

Mary's Little Lambs Childcare Child Minding

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 30 July 2021

Service provided by:
Mary Newlands

Service provider number:
SP2019990510

Care service number:
CS2019374736

Introduction

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 21 August 2019.

Mary's little Lambs Childcare is operated by Mary Newlands who is referred to as 'the childminder' in this report. She is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Of these 6 no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school. Of these 3 no more than 1 is under 12 months. These numbers include children of the childminder's and her husband's family. No overnight care will be provided. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The childminding service is provided from a terraced house within Kirkcaldy. The premises were clean, tidy, warm, spacious and suitable for childminding. The designated area used for childminding included the kitchen/diner, living room, separate playroom, bathroom and large enclosed rear garden. The service is close to local amenities including the school, shops and parks.

At the time of the inspection there were four minded children in attendance aged between nine and 11 years old.

The childminder's aims are:

"To provide the highest possible level of care for all the children in my setting.

To ensure the children in my care are happy, content and secure.

To ensure the parent/guardian feels happy and reassured about leaving their child in my care.

To keep on top of current guidance and make more use of the Care Inspectorate website

To start linking the children's wellbeing up to Shanarri

To start getting back onto more regular learning."

What we did during our inspection

We compiled this report following an unannounced inspection, which took place on 23 July 2021. The inspection was continued virtually with documentation requested and communication with the childminder using digital technology. Feedback was given and evaluations confirmed on 30 July 2021. The inspection was carried out by an early years inspector.

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

We sent an email to families using the service, via the childminder, asking them to provide us with feedback about their experience of using the service. Three families submitted a response.

During this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources:

We spoke to:

- the childminder
- the minded children present
- parents.

We looked at:

- observations of the childminder and her interaction with the children
- observations of the children at play
- discussions with the children
- a sample of children's records of learning
- a sample of other documentation relevant to this inspection
- Certificate of Registration
- examination of equipment, resources and the environment.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). This is 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 GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

Views of people using the service

The minded children were settled and secure and had formed a positive relationship with the childminder and each other. They were confident in the service and very busy in their play. They enjoyed a board game together during the inspection and then chose to play outdoors and demonstrate their physical skills on the trampoline and with the pogo stick. Children shared their view of the service with us and measures they take in regard to Covid-19, a sample of which is shown below;

"The rules are we are not to fight, not to blame each other, not to watch bad stuff and not watch scary films."

"We have to wash our hands before we come in, before we eat and when we leave. You're not to go near people's breath, walk past others in single file and give space for people so you don't get corona."

"If we sneeze we do it into the side of elbow and use a paper towel and put it in the bin and then wash our hands."

"Mary taught us not to put our hands on anything outside."

"Yes we like it here because sometimes we watch good movies and get popcorn, chocolate and candy."

"My favourite food is pizza but sometimes I like salad cos I'm trying to be healthy."

"I like it because I get to play games and there's lots of board games."

No parents were present during the inspection, therefore we sent an email to request feedback in any format they prefer. Three parents responded to this which demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the service. A sample of comments received is shown below:

"Communication is one of Mary's strong points. Every day I have vocal feedback or messages with pictures sent through Messenger. During the pandemic when closed for a few months, she still kept in contact and asked how the kids were and upon opening again she asked for updated information on the kids, as she knew they would have changed slightly. Since the pandemic Mary doesn't allow adults into the house at drop off or pick up. There is a sanitiser station at her front door and she has the kids consistently washing hands. She allocated them their own colouring in pencils and minimised the toys out in the setting. Mary has her Covid policy and risk assessment on her private business page on Facebook and I am confident Mary is doing all she can to keep my kids safe when they are in her setting. I feel Mary knows my children very well. They class Mary as an unofficial aunt and are confident enough to discuss things with Mary. Mary has been supportive.

Mary shares when she has been doing online training in her private business group. Mary adapted her house with minimum impact on the children to accommodate the rules for the pandemic."

"I have opportunity to discuss my children's individual needs and development during pandemic. Changes noticed included redecorating home and updating garden (adding a tent, climbing, trampoline). I have seen the Covid specific risk assessment and policy and it provided me with it. I have updated information about my children before summer. I am providing lunch for my children and Mary gives them snacks and some drinks. I always update Mary each day with anything regarding my kids (meals, moods, activities, playing). I am aware of Mary's training developments. Mary's service it's absolutely fantastic. I am more than lucky to have her watch after my children during this pandemic. She's been amazing all the way, no problems whatsoever.

Mary helped my child spend time during lockdown doing the school work required. My child enjoys going to Mary's. Mary always reports back what kind of day my child has had which is great."

Self assessment

We did not request a self assessment prior to this inspection. We instead discussed how the childminder could develop a system of quality assurance to support continuous improvement of her service.

What the service did well

This was the first inspection of this service and the childminder has made a strong start. Outdoor play opportunities were enhanced by additions to the garden which children thoroughly enjoyed and they were achieving due to the level of challenge and support provided by the childminder. Children were happy and content and enjoyed strong and nurturing connections with the childminder.

We found that practice was in line with current Covid-19 guidance as the childminder was aware of the current guidance and had implemented this fully. This contributed to children's continued wellbeing and safety. This is reported on further within the body of the report under Quality of Care and Support.

What the service could do better

We made two recommendation during this inspection. These focused on the following areas;

- holding of complete care plan information for all children
- developing a record of children's achievements and next steps within the service.

We also made suggestions to support the childminder in moving forward which can be found within the body of the report.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were happy, relaxed and confident in the setting as they experienced warm, nurturing and supportive care. They had developed positive relationships with the childminder and were benefitting from her skilled interactions which provided them with challenge during their play and fostered their learning.

Children were regularly consulted, which built their sense of empowerment. We discussed involving children in a review of the generic house rules displayed. This would allow them to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

The childminder did not provide food at this time, however, children were encouraged to eat together to promote the social experience of mealtimes. This contributed to open discussions and supported relationships.

The childminder knew each child as an individual and respected their choices and wishes. She effectively supported peers through provision of appropriate resources and sensitive discussions to support inclusion. This contributed to children feeling accepted and valued.

Children's wellbeing was protected as the childminder was knowledgeable in recognising signs of child abuse. She had completed relevant training and was confident in taking appropriate action to safeguard children. We encouraged the childminder to explore ways to help children learn how to keep themselves safe in this respect and signposted to resources available online.

Basic care plans held were kept up to date to support continuity of care. However, we reminded the childminder to ensure that these were kept within the home as there was no information held within the setting for one child during inspection due to it being updated. This was quickly rectified later that day. We also reminded the childminder to ensure that start dates were consistently recorded as some were missing. See recommendation one.

There was no additional information on children's achievements and next steps being captured except within diaries detailing daily experiences. Therefore, these should now be developed to support planning of experiences and demonstrate children's progress. See recommendation two.

The childminder had carefully considered the national guidance in relation to Covid-19 and used this to support her to reflect on and review her service. Measures in place to ensure appropriate infection prevention and control were detailed within a specific risk assessment and observed during inspection. This included increased hand washing, cleaning of high touch points and supporting children effectively with cough and respiratory hygiene. Children were able to confidently discuss the measures in place. Parents also confirmed they were made fully aware of changes in place. We were satisfied with the measures in place which contributed to the positive health and wellbeing of children and families.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The childminder should ensure that care plans are held for all minded children during their time in the service. These should be completed in full including start dates. This would support continuity of care especially in the event of an emergency.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices." (HSCS 1.15).

2. The childminder should now develop information held within children's personal care plans to capture their achievements within the setting along with identified next steps. These can be linked to the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and would support planned experiences and children's continued success.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices." (HSCS 1.15).

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The home was clean, tidy and safe for children, contributing to their continued comfort. The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding and commitment to the continued safety of children in her care. As a result, measures were in place to reduce risk of harm, including detailed risk assessments, relevant policies and safety equipment, contributing to children remaining safe.

Children were able to use space in the house flexibly, contributing into a home from home feeling. They chose games from the playroom and played in the living room and then moved outside when they wished. This enabled children's independence and choice, increasing their level of enjoyment.

Frequent use of the local and wider community increased children's access to fresh air and exercise. Children experienced increased outdoor play in the garden supported by investment in additional outdoor resources. These provided challenge and risky play opportunities as children demonstrated their physical skills during inspection. The childminder could now further explore risky play opportunities through a risk/benefit assessment approach to build confidence in this area and increase children's opportunities to understand and learn how to manage risk.

A very good range of toys and games were available for children, contributing to their enjoyment and providing appropriate levels of challenge. Although reduced due to the current pandemic, they were easily accessed and in good condition, promoting independence. We discussed involving children more in rotating and choosing new resources through verbal consultation. This would allow children more say on matters that affect them. We also advised the childminder to develop loose parts play opportunities inside and outside to increase children's creative play opportunities.

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

Children's personal information was managed securely as the childminder took appropriate steps. These included development of a confidentiality policy and registration with the Information Commissioner's Office regarding data protection.

Appropriate systems were in place for the recording of accidents and medication. This contributed to effective sharing of information to maintain children's health and wellbeing.

An attendance register ensured that the childminder was operating appropriately concerning the number of children cared for. This meant that all children would be accounted for in the event of an emergency.

The childminder was remaining abreast of developments in childcare through links with other childminders and reading information published by SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association) and ourselves. She was able to describe some changes made as result of this in regard to Covid-19 specific practices.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to personal development and training which promoted positive outcomes for children. She had completed core training in first aid and child protection along with other modules. These were identified to support her in meeting the needs of the children in her care. Training accessed to register as a food business and provide meals further improved the service delivered. We asked the childminder to keep a record of her training and development and the impact on the service to support quality assurance of provision.

Relationships with parents were well established, which strengthened sharing of information to help meet children's individual needs. Feedback from parents was gathered through use of a settling in questionnaire and discussions on the closed Facebook page along with verbal chats. We advised the childminder about asking specific and targeted questions which would support her in her ongoing assessment of her service. The responses should be used to support continuous improvement and fed back to parents.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - 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 registration.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since registration.

Inspection and grading history

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

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