

# Sarah's Childminding Child Minding

Langholm

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Sarah Phillips

**Service provider number:**  
SP2012983552

**Service no:**  
CS2012308311

## About the service

Sarah's Childminding provides a childminding service from the childminder's home in a quiet area of the edge of the town of Langholm, in Dumfries and Galloway.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children. At the time of our inspection, 14 children were registered with the service. There were three children in attendance during the inspection.

The service is walking distance to the local school and shops and other amenities. The children are cared for in the kitchen/diner, living room, and downstairs bathroom. Children also have access to a large, enclosed garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 June 2025 between 09:50 and 12:20. 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 of the service we:

- spent time with three children using the service
- received three responses to our request for feedback from parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced very good nurturing care and support from a highly skilled and experienced childminder.
- Children were happy and having fun.
- Children's learning and development were being well supported.
- Children benefitted from a clean, tidy, secure environment.
- Parents were very happy with the support and care their child received.

## 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 evaluated this key question as very good. We identified significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from warm, nurturing interactions. The childminder was kind and caring. They supported children very well, providing cuddles and comfort when it was needed, helping children feel comfortable and cared for. Parents spoke very positively of the childminder's relationship with their children. One parent said, "(the childminder) is brilliant. Really feels like a home away from home. My child loves their days with (the childminder)."

The childminder knew children well. Information contained within personal plans reflected their individual needs and were reviewed regularly with parents or carers. This allowed the childminder to plan appropriate support for children, for example, the childminder gently and sensitively supported the children with toilet training. Targets and next steps had been clearly identified for children. This meant that children's needs were being met.

Mealtimes were a calm, relaxed experience which supported children to be healthy and develop positive eating habits. Children were involved in deciding what was for lunch and the childminder then cooked a nutritious home cooked meal. Parents spoke of the good quality of meals provided and one said that there was "always a variety on my child's plate. He will eat food at (the childminder's) that he won't eat at home." The childminder sat with the children while they were eating. This helped keep them safe. There was fresh water available for the children. This helped keep them hydrated.

Communication with families was a strength of the service. A parent told us, "I feel I am able to ask (the childminder) anything or pass on any information and she will communicate with me regarding my child's day." The childminder used an online app to share and receive information with parents as well as using messages and chatting to parents at drop off/pick up. As a result, children received consistency and continuity of care.

No children were receiving medication at the time of the inspection but there were clear procedures in place should they be required. We advised the childminder to update medication forms to include the expiry date and strength of the medication in line with the guidance from the Care Inspectorate's 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' publication. Prior to the conclusion of this inspection, the childminder had updated the forms.

### Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were playing happily when we visited. They played co-operatively with each other. The childminder knew the children well and ensured there were toys that would interest the children, for example, dinosaurs, trains and paper and crayons. This meant that the children were enjoying themselves and having fun. A parent told us, "My child is able to interact (with the childminder) but also in a small group. Has lots of different activities. Books, crafts and play time."

Children were leading their own play and learning. The childminder knew when to play and engage with children in order to extend their learning and support their social skills. For example, by supporting the children's fine motor skills when they were drawing and encouraging them to take turns and share. There were a variety of books available for the children. This supported their early literacy development.

The childminder encouraged children to be careful with toys and tidy up after play. This supported children to be responsible and respectful.

The childminder made good use of the local area to offer further learning and development opportunities for children. For example, by attending weekly toddler classes, and going on walks, trips to the shops and post office. This helped the children build a connection to their community. Good use was also made of the local woodland where children could walk and explore. This supported children's emotional and physical wellbeing.

Robust processes were in place for observing and tracking children's progress and achievements. The childminder was making very good use of an online app to record and share observations with families. Observations were focussed; they highlighted what children had learned which allowed the childminder to plan next steps. The childminder then recorded this in the children's personal plans. As a result, children were progressing well.

## How good is our setting?

## 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We identified significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a clean, tidy and homely space. They spent most of their time in the play area of the kitchen/diner which was carefully planned for them with soft play floor tiles and a selection of toys. This gave children a sense of belonging and helped them feel that they matter.

Children could choose from a range of toys which were appropriate for their age and stage of development. These included jigsaws, a toy kitchen, books, and drawing and colouring resources. The childminder had more toys and rotated these depending on the age and interests of the children who were attending the service. As a result, children were enjoying the toys available and having fun.

Children had regular access to a large, enclosed garden. There was a variety of resources outside including a swing set, slide, bikes and cars and ample space to run around. This encouraged children to be active and supported their physical development. There was also a sand pit, toy house and mud kitchen to develop their curiosity and imagination. Children enjoyed engaging with nature as they watched birds in the garden. Parents told us they were happy with the provision; one said "they do lots of activities and outside time. My child is like part of the family. Love the experience my child gets." Another parent told us "(the childminder) is amazing. She does an amazing job with the kids. They are always doing different activities inside and out. It's never the same thing. She also has a variety of different toys and books for the children."

The childminder had robust risk assessments in place, and they used them to reflect on the environment and consider risks. This included a specific pet policy for their pet guinea pigs. This helped keep children safe.

Children's health and safety was promoted through effective infection prevention and control measures. For example, the house was very clean and after cooking, surfaces were wiped down. Used dishes and utensils were promptly cleared away. Good hand hygiene practices were in place; children were reminded and supported to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. This helped prevent the spread of infection.

Children and their family's personal information was securely stored, and the childminder had registered with the Information Commissioner's Office to protect personal data. This helped protect children and their family's privacy.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good. We identified significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder aimed to "provide a warm, friendly and homely environment" for children. This positively impacted her practice and was reflected in the atmosphere within the childminder's home. The childminder shared the aims of the service with families through a welcome letter so that they knew what to expect.

Families views were sought, through conversations and questionnaires, to support development of the service. For example, the childminder spoke with families after trialling an online app before fully introducing it. The childminder also asked the children what they would like to see in the service and acted on this. This helped the children and families feel valued.

The childminder regularly reflected on their practice. They used self-evaluation tools to ensure continuous improvement within the service. Detailed self-evaluation documents supported the childminder to identify strengths of the service, and to help plan for areas to further develop. For example, the childminder was very good at updating care plans and did this by considering the wellbeing indicators as described in the Scottish Government's 'Getting it Right for Every Child' document.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good. We identified significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

### Quality Indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children benefitted from an experienced, highly skilled childminder. The childminder had a qualification in childcare learning and development and was pro-active about continuous professional development. They had sought out additional training opportunities including child protection, first aid, managing behaviour and play and stimulation 0-3. As a result, the childminder was knowledgeable about good practice. This supported good outcomes for children.

The childminder had a good understanding of how children develop and learn. They referred to key documents such as 'Realising the Ambition' and the 'Curriculum for Excellence' to support them when observing and tracking children's progress. This helped ensure children were meeting their developmental milestones.

Children experienced kindness and compassionate care. Children had a strong attachment to the childminder, they listened to the children and was attentive to their needs. When children started at this service, there was a very flexible settling in process that differed depending on the needs of the child. This meant children felt very secure. A parent told us they felt a positive aspect of the service was, "the 1-1 she has with kids, not overcrowded and can get a good bond with each other."

## 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?	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



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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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