

Julie Docherty Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2025

Service provided by:
Julie Docherty

Service provider number:
SP2022000132

Service no:
CS2022000185

About the service

Julie Docherty provides a childminding service from her home in residential area of Barrhead. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children. At the time of our inspection, five children were registered with the service.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the kitchen, living room, and bathroom areas. Children did not have access to the garden area during our visit, due to effects of storm damage.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 March 2025 between 12:30 and 15:15. Two inspectors from the care inspectorate were present during the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Reviewed five completed questionnaires.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was very good at developing meaningful relationships with children and families.
- Parents were very happy with the quality of care provided by the childminder.
- Children enjoyed a range of play experiences both within the childminders setting and the local community, which supported their learning and development.
- The childminder had a strong focus on self-evaluation for improvement.
- The childminder created an ethos of continuous professional development through training opportunities, to support self-reflection.

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?	5 - Very 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

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

There were two children attending the service when we visited. The childminder had warm and nurturing relationships and knew the children well within their care. We observed lots of praise and encouragement towards children. These interactions helped show us that children felt loved and reassured. Children were calm and relaxed within the childminders home and felt safe and secure. One parent commented 'We love the relationship we have with the childminder. 'They have been a gem of a childminder'.

Parents provided snacks and lunches for children. Although we did not observe mealtimes, the childminder told us that they had a fold down table where children would sit. They told us that they sit with the children which encouraged them to eat healthy snacks. Water was available throughout the day, to ensure children remained hydrated. A highchair was also available to allow younger children to be part of this experience. This would ensure children are supported to develop a positive relationship with food. The childminder told us they were aware of the 'Setting the Table' guidance to follow best practice around mealtimes.

Individual personal plans were in place and were detailed with strategies to support children's learning and development. Using individual personal plans allowed the childminder the opportunity to plan for children, considering their learning needs and allowing them to thrive at a pace that was right for them. The childminder referred to a milestones tracker for each child, which gave them a baseline to support children's age and stage of development. They used this as a guide and told us that they meet the child, where they are with their learning. These plans were supported using information provided by parents which helped to support, to meet children's needs within the childminders home. This strengthened the relationship between the childminder and families, offering further involvement within their care. We advised in order to follow legislation; the childminder must update personal plans on a six-month basis.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as the childminder had a medication policy in place, which highlighted the responsibility of the parents and the role of the childminder when storing and administering medication. We referred the childminder to 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services document' and suggested they add an audit, to ensure medication is checked on a three-monthly basis. We also asked the childminder to ensure all information is completed on the medication forms when receiving medication.

Children's individual sleep routines were supported by the childminder in agreement with families. We saw a cosy area was created on couches with blankets and cushions to offer a more relaxed sleep space. We suggested the childminder reviews the safe sleeping Scotland guidance to support best practice in relation to sleep spaces.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

A range of toys were available and reflected the interests of the children attending the service. For example, books, dolls house and farm animals were available for children to explore.

The childminder responded to children's interests by asking questions about what they were learning, responding positively through facial expressions, body language and talking to children. The childminder told us that they were supporting children's independence. As a result, children were confident to manage and complete tasks on their own. One parent told us 'I feel like I'm involved as the childminder tells me what they have been doing and what my child is learning, starting to work on putting on shoes etc.' A variety of resources were available throughout the inspection and we saw children actively engaging in these. The childminder was able to show us some of the rotational resources, such as threading and counting animals to support children's numeracy skills. We observed reading stories together, singing songs and interactive games which allowed children to learn whilst having fun. As a result, children were engaged in play and having fun.

The childminder accessed additional resources during our visit and asked a child if they would like to make a Mother's Day card. They also responded to children's interests and asked challenging questions such as 'what does the rabbit do?' using Makaton to support this when reading stories. This resulted in children having full ownership of their play, while receiving an appropriate level of support. One parent told us 'The childminder has a welcoming nature'. They regularly invite me in to see my child play and discuss what has happened on that day'.

Activities were planned to support children's learning, building on the interests of children including, visiting the airport and going on a bear hunt to the local woodland area. We reviewed evidence of learning through play, which was recorded in floor books which documented children's fun play experiences, that supported children to investigate, explore and be creative.

The childminder told us that children spent time outdoors most days, which allowed them to be active and explore the world around them. The childminder also made good use of the local community for walks and visits to the local woodland, which provided children to have access to fresh air and physical exercise. This ensured families and children experience meaningful links in the local community.

Personal plans, and milestones trackers allowed the childminder to support children's learning and development in a meaningful way, reflecting on current learning and responding to children's next steps. Sensitive and skilled interactions were used to extend children's thinking and learning. These enriched children's play and learning, stimulated their natural curiosity and encouraged children to be creative, learn about risk and problem solve. We suggested this could be further enhanced by adding parents' comments to support home links.

Children benefitted from a childminder who displayed a very good knowledge and understanding of child development and who was able to support children's progression and development. We saw the childminder engaging in play with children, and using appropriate questioning skills to support children's interests and take these forward.

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 minded children benefited from a clean, welcoming environment. The living room was bright and provided space for children to play and rest. The children could move freely in the living room area where they were able to play on the carpeted floor, as well as relax and rest on the couch, where blankets and cushions were available to create a cosy space. We saw children choosing to sit on the couch to read stories, and appeared comfortable in doing this. It helped give the message to children that they mattered, whilst also ensuring children felt safe and secure. The childminder completed a daily indoor risk assessment to keep children safe from potential risks.

Children were using the available resources with independence and confidence. We discussed further developing opportunities for children, to self-select toys and materials out of reach, to support their play and enhance learning. The childminder told us that they rotate resources frequently, to keep children's interests. We suggested extending play activities to include a range of natural and loose parts that can develop children's curiosity, creativity and imagination.

Children benefited from regular access to the community which supported their connection with nature and promoted their wellbeing. Due to storm damage, the childminder risk assessed the outdoor space, and children were therefore not using the garden area. The childminder was mindful of utilising the local area in place of this. The childminder told us this would be resolved within a couple of days and the children would then be able to access the outdoor area once again.

Disposable gloves and aprons were worn when supporting children with their personal care, to help prevent cross-contamination and keep everyone safe and well. We encouraged the childminder to revisit the nappy changing policy regarding glove changing during personal care.

Children's personal data was organised and accessible. This ensured children's information is relevant and up to date, in a place that could be easily accessed by the childminder. The childminder was registered with the information commissioner's office, to adhere to the principles of data protection.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The childminder had a clear vision, values, and aims, with children at the heart of their service. An 'all about me' of the childminder and their family was shared with children and families during the settling in period. This allowed children and families to get to know the childminder, as they also got to know them. One parent told us 'The childminder is very loving towards my child, I feel like my child is visiting family when they go to them'. As a result, this created open and transparent relationships with children and families using the service.

The childminder knew children and their families well and had positive relationships, which supported them to get it right for every child. The childminder spoke fondly of the children, families, and their individual needs. The childminder demonstrated high aspirations for children to develop and thrive. We saw children who were comfortable and confident in the childminders home. For example, one child gave us a tour of the childminders home and was able to share what areas they accessed.

One parent told us 'I get on very well with the childminder, they are very caring and take an interest in our lives and is accommodating if we need anything'. This demonstrated an open approach to communication with families, showing value and respect.

The childminder was focused on ensuring children were provided with the best possible care and support by working in partnership with families to meet their individual needs. We suggested that quality assurance systems could be strengthened further, by continuing to record parents/ families' views as part of this process to enhance home links.

A well thought out improvement plan, linked to the quality framework had shown, that the childminder had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of self-reflection and improvement. Self-evaluation enabled the childminder to tailor improvements towards the needs and choices of children and families, through the collation of observations, verbal feedback from parents and recent training attended. The childminder was able to discuss the benefits of their training and that this has a positive impact on the children she minded, through an increased knowledge base.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures that were shared with parents, ensuring that they knew what to expect from the service. The childminder should continue to review these regularly and amend in line with any changes in good practice guidance and frameworks.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's kind, patient and nurturing approach. This ensured that children and families felt safe, valued, and respected. Parents told us, 'The childminder has worked hard to foster a strong relationship with my child, who initially was nervous to go away from us'.

The childminder had created a culture of self-improvement by being a reflective practitioner. We reviewed a training programme, which showed a clear vision for continuous professional development. The childminder told us that training and increasing their knowledge and skills was an important part of developing their service.

Children and families benefitted from the childminder's experience, knowledge and dedication to continuous professional training and development. Recent training included brain development, and teaching and observation, which the childminder sourced and completed in their own time. This allowed the childminder to reflect on training and support outcomes for children. The childminder remained accountable to their own learning and kept records of upcoming training events, including realising the ambition and understanding child development. As a result, children received high quality care and support that was based on best practice and national guidance through a knowledgeable and skilled childminder.

The childminder had experience of working with children and has been providing care to children in their home for over two years. They kept their knowledge and practice up to date through emails and updates from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). We also suggested utilising the Care Inspectorate provider updates.

The childminder also maintained positive links with other childminders, which resulted in the sharing of good practice and ideas. This provided the childminder with a good network of support, which further enhanced good quality practice and experiences for children.

The childminder recognised the importance of fun in children's play to enable learning to be taken forward. Being active through playing games, singing, and reading stories together allowed children to feel a sense of fun, as well as building lasting relationships.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

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

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