

Curious Minds Islay Child Minding

Type of inspection: Announced (short notice)
Inspection completed on: 5 July 2021

Service provided by:
Lucy Sutherland and Martin Jones a
Partnership Lucy Sutherland and
Martin Jones a Partnership

Service provider number:
SP2018013229

Care service number:
CS2018371345

Introduction

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 11 July 2019.

Curious Minds Islay is a childminding service provided by Lucy Sutherland and Martin Jones who are registered with the Care Inspectorate; when both childminders are working together to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 6 are not yet of an age to attend primary school, and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

When one childminder is working to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 are not yet of an age to attend primary school, and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

Any other conditions unique to the service:

2. Overnight care will not be provided.
3. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The service is provided from the childminders home, which is located within a residential area in Bowmore, Isle of Islay. The service is located near to local schools, shops and parks. The area used to provide the service are a dedicated playroom, kitchen, and bathroom. Children can also access to the garden to the rear of the property.

The aims and objectives of the service are:

Curious Minds aims to provide nurturing, holistic childcare in a safe, calm and welcoming environment, inspired by nature. The children at Curious Minds will have endless opportunities to learn in their own way through play, using a rich variety of resources and spending a lot of time in the outdoors. Mindful communication with parents/carers will enable the children at Curious Minds to gain a sense of comfort in their surroundings from the start. Regular clear communication with parents/carers will also ensure that the welfare of the children is paramount. Curious Minds will have the physical and mental wellbeing of service users a priority, offering nutritious plant-based foods and plenty of opportunity for connecting with nature through freedom to explore on local beaches and in woodland, for example. Through careful observation of the service users, the flexible space at Curious Minds will be adapted in order to meet the changing needs of the developing children, facilitating their continued curiosity for the world around them.

What we did during our inspection

We wrote this report following a short announced inspection which took place between 10:30hrs and 12:30hrs on Thursday 24th June 2021. The inspection was carried out by one early learning and childcare inspector.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (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 families to work with services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

During this inspection process, we looked around the areas of the childminders' home used by the minded children, and we gathered evidence from various sources; We looked at:

- Children's information records
- Children's personal plans
- Service policy and procedures
- Risk assessments
- Parental permissions
- Registration certificate
- Insurance certificates
- Medication records
- Self evaluation Key question 5
- Training certificates

Also during the inspection, we spoke to the childminders and two children that were present as well as observing the care given.

Views of people using the service

We contacted six parents by email, and we received feedback from three parents comments made included;

- Lucy and Martin provide a very nurturing environment for our daughter to flourish and develop. She is offered a wealth of experiences of nurturing opportunities and time which I believe to be unparalleled. They are a fantastic resource and I highly recommend them to any enquiring parent.
- We are so lucky to have found Lucy and Martin to care for our son, they have welcomed him into their home and family and become good friends along the way. The care they provide for our children is second to none.
- I get verbal feedback at the end of every day about how my daughters' day has been and also some updates and pictures throughout the day which I really appreciate.
- My daughter loves being at Curious Minds, from her very first settling in day, I knew she'd love it. She loves messy play, water play and adventuring outdoors. Also snack time!
- Since my daughter started with Lucy and Martin I have seen a dramatic change in her. Not only physically but her temperament and also attitude towards food (mainly fruit and veg - she eats it all now!!)
- My daughter is at the stage where she is starting to have tantrums and Lucy and Martin are incredibly calm with her. I wouldn't want to put her with any other childminder.

- Our daughter enjoys attending Curious Minds immensely. She partakes in a myriad of activities which I believe give her a wealth of experience and opportunity. From time at the woods to the beach, sensory play, and art.
- Our daughter has gained many new skills already from her time there. For example, I have noticed our daughters speech improving and developing as well as her skills and curiosity playing in the garden.
- Our daughter has a personal plan folder of which we contribute to. Lucy and Martin are also very good at observing and relaying the skills that our daughter is developing, many of which I believe are helped by her attending Curious minds.
- My own mum was a childminder for most of my childhood and I am forever grateful I have found a loving, home from home environment like the one I grew up in. If you ask me, they couldn't do a better job at loving and caring for our children on a daily basis.

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a completed self evaluation key question 5 document from the provider. We were satisfied with the way the provider completed this and with the relevant information included for each heading. The provider identified what it thought the service did well, some areas for development and any changes it had planned.

What the service did well

Throughout our inspection, we observed the care provided to the minded children present. The childminders provided a welcoming, warm, nurturing environment for children. We found the childminders had a caring, friendly approach to the minded children in their care and had developed positive relationships, helping to build the children's self-esteem and confidence. The children present were seen to be relaxed and comfortable in their care throughout our inspection demonstrating positive secure bonds between the children and childminders.

We found the childminders had developed positive relationship with parents which helped to ensure children experienced a continuity of care between home and in the care of the childminders. The childminders made good use of the local community with a range of both varied and interesting experiences for children.

The childminders demonstrated a very good knowledge of the children they cared for. We sampled personal plans for children which reflected children's interests and needs and identified next steps in learning and development.

What the service could do better

The childminders should continue to engage in training and best practice guidance to ensure they continue to provide positive experiences for children. We sign posted the childminders to the SSSC open badges and Care Inspectorate Hub to support learning further. This will benefit them both when training is difficult to access.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children presented as happy, confident, and relaxed in the care of the childminders who offered a warm caring approach in making the children feel nurtured and secure. The children played well together supported by the childminders who encouraged them to have respect and empathy for each other during their play.

We found the service had an inclusive approach to ensure all children, wherever possible, had the best possible experience whilst in their care. Using their knowledge of children and their developmental stages, the childminders had planned a range of activities that was influenced by the children's interests and what the children would like to focus on next. We found that the childminders supported children to reach their potential through fun, stimulating, creative play, by listening to their wishes and choices, they were able to create a service that respected children and valued their interests.

Children were respected by the flexible approach the childminder had adopted to the settling in policy process. Information was gathered prior to the children starting and the childminders were responsive in meeting individual needs allowing them time to build a bond and feel secure. The childminders made sure that families knew what to expect from the service. This provided a link with home, helping to provide continuity of care.

During the inspection we sampled the personal plans and found information recorded for each child showed how their health, welfare and safety needs were being met. The childminders along with parents had set targets and next steps linking to GIRFEC and the wellbeing indicators. This supported the childminders to meet individual needs which provided positive outcomes for the children in their care.

Healthy lifestyles were promoted with children being offered a variety of home cooked meals and snacks. During the inspection we observed one of the childminders preparing lunch which was healthy and well-balanced. Meals supplied by the service consisted of a well planned menu taking into consideration children's likes, dislikes and allergy information. Menus were reviewed and shared with parents regularly.

Examples of meals and snack provided consisted of; carrot and apple muffins, tomato, red pepper and lentil soup with homemade cheesy flat bread, children also had regular access to water. The childminders told us they regularly consult with a qualified nutritionist and refer to documents such as 'Setting the Table' and 'Food matters' when planning meals. Through feedback from parents, we found children attending the service were receiving high quality, well-balanced, nutritious and appetising meals and were being supported to eat well and have positive relationships with food.

Children benefitted from daily exercise which incorporated exciting, creative, and interesting outdoor activities. Children participated daily in walks and physical play within their local community and had access to a well-resourced secure garden area. The childminders told us they used outdoor play to encourage children to be active, develop their physical co-ordination, creativity and experience the world around them. We found this promoted children's general health, well-being, confidence, and risk taking. Children who were unwell did not attend the service.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children, for example we observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene, most of the children attending the service were young but they were supported to understand the importance of handwashing and keeping things clean. Children were supported and encouraged to wash their hands frequently before eating and when returning in from outdoor play this supported good infection prevention and control practice and helped reduce the risk of cross infection. We saw that the bathroom was clean with children having designated hand towels to dry their hands. The childminder advised towels were washed daily.

The childminders had implemented new arrangements for cleaning within the service and risk assessments have been undertaken that address the areas within the national Covid-19 guidance. There are clear policies and procedures implemented to ensure consistent approaches across the setting.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

On the day of inspection, the childminder's home was inviting, homely and a comfortable environment for children. The environment was safe and stimulating and set up to meet the needs of the children. The childminders used a designated room on the ground floor which had a very good range of resources appropriate for the children attending. The childminders provided a sofa where children could rest or relax, read stories, or listen to music.

During the inspection, the children spent time in the playroom where we saw an extensive range of toys, games, books, natural resources and craft activities available. We found these to be stimulating, clean, in good condition, accessible and appropriate for children's individual age and stage of development. On the day of inspection, we saw the minded children selecting toys they wanted to play with from low-level storage units. This allowed them to make choices and promoted their independence.

We also observed the children accessing and playing outdoors in the secure garden area. We found this to be well organised, well maintained and children had access to a variety of engaging, creative resources for example, a mud kitchen, digging area, loose parts resources, and a small planting patch where the children had been growing vegetables. The garden had been designed to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to stimulate their imagination, encourage children to take turns, share and problem solve promoting social and communication skills. The childminders told us the children have daily access to outdoors as playing outdoors is good for children's health and wellbeing, it develops their social skills, and it helps with their development. Children attending the service are provided with outdoor waterproof suits and wellington boots.

To ensure the safety of the children within the service, the childminders told us how they used daily visual checks to make sure the environment was hazard free, safe and child-friendly. We sampled risk assessments in place this told us that the childminders were vigilant in their care of the minded children. A procedure for recording accidents and incidents was in place and shared with parents.

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 particular strengths in the childminder's professionalism and drive to deliver a high standard of care. The childminders were organised and had good systems in place that enabled them to manage paperwork. We found the childminders to be innovative and proactive in the development of the service, with children at the forefront of their decisions.

The childminders had established very good relationships with parents and carers. This enabled them to have open conversations about children's care and the service as a whole.

As well as regular contact through texts messages, private Instagram account, daily discussions at drop off and collection, the childminders would invite parents and carers to complete regular questionnaires to provide them with the opportunity to express their views and opinions. This enabled an inclusive ethos within the service and encouraged everyone to work in the spirit of genuine partnership for the best outcomes for children. The childminders had a number of policies and procedures in place to promote children's wellbeing and to support the effective delivery of the service.

We asked the childminders to tell us how they ensured that they were aware of and up to date with best practice and legislation. The childminders told us they keep up to date with best practice through a variety of ways, including their membership of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). The childminders also kept in touch with other local childminders. This allowed them to access relevant training and keep in touch with childminding initiatives. They told us they used the internet and the Care Inspectorate knowledge 'Hub' to keep abreast of recent childcare developments and used the knowledge and skills gained to update and improve their practice. The childminders had also developed an effective way of monitoring and reflecting on their Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as well as areas of improvement and development within the service. We found this document to be reflective highlighting ideas for improvement and actions required and in turn supporting better outcomes for children.

The childminders were confident in their roles and responsibilities for protecting children and keeping them safe and healthy and had a child protection policy in place. We saw from the childminder's training records that they had not accessed a range of training over the past year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that first aid and child protection training was due for renewal. We have discussed with both childminders refreshing their knowledge through accessing further information online and renew child protection and first aid training as soon as its available.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

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

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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