

# MacAlpine, Kirsty Child Minding

Falkirk

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
3 April 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Kirsty MacAlpine

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003909601

**Service no:**  
CS2003015169

## About the service

Kirsty MacAlpine operates a childminding service from their home in the Carronshore area of Falkirk. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, the local nursery and school. Children have access to the ground floor of the family home which comprises of lounge, hall, kitchen and toilet. They also have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property.

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.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 3 April 2024 between 12:30 and 14:45. 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 children in the service
- spoke with two families in person
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced a warm and nurturing approach to the care they received.
- The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air.
- The childminder was responsive in their approach to offering play and learning opportunities.
- Positive relationships had been established with children and families.
- The childminder should now consider developing a more formal way to evaluate the service.
- The childminder should reflect and consider the impact their research and training had on improving outcomes for children.

## 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?	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?

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 experienced a warm and nurturing approach to the care they received. The childminder listened and responded to children's verbal and nonverbal cues. For example, we could see they were developing a secure attachment with a very young child who had recently started attending the service. We observed lots of eye contact, smiles and chatting with the child. As a result, we could see children were relaxed and happy in a service that supported their overall wellbeing.

The childminder knew children well and offered support and encouragement to promote their independence. They understood the importance of developing positive relationships with families to ensure consistency of care and routines for children. A daily diary had been developed for young children to ensure effective communication between home and the childminder. Information was also shared informally at drop off and pick up times. This meant that the care provided met the needs of individuals and respected the wishes of parents.

Personal plans contained "All about me" information. This meant that important and relevant information regarding children's routines, development and experiences were recorded. We discussed ways to use personal plans as a working document with families. For example, recording information shared informally by families within the plans and asking parents to sign and date the updates. We also discussed ways of encouraging and supporting older children to have responsibility and ownership of their personal plan. This would provide opportunities to ensure the child's "voice" was recorded and their views considered.

At the time of inspection no children required medication. We were satisfied that appropriate procedures were in place to safely administer, record and share information with families when it was needed.

### Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

The childminder was responsive in their approach to offering play and learning opportunities, based on children's needs and interests. There was a mixture of planned and spontaneous experiences for children. They were encouraged to lead their play and learning as the childminder discussed what toys and resources children would like to play with. Planned activities such as seasonal celebrations and baking supported children to learn, and experience new opportunities.

We observed children's literacy and numeracy skills being promoted as they explored story books and used story spoons as prompts. One child compared the spoon sizes. They were supported by the childminder when they asked "what one's bigger?" and "why is this one smaller than all the other ones?" As a result children were happy and developing confidence as they explored, played and learned.

The childminder knew children very well and spoke knowledgeably about each of them and their developmental progress. One parent arrived to collect their child during the visit and shared how their child could now put on their shoes independently. They told us that their child would do this with the childminder but was less keen to do so at home. The child demonstrated this as they put their shoes on to go home. The childminder should record children's learning and achievements. This would further support them to identify children's potential next steps in learning.

The childminder had developed a closed and private Facebook group where children's experiences were shared with families. We discussed how this provided opportunities for children to tell their parents what they had been doing at the childminders. A floorbook had also been created to record children's learning and experiences. The childminder explained how they planned to involve children in documenting their learning in this way. This would promote a sense of achievement for children and give them opportunities to celebrate their success.

## 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

Children were cared for in a homely environment that was comfortable, welcoming and offered them space to play and relax. The childminder had given thought to creating quieter spaces for children as they extended play areas into the hallway. Consideration had been given to providing child sized tables and chairs, where children sat comfortably as they ate and played. The organised layout supported children to access toys and activities. Children's interests were observed and were reflected in the activities offered to them. We discussed the benefits of open ended and natural resources with the childminder. We suggested that more of these activities would encourage children's curiosity, creativity and help to develop their problem solving skills.

The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air. The childminder made use of the local community, and walked to and from the school every day. This ensured children had regular physical exercise and fresh air as they developed an understanding of the importance of an active lifestyle.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place. For example, we witnessed children being encouraged to wash their hands at key times. Regular cleaning of toys and resources alongside effective handwashing meant we were satisfied that the spread of infection was minimised.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised. As a result children were cared for in a safe and secure environment where their wellbeing was prioritised.

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

#### Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The vision, values and aims of the service were evident in the warm interactions and positive relationships we observed throughout the inspection. We noticed the childminders' natural inclination to promote children's rights as they consulted all children. For example, we witnessed them chatting to a young child, and sensitively asking if they were ready to have their nappy changed. The nurturing nature of the childminder meant that children felt loved, safe and secure.

Informal ways were used by the childminder to evaluate their service. Positive relationships had been

established with children and families, and their views were important to the childminder. These were mainly gathered and shared informally during daily chats as children were dropped off and collected. Regular communication meant children and families could influence the care provided. As a result the childminder understood what was important to ensure they met the needs of children and families.

The childminder was beginning to record areas for improvement by using a "to do" list. We discussed different ways to record development priorities and ways to involve children and families in this. The childminder told us that they were keen to find ways to encourage families to share their feedback and suggestions. We also discussed the importance of documenting an improvement plan, and sharing this with children and families. This would provide an opportunity for the childminder to share the successes and achievements of the service.

The childminder should now consider developing a more formal way to evaluate the service. We highlighted best practice guidance which could help with this. For example, A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare and the Care Inspectorate bitesize resources. This could support them to reflect and record what is working well in their service and what could be improved. This may also support children and families to have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service.

## How good is our staff team?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

### Quality Indicator 4.1 -Staff skills, knowledge and values

The kind, nurturing and fun interactions we witnessed supported children to feel relaxed and secure. For example, we observed children receiving appropriate levels of care and support during the inspection. Such as cuddles to help settle and soothe the youngest child. Whilst older children enjoyed joking and having close contact, such as tickling and laughing with the childminder. As a result children's emotional wellbeing benefitted from strong, positive attachments.

The experienced childminder demonstrated a good understanding of how children develop and learn. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), and made use of the resources offered by them. They had also enrolled on a few SCMA online training courses, however, at the time of inspection these had not been fully completed. We discussed the importance of ensuring that Child Protection training is regularly refreshed to maintain a good awareness of current guidance.

The childminder enthusiastically shared how they had been developing ideas from their online research into The Curiosity Approach to children's learning. The childminder should now record their training and research. They should reflect and consider the impact this had on improving outcomes for children. This will support them to develop a clear learning action plan.

## 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 childminder should access further professional development opportunities such as reading current guidance and reflecting on their learning. This will support the improvement of outcomes for children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 14 April 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had enrolled in some training courses but these were not fully completed at the time of inspection. They had accessed online platforms to learn from others examples of good practice and are taking some ideas forward.

**This area for improvement has not been fully met and will be carried forward in this report.**

### 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	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?	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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