

Lang, Melanie Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 12 July 2018

Service provided by:
Lang, Melanie

Service provider number:
SP2003902986

Care service number:
CS2003005158

The service

Introduction

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

Mrs Lang has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 2011 to provide a childminding service.

At the time of this inspection, the service complied with the following conditions:

1. To provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.
2. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.
3. Overnight care will not be provided.

The childminder provided her service from her home a two storey house, which is situated in a residential area of Ayr in South Ayrshire. The home is within walking distance to the local school with nursery class and other amenities. Minded children mainly have access to the open plan kitchen, dining and sitting rooms. They also have direct access to the enclosed rear garden from the dining area.

At the time of this inspection, the childminder was providing a service for 11 children within the conditions of her registration.

The childminder aims to:

'Provide a positive environment
Provide appropriate activities and outings
Encourage positive relationships
Meet each child's individual needs.'

What we did during our inspection

We compiled this report after an unannounced inspection that took place on Thursday 12 July 2018 between 10:45am and 1:30pm. A Care Inspectorate Early Years Inspector carried out the inspection.

During this inspection, we spoke with the childminder and a minded child who was present. We observed the care given by the childminder and looked at a number of documents including records for the children and health and safety records. We also inspected those areas of the property used for childminding.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included.

Views of people using the service

The child who was present was happy and relaxed in the care of their childminder. The child was enjoying this, a rare day of one to one with the childminder with no other children in attendance. The child readily engaged in conversation and contributed to the inspection process. That morning she had enjoyed a shopping trip with the childminder buying a magazine and colouring in set and ingredients for baking activities. During the inspection, the day was very much child led when she chose games, no cook baking, painting and an electronic game. She also chose what she wanted for lunch and prepared this herself. She was clearly at home in her surroundings and shared a friendly relationship with her childminder. She was also comfortable in the presence of the pet dog.

At the time of this inspection 11 children from 7 families used this service.

We issued three questionnaires for parents to complete and three parents returned a completed questionnaire. These indicated a high level of satisfaction with the service. Comments included:

'She has gone over and above on occasion to support not just my child but myself and will help in any way possible to maintain routine and stability for my child.'

'The children both love the dog! The children are often asked about activities/outings and their opinions are valued by Melanie.'

'My child loves going to Melanie's especially in the school holidays as she has a full and very busy itinerary of days out to places like the Transport Museum, Culzean Park and the Cinema.'

Self assessment

We did not receive a self-assessment from the childminder. Issues relating to how parents and children are involved in decisions within the service and the quality of the service's health and safety records are considered below.

What the service did well

We found that the childminder had established very effective relationships with parents and provided a nurturing inclusive environment where children were respected and encouraged to realise their aspirations.

The childminder had made progress in meeting four recommendations made at the previous inspection:

- She had further developed children's personal plans
- She had considered potential risks and put in place precautionary measures
- She had registered with environmental health for the provision of food
- She had updated her handbook of information.

What the service could do better

The childminder readily accepted our suggestions for improvement in relation to:

- Recording weekly smoke alarm tests
- Keeping records of allergens present in meals and snacks

- Keeping a copy of medication records
- Updating risk assessments for her home and outings
- Downloading infection control and fire guidance
- Keeping an attendance register.
- Completion of paperwork for General Data Protection Regulation.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	6 - Excellent

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

We found that the quality of care was excellent in those areas we sampled under this quality theme.

The childminder understood and met the needs of the children in keeping with parental wishes and the children's care routines. She had set up Facebook pages, a general one that all families using her service had access to and, personal pages, private to individual children. We saw that parents and children responded to posts made by the childminder and these pages had facilitated very effective two way communication for the benefit of the children. The personal pages included the completion of mandatory records and additional information to support the care provided by the childminder. She had also compiled a personal plan for each child on their page linked to the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators. Photographs of the children participating in a variety of activities complimented and illustrated the written information. In relation to how the childminder gathered the views of parents and used this to care for their children, parents wrote:

'Regular verbal communication and electronic correspondence. Melanie uses the information to compile an individual plan for my child to encourage positive interactions and progress learning and wellbeing.'

'She involves me by message and also via the Facebook page she has set up that only I can view.'

'Melanie asks for my views via group and independent chat forums. Melanie uses this information to ensure the care she provides meets the daily needs of the children and also to plan her day and future sessions.'

As recommended at the previous inspection, the childminder had included details of potential hazards specific to individual children in their plans. This showed her level of awareness and the need for additional vigilance for these children in some instances.

We found very good evidence that the childminder promoted healthy lifestyles. For example walking to and from school was the norm. The childminder provided food and snacks for children over one year of age. We have suggested that she keeps a record of allergens present in the food she provides. Parents wrote:

'She embraces a healthy eating strategy with a fantastic balance of all food groups.'

'The children always seem to get a selection of different fruits and when they are there all day they often get homemade soups and lasagne.'

'Melanie provides food that the children enjoy and ensures they are well balanced and healthy. My son is delighted that she always remembers his favourites.'

The childminder was aware of her responsibilities in relation to the protection of children. She had also put in place precautions to protect children in day-to-day situations. For example, by promoting safe routines in relation to road safety and helping the children understand stranger danger.

The childminder advised that there were normal issues in relation to behaviour given the ages of the children. She told us that the children were aware of clear boundaries and her expectations of them. She had encouraged the children to respect each other and show good manners.

The childminder followed good practice in the administration of medication and completed written records for the parents. We advised that she should keep copies on these records.

We saw that the childminder readily engaged with the child who was present during the inspection. We saw that games and activities were age appropriate and in keeping with the child's interests. Preparing strawberry tarts was a clear favourite and the child proudly posed for a photograph with her tarts. She then enjoyed painting before preparing her sandwich lunch with fresh fruit and a yoghurt.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 - excellent

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

We found that the quality of the environment was very good in those areas we sampled under this quality theme.

We saw that those areas of the home used for childminding were clean and safe. The childminder told us she maintained her environment by day to day cleaning and visual risk assessment. The childminder had written risk assessments for general home safety and some outings where there was the potential for harm. We suggested that she update some of her written risk assessments for her home and outings with input from the children. Updates should take account of the new open plan ground floor, the pet dog and outings where there may be the presence of water.

General safety precautions to protect children were in place, for example, the childminder had tested her smoke alarms weekly to ensure working order and early warning of danger. We have asked that she keep a record of these tests. Suitable insurance was in place for childminding and the use of her car. Her gas heating system had been checked annually.

The childminder followed best practice to minimise the spread of infection. The service had registered with environmental health for the provision of food and we noted that facilities for the storage, preparation and serving of food were clean and in good repair. Her information leaflet made clear that she followed exclusion periods for infectious illness. She provided individual hand drying for the children and we noted that the child who was present was diligent in washing her hands before making her tarts and before she made her lunch. The childminder outlined best practice for changing nappies.

Overall, the children had access to the open plan ground floor areas where there was space to play and comfortable seating for rest and relaxation. Within the dining area room, there was a storage unit where the childminder kept a very good range of play and craft materials. Photos showed the children taking part in a wide variety of games and activities in the home, the garden and on outings. It was very evident in questionnaires and feedback in the Facebook pages that parents and the children had appreciated the wide variety of activities and outings the children had enjoyed.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

This quality theme was not assessed.

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

We found that the quality of management and leadership was excellent in those areas we sampled under this quality theme.

As recommended at the previous inspection the childminder had updated her handbook of information and this was available to parents electronically. This included a statement about how parents and their children could be involved in assessing the quality of the childminder's service.

We were particularly impressed with the childminder's new electronic record keeping system where we found some excellent examples of direct feedback from children and their parents. The childminder had registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in relation to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and this informed her about how childminders may collect, manage, store and share data. We have advised that the childminder now complete the required data retention statements and have parent's sign these.

The childminder told us she had used the Care Inspectorate online resource 'The Hub' and had some examples of current best practice guidance documents relevant to childminding including the 'Health and Social Care Standards' (Scottish Government 2017) and other recently published documents by the Care Inspectorate. We suggested that in addition she could download the most up to date fire and infection control guidance.

Since her previous inspection, she had updated her first aid certificate. The childminder had a nursery nursing qualification but told us that she had enrolled for a Childhood Practice course to update her knowledge and skills base.

The childminder also told us that she networked with other local childminders online and through meetings and outings with the children. She had found this to be beneficial with opportunities to share information, discuss topics relevant to childminding and by sharing information about training opportunities.

The childminder had submitted her annual return to the Care Inspectorate and this provided some insight into how the childminder used quality assurance processes to evaluate her service in consultation with children and their families. Her handbook included details of her complaints procedure. Parents who completed our questionnaire clearly had a high level of satisfaction with this service and wrote:

'I would arrange a time with no children present to discuss my concerns and gather all the facts to reach a happy conclusion.'

'By speaking to her directly. Anything that I felt needed reported or further investigation I would report directly to the Care Inspectorate. I highly doubt this would ever be necessary.'

It was apparent that the childminder used day-to-day exchanges with children and parents to discuss childcare issues, choices and preferences. We found that the childminder was very well organised and business like and her records were readily to hand and assisted the inspection process. In addition, we have asked her to keep an attendance register.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 – excellent

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The childminder should further develop written personal plans for the children ensuring that the views of families, and if appropriate those of the children, are integral to each. The childminder should link the plans to the wellbeing indicators of the national programme 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC). When particular needs are identified, the plan should include a risk assessment identifying potential hazards and suitable precautionary measures such as for children who might walk from school unescorted. Thereafter the childminder must review these with the families and if appropriate the children, at least once in each six months. The childminder with families should then measure progress at each review and use the findings to plan next steps for the children. This is in order to comply with: SSI 2011/210 Regulation 5 - to prepare a written plan within 28 days of the date on which the service user first received the service. Timescale - within 8 weeks of receipt of this report.

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Please refer to the section of this report headed Quality of Care and Support. Recommendation met.

Recommendation 2

The childminder should prepare written risk assessments for activities and outings where there is the potential for harm. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 2: A safe environment.

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Please refer to the section of this report headed Quality of Environment. Recommendation met.

Recommendation 3

The childminder should follow guidance for fire safety in childminding premises and record weekly tests of her smoke alarms. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 2: A safe environment.

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Please refer to the section of this report headed Quality of Environment.

Recommendation 4

The childminder should contact environmental health about registration with the Food Standards Agency for the provision of food. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 2: A safe environment.

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Please refer to the sections of this report headed Quality of Environment. Recommendation met.

Recommendation 5

The childminder should include a statement in her handbook telling families how they and their children can be involved in the assessment and development of her service. National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 13: Improving the service & 14: Well managed service.

This recommendation was made on 25 June 2014.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Please refer to the section of this report headed Quality of Management and Leadership. Recommendation not met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
25 Jun 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
26 Jul 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
14 Oct 2008	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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