

Johnston, Christina Child Minding

Kirkwall

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 April 2025

Service provided by:
Christina Johnston

Service provider number:
SP2012983599

Service no:
CS2012308565

About the service

Christina Johnston is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16; of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. On the day of the inspection there were two children attending the service.

The childminder operates their service from their home in a residential area of Kirkwall within easy walking distance of a school and nursery, play areas, shops and other amenities. Children have access to a designated playroom, lounge and supervised access to the kitchen and bathroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 22 April 2025. 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:

- spoke with two children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed online questionnaires from three parents and carers.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing interactions from the childminder who supported their care needs.
- The childminder knew each of the children in their care very well.
- Children were provided with a wide variety of exciting opportunities which met their developmental needs, interests and curiosities.
- The premises were homely and welcoming which allowed children to feel safe and secure.
- Families had strong communication and relationships with the childminder which resulted in effective partnership working.
- The childminder was a very skilled practitioner and used their knowledge to support children and their families.
- Effective self-evaluation and improvement planning enabled the childminder to be reflective and responsive to the changing needs of their children and 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 key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and positive interactions from the childminder who supported their care needs. They knew the children very well and were responsive to their emotional and wellbeing needs. Comfort and cuddles were offered when needed, which gave them reassurance. This supported children to feel safe and secure during their time with the childminder. A parent told us, "(child) definitely feels safe with [childminder], (child) runs to them and hugs them and definitely enjoys going there."

The childminder spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs, preferences, personalities and what they did to support them. Very effective sharing of information enabled the childminder to provide individualised care based on personal preferences. Families received a daily overview of their child's learning and achievements which included photographs of children's play experiences. This provided them with a chance to share comments and feedback. Additionally, it enabled the childminder to respond quickly and sensitively to any changes in the child's life. One parent told us, "[The childminder] regularly asks for feedback in multiple formats and is also very open with sharing updates on (child's) progress. I always feel like I'm in the loop with how (child) is doing at [childminder's]". Another parent told us the childminder sends a daily report which was useful as it prompts discussion with their child.

Children were nurtured and supported through their daily experiences. They received sensitive and kind interactions during personal care. Their needs were met in a dignified and respectful manner.

Children experienced unhurried mealtimes with a relaxed, positive atmosphere. The childminder recognised the opportunity to build on relationships and joined children at lunch time which promoted meaningful conversations. This contributed to the sociable experience for children and allowed an opportunity for emerging language skills to be developed.

The childminder refreshed their knowledge of child protection and was confident to follow their procedures should they have any concerns about children.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were directing their own play and learning. They had access to a broad and balanced range of resources that met their stage of development. For example, children's curiosity and problem-solving skills were promoted through a selection of open-ended resources. This meant children were engaged and having fun in a range of appropriate play experiences. A parent commented, "My child says they like being with [childminder] as they get to do lots of fun things". Another parent told us their child likes going to the childminder as they, "have good toys and let them do crafts".

Children had access to story books. This supported them to develop skills in early language development. On the day of the inspection, a child was highly engaged and interacting with the childminder as they read and discussed pictures in a book the child had selected. This contributed to the development of early reading skills.

The childminder was playful in their interactions with children. They took time to listen to children and used careful questioning to promote children's curiosity and creativity. They valued children's interests and supported their play, learning and development through following children's line of enquiries at their own pace. The childminder had a very good understanding of children's development and provided effective support to meet their needs and to help them flourish. For example, the childminder responded effectively to children's schematic play types and extended their learning by adding resources. As a result, children experienced high quality play and learning.

Day-to-day routines and experiences were utilised to support children's learning and development. For example, the childminder created natural opportunities to develop and consolidate early numeracy skills, including counting and size, using toy cars. While supporting play, the childminder commented on objects and labelled new vocabulary to children which they then repeated and used in conversation.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by regular visits to the local community. Weekly visits to a local toddler group and meeting up with other childminders helped to promote children's social skills and develop their confidence.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported with regular opportunities for outdoor play. They participated in daily walks in the community as well as visiting the local playpark and a community allotment, where children were growing their own vegetables.

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's home was very warm and welcoming, providing children with a true home from home environment. They had a dedicated playroom where they could choose from a wide variety of resources suitable to their age and stage of development. They were effectively supported by the childminder to explore the resources. This provided very good opportunities for children to develop curiosity, enquiry and problem-solving skills.

Due to ongoing works the childminders garden was not in use at the time of the inspection. However, the childminder ensured children had daily access to the outdoors. For example, they visited local parks and a community allotment. This meant they benefitted from exploring their abilities and the natural environment. This contributed to children having opportunities to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle. Outdoor play was highlighted as a positive aspect of the service by a parent who told us, "This is a particular strength of [childminder], they have a lot of outdoor play which I really value, including regular trips to the polytunnel."

Effective infection prevention and control measures supported children's health and wellbeing. Children were well supported by the childminder to wash their hands effectively at key times throughout the day.

Arrangements for safety and security were well functioning and supported keeping children safe. For example, to ensure a safe environment for children parental permission was sought for trips and outings and effective risk assessments were in place.

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 led well

The vision, values and aims of the service were shared with families, which helped them to have clear expectations of the service and how their child's needs would be met. The vision, values and aims reflected the service provided.

Clear policies and procedures were in place that supported the childminder to deliver a very good service. Policies were reviewed and updated regularly and reflected current legislation and best practice documents. Families were made aware of policies when they joined the setting. This meant that children and families benefitted from a service that demonstrated a commitment to offer high quality care and support.

The childminder recognised the value and importance of positive relationships with families. The views of parents and children were sought to support improvements, using both informal conversations and formal methods. Parents told us that the childminder frequently asks them for their views and acts on feedback, to support children's individual needs and preferences.

Children benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. The childminder was motivated in their approach to ensuring the service was meeting the needs of children. The childminder had used self-evaluation effectively to recognise what was working well and identify areas for development. This continuous cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning enabled the childminder to be reflective and responsive to the changing needs of their children and service.

The childminder was responsive to suggestions we made during the inspection. We found they were well placed to achieve their ongoing improvement priorities to ensure children and families continue to experience quality care, play and learning.

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 was very responsive to the needs of all children. They were skilled, compassionate and demonstrated a very good understanding of child development. The two children present on the day of inspection were visibly happy and comfortable in the childminder's home. They had developed close attachments with them, which supported them to feel safe and secure in their care. Parents spoke very positively about the childminder, comments included:

"[The childminder] is an excellent childminder and my (Child) loves going there".

"[The childminder's] childminding service has been nothing but positive in (Child's) development".

The childminder was passionate about providing the children in their care with high-quality experiences. They had undertaken a wide range of training as well as keeping up to date with core training. For example, the childminder had recently attended training on early language development, supporting them to develop their understanding in early communication. The childminder told us that they put into practice new knowledge to support the children in their care. This meant that children experienced positive outcomes based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

The childminder met regularly with other childminders in the area, sharing information, knowledge and ideas. They told us this provided them with a good network of support, which ensured high quality practice and experiences for children.

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
4.2 Staff recruitment	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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