

Biggar Little Ones - Registered Childminding Service

Child Minding

Biggar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 June 2025

Service provided by:
Elaine McCorrison

Service provider number:
SP2015987215

Service no:
CS2015339685

About the service

Biggar Little Ones - Registered Childminding Service is provided by Elaine McCorrison from their family home in Biggar, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children up to the age of 16. Numbers are inclusive of members of the childminder's family. There are currently 12 children registered with the service who have different patterns of attendance over the course of the week. They are cared for in line with the conditions of registration.

The children have access to the downstairs of the property which includes a playroom, bathroom, dining room/kitchen which leads to a small courtyard area. The rear garden is not currently accessible to children following a risk assessment by the childminder. Outdoor play opportunities are provided regularly through local walks, visits to parks and places in the local community. The service is close to shops, nurseries, schools and public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 June 2025 between the hours of 10:00 and 12:30. 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 three children using the service and reviewed four questionnaires received from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and settled in the childminder's care and had fun choosing from a wide variety of toys and resources independently.
- The childminder was kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children.
- Personal plans should be reviewed and updated with parents in line with legislation to ensure information is current and fully demonstrates how each child's needs will be met in the service.
- Children benefitted from a range of play and learning opportunities at the childminder's home, places locally and in the wider community.
- The childminder had a professional background in childcare and was keen to maintain their own professional development through reading updated research, guidance and sourcing relevant training.

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 key question 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 were observed to be happy, settled and engaged in play throughout the inspection. The childminder was kind, caring and responsive to their needs, requests and interests. They knew children and families well, which contributed to children feeling safe, secure and loved. The four parents who completed our questionnaire strongly agreed they had a strong relationship with the childminder and agreed they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their child's personal plan. Their comments included, "Elaine always checks in to see if there is anything the children want to focus on and updates me regularly" and "I am given plenty of opportunities to update my child's care plan and can give lots of information at drop off and pick up."

Personal plans were in place for all children as required. Although some information was shared verbally, by text and daily diaries, we advised this information should feed into children's plans. Making arrangements to review plans with parents in line with legislation would assist with this. Improvements included updating individual children's health needs, stages of development, interests, recording how these would be met in the service and children's overall progress. Personal plans contribute to positive outcomes for children in terms of their wellbeing, learning and development. (See Area for Improvement 1).

We reviewed the storage and documentation for children who may require medication at the service. We identified improvements which were then actioned by the childminder at the time of writing this report. We shared updated guidance 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' to support the childminder in the future. Improved practice would contribute to children's health and wellbeing.

Healthy options for breakfast, lunch and snacks were provided by the childminder. Drinking water was promoted and should be freely available to children throughout the day to ensure children remain hydrated. Lunchtime was a relaxed, sociable time for children. Children were asked what they would like for lunch, with the childminder taking account of their individual preferences. They sat around the table which created a relaxed, pleasant, sociable experience. The childminder was aware of the importance of sitting alongside children as they ate. This ensured their safety from choking, while supporting a homely environment. One parent told us, "They eat an amazing range of foods with Elaine, both within the setting and also on picnics."

Children's routines were followed, with younger children having a nap or rest after lunch. This met children's needs, supported their wellbeing and respected parents' views. There were sleep mats which could be used, but children usually slept in buggies which could be laid flat, following parents' preferences. The childminder was aware of the importance of sleep and safe sleeping guidance. This supported children's safety and development. One parent added, "Freedom of sleeping whether within a buggy or within the playroom. Also very comfortable sleeping on Elaine, enjoying a cuddle."

The childminder was confident in their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They discussed risk assessments and procedures for indoors and outdoors, reinforced safety with children and had attended child protection training. This contributed towards children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy, having fun and engaged in a variety of play experiences indoors over the course of the inspection. This included playing with cars, dressing up, completing puzzles and having energetic play with each other. This developed their skills in imagination, investigation and problem-solving. Children's comments included, "I'm spiderman", "motorbikes" and "I want puzzles." The childminder knew children's individual interests, was responsive to their requests, used questioning and ensured there was a wide variety of resources for children to independently choose from. Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy naturally throughout the day. This supported learning in a relaxed, meaningful way.

The childminder was aware of schemas and supported children with activities to enable this stage of development. In child development, a schema is a repeated pattern of behaviour or thinking that a child uses to explore and understand the world around them. This helps children make sense of their experiences, build their knowledge and show their current understanding and interests.

Children benefitted from regular access to places in the local and wider area and risky play opportunities. Photographs of children having fun demonstrated the wide activities and experiences the service offered. Parents told us, "Lots of free play, fun outdoors at the park and activities set up like water and sand to suit child's interests", "Elaine takes the children to local museums, and parks, messy play, splashing in water - they have loads of fun" and "Lots of toys available within the setting and all within children's reach. They often go on walks to local parks throughout the day and longer excursions in the holidays."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care and wellbeing and to ensure all information is current, the provider should review and update children's personal plans with parents in line with legislation.

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

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question 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

The childminder's home was clean, safe and well-ventilated. Care was provided from the downstairs of the childminder's home. The layout meant children could access the bathroom, dining area and kitchen where doors opened to a small courtyard. This offered space for children to play and participate in a variety of activities. Parents told us they were always welcomed into the childminder's home. They added, "Elaine's home is always a welcoming place. There is never any concern about access" and "An excellent set up for kids in play room and a lovely home which I've always felt is welcoming, safe and fun."

We observed children confidently and independently making choices of what to play with over the inspection. Resources were stored on open shelving and units at children's level. We observed children selecting vehicles, puzzles, games and books and taking part in more energetic play with each other using all areas available to them. The childminder was responsive to children's additional requests and interests. This demonstrated how children's needs were considered and their preferences and views respected and valued.

There were comfortable cushions for children to sit and relax on and a table with chairs and highchairs for eating, drawing and table top activities. Areas were used flexibly throughout the day in response to children's needs and choices.

The childminder had risk assessed the rear garden and decided this was not suitable for children to access currently. However, good use was made of local areas for walks and activities in the fresh air. This ensured children had outdoor play opportunities daily and regularly explored a natural environment. Parents told us their children very often had opportunities to play outdoors. Their comments included, "Walking, park trips, running around in the fresh air and chance to be in nature" and "Park, building dens, digging for gemstones."

The childminder and children washed their hands before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet and when required throughout our visit. Children's privacy and dignity was maintained during nappy changing. Although the childminder cleaned the changing mat, washed their hands before and after nappy changing, we advised the use of disposable gloves and aprons to further support and maintain a hygienic, safe environment. This was in line with good infection prevention and control procedures. The childminder agreed to use these in future.

Following our discussions on general data protection requirements (GDPR), the childminder planned to source a locked file to store children's personal information more securely and contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for advice on managing information stored online. This contributed to safety and security.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question 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 had devised aims for the service. The aims, policies and procedures were periodically reviewed. This let parents know what they aspired to provide for children and families and ensured procedures and practice was in line with current guidance. Following our discussions the childminder planned to review their medication policy, nappy changing policy and introduce a system for the review and monitoring of personal plans throughout the year, ensuring this was manageable. This would contribute to positive outcomes for children and their families.

Although there were no formal systems in place for quality assurance, self-evaluation and service development, the childminder spoke of the service's improvement plans. This included the recent purchase of new resources and toys, as they felt some resources were well used and needed replaced or refreshed.

The childminder recognised the importance of working in partnership with parents and this was done in consultation with children and families. This ensured they respected and valued their views and suggestions and any purchases met children's interests and stage of development. As the childminder provided and prepared snacks and meals for children, they acknowledged this was an area they should have addressed and now planned to contact the local authority to register as a food business. Having self-evaluation and development plans would support continuous improvement.

Parents agreed they and their children were involved in meaningful ways to develop the service. They told us, "Elaine often asks for feedback and what my child enjoys so they can tailor what they provide to my child's needs." and "Elaine will consult us if thinking of making any changes and will always try to accommodate our requests if they can." The childminder was aware of updates to nutritional guidance, 'Setting the Table' and planned to involve parents and children in a review of snacks and lunch menus, respecting and including their views and suggestions.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question 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 and families benefitted from a childminder who was trained, competent and skilled. They had a professional background in childcare, both in nurseries and as a classroom assistant. This had informed them with a good knowledge of child development and working with children and parents. Open and trusting relationships had been built and maintained with families, with many parents choosing to use the service again. Parents told us, "Elaine is an excellent childminder. They provide a safe, fun, caring space with opportunities for children to nap, eat well and free play", "Elaine provides a really personal service and knows the children well" and "Elaine is reliable and approachable and the children are encouraged by her."

The childminder was kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with all children. As a result children were happy, confident and settled, enabling them to feel valued, loved and secure.

The childminder was committed to their role, receptive to any advice and motivated to continue their professional development. They had recently completed first aid training to refresh their knowledge and shared this information with parents. They frequently read research, updated guidance and practice to keep up-to-date with childcare developments and inform their practice. A brief training log would assist with identifying training and development needs, record the outcomes for children, the impact on their own professional development and the improvement of the service as a whole.

When asked what they liked about the service, parents told us "Elaine knows my child so well and is interested in them as an individual" and "Elaine always makes time to speak to me and gives lots of feedback."

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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