

# Thankerton Childminding Service Child Minding

BIGGAR

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 April 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Charmaine Forsyth

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000002

**Service no:**  
CS2022000005

## About the service

Thankerton Childminding Service is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than six are under 12 years, no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

The service operates from the childminder's family home in the rural area of Thankerton, Biggar, South Lanarkshire. The service is close to some local amenities.

Children have access to a dedicated playroom and lounge/kitchen/dining area. They can also access the garden at the rear of the property.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 April 2023 between 10:00 and 13:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

This was the service's first inspection.

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:

- Spent time with two young children using the service
- Spoke with the childminder
- Received feedback via email from two parents/carers
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children attending the service were settled and comfortable in the childminder's care.
- Children's wellbeing was supported through regular opportunities to play outdoors.
- Children had opportunities to socialise with wider groups of children and develop extended friendships when attending local community groups.
- The childminder must improve the childminding environment.
- The childminder should ensure pets are well managed.
- Children could be better protected from harm through more effective supervision and identification of risks.
- The childminder should develop effective self-evaluation and quality assurance processes.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	2 - Weak
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

The young children were settled and comfortable in the childminder's care. They were relaxed with the childminder and confidently sought support and reassurance when they needed it. The childminder knew children well and spoke confidently about their needs and progress. A parent/carer told us, "Charmaine knows our child very well and does all she can to support her needs."

While we observed some respectful, warm and nurturing interactions, children would have benefitted from a more consistent approach. For example, we found, at times, the childminder was task focussed which took her attention away from the children. We discussed with the childminder the importance of being attuned and responsive to children's needs, to ensure they feel safe and secure. The childminder should also ensure that routines are flexible and responsive to children's needs, to ensure that play is not unnecessarily uninterrupted. (see area for improvement 1)

The childminder provided children with some opportunities to make choices about how they spent their time, for example choosing what music they would like to listen to. We observed children being praised and their achievements acknowledged, however there were some missed opportunities. Providing praise and encouragement is important for children to develop positive self-esteem and confidence.

Personal plans contained some important information about children's development. Individual books contained photographs of children participating in a range of activities, with some relevant written observations of them at play. A parent/carer commented, Charmaine updates on daily activities, progresses and well being."

We noted it had been some time since children's 'all about me' records had been reviewed. The childminder confirmed there were plans in place for these to be updated. While children's personal plans contained some important information about their progress, these should demonstrate more clearly how children's individual learning and development needs are to be met. We signposted the childminder to current best practice guidance relating to personal plans, which can be accessed from the Care Inspectorate HUB.

Children experienced a pleasant, unhurried mealtime. They benefitted from a home cooked meal and ate this well. Water was available throughout the day, ensuring children were kept hydrated. Children's personal preferences and health needs had been fully considered by the childminder. A parent/carer told us, "My child is fed well when he is at Charmaine's with lovely home cooked meals which he loves." Children were encouraged to eat independently and were supported when required. This supported them to develop independence and important life skills. We encouraged the childminder to consider how children's independence could be further promoted during snack and mealtimes and continue to develop the quality of this experience.

The childminder confirmed that children's sleep routines reflected their needs and parents/carers wishes, however we noted it had been some time since information relating to this had been reviewed. The childminder gently soothed the children and ensured they had their special comforter. While children slept comfortably, monitoring of sleeping children could be better. We asked the childminder to improve practice

in this area and develop a written policy, which should be shared with parents/carers. This will help to ensure children are kept safe and secure while sleeping and keep parents/carers informed of practice. We signposted the childminder to Scottish Cot Death Trust for guidance relating to this. (see area for improvement 2)

Children's personal care routines were carried out sensitively and in response to their needs. Children were changed in a private area to ensure their privacy and dignity was protected. We asked the childminder to improve infection control procedures during nappy changing. This is reflected further under key question two.

The childminder had not yet had to administer medication to children. They had an appropriate awareness of how to manage medication and a suitable recording system was in place. We asked the childminder to revisit medication best practice guidance and use this to update the service's written procedures.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

The young children were content playing with the toys available to them. They particularly enjoyed playing in the ball pool and with the sand. We found there were some opportunities to lead their own play, and during these times they had opportunities to engage in activities that reflected their interests and supported their development. We noted planned activities reflected the children's interests, however, were mostly adult led. This impacted on opportunities for children to be creative and use their own ideas.

Children had access to a suitable range of toys and resources including books, arts and craft materials, musical instruments and sensory materials. Overall, children would benefit from more opportunities to lead their own play and having access to a wider range of resources would support their learning and development. To ensure play opportunities are stimulating, we recommended the childminder consider introducing more natural and open-ended materials. Children can use these resources in a range of ways, which promotes creativity and curiosity. This is important for their learning and development.

The childminder should continue to develop their understanding of working with younger children and how to support their development. We signposted them to a variety of resources that would support them to develop their skills and knowledge. This would result in improved play experiences for children. (see area for improvement 3)

Children had opportunities to socialise with wider groups of children and develop extended friendships when attending local community groups. This provided the opportunity to watch and listen to other children, which supports them to learn from each other.

The childminder understood the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and told us that they were able to access this regularly. In addition to playing in the garden, children had opportunities to visit fun places in the local and wider community. This helped enrich children's learning and enabled them to develop positive links with their community.

### Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, the childminder should ensure children experience a consistent nurturing approach.

This should include, but not limited to ensuring a more organised approach, which results in the childminder being consistently available to respond to children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS ) which states that: 'I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person caring for me.' (HSCS 3.9)

2. To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the childminder should implement safe sleep practices.

This should include, but not limited to developing and implementing procedures for monitoring sleeping children and developing a policy, which is shared with parents/carers.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

3.

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should improve children's play experiences. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Extending the variety of toys and experiences for children to ensure that they meet their interests and stage of development.
- Developing skills and knowledge in supporting children's play.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27) and:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

## How good is our setting?

## 2 - Weak

We made an evaluation of weak for this key question. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

Childminding was mainly provided from a dedicated playroom which was spacious and brightly decorated with children's artwork. These thoughtful touches supported children to feel included and a sense of belonging. The playroom was equipped with an adequate range of toys and resources, which were easily accessible and reflected the children's ages and interests. The childminder should continue to build on the range of toys and equipment available to children. This will ensure a fun play environment for children to learn and develop.

The lounge/kitchen/dining room provided children with an additional play area and a space where they could rest and relax. Children benefitted from playing outdoors in the childminder's garden which was a spacious area for them to enjoy playing in the fresh air.

We made two areas for improvement when we visited to investigate a complaint in February 2023. These were in relation to the fitness of the environment and management of pets. We found there had been a little progress made with how pets were managed in the service. For example, the childminder had developed a brief policy on how pets were managed and had engaged in some discussions with parents/carers. However, further improvements were needed. We have repeated the area for improvement in this inspection. (see area for improvement one)

We found here had been no improvements made to the environment. During our visit we were concerned about the following areas:

- Cleanliness and tidiness of the premises, including food preparation areas.
- Poor hand hygiene practices.
- Aprons not being worn when supporting children's personal care.
- Management of the pet dog.
- Supervision of children and identification of risks.

As a result, we were concerned that children could be exposed to potential risk to their health and wellbeing. The childminder should take the required action to make the required improvements. They should refer to Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings. This can be accessed from the Care Inspectorate HUB. We also signposted the childminder to the local authority's food standards and hygiene guidance. (see requirement 1)

## Requirements

1. By 31 May 2023, the childminder must ensure children are cared for in a clean, safe and hygienic environment.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- All areas used by children are clean and tidy.
- Food preparation areas are decluttered and clean.
- Effective handwashing procedures are in place.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn when supporting children's personal care.
- Pets and their equipment are managed effectively.
- Children are supervised effectively.

This is to comply with regulations 4 (1) (a) (welfare of users) and 10(2) (d) (Fitness of premises) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience and environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24)

## Areas for improvement

1.  
The provider should develop a comprehensive management of pets risk/benefit assessment and policy.

The policy should inform parents/carers of the benefits to their children, as well as how risks are managed and detail how it will be implemented.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 4.11: I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

We investigated and upheld a complaint in February 2023. This was in relation to management of pets. The childminder had made limited progress with this. We issued an action plan setting out the areas to be improved. This was viewed during our visit, however, it had not been submitted to the Care Inspectorate and did not demonstrate clearly the actions the childminder intended to take. We have reflected this further under key question two.

Communication with parent/carers was mostly informal. This included conversations when children arrived and departed the service, which provided opportunities for sharing information about children's needs and any changes. Social media apps were used to share photographs and information, which enabled parents/carers to be included in their child's experiences.

The childminder confirmed that key information was shared with parents/carers, including aims and objectives, policies and procedures. This helped ensure they understood the childminder's vision for their service. To further support children's wellbeing, we recommended the childminder continue to develop relevant policies for their service, for example safe sleep. We also suggested that some existing policies be reviewed and updated to reflect legislation and best practice guidance. This should include complaints and medication policies and procedures.

The childminder used informal ways to evaluate the service. Regular contact with parents/carers and informal communications meant families could influence the care provided. The childminder told us that children and parents/carers views were important to them and that these were taken into account when reviewing the service.

The childminder recognised that self evaluation was an area that required to be further developed, and we could see they were at the very early stages of formalising their approach. We highlighted a range of best practice guidance which could help with this. For example, Realising the Ambition and A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare. This could support the childminder to reflect on what is working well in their service and what could be improved. This could also support children



and families to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service. Overall, the self-evaluation process should lead to improved outcomes for children and their families.

### How good is our staff team?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Children attending the service were settled and comfortable and the childminder knew them well. They benefitted from being cared for in familiar surroundings, which helped support continuity and consistency of care. A parent/carer commented, "We are very happy with the service provided by Charmaine."

The childminder was still developing in their role and told us they very much enjoyed being a childminder. Being a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and accessing information from the Care Inspectorate HUB helped them keep up to date with new developments.

The childminder was clear about the conditions of registration and a copy of their registration certificate was displayed in the foyer for parents/carers to see. Appropriate business and car insurance was in place to protect those who used the service. Records were accessible and organised.

The childminder had a satisfactory understanding of safeguarding children. They understood their responsibilities and knew who to contact for advice and support. We were confident that they would respond to any signs that children were at risk of harm. Recent attendance at first aid training supported the childminder to develop their understanding of dealing with emergency situations.

While the childminder had attended training relating to child development, we recommended that they access further professional development opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in caring and supporting young children. (see area for improvement one)

The childminder should take account of the improvements reflected in this report and further develop their understanding of providing high quality care, play and safe environments.

### 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

The provider should develop a comprehensive risk/benefit assessment and policy along with a full consultation carried out with parents to ensure appropriate practice and children's wellbeing. The policy should inform parents of the benefits for their children and detailed how it would be implemented.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 4.11: I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

**This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2023.**

## Action taken since then

We found that a brief consultation had taken place with parents/carers, which demonstrated that they were satisfied with the arrangements. A brief risk assessment was in place, however this needed to be more robust. As a result, this area for improvement was not fully met. We have reflected this further under key question two.

## Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should implement an effective procedure to ensure the cleanliness and fitness of the environment and resources for minded children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 5.22: I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.

**This area for improvement was made on 8 February 2023.**

## Action taken since then

We found there had been no progress made with this area for improvement. We were concerned about some areas of the environment and have made a requirement about this. This is reflected further under key question two.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	2 - Weak
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	2 - Weak
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	3 - Adequate

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