could do better. She had in the past used written questionnaires to ask parents what they would like changed and we discussed how reinstating this would help the childminder to write an improvement plan for the 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 service aims and objectives were shared with families when their children registered with the service. This allowed everyone to know what to expect from the service and supported children's continuity of care. The childminder's clear vision for the service positively informed her practice. We could see that children and families were meaningfully involved. For example, a range of consultation and communication methods were used to gather parents' views, included, online platforms, and informal daily chats during drop-off and pick-up times. All parents strongly agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Families comments included, "Sharon is always open to feedback or recommendations", "Sharon has always listened to anything I have had to tell her" and, "Sharon has always asked for feedback."

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and had accessed a range of resources and training. This supported the delivery of a professional childminding service. One parent told us, "Sharon is really professional in what she offers. All online forms, welcome packs, contracts, invoices are all detailed, always on time and fit for purpose." She had recently completed her Scottish Vocational Qualification level 7 in children and young people. Some of the topics that she studied as part of this qualification included:

- Children's Rights
- Transition Matters
- Bookbug
- Early Years practitioners Professional Values

This recent studying has impacted positively on the childminder service that she now offers. Parents told us, "I honestly couldn't ask for anything more from my childminder, she provides a service in a setting she's that is absolutely perfect" and "She is made for the role of childminder, I couldn't recommend her highly enough".

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

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