

# Little Nest Childminding Child Minding

Wallyford

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
2 April 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Claire Forshaw

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000547

**Service no:**  
CS2024000068

## About the service

Little Nest Childminding provides a childminding service from their family home in the Wallyford area in East Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of three children up to 16 years of age.

The service is close to the local primary school and nursery, shops, and parks. Children have access to the downstairs living room, kitchen, toilet and there is a secure garden to the side of the property.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 April 2025 between 11:45 and 14:30. One inspector carried out the inspection.

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

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three children using the service
- considered feedback from three families through an online questionnaire
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from the childminder.
- To support children's ongoing individual needs, the childminder should develop children's personal plans to ensure they are a current reflection of the child. This should include, but not be limited to, clear records of how their current wellbeing and development needs are supported.
- Children participated in play and learning experiences that were engaging and fun.
- Children enjoyed spending time outdoors and in the local community.
- The childminder should now look to develop risk assessments to include daily checks to minimise any evolving risks to children.
- The childminder had undertaken some self-evaluation through consultation with parents using questionnaires. Regular evaluations should take place to allow the childminder to identify how the service is performing and what could be adapted to improve it.
- The childminder supported children's wellbeing through responsive care and interactions.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this key question as adequate and good, with an overall grade of adequate, where there are some strengths but these just outweighed weaknesses.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this quality indicator as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from the childminder. They had developed good relationships with minded children and their families and knew them well. They spoke about what was important to each child in their care and were attuned to the children's needs. They read their cues, providing cuddles to support emotional wellbeing when needed. As a result, children felt safe and secure.

Children were familiar with the mealtime routine which was relaxed and sociable. Children sat together at the dining table and the childminder sat with them and supported engaging conversations. This meant children were closely supervised which ensured their safety. The childminder prepared all meals and snacks and had created a nutritional menu that had been shared with parents. They were responsive to children's needs and adapted the menu accordingly. One parent told us, "They offer meals and snacks and always open to give him something different if he isn't feeling what's being made on the day". As a result, children had social mealtimes which were relaxed, unhurried and met their nutritional needs.

The childminder gathered detailed information when a child started in the service to form the child's personal plan. While we acknowledged and appreciated that the childminder knew children's care routines, the childminder did not always record formal written records beyond the information gathered from families. To support children's ongoing individual needs, the childminder should develop children's personal plans to ensure they are a current reflection of the child. This should include, but not be limited to, clear records of how their current wellbeing and development needs are supported. Formalising this approach for individual children would ensure that the childminder could then plan for children's current needs in the service and review these with families. One parent told us, "We have been asked to complete and update our answers on what our child enjoys, what helps soothe her and makes her happy, any dislikes etc on a regular basis". The childminder planned to review personal plans every six months as per legislation, however we found this had not always taken place and some reviews had been missed. They should continue with their plan to ensure they review this information with parents at least every six months, or sooner if there is a change in a child's circumstances or wellbeing. The Care Inspectorate 'Guide for providers on personal planning, Early learning and childcare (2021) would support the childminder to develop these and we have made an area for improvement on this (See area for improvement one).

Children's sleeping arrangements were not yet following best practice for safety. A cot or bed was provided in the upstairs of the home. Children provided their own bedding for sleep. We asked that the childminder remove any existing bedding from the bed and place a clean sheet on the bed before each child uses the bed. This would ensure best practice in relation to infection prevention and control. The blinds were closed which created a dark and relaxing room for sleep and each child had their own space for sleep which created a restful and homely environment. The childminder checked on children every thirty minutes whilst they slept. To ensure children's safety the childminder should review the safer sleeping guidance. The length

of time between checks should be reviewed to more regular checks to help keep children safe as there was no monitors in place. The childminder had the capacity to take this forward.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

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

Children participated in play and learning experiences that were engaging and fun. After lunch time in the service children were engaged in play on the floor in the kitchen area. We saw children having fun as they played and interacted with each other exploring books and building with construction toys. They were able to choose from a selection of toys that had been organised at floor level in the living room area. There were age-appropriate toys, reflecting children's current interests and curiosities. The childminder told us they rotate toys depending on the children's interests and age/stage of development. This meant that children were able to freely choose activities from the resources on offer. The childminder could now consider how she broadens children's play experiences to extend learning and development opportunities. This could include a review of resources available to develop more varied, natural and open-ended resources to spark creativity and curiosity in children.

The childminder had a good understanding of how children learn through play. The childminder mostly followed an informal spontaneous planning approach that reflected the interests as well as the ages and stages of children. The childminder had observed children's interests and informally planned experiences and outings based on that. They tailored their approach to meet the needs of the young children in the service. Recent activities included arts and crafts on pancake day, visits to a local farm to see tractors and going to the park to count the birds. This meant that children experienced a wide and varied range of experiences that met their interests and developmental needs.

The childminder encouraged and supported children's language and literacy skills. There were lots of books readily available and regular stories and songs promoted literacy and numeracy development. In addition to this there were alphabet and number pictures displayed, activities such as counting the stairs or the birds at the park and engaging interactions from the childminder to support children's development. As a result, children were challenged and engaged with the experiences on offer which supported their development in literacy and numeracy.

The childminder had built trusting relationships with children and families. Engaging families in the service ensured they felt included in their children's childminding experience. Daily chats and the use of what's app provided opportunities for sharing information, children's experiences and their progress. One parent told us, "We communicate very regularly, she keeps us very well informed when she has our child for the day and sends photos". The childminder was at the very early stages of completing observations of children's progress. The childminder should continue to formalise and develop these and ensure children's observations are meaningful with relevant next steps. This will support children to progress and develop a broad range of lifelong learning skills.

Children were supported to be active and develop physically as the childminder enabled them to spend time outdoors and in the community. The childminder accessed local parks, beaches and green spaces and encouraged children to explore nature. The childminder shared their routine which included visits to playgroups, bookbug sessions, libraries, and soft plays. When asked what they like about the service a parents told us, "Going outside and being taking out to do things like play group. Socialising and playing with the other children" and "They always take the kids out and about, lots of outdoor activities, parks, soft

play on cold wet days, library and bookbug. She keeps the kids active and well cared for, always has snacks to stop for a break". This enabled children to learn key skills and have fun within their local community.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that all children have a personal plan which sets out how their current individual needs will be met. The childminder should:

- a) ensure that they understand the purpose of personal plans and are using the Care Inspectorate guidance 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning, Early Learning and Childcare;'
- b) ensure that personal plans are written and regularly reviewed with children and families, at least every six months, and when necessary, to ensure that information is up to date to reflect children's current needs, wishes and choices;
- c) ensure that all personal plans are meaningful, working documents that support children's care and include strategies of support and progress made.

This is to ensure that 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?

**4 - Good**

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

### 2.2 children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in an environment that was homely and welcoming. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children had access to a living room and kitchen/ diner which had patio doors that opened out to an enclosed garden. The children also had access to the downstairs toilet where the environment had been considered to encourage independence for handwashing. Spaces were comfortably furnished with sofas and cushions and children enjoyed relaxing in spaces. Children were able to make choices from the resources available, as the living room had been organised to promote independence with toys in boxes on the floor. As a result, children were familiar and relaxed in the home from home environment.

Children had their personal care needs tended to within the service. They were changed on a mat in the lounge area, however if children were playing here and to respect children's privacy, they were changed in the downstairs bathroom. The childminder ensured that good hand hygiene practices were followed and although had personal protective equipment (PPE) available for changing children, gloves were not used for changing all children. Their policy follows best practice guidance and states "I will wear disposable gloves during each change." The childminder should ensure that they follow their policy and best practice guidance in relation the changing of nappies to keep children safe and prevent the spread of infection. The childminder was receptive to this and discussed some immediate improvements they would make.

The childminder had a range of risk assessments for the environment and outings. Risk assessments for indoors and outdoors ensured toys and resources were checked for damage and replaced where appropriate. Although risk assessments were in place these did not always reflect the changing risks in the environment for example the stair gate being removed at the top of the stairs. This will be reported on in 3.1 of this report. There were plans in place to review risk assessments at dates throughout the year but risk

assessments should be updated when risks change, or equipment is removed or damaged. The childminder should now develop risk assessments to include daily checks to minimise any evolving risks to children. The childminder had the capacity to take this forward.

The childminder adhered to her responsibilities to ensure children's safety. Children were transported to and from the school in the childminder's car. The childminder had the correct insurance in place and demonstrated that she transported children safely with the use of appropriate car seats. There had been no accidents or incidents to record in the service. The childminder had appropriate forms in place to record any accidents and incidents. The childminder had valid public liability insurances in place for their service which supported a safe environment for the children. This meant that children's safety and wellbeing was ensured.

## How good is our leadership?

## 3 - Adequate

From the evidence gathered, we evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The childminder shared her vision for the service through her welcome pack to parents when they enrolled. This included "In terms of play I am passionate about 'child led play' and giving children the confidence to explore their individual interests and curiosities." and "While Little Nest will be based from my home we will also be spending time outside in the fresh air on walks, at local parks and in the community where we will visit local clubs such as 'book bug' in the library or playgroups in the community centre". These values were embedded in the practice we observed during inspection.

Self-evaluation was at the early stages of making an impact. The childminder had undertaken some self-evaluation through consultation with parents using questionnaires and informal discussions. This meant families felt involved as their views informed the care provided. The childminder should continue to collate feedback from parents and use any suggestions to inform improvements to the service.

Regular evaluations should take place to allow the childminder to identify how the service is doing; consider parents and children's views and opinions; and plan for next steps. We discussed self evaluation with the childminder and guided them to become familiar with the best practice document 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare'. This document will support the childminder to evaluate their work. We also highlighted the improvement section on our 'HUB'. The childminder should use these tools to provide effective structure around self-evaluation. This would enable children to benefit from a service focussed on delivering high quality care and support through a continual improvement journey (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder had some policies and procedures in place to guide the provision of the service to ensure children were safe from potential risks. As part of their quality assurance the childminder should carry out regular checks to ensure they are adhering to the policies, procedures and risk assessments of their service. In the risk assessments they should develop visual daily checks and note mitigations to any risks identified where relevant that would impact children's safety. During inspection there was no gate at the top of the stairs which presented a risk to children who were sleeping upstairs. The childminder identified this had been removed but had not yet actioned the replacement gate to ensure children's safety. We discussed this with the childminder, and they were responsive to this and took swift action to address this issue. The stair gate was in place the following day.

During the inspection, we alerted the childminder to the conditions of registration for the service, and an error they were making when planning attendance. The childminder should display an up-to-date registration certificate and ensure they adhere to the conditions set out within their registration. The numbers are inclusive of their own children. The childminder took swift action to address this and provided assurances that going forward they would operate within their conditions of registration. The childminder planned to apply for a variation to their conditions to enable them to increase the number of children that they are currently registered to care for.

## Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should continue to develop self-evaluation and quality assurance processes using best practice guidance to evaluate the service and identify any improvements. Gathering parents and children's views regularly should be part of this process. This will help identify any areas for improvement.

This is to ensure that 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 a robust and transparent quality assurance processes (HSCS 4.19).

## 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.

### 4.1 Staff Skills, Knowledge and Values

The childminder supported children's wellbeing through responsive care and interactions. Attachments had formed between the childminder and the children attending enabling a feeling of belonging, comfort, and security. The childminder was skilled at building positive relationships with both children and families which had created a warm and welcoming ethos within the service. One parent told us "They are really good; we fully trust her with our daughter. She is patient, takes lots of photos for memories, plays music and dances, cooks lovely food for meal times and keeps the kids busy and entertained all day. She also keeps parents updated throughout the day which is lovely". All parents strongly agreed that they have a good relationship with their childminder and one parent commented "Easy to talk with. Very friendly". Children benefitted from kind and caring interactions that were sensitive, responsive, and met their needs. As a result, children benefitted from secure attachments and positive experiences in the service.

The childminder was a member of the SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association) and used their membership to access materials to support delivery of their service. They had supportive links with other local childminders which provided opportunities for sharing ideas and good practice. This contributed to positive outcomes for children.

The childminder had opened her childminding service just over one year ago and showed commitment to her learning to help develop and grow her service. They had completed core training such as first aid, child protection, additional support needs and Food Hygiene training. As a result, children's wellbeing was supported. To support further development of practice we asked the childminder to review knowledge of current guidance and developments in the sector.



## 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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