

Laura's Childminding Child Minding

Newton Stewart

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 August 2023

Service provided by:
Laura Cannon

Service provider number:
SP2015987199

Service no:
CS2015339562

About the service

Laura's Childminding service is provided from the childminder's family home in the village of Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, 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.

Care is provided on the ground floor of the house where children can access a kitchen-diner and living room. Children also had access to a secure rear garden.

The service is located a short walk to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 and 16 August 2023. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

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
- emailed parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

Key messages

- The childminder used meaningful praise and acknowledged children's achievements which supported them to develop positive self-esteem and confidence.
- The childminder provided a wide range of activities for children and could tell us what areas children were achieving in as part of the play and learning opportunities provided.
- Outdoor learning is promoted within the childminder's garden, and participating in outings to the beach, park, and woods.
- To help identify what is working well in their service and what could be improved, evaluations activities would benefit from continued development.
- The childminder effectively engaged with children taking account of their views and experiences.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care & support

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

We could see warm, positive relationships had developed between the childminder and the young children who were present. The childminder used meaningful praise and acknowledged children's achievements which supported the children to develop positive self-esteem and confidence.

Personal plan information was sampled as part of the inspection process. We found that information supported children's individual health, welfare, and safety needs. However, we have asked that the childminder review and update personal plans every six months or when there is a significant event. The plan should include the children's next steps and how they will support the children to achieve them. To support this process, we have signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate's 'guide for providers on personal planning.' (See area for improvement 1)

Lunch was an unhurried and relaxed sociable experience. The parents provided the packed lunches. The children ate their lunch at the kitchen table, providing opportunities for chat and modelling of good eating habits. We observed children experience warm, caring relationships with the childminder and the assistant. There was lots of chatting and encouragement of good manners. Each child had their own water bottle available throughout the day and children were encouraged to remain hydrated. One parent said, "Laura provides daily photos and updates, usually around lunchtime, which I love. My child's language has come on loads since being with Laura."

We observed the childminder supporting children as they learned to play in each other's spaces. For example, when the children needed support to share and take turns, the childminder sensitively intervened to support the children. The childminder showed good knowledge of when to intervene and when to allow children the chance to solve a problem themselves. This was enhancing children's experiences. One parent said, "My child always naps well at Laura's and I think this is the ultimate sign that a child feels safe and comfortable in their setting."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play & Learning

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.

Children experienced warm and nurturing care to support their wellbeing. We observed children receiving cuddles and reassurance when needed, which demonstrated that they had formed strong attachments with the childminder. Children were observed to be happy and confident in the childminder's care and were keen to share their experiences. This demonstrated that children felt safe and loved.

The childminder had a particularly good understanding of child development, relevant theory, and practice. They used this to skilfully support high-quality play and learning experiences for the children. For example, the childminder had collected shells with the children at the beach then put them into the sand for the children to find as treasure. The children helped with the risk assessment which included talking about the risks and how to stay safe.

The children were able to choose from lots of toys and resources they were interested in. During our visit, children were playing with jigsaws, and toy kitchen, making toast and cups of tea. The childminder was supporting the children and we observed them chatting with each other and running around laughing. The children were secure, relaxed, and happy. One parent shared, "Laura's house is always clean and well organised. A range of toys and activities are made available to the children and they are age appropriate."

All children who attended the service on the day of inspection were under the age of three-years old. The Care Inspectorate have published a practice note to promote important aspects of high-quality provision for younger children. The guidance note: Growing my potential (Care Inspectorate, 2022), would support the childminder to extend play experiences to focus further on the specific needs of this age group. This would enhance opportunities for children to explore and discover as they grow and develop.

The childminder provided a wide range of activities for children, and could tell us what areas they were achieving in as part of the play and learning opportunities provided. We discussed ways that the childminder could enhance their observation, planning, and reflection of experiences. For example, the childminder cares for younger children and could use photographs to revisit experiences, extending learning with children. These could be recorded in, what is often referred to, as a floor book. Floor books are one way to observe, document, and plan by sharing thinking and ideas with children as they recall experiences.

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should further develop children's personal plans.

Personal plans should be developed in partnership with parents, be reviewed at least every six months, and be used to outline the next steps in children play, care, and learning.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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).

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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.

Children have ample space for their needs. The playroom and outdoor space were well resourced with a wide selection of resources that reflect the children's needs and interests. One parent shared, "Laura's house is always clean and well organised. A range of toys and activities are made available to the children and they are age appropriate." This supported their continued play, learning, and development.

The childminder had robust infection prevention and control, and food safety practices in place providing high levels of safety for children. Children washed their hands before and after snack, and also when they returned inside from outdoors. The home was clean and tidy and well maintained. This ensured that children stay safe and well.

Outdoor learning is promoted within the childminder's garden and by participating in outings to the beach, park, and woods. Children enjoyed the challenges, fun play, and learning that were offered through these experiences. For example, going walks to the parks and beach. The childminders shared their knowledge of the importance of outdoor learning and the benefits to the children's health and wellbeing. One parent told us, "My child is often exploring the community, attending toddler groups, going out on walks, different activities every day."

The indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured and accounted for all children's development and learning stages. As a result, children were independently exploring and engaged in play experiences that supported the development of new skills. For example, we observed children playing outside in the play house which supported children's imagination and role play.

The childminder's home was well maintained, clean and tidy. The childminder had a good understanding of the arrangements in place for cleaning. Risk assessments had been undertaken that addressed the current guidance regarding infection prevention and control. We reviewed the risk assessment and found they were of a very good standard. This meant children benefited from a safe and secure environment.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

We found that the childminder used daily discussions to ensure that children and their families could be consulted on the day-to-day running of the service. The childminder ensured that parents were involved from the outset and through the settling in period. They shared policies and procedures at enrolment, and were willing to respond to ideas and routines highlighted by parents. For example, changing the lunchtime to suit children's sleep patterns.

The childminder regularly sought feedback from parents to help identify improvements needed in the service. Parents commented positively on the service. One parent said, "Laura does a great variety of things with the kids both indoors and outdoors."

The childminder had developed a range of policies, procedures, and risk assessments that were shared with parents. The childminder reviewed these regularly to ensure they remain in line with current legislation and guidance. This ensured families knew what to expect from the care provided to their children, giving them some assurance about the measures taken to keep children safe.

To help identify what is working well in their service and what could be improved, evaluations activities would benefit from continued development. We encouraged the childminder to continue this journey and shared some examples of how this could be achieved. This will support the childminder to reflect on what is working well in their 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)

Children and their family's personal information was securely stored, and the childminder had registered with the Information Commissioners Office. This showed they understood their responsibilities regarding storing and processing children's personal information, helping protect children and their family's privacy.

Areas for improvement

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

This is to ensure 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?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values

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 childminder supported the children with warmth, kindness, and compassion; enabling children to feel valued, loved, and secure. The childminder effectively engaged with children and families taking account of their views, wishes, and experiences.

The childminder had reflected on and improved their childcare practice. Purposeful and comprehensive training had been undertaken. For example, they had developed their knowledge of child led learning and had a better understanding of how to build on children's interests. This was seen in the childminder's practice. They knew when to skilfully intervene to support and when to step back to empower children to think for themselves. We also observed the childminder's use of questions to encourage children's thinking. For example, they frequently encouraged children to wonder what would happen next. All parents shared they strongly agreed that the childminder had the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience to care for their child/children and support their learning.

The childminder had a very good understanding of rights-based childcare practices. They understood it was important to empower children and treat them with respect. They demonstrated this when they spoke with children before they provided personal care. For example, after lunch, the childminder asked children if she could assist in washing their hands, and encouraged them to do it for themselves, promoting life skills. This ensured children are treated with respect, and have their individual needs and preferences met.

The childminder continues to develop her childcare skills and knowledge to ensure children experience a wide range of care, play, and learning opportunities in an environment that is sensitive to their needs and wishes. Children were happy, content, and stimulated within the childminding environment.

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	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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

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