

Karen Wilson's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Dumbarton

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 April 2025

Service provided by:
Karen Wilson

Service provider number:
SP2017989507

Service no:
CS2017361995

About the service

Karen Wilson operates a childminding service known as Karen Wilson's Childminding Service.

The service operates from the childminder's home in Dumbarton and is close to local amenities and on a bus route. The children are cared for in the lounge area on the ground floor and have access to the family bathroom which is situated on the upper floor. There is also an enclosed garden to the rear of the property. The childminder makes good use of local community and parks to extend the quality of children's experiences.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 children are not attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family/household.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 April 2025. The inspection was concluded on the 17 April 2025 by telephone, confirming the inspection findings. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 we:

- observed care for a total of three children using the service
- gathered feedback from four families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care which made them feel safe and loved.
- Children were at the heart of the service and cared for by a childminder who knew them very well and who was responsive to their individual needs and interests.
- A warm and inviting setting had been developed where children could access and enjoy a range of quality experiences both indoors and outdoors.
- The childminder made good use of the local area, which supported children in becoming familiar with and included in their community.
- Positive improvements in children's experiences resulted from the childminder's commitment to reflective practice.
- The childminder was experienced, knowledgeable and committed to training and professional development.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident, and secure in the childminder's care. Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed, and one child eagerly introduced themselves and the others. We saw nurturing interactions among the children which reflected the childminder's friendly, kind, and caring manner. Throughout the visit, the childminder consistently provided warmth through cuddles, reassurance, comfort, praise, and clear boundaries. As a result, children felt safe, secure, and loved.

The childminder knew the children well and sensitively shared their knowledge of each child's individual personalities, needs, and interests. All parents strongly agreed they were involved in creating and reviewing their child's personal plan, which included key details such as likes, dislikes, dietary requirements, and healthcare needs. Parents spoke highly of the childminder's approach, describing them as friendly, adaptable, and supportive. One parent said they appreciated how the childminder accommodated changes in their child's routine, while another valued the helpful advice offered to support their child's development. This strong partnership supported effective planning, helping each child learn and develop at their own pace.

Settling-in visits were tailored to meet the needs of each child and family, with the childminder prioritising strong, trusting relationships with parents. To support this, relaxed outdoor visits to a local park were introduced for new families, further strengthening positive connections and easing the transition before visits to the childminder's home began. This approach helped children feel comfortable, secure, and supported, promoting their wellbeing.

To support a calm and relaxed snack time, the childminder sat with the children at a low-level table, engaging in conversation and ensuring their safety. The childminder followed "Setting The Table" guidance, offering a variety of healthy foods tailored to dietary needs and preferences. Children enjoyed a snack of pancakes and strawberries, with one child sharing it was a favourite. Breakfast was also provided, one child told us they liked having porridge in the morning, and a parent noted their child particularly enjoyed choosing and preparing their own breakfast. While parents provided packed lunches, home-cooked meals for dinner such as steak pie were available on request. Children had easy access to their water bottles, keeping them hydrated. These positive mealtime experiences supported social interaction and healthy eating habits.

Children's personal care was sensitively supported, with the childminder respecting their privacy and dignity. A designated space was used for nappy changing, and a comfortable, secure environment was created through chatting, laughing, and singing with the children. Each child had their own bag with spare clothing, which they could access independently, giving them a sense of responsibility. As a result, children felt secure and valued in their care.

At the time of inspection, no children required medication. The childminder confidently discussed medication procedures, including storage, administration, and the management of specific health care needs. A clear policy was in place, and appropriate records were maintained, ensuring effective

communication with families. This demonstrated that children's healthcare needs were understood and well supported.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had access to a variety of age- and stage-appropriate toys and resources that captured their interests, enabling them to confidently make independent choices and engage meaningfully in play. The childminder told us that toys and resources were regularly rotated based on children's interests and requests. During our visit, children happily explored magnetic tiles, looked at books, sang songs, and played with dolls and a pram indoors. As a result, these experiences encouraged the development of independence and decision-making.

During the inspection, we saw children actively engaged in outdoor play in the front garden. The childminder explained that on-going refurbishment limited access to part of the back garden, however the space within the front garden was being used well to provide rich play and learning experiences. Children had opportunities to explore with chalk, brushes, pots, a mud kitchen, and art supplies. We observed them confidently riding bikes and joyfully interacting with bubbles, watching, catching, chasing, and popping them with laughter. This supported the development of gross motor skills, creativity, and social skills through fun and meaningful outdoor play.

In addition to outdoor play in the garden, children's learning was further enhanced through strong community connections. The childminder understood the importance of outdoor play and ensured children had daily access, with regular visits to local parks, childminding groups, cafes, and museums. Frequent playdates with other childminders also supported friendships and connections. A parent commented and told us, "They are always out and about, my child knows the local area much more because of all the adventures they are taken on". These experiences enhanced children's learning and supported the growth of positive relationships and connections within the community.

The childminder demonstrated a strong understanding of child development, they used a child-centred approach to planning and skilfully incorporated children's individual interests, developmental stages, and learning goals. Children's natural curiosity about spring was nurtured through engaging experiences such as seasonal walks, planting, and learning about baby animals. These experiences promoted literacy and numeracy through play. The childminder also supported communication skills through conversations, counting, and introducing new words. Parents told us they were happy with the wide range of experiences provided, as well as the nurturing support their child received, and another shared that they particularly liked the range of diverse activities on offer. As a result, children learned about the world around them while benefiting from high-quality play and learning, that enhanced literacy, numeracy, and overall wellbeing.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The childminder created a warm, welcoming, and nurturing environment with a homely feel, enhanced by a large window that provided natural light and sparked children's interest in their surroundings. Children

proudly shared how they decorated the window with Easter stickers. Their artwork was displayed in a designated area, and they were eager to showcase this during our visit. A readily accessible fruit bowl allowed children to request fresh fruit at any time. One parent commented, "The childminder's house is lovely and well equipped for the children". The play space was thoughtfully designed with the children's needs and input in mind. This created an environment where children experienced a strong sense of ownership, pride, and belonging, making them feel valued.

Children were observed playing safely and confidently within the living room area. The childminder told us they also made effective use of the spacious hallway to provide a wider range of play experiences in a larger area. A sofa with cushions and blankets offered an additional cosy space for rest and relaxation. The variety of safe and comfortable spaces supported children's wellbeing and offered them choice in how they played and relaxed.

The environment was clean and well-organised, with effective infection control measures in place. Very good handwashing practices were observed throughout the visit. The childminder followed best practice guidance, including the use of gloves and aprons during nappy changes and kept a record of cleaning that was carried out. This ensured a consistently clean and safe environment for the children.

Risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed. To further ensure safety, the childminder carried out daily visual checks before children arrived and throughout the day. Some areas needing repair in the back garden had been identified, with plans in place to address them as part of ongoing refurbishment. One parent shared, they felt very confident in their child's safety. These measures contributed to a safe environment where children could explore and learn with minimal risk.

The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), demonstrating a commitment to handling data responsibly and securely. Personal information was stored appropriately, following best practice guidelines to protect the privacy of children and families. As a result a safe, respectful environment had been created where privacy was valued and upheld.

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 improvements are led well

Prior to enrolment, families received key information about the childminder and their family, as well as the service, vision, values, aims, and policies. This helped them choose a service that was right for them. We saw children playing, learning, and having fun, reflecting the aims of the service.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures which supported the service and reflected current best practice. They kept informed through regular updates from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), and the Care Inspectorate. The childminder should continue to review these regularly to ensure they align with current legislation and support the continued delivery of high-quality care.

Children and families views were genuinely valued by the childminder, who understood their input as key to building positive relationships and making improvements. The childminder actively gathered feedback through both informal and formal communication, including daily chats, WhatsApp, Facebook, and questionnaires. One parent agreed and told us, "we are given out regular questionnaires to capture our

thoughts and always given a detailed breakdown of their day at pick up and through the private Facebook group and via text. This open approach allowed families to share suggestions and ideas in a variety of ways, which made them feel respected and involved in the service's continuous improvement.

The children's voices were valued, empowering them to take an active role in the daily plan. The childminder followed their lead, offering them freedom to choose what they wanted to do. They shared information daily and kept a diary log for reflections to inform future planning. This approach allowed the childminder to adapt experiences to the children's needs and interests, placing them at the heart of the service. As a result, children felt confident, engaged, and supported in their learning and development.

As a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), the childminder made good use of resources available, for example, accident and medication form templates, to ensure safety standards were met. They also benefitted from a supportive network where there were opportunities provided to share experiences and best practice with other professionals. This meant the childminder consistently provided a safe, nurturing environment, which led to positive outcomes for the children.

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

The childminder consistently showed a warm and professional approach to their role. They recognised the importance of fun in children's play and were enthusiastic and dedicated to providing high quality care, play and learning experiences, with children truly at the heart of the service, they thrived in a nurturing environment shaped by a kind and consistent approach, ensuring they felt safe, valued, and loved.

Children and families benefited from the childminder's very good knowledge of each family and the respectful, trusting relationships that had been built. Parents spoke highly of the care and support provided. One parent shared, "We are glad to have the childminder in our lives and are thankful for all their help". Another commented, "The care and attention provided is exceptional, and the kids love going", while a third noted, "The childminder provides a 5-star, caring, and professional service".

Children's care, development and wellbeing benefited from the childminder's engagement and commitment to continued professional learning. They completed a range of training, including child protection, first aid, and food hygiene. The childminder kept a record to reflect on and ensure training remained current. They told us how recent training had deepened their understanding of children's development and influenced how they supported and offered experiences. For example, they had recently sourced books and materials to further support communication, this was shared with parents to encourage a collaborative approach to learning at home. As a result, the childminder built on their knowledge to improve outcomes for children and offer meaningful support to families.

The childminder had a very good understanding of their responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children, they were confident in knowing who to contact for advice or support when needed. They had completed a range of safeguarding training and engaged in relevant reading to strengthen their knowledge and understanding. As a result, children were protected and kept safe from harm.

In addition to connections through the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), the childminder developed positive links with other local childminders, creating a valuable support network. This encouraged the sharing of good practice and ideas, as well as regular meet-ups for the children. These strong connections and professional relationships further enhanced the childminder's practice, enabling them to ensure they were getting it right for every child in their care and supporting each of them to thrive and reach their full potential.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.