

# Little Wonders Childminding Service

## Child Minding

Hawick

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 April 2025

**Service provided by:**  
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**Service provider number:**  
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## About the service

Little Wonders Childminding Service provides a childminding service from their family home in the Hawick area in the Scottish Borders. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age.

The service is close to the local primary school, nursery, shops, and parks. Children have access to the downstairs living room, kitchen and toilet.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 April 2025 between 11:15 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's health and wellbeing was supported by personal plans which ensured that children received the care and support that was right for them. They should continue with their plan to ensure they review personal plans with parents at least every six months.
- Children experienced quality play and learning opportunities throughout the home.
- Children were accessing a fun and stimulating environment that supported their learning and development.
- The childminder had a very good understanding of the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and ensured they had regular access to outdoor spaces within the community.
- Children benefited from a well-considered, safe indoor environment.
- The childminder demonstrated a positive commitment to improving their service and they regularly sought the views of the children and families.
- Children and their families benefitted from a childminder who was committed to providing quality care

## 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?	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 different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

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

During our inspection there were three minded children present who were relaxed and comfortable in the childminder's care. Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from the childminder. The childminder spoke to children in gentle and encouraging tones as she supported them at play. They had developed good relationships with minded children and their families and knew them well. One parent told us the childminder was "Welcoming, friendly, informative, and cares for my child as if he is her own." The Childminder spoke about what was important to each child in their care and was attuned to their needs. They read their cues, providing support for wellbeing when needed, and as a result, children felt safe and secure.

Lunchtime was a pleasant, sociable experience for children. Appropriate seating was in place and children were offered a choice of sitting at the large or small tables which ensured all children could sit comfortably and safely. Children were familiar with the mealtime routine which offered plentiful opportunities for children to develop independence skills. For example, children collected their own plates, self-served their food and washed their own dishes. 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 created in consultation with families. They were responsive to children's needs and adapted the menu accordingly. One parent told us, "Meal plans are reviewed and changed, likes and dislikes are considered" and another said, "We get to see a menu of the week of what is being offered, there is always a good variety". This resulted in children having social mealtimes which were relaxed, unhurried and met their nutritional needs.

All children engaged keenly in the robust approach to handwashing, which embedded positive habits to keep them safe and well. Children were encouraged to independently access a handwashing station and were supported to carry out thorough hand washing routines at regular times throughout the day. A wipeable mat, gloves and an apron were used to prevent the spread of infection during nappy changes. As a result, this helped prevent the spread of infection and to keep children and the childminder safe.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by personal plans. We sampled personal plans and saw that these were created with parents to capture children's needs, interests, and preferences using the wellbeing indicators. We observed that information was updated on chronologies showing that the childminder responded quickly, sensitively and compassionately to the changing needs in each child's life. This ensured that children received the care and support that was right for them. Personal plans had been reviewed annually and not every six months in line with legislation. The childminder shared they had recently attended training and were now familiar with best practice and legislation. 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 ensure they continue to follow legislation and best practice guidance in relation to personal planning.

Children's individual sleep routines were supported by the childminder and were reflective of their families wishes. Children were given opportunities to sleep or rest on a mat within the lounge area of the home. As a result, children's wellbeing needs were being met.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced quality play and learning opportunities throughout the home. The layout of the resources provided children with opportunity to freely access them and encouraged independence and choice. Real attention and detail had been placed on each area of play to support play experiences which included interactive displays and resources linked to their interests. This meant that there were opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play and learning in the environment.

Play spaces and experiences indoors promoted learning and engagement. One parent commented, "He is learning something new all the time" another said, "Play and learning is always kept fun and age appropriate". We observed children engaged in counting experiences and other children were supported to join in and count along too. Early numeracy was promoted as a result. A parent said, "My child has the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment led by a very devoted individual, couldn't ask for anything more". We observed children transporting resources around the spaces to lead their own play. The childminder had a good understanding of how children learn through play. The childminder was attending hygge training and identified that children's play and learning was supported by having access to natural and open-ended materials to support their curiosity, problem solving and creativity. As a result, children were accessing a fun and stimulating environment that supported their learning and development.

Planning for individual children's experiences was responsive which supported children to learn and develop through play. This was evidenced through their floorbooks and responsive planning records. The childminder observed children's interests and planned experiences and outings based on these and children's next steps. One parent told us, "There is always different activities for my son to do on different days and also different outings allowing them to progress in their learning". Children had been observing the recycling lorry prior to inspection. On the day of inspection they were celebrating World Earth Day where they visited the local recycling centre and engaged in play with toy recycling trucks. The childminder placed the needs and interests of children at the centre of activities and experiences. Using effective questioning and tuning into the needs of individual children which supported inclusion, friendships and positive interactions. They spent time with them at their level and helped support their confidence and skills. As a result, children were busy and engaged in their play for long periods of time as they extended their interests and developed their own ideas.

Observations were carried out and meaningfully supported the learning and development of children. Observations were recorded in learning journals and next steps were identified to support children's learning and development. These were shared with families and they told us, "We get to see our sons development book and are able to comment on his progress" and "We are always told about our sons development with our childminder but also what we can do at home to help him along". The childminder knew the children well and their development needs. The childminder was continuing to review and develop their learning

journals and observation formats. They had recently trialled different formats of observations and were looking to develop online formats of learning journals to enhance the families access to these.

The childminder had a very good understanding of the importance of children having opportunities to play outdoors and ensured they had regular access. The childminder spoke positively about the strong connections to the community and the places the service visits regularly. The childminder ensured the children accessed outdoors daily with visits to the local shops, parks and community groups. This helped enrich children's learning and enabled them to develop positive links with their community.

## 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. Areas used for childminding provided ample space for children to play and opportunities to relax. Child pegs and storage at the front door helped ensure children felt welcome and important. Toys and resources were easily accessible to them. As a result, children were familiar and relaxed in the home environment, children were settled and were given the clear message that they mattered.

The childminder's previous conditions of registration had restricted the use of their own garden space for outdoor play. However, the childminder had been proactive in evaluating, risk assessing and developing their garden so that it was safe and this condition was recently removed. Previous to the condition's removal, to ensure children had access to the outdoors, the childminder regularly accessed local community spaces such as parks and woodland. One parent commented, "My son loves to be outside and our childminder is always out and about with them," highlighting how children's health and wellbeing needs were consistently met.

Children benefited from a well-considered, safe indoor environment. One parent told us, "The environment is amazing really safe and secure and always well maintained. We couldn't ask for anything better". The childminder had a good knowledge and understanding of potential risks and had a range of risk assessments for the environment and outings. They promoted the use of SIMOA the elephant which links to linked to the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA - Keeping Children Safe campaign, that they took on outings with children to help them assess and identify any risks. We observed that when the childminder was changing children in the toilet, children were playing in the hallway and accessed the stairs. The childminder should consider the use of a stairgate at the bottom of the stairs if children are accessing this space to help keep children safe.

Children were transported to and from the community 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. As a result, children's safety was ensured.

The childminder had an up-to-date registration certificate displayed within the service. The childminder had valid public liability insurances in place for their service which supported a safe environment for the children.

## 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.

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

There was a clear vision for the childminders service which held children and their families at the centre of their work. The childminders vision included providing a safe, stimulating and loving home from home environment and aiming to provide a high quality of care to each individual child. The childminder confirmed that key information about the service was shared with families, including aims and objectives, policies, and procedures. This helped families to understand the childminder's vision and ensured they were informed about the service provided.

The childminder demonstrated a positive commitment to improving their service and they regularly sought the views of the children and families. For example, questionnaires helped the childminder to plan for any changes to the service. Daily communication with parents helped foster positive relationships and allowed the childminder to respond to any comments or requests. This promoted working together to ensure the childminder met the needs of children and families.

The childminder had begun to complete a robust self-evaluation document linked to the Quality framework key questions. From this self-evaluation they had developed improvement plans that included developing a self-evaluation calendar, developing access to the garden environment and attending Hygge training. Development in these areas would support the childminder to deliver a high-quality service for children and families. The childminder also discussed an interest in developing areas not yet on her improvement plan, such as developing observation formats and journals to online formats. The childminder had been working closely with a Scottish Childminding Association mentor to develop different approaches. As a result, improvement was supported through effective systems.

The childminder had identified that current legislation, frameworks and best practice guidance could be used to further strengthen their approach to self-evaluation through exploring these from the Care Inspectorate Hub. We agreed that this would support continuous improvement further and help ensure positive outcomes for the children and their families.

## 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.

### 4.1 Staff Skills, Knowledge and Values

Children benefitted from the kind and caring relationships they experienced with the childminder. Children were settled and comfortable in the setting. A parent told us, "My child has the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment led by a very devoted individual, couldn't ask for anything more". The childminder was responsive to children's cues for support and reassurance. They understood what children needed to help them grow and develop and responded to their needs in a caring and calm manner. This helped children feel safe and secure.

The childminder understood her role and responsibilities for child protection. They could identify indicators that may suggest a child was at risk of harm and knew who to report concerns to. This contributed to keeping children safe and nurtured.

Children and their families benefitted from a childminder who was committed to providing quality care. The childminder had engaged in a wide range of learning and development opportunities. This enabled the childminder to keep abreast of current practice and kept their knowledge refreshed. The childminder was experienced in early years and held a practitioner qualification. They had completed core training such as first aid, child protection, food hygiene as well as other training in areas of interest such as 'Think STEM', 'Autism ADHD and the senses' and 'hygge' training. Training was evaluated, with the childminder considering how learning was transferred into daily practice to improve outcomes for children. As a result, children's wellbeing was supported.

The childminder worked with families and other professionals to support children's development. For example, they reached out to NHS Childsmile to support toothbrushing within the service or spent time with families at the beginning and end of the day. One parent told us, "We can chat about my son for a good half hour when I go and pick him up and also have a good chat about what is happening for the rest of the week", another said, "Communication is never a problem, super informative". This effective partnership working meant children's wellbeing was supported.

The childminder was very professional and well organised for the inspection. They had worked hard to ensure high standards were maintained. Record keeping was well maintained which supported the delivery of a quality, professional childminding service. We sampled the service's policies and procedures, including medication, complaints and child protection. These reflected the service provided and best practice guidance. As a result, children and their families experienced high quality care and support from a childminder who was dedicated and passionate about their role in ensuring children thrived and flourished in their care. Parents told us, "I honestly couldn't ask for anything more from my childminder, she provides a service in a setting she's created that is absolutely perfect" and "She is made for the position she is in, couldn't recommend her enough".

## 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	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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