

McNamara, Elizabeth

Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 October 2022

Service provided by:

Service provider number:
SP2006962095

Service no:
CS2006138242

About the service

Childminder Elizabeth McNamara provides childminding from her home in the residential area of East Kilbride, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age.

Children are cared for in the downstairs of the property which includes a living room, kitchen, rear garden and bathroom. The service is located close to local parks, amenities and primary schools.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 24 October 2022 between 10:00 and 12:00. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three people using the service and five of their family
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Personal plans were detailed, relevant to children's needs and interests and focused on supporting positive outcomes.
- Community links supported wider learning for children of all ages.
- Care and support was delivered in a meaningful way and met the individual needs of children.
- There was a commitment to continuous improvement of the service.
- The childminder's knowledge and engagement with training opportunities supported a well-led and well managed service.

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?	5 - Very 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

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and Support

A parent told us "The childminder acknowledges my child's achievements in and out of childcare and I really feel that we have formed a great relationship". This was consistent with our findings. The childminder had created a homely, inviting and nurturing environment for children to play and learn.

Children's interests were noted in all about me books. Valued by the childminder these interests were at the heart of planning approaches. For example, a current interest in science experiments led to an ongoing area of learning. A floor book contained examples of children engaging in those experiences and a parent told us "The childminder will try to organise activities that interest the children and takes their likes into consideration". This ensured the childminder was responsive to children's interests and their life experiences.

The childminder knew children well and needs were met in a sensitive way. Children were actively and meaningfully and involved in leading their play and learning through spontaneous and planned high quality experiences such as the opportunity to explore a variety of role play, construction and sensory activities. Further to this the childminder knew which books and songs children enjoyed and adapted the pace of day to include this when requested.

The childminder provided a responsive and unhurried mealtime experience for children with lots of interaction and chatting. They used this as a rich opportunity to support young children to build skills for life such as finger feeding themselves and to develop social bonds. Children had access to fresh water and were encouraged to remain hydrated. This helped to support children's personal care needs.

A parent told us "The childminder keeps me updated with messages, pictures, videos, and a report of what my child has been doing and the progress that they are making as well as daily updates on collection." This was consistent with our findings. Personal plans were in place for all children and contained detailed information about needs, interests and progress. These plans were discussed with families on a very regular basis. This approach ensured the childminder was supporting positive outcomes for children using good practice guidance documents.

Appropriate arrangements were in place for children's rest and sleep. The childminder knew children's individual cues for sleeps and rest and had established good habits and routines to support this.

Children were protected from harm by the childminder who had a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities. The childminder had recently completed child protection training which was reflected in policies and was confident in recognising and responding appropriately to any concerns.

1.3 Play and Learning

Trips to a toddler group, soft play, local parks for nature walks and rhyme time sessions at the local library were on offer for children. This provided children with a regular opportunity to socialise with other children in the local community. A parent told us "The childminder is always taking our child to different things like toddler groups, the rural museum and pumpkin picking. Our child always has a great time and is excited to tell me what they have done and learned". These play experiences helped develop children's skills across curricular areas.

Children were happy, engaged and having fun. The childminder offered provocations for learning and play using library books to extend learning, create models of the characters, discuss emotions and create a connection for children to take this experience home. These types of interactions and activities promoted children curiosity and consolidated learning through fun experiences.

The childminder described support provided for a child who had an additional need. Working with the family and implementing specialist guidance the childminder was able to support the child as an individual. A parent agreed and told us "Our child currently has an additional support in place which the childminder has supported us with through activities and games to learn and practice each week". This responsive approach ensured children got the right support at the right time in the right way.

Sensitive questions to support care and learning for children was used by the childminder as they chatted to children during play. Reading children's cues, the childminder knew a child needed some comfort and reassurance. These cues were acted on quickly and the childminder engaged the child in interactive storytelling and songs which the child responded to in a positive and engaged way. Parents were grateful for this responsive approach telling us "The childminder continually provides experiences that are stage appropriate while challenging my child and furthering their interests."

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

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 environment was clean, tidy and welcoming. Children had access to a downstairs bathroom, kitchen and a living room with patio doors leading to a large garden area. The room was well ventilated. The service provided a homely, pleasant environment for children to play and learn.

Suitable infection control procedures were in place such as the use of gloves and aprons for nappy changing and embedded handwashing before mealtimes. Posters displayed supported children to develop their understanding of this.

A range of resources and experiences that stimulated natural curiosity, creativity and learning and creativity were provided. For example, children enjoyed following their interests and experienced the process of joining the local library to get their own library card and visited weekly with the childminder to borrow books. This sparked ongoing support for learning through play using books as starting point.

The environment and variety of learning was welcomed by parents. Parents told us "We are really happy with the environment that is provided, and the variety of experiences offered" and "The house is always clean, very well maintained and it is a safe environment never had any cause for concern".

Children were protected from harm through a variety of safety measures. For example, a secure entry system, first aid training and a variety of risk assessments. We asked and the childminder agreed to ensure safety checks of areas such as the kitchen and rear garden were regular. Continuing to review risk in this way would contribute to keeping children safe.

A variety of policies were in place that supported a well-managed service such as child protection and settling in. Policies, practice and the service aims and objectives were aligned and reflected the aspirations of children and families.

Appropriate systems were in place to manage information in line with general data protection requirements. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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.

Positive and trusting relationships with families were established and helped to meet children's needs. Parents valued this and told us "The childminder is great at giving advice and suggestions when asked for any and has always taken on board what we have said as well" and that the childminder "Works well with me and keeps me up to date with every aspect of my child's care".

The service had an established system of two-way communication in place to support parent participation such as daily communication books, questionnaires, phone calls, text messages, photos, emails and face to face discussions. This helped the childminder to establish clear and effective communication as an important part of delivering a high-quality service.

Clearly committed to a culture of improvement the childminder respected the voice of both families and children in a meaningful way. Their thoughts and suggestions on areas such activities and support for individual children were all considered. Parents appreciated this approach and told us that the childminder "Is very accommodating to us and always goes above and beyond with the care given not only to our child but to us as a family". As a result of this approach children and families were receiving support that was right for them and their needs were being met.

High-quality learning through fun and engaging play was at the heart of all service planning. Good practice guidance was used to plan, reflect and review all aspects of the service and parents were fully involved in this. For example, children were involved in choosing resources for the service and parent's contributions to extend learning were welcomed.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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.

Interactions with children were natural, attentive and nurturing. For example, when a child was upset comfort and cuddles were provided and the child settled quickly. To support the child further the childminder read an interactive book and sung songs which the child enjoyed. This sensitive approach ensured quality engagement with the children across the day.

The childminder understood how children develop and took part in regular training opportunities relating to care, play and learning. New learning was put into practice such as creating outdoor nature play resources which were used during nature walks in local parks. This practice ensured positive outcomes for children and a high quality of early learning and childcare. Parents agreed and told us the childminder was "Friendly, personable but still highly professional. Great at keeping us updated and genuinely seems to love and care for our child as much as we do" and told us that they had "A great connection with all children and was interested in everything that we do with them as well".

Good practice reflections and up-to-date knowledge was extended through membership of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and partnership with the local authority. Training related to areas of practice such as recording children's learning and play. Peer reflections and support was also gained from other childminders who attended a local toddler group. This offered opportunities to discuss practice and training.

A child told us that the childminder was "Kind and caring and takes me lots of places, I have lots of fun" and parents agreed telling us "The childminder continually provides experiences that are stage appropriate while challenging our child and furthering their interests". There was lots of laughter, smiles and fun shared between children and the childminder throughout the day. This supported children to have fun and access high quality learning through play.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

We recommended that the childminder should access a refresher course on child protection as it had been a number of years since her last training course in this area.

This would assist with children's health and safety and the childminder's responsibility in managing and improving her service. National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 4 November 2022.

Action taken since then

The childminder had undertaken two updated child protection courses with the local authority as a partnership service and as part of their membership with SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association). The child protection policy was clear and detailed. This recommendation was addressed.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

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

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