

Laura Macfadyen Child Minding

Oban

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 August 2023

Service provided by:
Laura Macfadyen

Service provider number:
SP2021000058

Service no:
CS2021000094

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 11 June 2021. The service provider is Laura Macfadyen.

Laura Macfadyen is a childminding service. The service operates from the childminder's own home, located in a residential area of Oban. The service is provided from a semi detached two storey house, with children having access to the ground floor and back garden.

The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age:

- of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years
- of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and
- of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate. No overnight care will be provided.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by one early learning and childcare inspector, which took place on 02 August 2023. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration in June 2021.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed documents
- spoke with the childminder
- sent questionnaires to parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

- Children were experiencing warm, nurturing care and support.
- The childminder's dedication and passion was supporting children to thrive and flourish.
- There was a strong focus placed on being outdoors.
- Children's experiences were being enhanced and enriched through strong connections with their own and the wider community.
- The childminder communicated and engaged well with families.
- The childminder's warmth, kindness and positive ethos of mutual trust and respect was promoting a happy, secure and supportive environment for children and their families.
- The childminder was committed to the ongoing improvement and development of her service to achieve the best outcomes she could for children and their families.
- A written record should be kept of all the risk assessments undertaken.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, 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 children.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We were able to see children experiencing warm, nurturing care and support. The childminder knew children well and had developed trusted and loving relationships with them to nurture, support their wellbeing and help them feel valued, safe and secure. Children were happy and settled in the service. They were relaxed and confident around the childminder and in the home from home environment.

The parents commented that, 'Laura is caring, kind and really understands what my child's needs and preferences are - she does a great job.' 'It's so lovely to see my child walk into her home, as if it was his/her home. To have a child so young feel so comfortable in another setting, speaks volumes and I couldn't be more grateful for her.'

Another parent commented, 'I love how welcoming Laura's home is. My child is so comfortable with Laura and the other members of her family that he/she often talks about them on days he/she doesn't see them. I think this is down to how accepting they all are and how respectful they are to all the children while keeping everything fun. I also like how informed Laura keeps me about everything.'

Families provided snacks and packed lunches for their children. The childminder explained the importance of children enjoying a positive relaxed experience when eating that supported their independence, encouraged friendly social interactions and developed their communication skills.

The childminder was nurturing and respectful with children's personal care. Sleep routines were being followed for the younger children tailored to their individual needs and were in the process of being reviewed using current safe sleeping guidance.

Children's personal plans contained relevant core information. Children's likes, dislikes, and interests, had been gathered when they started supporting the childminder to meet their initial health, welfare, and safety needs. Work was underway to further develop children's personal plans with support planning taking account of children's emerging and changing needs. 'All about me' profiles and transition plans were also going to be tailored to children's individual needs and linked to the wellbeing indicators. We have asked the childminder to continue to review and update all children's plans every six months in line with legislation.

The childminder communicated effectively with parents through regular conversations and daily discussions to support children's wellbeing. Through discussion she explained the importance of working collaboratively when needed with other professionals and agencies involved in a child's care and support.

No children were being given medication at the time of the inspection. We sampled medication formats and found these needed to be updated. We discussed with the childminder reviewing the format, in line with current best practice guidance: 'Management of Medication in daycare and childminding services' and she confirmed she intended to do this.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder engaged with children in a sensitive, nurturing and respectful manner to reassure and support their play, encouraging them to make choices, share and promote friendships. Children were busy, having fun and engaged well playing together. They had access to a wide range of age and stage appropriate toys and resources to support their play and learning both indoors and outside. Children were able to choose and freely access these resources supporting them to lead their own play. These experiences were being enhanced and enriched through strong connections with their own and the wider community. For example, a trip to the local airport had been an exciting adventure and learning opportunity for them all.

Parents told us:

'I like that Laura is always challenging my child with activities. There's not a day that they are not doing something fun or new. Laura keeps my child part of his/her community with everything she does.'

'Every day with Laura has been interesting and varied and my child has so much fun with her. I also think she has helped a lot with his/her development and confidence since he/she started.'

The childminder was supporting children to explore their ideas and build on their interests. She had begun to develop planning approaches that were child centred and responsive to children's individual needs. For example, using observations to support the development of their natural curiosity, identifying next steps and progression in their play and learning. She was also considering floor books as a way to record children's developing skills and progress, gathering their ideas and interests and identifying possible lines of development and challenge.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, 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 children.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, 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 children.

The childminder's home was clean, comfortable and well ventilated with plenty of natural light. Children had space to play and areas with soft furnishings for relaxation and comfort. Children had space to play together, relax on the sofa or have time to themselves if they wished. One parent said, 'Laura's house is really nice and friendly and another said, I've always felt that my child is really safe there. It's also always clean to a high standard.'

Children had access to a range of suitable resources that were being regularly replenished. Children were able to make choices and select toys. Resources were accessible to children, providing opportunities for them to direct their own play and be independent. Importance was placed on being outdoors and engaging in the wider surrounding community with visits to the local beach, woodland, playgroup, community hub and toy library. This was supporting children to explore, be curious and enjoy risky play, promoting their imagination, sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.

The parents told us, there is always a variety of toys out to play with, indoor and outdoor. My child is also able to have safe interactions with Laura's pets which he/she adores, and is great for him/her to have at his/her age.'

Other comments from parents included, 'the childminder attends various groups with my child which he/she absolutely loves and it's a joy to see him/her so entertained.' and that: 'the childminder is always giving the children opportunities to socialise and explore. They are always out doing things like walking in the woods, picnics at the castle, going to the beach and season things like egg hunts, Easter crafts, Valentine's Day crafts and Christmas parties all of which she keeps us informed on.'

Although measures were in place to support children to enjoy a wide range of activities, the childminder agreed a written record should be kept of all the risk assessments she undertakes - to enable them to be regularly reviewed, updated and shared with parents and children (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder demonstrated good practice in infection prevention and control. For example, she modelled good hand hygiene and children were regularly reminded and supported to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before and after eating and coming in from outdoors.

The childminder had plans to lay slabs, erect additional fencing and a polytunnel in her back garden as well as increase her stock of natural materials and loose parts play.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure appropriate arrangements for limiting the risk of harm to children, the childminder should keep a written record of all the risk assessments she undertakes.

These should be:

- a) Reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and in line with current guidance
- b) Shared with parents and children, in a way that is appropriate for their stage of development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, 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 children.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The childminder was welcoming, engaged well with the inspection process and was responsive to our suggestions for further development. She was committed to the ongoing improvement and development of her service to achieve the best outcomes she could for children and their families and had begun some self-evaluation using our new quality framework.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures, and these were available to parents, so they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly to ensure they remain in line with current legislation and guidance.

The childminder was in the early stages of developing her quality assurance processes. As a starting point we suggested she issue questionnaires to parents to seek their views and identify areas where she could improve. This would enhance the service moving forward enabling the childminder to reflect on suggestions and make improvements where required.

The childminder could then develop a plan with achievable targets and make links to best practice guidance. For example: 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged childcare', 'Realising the ambition' and the 'Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS)'. This would support the childminder to reflect on what was working well in the service and what could be improved. This will also ensure children and families continue to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service (see area for Improvement 1).

The childminder communicated and engaged well with families. Parents were given regular updates on their child's development and learning through daily conversations, telephone calls and digital technology.

Parents told us, 'Laura is a fantastic childminder who keeps us fully informed of her daily plans, how my child has been and any upcoming plans.' and 'Laura often sends pictures or little fun snippets about what funny things my child did that day while also giving a handover to the person collecting my child.'

Areas for improvement

1. To support a culture of continuous improvement, the childminder should develop monitoring and self-evaluation processes that will help to identify service strengths and areas for further improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes. (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, 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 children.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder's dedication and passion was supporting children to thrive and flourish. Her warmth, kindness and positive ethos of mutual trust and respect was promoting a happy, secure and supportive environment for children and their families. She was nurturing in her care and had formed strong attachments with the children and their families.

The parents told us that,

'Laura seems very experienced and confident with looking after young children, I've had no concerns at all'
'Laura provides a really safe and fun learning environment and has got to know my child's personality well which is important to me and shows she cares about what she does'

'I couldn't ask for a better service' and

'Laura is a dedicated and hardworking childminder.'

The childminder engaged with children in a responsive, and respectful manner which supported their self esteem and confidence. She promoted positive behaviour by role modelling kind words and friendly engagement with the children.

The childminder knew the importance of being well informed. She had undertaken recent training in first aid, was clear what to do and who to go to should she have any child protection concerns and demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of identifying and managing risk. She was fully aware she needed to update her child protection training and intended to do this at the earliest opportunity.

The childminder was developing her knowledge and understanding of best practice guidance. We directed the childminder to the Care Inspectorate 'Hub' and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) where she can access best practice guidance and online training. This would ensure the childminder was continually improving her practice and the experiences on offer to the children. The childminder should consider keeping a record of her professional development to enable her to evaluate the impact it has had on outcomes for children and the ongoing development of the service (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure positive outcomes for children and the ongoing development of the service, the childminder should identify and access further training, review best practice guidance and keep a record of her professional development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'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); and I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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