

Muirhead, Lorna

Child Minding

Bathgate

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 May 2025

Service provided by:
Lorna Muirhead

Service provider number:
SP2008972525

Service no:
CS2008191746

About the service

Lorna Muirhead provides a childminding service from her detached property in Armadale, West Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children under the age of 12. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local amenities, school and park. The children are cared for downstairs and use kitchen, living room and have access to a downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property and a cabin, providing a dedicated play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 May 2025 between 11:45 and 14:15. 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:

- observed the minded children using the service.
- received feedback from four parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing, they were happy and enjoying their time at the childminders
- Children benefitted from a service that was homely, warm, and welcoming.
- Children experienced, positive, compassionate, and responsive care.
- The childminder was proactive in accessing training and professional learning opportunities. This commitment supported a culture where children and families were able to thrive and flourish.
- The childminder had created a warm and welcoming ethos within the service

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 quality key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind, caring, and nurturing interactions from the childminder, who consistently engaged with them in a respectful manner. These positive interactions helped children feel safe and valued, contributing to their overall wellbeing and happiness. The children had developed strong, trusting relationships with the childminder and confidently sought comfort and reassurance from her when needed. We observed that warmth, affection, and emotional support were readily provided, creating an environment where children felt nurtured and secure.

On the day of the inspection, three minded children were present. They appeared happy, settled, and relaxed in the childminder's care. Their warm and attentive approach supported the development of strong emotional attachments, allowing the children to feel loved, confident, and secure in her presence. One parent commented, 'The most positive thing, is the fact I don't think lorna only treats looking after the kids as her job, she has great bonds with all the kids and it shows massively'.

Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well. Children attending the service had personal plans in place that were up to date and had been reviewed with families. This ensured children's current health, well-being and developmental needs were supported appropriately by the childminder.

The childminder had a friendly and open approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships. As a result, effective communication kept parents informed. Conversations when children were dropped off or collected meant there were opportunities for informal chats about each child's day. This meant families were included in children's experiences and care. One parent told us, "Always kept updated on [child] progress, always felt very welcomed and comfortable when discussing anything".

Children were kept safe and protected due to the childminder's understanding of how to respond to concerns regarding a child's health, safety, or wellbeing. A safeguarding policy was in place, providing families with reassurance that any concerns would be addressed promptly and appropriately. This proactive and transparent approach supported children's safety and contributed to their overall health and wellbeing.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun as they actively led their play and learning. They had a variety of opportunities which met their developmental needs, interests, and curiosities. For example, sand and water were readily available, children were able to explore and experiment with the water wall. As a result, children were engaged in exciting and meaningful play.

The childminder was playful in her interactions with children and there was lots of chatter and laughter. She took time to listen to children and pick up on their nonverbal cues. Her enabling attitude supported children to explore and shape their play. Children's perspectives were listened to and taken account of. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected.

Opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills were naturally embedded throughout the environment and daily interactions. The childminder was highly responsive to children's interests and curiosities, and facilitated their learning experiences. This approach supported the development of early language, literacy, and numeracy skills, contributing to children's ongoing progress and achievement.

The childminder's approach to play and activities was child-centred and responsive to the children's interests, wishes and level of skill. Floorbooks highlighted the wide variety of play and learning experiences that had been undertaken over the past few months. Observations were shared with parents, supporting them to be included in their child's learning.

Children had developed positive connections with their local community. They regularly accessed local toddler and music groups, nearby parks and soft play. This provided the children with valuable socialising opportunities and a range of fun activities, which promoted children's overall development and independence.

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 quality key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefited from a service that was homely, warm, and welcoming. The childminder's home was clean, tidy, and furnished to a high standard, providing a comfortable and inviting environment. Outdoors, 'The Cabin' provided an additional, dedicated playroom, where there was ample space for children to play and explore. This contributed to children being valued and respected.

Children were able to direct their own play, selecting from an age-appropriate selection of materials that supported their learning and development. Spaces accessed by children were well organised. Children moved around the space with ease. Children's choice and interests were promoted through safe and easy access to toys and materials such as books, toys and loose parts. The garden offered a range of resources to stimulate curiosity and imagination including sensory play such as water and sand, and mud kitchen. This meant that activities were varied, and children were able to be supported to enjoy challenging, fun play which helped foster curiosity, inquiry, and problem-solving skills.

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the childminder had carried out risk assessments covering the home, key activities, and outings. This proactive approach to risk management created a secure environment with minimal hazards. All parents strongly agreed that their child was safe while attending the setting.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. They asked families for permission before taking photographs and shared their privacy notice and confidentiality policy with families using the service. The childminder had well organised record-keeping which supported her ability to uphold confidentiality and manage information responsibly.

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 quality key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Vision, values and aims of service were shared with parents when they started at the service. This meant that parents had a clear expectation of the service upon starting. The childminder was passionate and committed to ensuring values of service were upheld and this was reflected in her practice.

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, helping children feel loved, safe and secure. They engaged with families and children and asked for feedback about the service through informal conversations and questionnaires. This helped the childminder to reflect on the needs of the children and make changes to support them. All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

Self evaluation was established within the setting and leading to improved outcomes for children and families. The childminder's understanding and use of good practice guidance enabled them to evaluate how well the service was doing. For example, using the Care Inspectorate quality framework document had given them a good understanding of the service strengths and areas for further improvement. We discussed ways to streamline improvement planning. This would support the childminder to identify focussed areas of improvement and develop their service in a meaningful way.

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 quality key question as very good.

4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

During the inspection, we observed the childminder engaging in kind and nurturing interactions with the children. This approach contributed to a caring and supportive atmosphere in which children felt loved and secure. The children responded positively to the childminder's support and were given appropriate time to listen and respond to instructions, promoting their confidence and independence.

The childminder was sensitive, kind, caring and consistent in her approach to children which helped them feel safe and secure. She was committed to ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. The childminder had developed very positive relationships with families which was reflected in their comments to us and resulted in a warm and welcoming ethos within the service. Parent comments included, 'Lorna genuinely cares, is very personable, my [child] sees her as family and absolutely loves going to her, Lorna is a fantastic childminder and we feel very lucky to have her', and, 'I have zero concerns only praise for Lorna, I couldn't recommend Lorna enough to parents, her ethics and morals are the perfect balance to nurture in a positive manner'.

The childminder demonstrated an understanding of the importance of maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills in order to provide high-quality care and experiences. She was proactive in accessing training and professional learning opportunities. This commitment supported a culture where children and families were able to thrive and flourish.

As a result of her dedication to continuous improvement and high standards of care, children experienced a nurturing environment that supported both their emotional wellbeing and learning development.

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 ensure that children's personal plans are reviewed at least on a six monthly basis.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.

This area for improvement was made on 12 June 2017.

Action taken since then

All children's personal plans had been reviewed at least six monthly. Personal plans reflected children's current needs.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should identify training that would help her professional development. If she uses information or research she should keep a record of how she has used it to develop her service.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 12.2: Confidence in staff.

This area for improvement was made on 12 June 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had identified training to support their professional development and improve outcomes for children and families. The childminder had kept a reflective record of training.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should complete and submit an annual return and self-assessment when requested to do so.

National Care Standards - Early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 12 June 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had completed and submitted annual returns in a timely manner.

This area for improvement has been met.

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
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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