

# Angela's Childminding Child Minding

Beauly

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 October 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Angela Blake

**Service provider number:**  
SP2020991354

**Service no:**  
CS2020381003

## About the service

The childminder lives in a quiet residential area in Beauly, Inverness-shire. Childminding takes place in the downstairs of the home, with children accessing the toilet upstairs. Two of the upstairs bedrooms are used to provide sleeping spaces for younger children. Children also have access to fully enclosed garden areas to the front and rear of the property.

The childminder 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 no more than one is under 12 months old. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. No overnight care is provided.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 October 2023 between 12:50 and 16:30. 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:

- spoke with eight children using the service and two of their families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from five families;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure.
- Children attending the service were happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder.
- Skilled interactions from the childminder supported the development of children's language, literacy and numeracy.
- Resources for play and learning provided children with opportunities to be creative and engage children's imagination.
- Children's health and wellbeing was supported with regular opportunities for outdoor play.
- The childminder provided opportunities for meaningful communication with families which supported them to feel valued and respected.
- The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining their skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected.

## 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 evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. Their needs were met through nurturing and responsive interactions, which helped children feel loved, safe and secure. For example, physical comfort and reassuring words and actions supported a child who was missing a parent. These actions nurtured the child's security and confidence and promoted positive relationships between the child and the childminder. One parent told us: 'Angela is very attentive to my child and promotes their confidence and independence with her warm and friendly nature and the wide variety of activities she plans for the children.'

Personal plans were in place for all children and contained important information that supported meeting children's needs. For example, details about their interests, care needs and likes and dislikes. The childminder spoke with parents regularly about the individual needs of children. This approach supported effective communication and consistency of care for children. All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed with the statement 'The childminder knows my child well, including what is important for their care'. One parent commented "My child has neurological concerns that have been diagnosed. Angela has been instrumental in helping and informing me of techniques, developments and learning opportunities." As a result, children received the care that was right for them and tailored to their individual needs.

Snack was unhurried and relaxed, which ensured a caring and positive experience for children. Children and families were regularly consulted around snack choices and preferences and the childminder provided a balance of healthy snack options including fruit, crackers, cheese, milk and water. Children had some responsibility during snack times where they prepared their own cracker toppings and collected their own fruit and drinks. We discussed with the childminder how they could further develop the snack experience to offer more opportunities for children to develop their independence skills, for example by being involved in the snack preparation.

Whilst no children attending the service required any medication, we reviewed procedures and paperwork in place. We were satisfied that safe administration of medication procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

Children's safety and emotional security and wellbeing was supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep routines which reflected individual children and family wishes. One parent commented: "When xxxx first began attending the setting, Angela had a lovely, cosy space available upstairs which was well equipped with a travel cot and monitors if xxxx did need to nap." The childminder was aware of strategies to support safer sleeping routines for babies which supported children's safety and emotional security.

The childminder worked proactively with other professionals to ensure children's needs were met. For example, the childminder liaised with the local health visiting team to support the ongoing review of the care needs for some children. As a result, children received individualised support which was right for them.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were provided with a range of activities that supported their play and learning. The children were able to choose from a selection of toys and play equipment that met their stage of development and interests. For example, the younger child had access to various resources which supported their curiosity and problem solving skills. These included role play resources, a selection of loose parts as well as other open ended objects, small world toys and books of interest. Older children enjoyed being creative using seasonal resources to create Halloween crafts. As a result, children were engaged and having fun in a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences.

Skilled interactions from the childminder supported the development of children's language, literacy and numeracy. For example, the childminder scaffolded learning sensitively for younger children by modelling and repeating new words while sharing stories and when supporting play experiences. This helped children to develop their understanding of language and use new words with confidence.

The childminder demonstrated an understanding of child development; they followed best practice guidance and used approaches which were child-centred and responsive to the interests of the children. For example, the childminder supported younger children by noticing and providing resources to facilitate schematic play around enveloping objects. As a result, children benefited from high quality learning experiences through play.

Children benefited from effective planning that considered their interests, allowing them to feel valued. Children's learning and progress was shared regularly with families through a profile folder, a messaging app, a closed social media platform and at pick up and drop off times. One parent commented: "xxxx has come on leaps and bounds since going to Angela's, and that's just one day a week. Their vocabulary and meeting of milestones - learning to jump! For one has been noticed by myself. She always has a variety of play activities available and xxxx definitely enjoys the messier side to this! Angela is so attentive to xxxx's needs and I couldn't recommend her enough. I'm really happy with the care she provides to my child and the play opportunities she has opened up to promote xxxx's creativity and imagination." All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed with the statement: 'I am fully involved and informed about my child's learning and development'. This demonstrated families were valued and respected as partners in their children's learning.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community. Visits to the local toddler group as well as meeting up with other childminders helped to promote children's social skills and develop their confidence. Older children had helped to set up a clothing bank as well as a bring and buy sale to raise funds for the local school. This supported children to take responsibility and contribute positively to their local community.

## How good is our setting?

## 4 - Good

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

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment which was welcoming and homely with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Spaces were organised and children benefited from having access to play resources in the living/dining room area as well as a dedicated playroom for younger children in the conservatory area of the home. The organised layout enabled children to lead their learning and have ample space for their needs.

Children benefited from a range of resources that reflected their interests and developmental stages. These were easily accessible and included loose parts, open-ended objects, construction toys, small world play, building and stacking games, books and puzzles. The dining table offered space for a range of art and craft activities which met the needs of varying ages and stages of development. Some parents commented: "The house is very homely and has a wide range of toys and play materials available for children of all ages." and "It's very good and it has so many good activities to do." This supported children's choice and positive engagement when attending the service.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported with regular opportunities for outdoor play. They participated in river and woodland walks in the community as well as visiting the local playpark. The children had free-flow access to the childminders enclosed back and front gardens which contained a range of resources including loose parts to promote children's creativity and curiosity. The outdoor space adjacent to the childminder's back garden also provided a safe area with equipment to climb, slide and run which supported children's physical development and overall wellbeing.

Risk assessment systems were implemented to ensure that children's safety was promoted and potential risks were minimised. For example, changes were made to improve the outdoor fencing and outdoor gate security. As a result, children experienced care in an environment which was safe and secure.

Most infection prevention and control procedures supported a safe environment. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at necessary times. The childminder had taken part in professional learning to support the implementation of effective infection prevention and control practices. This ensured children experienced care in an environment which was safe and clean. We advised the childminder to replace the current nappy changing mat as areas of this were damaged and to ensure suitable resources for drying hands were available at all times.

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

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

**Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. They engaged with families and children, and asked for feedback about the service through informal chats and questionnaires. This helped the childminder to reflect on the needs of the children and make changes to support them. All families who responded to our survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: 'My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop this setting and our ideas and suggestions are used to influence change'. Policies and procedures were in place to keep children safe and support their health and wellbeing. These were shared with parents prior to starting at the setting and were regularly reviewed.

The childminder provided opportunities for meaningful communication with families. Children's play experiences and achievements and other important information was shared with parents through a variety of methods. These included phone calls, text messages, through observations in profile folders and face to face discussions. This helped the childminder to maintain clear and effective communication which supported families to feel valued and respected.

The childminder was motivated to provide a service that met the needs of children and families well. They were developing their skill of evaluating their service to ensure that children experienced high quality care and support. For example, while undertaking professional learning towards a BA in Childhood practice, the childminder had reviewed and improved their skills in leading and managing a care service and implemented changes in consultation with families. These included improving the service administration systems and improving the quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environments. This demonstrated they were developing a good knowledge of best practice guidance and understood the importance of self-evaluation to support positive outcomes for children. We spoke with the childminder about the benefits of recording changes in practice, as they occurred, as well as the impact these changes have on outcomes for children. This would support a more robust and meaningful approach to continuous improvement.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the responsive interactions we observed with the childminder. This supported the development of strong relationships with the children. The childminder understood what children needed to help them grow and develop, and responded to their needs in a caring manner. This helped children build good attachments and positively supported their wellbeing. One parent commented: "Angela is fantastic at her job; my son loves going as she does a lot of fun activities and little excursions with the children. She is also a very caring person. I feel 100 per cent comfortable with leaving my son in her care".

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining their skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. They had attended online training in child protection, food safety and first aid. We discussed the importance of ensuring that a more specific course in paediatric first aid was accessed to support the health and safety of children in the service (see area for improvement 1). In addition to core learning, the childminder was in the process of completing a BA in Childhood Practice which helped them to reflect on practice and improve experiences for children.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and had supportive links with local childminders. This provided opportunities for sharing ideas, developing knowledge and reflecting on practice, contributing to positive outcomes for children.

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are safe, protected from harm and their wellbeing needs are met, the childminder should take part in relevant training. This includes, but is not limited to:

a) undertaking suitable paediatric first aid training.

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).



## 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

To help ensure children are cared for in an uncluttered, inviting, and calm environment the childminder should:

- Declutter and reduce equipment and resources available.
- Resources and play equipment to be stored away appropriately.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.22).

**This area for improvement was made on 14 April 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

Children experienced an organised and calm environment which supported their play and learning. The childminder had taken action to declutter the indoor environment and reduce the number of resources available. As well as this, the childminder was no longer accepting unnecessary donations of toys and play equipment and two storage containers had been added to the outdoor areas to provide extra space for storing resources and play equipment effectively. These changes helped to ensure children were cared for in an environment which met their needs. We spoke with the childminder about continuing to review the environment and resources to build on the positive progress made since the last inspection.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children can choose from a range of stimulating resources and activities, the childminder should review all equipment and resources available. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Introduce more loose parts and natural, open ended materials and resources for play and learning.

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

**This area for improvement was made on 14 April 2022.**

## Action taken since then

Resources for play and learning provided children with opportunities to be creative and engage children's imagination. As part of professional learning, the childminder had used best practice guidance to review the range of resources available for children and introduced more loose parts, real tools and open ended objects. We observed children using sand, water, shells, containers for emptying and filling and wooden shapes to explore size, shape and number during play. Children commented as they played: "sandcastle again", "fell down", "oh no! Shells". As a result, children were engaged in a range of stimulating resources and activities which supported their play and learning. We discussed with the childminder the importance of continuing to review and develop resources further to support children's learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 3

To support high quality outcomes for children and families, the childminder should introduce clear systems in place to evaluate the service provided. This should include, but not limited to:

- Using best practice guidance documents including A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare, to assess the service she provides and identify areas for development.

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

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.22).

**This area for improvement was made on 14 April 2022.**

## Action taken since then

The childminder had taken positive steps to develop systems to evaluate the service provided. Whilst undertaking their BA in Childhood Practice, the childminder had become more familiar with best practice documents including 'A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' and used this knowledge to support the development of the service. For example, they have taken positive steps to reduce clutter and improve resources within the indoor play environment. This has improved children's choice and overall experiences. We discussed with the childminder the importance of continuing to review and develop the service, using best practice guidance, to support positive outcomes for children.

This area for improvement had been met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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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