

McArthur, Lorna Child Minding

22 Matheson Road
Stornoway
HS1 2LA

Telephone: 01851 700 157

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 June 2022

Service provided by:
Lorna McArthur

Service provider number:
SP2003910152

Service no:
CS2003015660

About the service

Lorna McArthur provides a childminding service from their home, which is a semi detached house in the town of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than six are under 12 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 childminder's family.

The service is close to local nurseries, schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the dedicated playroom, spacious hall, kitchen and downstairs toilet. Children also have access to the fully enclosed garden at the rear of the house.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 June 2022 between 14:45 and 16:15. 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:

- Observed the minded child in their play and reviewed feedback from parents of two minded children.
- Spoke with the childminder about the service they provided.
- Observed practice including the interactions between the childminder and minded child.
- Reviewed documents related to the service.

Key messages

- Meaningful communication with families supports children's individual needs.
- The childminder has built nurturing relationships with children, which helps them feel safe and secure.
- Children play outdoors every day, promoting their health and wellbeing.
- The childminder should regularly update children's personal plans, ensuring children enjoy appropriate support for their development and progress.
- The childminder reflects on their learning, which ensures children receive high quality interactions and experiences.
- The childminder is highly knowledgeable about aspects of the service that require improvement.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

We made an evaluation of very good for this theme, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on the children's experiences.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder had developed strong relationships with minded children and their families, which contributed to children feeling safe and secure within the setting. Meaningful communication was ensured through conversations between the childminder and parents when handing over children, sharing texts and photographs. This ensured parents were informed about their children's routines and experiences throughout the day and that their own views were valued and respected. One parent commented "Lorna is very caring, trustworthy and approachable. I feel as though she's a close family friend with the care she gives (my children)".

The childminder was nurturing and playful in their interactions with the minded child present and knew their care and support needs very well. The childminder explained how they provided continuity in children's homely routines such as changes to nap times, in keeping with parents' wishes. Parents provided all food for their children; mealtimes took place in the playroom to support an unhurried and sociable experience for children.

The childminder recorded 'all about me' information about children when they first registered with the service but agreed this should be updated every six months when other changes were made being made to children's personal plans. This would help ensure a more holistic approach to supporting children's care, learning and development. The childminder should refer to Care Inspectorate 'Guide for providers on personal planning: early learning and childcare' to help with this task. The document can be found within the HUB area of our website.

The childminder had participated in child protection training. This had improved their knowledge and given them confidence in their role and responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

1.3 Play and learning

The childminder understood the importance and benefits of providing play experiences that took account of children's interests and stage of development. Since the last inspection, the childminder had further developed the garden to include more planting and growing opportunities and added resources that would engage children's imagination. As a result play experiences were helping to develop children's skills in language, health and wellbeing.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to their wider community. The childminder regularly met other childminders and groups of children for shared activities. For example, the childminders recognised the value of inter generational friendships and had organised visits to a local care home where children enjoyed chatting with the residents. Meeting new people builds confidence, promotes children's empathy for others as well as building their own self-esteem.

Earlier on the day of our inspection, the childminder group had met for a picnic and played with bubbles in the castle grounds. This enabled children to socialise, develop relationships with their peers and learn about respecting each other's boundaries as they played energetically outdoors. There were photographs of similar activities displayed on the playroom walls, which stimulated children's memories and could act as a trigger for talking to the childminder about what they would like to learn about next. The practice contributed positively to children's higher order thinking and communication skills.

How good is our setting?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was innovative and sector leading.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Outdoor play and learning was a priority for the service and exceptional use was made of the garden and local facilities, including the castle grounds and beach. This enabled children to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational and physical activities. The childminder told us that children enjoyed being outdoors in all weathers, thus supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The childminder supported and encouraged children to be independent in their play environment. High quality physical equipment meant children could develop balancing and large motor skills, building strength and confidence. The vast garden provided a natural environment where children could energetically run around and experiment with the loose parts the childminder had added to offer challenge. We observed one minded child independently making choices in the garden with the childminder mainly intervening to explain when some activities might pose a risk to their safety, such as pushing a large branch through the window of the play house. Enabling quality outdoor experiences promoted children's natural curiosity and creativity as well as helping them develop analytical skills in measuring risks against benefits during their play.

The childminder had a dedicated playroom in their home and had given careful consideration to the layout including storage. As a result, children knew what toys, games, books and craft materials were available and where they could independently find them. Open ended resources engaged children's curiosity and challenged their thinking however we encouraged the childminder to make these more accessible to the youngest children in their care. This is because, providing they have been risk assessed, babies and toddlers can use loose parts according to their ability and interest. Soft furnishings and cosy spaces meant children could relax and feel secure, supporting their emotional wellbeing.

Photos and other child centred displays provided prompts for children of what they might like to play with next. The childminder knew each child's individual interests and made sure resources and activities matched these. For example we observed a minded child reacting enthusiastically to a book about vehicles. This helped children feel they had ownership of the space, giving a sense of belonging and inclusion.

The childminder made use of the hallway when changing children to ensure their privacy and dignity were respected. The downstairs toilet mainly for the use of minded children, was freely accessible from the playroom and we could see that the design promoted children's life skills. For example there was a step to help younger children to independently reach the toilet and sink.

Risk assessments for the home and outdoor area had been carried out, reviewed and updated as changes occurred to the environment. This contributed to keep children safe. All areas were visibly clean and tidy. The childminder was vigilant about their own and children's handwashing at appropriate times. Overall, we were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this theme, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on the children's experiences.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

During our inspection visit the childminder was open to ideas for how they could develop their practice thus ensuring that they contributed to good outcomes for children. The childminder regularly engaged in professional discussions with other childminders in the area who they met at least weekly for shared activities with children. They also continued to be a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and made good use of their materials to assist with record keeping and monitoring their service. SCMA is a national umbrella organisation whose main aim is to promote childminding as a quality childcare service. The childminder participated in monthly meetings with the local authority so that they could keep up to date with local and national developments on supporting children and families, including accessing training.

The childminder was extremely well organised. There was plenty of space in the playroom where they could securely store information about the operation of their service, including best practice guidance and evidence of their own learning. Registration certificate and training certificates were displayed so that everyone could understand how the service was regulated and the childminder's commitment to quality through their own professional development. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which demonstrated they followed ICO guidelines on data protection when considering how they stored children's personal information confidentially and lawfully.

Parents confirmed that the childminder regularly shared information with them and respected their opinions. This made it more likely that parents would be confident to raise any concerns about the service or their children's care with the childminder. Most communications were informal however the childminder was also proactive about seeking parents views through the use of questionnaires. For example, the use of settling in questionnaires helped the childminder to assess and adapt the level of care needed by each child as well as ascertaining how parents viewed the quality of care provided. Communication with families strengthened meeting children's needs and ensured everyone felt valued and included.

Self-evaluation enables the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices. The childminder was aware of our new 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' therefore we discussed how they could use this as a self-evaluation tool to develop how they evaluated their performance in delivering high quality care and learning for children.

How good is our staff team?**6 - Excellent**

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question, as we found the childminder's performance to be sector leading and innovative. The childminder reflected on their learning to improve practice and as a result children received high quality interactions and experiences.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder displayed a friendly and welcoming demeanour, which created a happy environment for children where they were more likely to feel safe, nurtured and loved. This was confirmed by parent comments, such as "Lorna really cares for the children, (child) is my second child to attend Lorna's and I am at ease leaving him there knowing he is being well looked after". The childminder had a clear understanding of how children develop and learn. They were aspirational and had an enabling attitude which supported children to achieve their potential. The childminder knew the minded children well and was intuitive to their individual needs. We observed that they skilfully interacted with children during play, understanding when to stand back or offer more challenge. This helped children to explore confidently, develop new skills and build their resilience. Recognising the importance of fun in children's play enables their learning to be taken forward in a way that is meaningful to them.

The childminder was committed to their professional development. In our conversations they presented as experienced, skilled and knowledgeable about best practice. The childminder had participated in training and professional reading, using what they learned to inform their practice and enhance outcomes for children. They had sustained their learning throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that practice continued to be innovative and relevant to current societal context. This helped make sure the childminder was confident to safely reopen their service after periods of closure and to support children's safety and wellbeing.

The childminder regularly participated in professional discussions with other childminders where they shared practice ideas but also acted as a role model for less experienced childminders. The childminder was part of a group that forged links with the local authority and with the Scottish Childminding Association. For example participating in online workshops within SCMA's national conference. This helped them identify potential gaps in practice and meant that children were benefiting from high quality care and support. In their feedback, parents strongly agreed that the childminder had the appropriate skills and experience to care for their children and support their learning.

The childminder let parents know about the professional development activities they had participated in. They maintained effective records of the impact of their learning and development and had clear ideas on what they wanted to learn about next.

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?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent

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?	6 - Excellent
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	6 - Excellent

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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