

# Little Giraffes Childcare Child Minding

Dunfermline

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
3 July 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Gillian Brand

**Service provider number:**  
SP2008972119

**Service no:**  
CS2008188154

## About the service

Little Giraffes Childcare operates a childminding service from their home in Dunfermline, Fife. The childminder may provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

The childminder provides a childminding service from the family home in a residential area of Dunfermline close to the local school, nursery, parks and other community facilities. Children use the kitchen, dining and family area on the ground floor of the property for indoor activities while the enclosed garden to the rear of the property provides a safe outdoor play space.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 July 2025 between 09:25 and 11:55. 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 and observed their experiences
- gathered feedback from seven families of children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The childminder was committed to delivering excellence, they blended emotional care with clear, purposeful learning opportunities that supported each child's holistic development.
- Children continued to flourish and develop a sense of security during significant milestones, as a result of inspirational and inclusive approaches.
- The childminder had extremely high aspirations for all children in their service.
- Families strongly agreed that their child was cared for in a safe and secure environment, giving a strong message that children mattered.
- The childminder had formed strong connections with the children and their families.
- The childminder was committed to provide high quality early learning and childcare through a homely, child-centred approach that prioritised children's interests and wellbeing needs.

## 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?	6 - Excellent
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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children and families experienced an excellent service that placed them firmly at its heart. The childminder had a deep understanding of the importance of relationships, and this was a key priority within the service. The childminder supported families exceptionally well and was mindful of family's circumstances and experiences. This approach enabled the childminder to put supports in place that were unique and personalised for the children and their families. For example, highly effective approaches were implemented to assist families during challenging situations such as separation, which supported the whole family. The childminder reflected upon present and past families, referring to them as extended family and demonstrated a professional love for all the children. Families told us "The childminder has made us feel like part of their extended family" and "They are a credit to the profession." These highly positive attachments resulted in children feeling safe, secured and loved.

The childminder knew children very well, they responded to children's verbal and non-verbal cues in a kind, nurturing and sensitive manner. The childminder was responsive to children's individual needs and continued to support children through high quality interactions such as wondering aloud and the use of effective questioning. Children benefitted from a childminder who was an advocate for their rights and who continued to go above and beyond to support children to reach their full potential. For example, supporting a child who required additional support to develop positive relationships during significant transitions, such as starting school. The childminder worked in partnership to ensure the right strategies were in place to ensure the child felt safe and secure. This promoted an exceptionally high quality experience for a child who was able to communicate their thoughts and wishes in a way that they had not be able to do before. As a result of these inspirational and inclusive approaches, children continued to flourish and develop a sense of security during such significant milestones.

Children's wellbeing was supported through highly effective personal planning. The childminder worked in partnership with families to gather valuable information about children's individual needs. The childminder had high aspirations for all children and families. Creative and innovative approaches supported children to continue to make outstanding progress. Strategies of support and encouragement were shared with families and continued to be reviewed. As a result, the voice of children and families were at the heart of the plans. This highly effective approach supported personal planning processes and enabled continuity of care between home and the childminder.

Mealtimes provided children with excellent opportunities to develop their independence and life skills. A variety of unique experiences provided children with opportunities to prepare and eat foods in different environments, for example having meals cooked on a fire at the beach. Through extensive consultation with families and children, the childminder was committed to providing the best possible mealtime experiences for all children. Children were supported by the childminder, who was nurturing and sensitive to children's individual needs and preferences. For example, a child did not want to touch the fruit, this was recognised by the childminder and cutlery was provided. As a result, the child was able to eat their snacks in a way that was right for them. This promoted the child's rights to be included and valued. These carefully considered approaches ensured that children experienced very high-quality mealtimes that were sociable, unhurried,

and relaxed.

Children were supported to understand their rights through creative practices. The childminder worked closely with another local childminder to plan experiences and opportunities for all children. The childminder skilfully embedded the rights of the child throughout all experiences, using the UNCRC (United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child). They used a variety of methods to empower children to learn about these rights and how these relate to them as individuals. Children were empowered through conversations with the childminder that highlighted their rights in a manner and pace that suited them. This approach had supported children to further develop a deeper understanding of their rights.

The childminder has continued to demonstrate how they have continued excellent practice in this area. Through discussions with the childminder and feedback from families, we were confident that these excellent practices were sustainable and the practices in this area would be maintained.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children's play and learning experiences were supported through creative approaches. Children led their own play and independently accessed a variety of high-quality resources both indoors and outdoors. The planning approaches placed high value on the child's voice. The childminder was committed to delivering excellence, they blended emotional care with clear, purposeful learning opportunities that supported each child's holistic development. Their approach was both aspirational and inspirational, setting high expectations while fostering curiosity, confidence, and a love for learning.

The childminder had extremely high aspirations for all children in their service. Children's play and learning was recorded through carefully considered observations. These were shared regularly with families on a communication app as well as the learning wall display before being added to the floor book and shared within newsletters. The childminder continued to share and celebrate significant achievements within children's learning and development. The childminder was enthusiastic and passionate about providing the right support for each child in their care. Children's progress was carefully tracked, gaps in learning were identified and innovative approaches were implemented to challenge children's thinking and learning. Children benefitted from a childminder who tailored experiences to meet individual needs, enabling children to make exceptional progress at a pace that was right for them.

Children benefited from a childminder who had an exceptional understanding about outcomes for children, recognising how these significantly improved when families are involved in their learning. The childminder worked closely with them to ensure children had the best possible start in their learning. The childminder had worked closely with another childminder sharing innovative practice on how to include families in learning. As a result, a video was made by the childminder and another childminder, highlighting opportunities for families to be involved in their child's care. This was shared by the Care Inspectorate as exceptional practice in conjunction with "My Active World," this guidance promotes physical development in early years. This sector leading approach demonstrates continued commitment for enhancing outcomes for children and families.

Children experienced a confident and dedicated childminder who continued to enhance experiences. For example, looking at provisions in local nurseries, and reaching out to other professionals to form partnership working. This included supporting other local childminders, sharing excellent practice as well as working alongside other professionals to best support children. Close partnership working with other childminder has offered a variety of experiences, for example visits to local fruit farms, beach, and forest experiences. A planned Halloween celebration brought families together to celebrate achievements and further develop lifelong friendships. Children were supported to develop life skills such as swimming, supporting their peers

to attend medical appointments to widen their knowledge of visiting health provisions and intergenerational work with neighbours. This carefully considered approach continued to enhance children's wellbeing and resilience, helping them to reach their full potential.

## 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/people, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children attended a setting that was welcoming, homely and comfortably furnished. They had ample indoor and outdoor space to support their play, exploration and rest. Families strongly agreed that their child was cared for in a safe and secure environment, giving a strong message that children mattered. A parent shared "The childminder's home is welcoming and warm and well maintained". This ensured children felt safe, settled and secure in the setting.

The childminder made effective use of the space, regularly adapting it to accommodate different experiences for the children. Cosy couches and soft furnishings provided a relaxing area for rest, while the dining kitchen area offered welcoming space for snacks, baking and creative activities. A dedicated playroom was available for children to access. Toys and resources in the playroom were appropriate for children's age and development stages. These were positioned at the children's level, this made children feel empowered to choose their activities. This well-planned use of space created a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children could explore freely and enjoy meaningful everyday experiences.

The environment was tidy, well organised and hygienic. Daily routines were carried out to ensure high standards of cleanliness. The children's toilet was clean and stocked with soap and individual hand towels. The childminder had effective prevent infection prevention and control measures in place, for example regular hand washing at key points during the day. These measures helped to minimise the risk of cross-infection, supporting a safe, healthy space where children could play and learn comfortably.

The childminder carried out regular risk assessments and visual checks to identify and minimise hazards within the environment. The childminder supported children identifying risks when out in the community, for example the importance of checking for vehicles when crossing the roads. Children had opportunities to be involved in assessing risks through discussions with the childminder, for example staying safe at the beach, highlighting the safety measures when using a fire. As a result children managed risks well and encouraged them to make informed decisions about their safety.

## 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/people, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children's and families' views were genuinely valued by the childminder, who understood their input as key to building positive relationships and making improvements. Children's views on the service that they receive were recorded in floors books and charts. The childminder actively gathered feedback from families through informal and formal communication, including daily chats, messages and questionnaires. A parent

shared "The childminder always welcomed suggestions and feedback the discussions are open and relaxed". This open approach allowed families to share suggestions and ideas in various ways and feel respected and involved in the service continuous development.

The childminder was highly reflective and used the "Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare" to support their practice. The childminder had developed an improvement plan which highlighted what they were doing well and what could be developed further. We could see that the childminder was working through the improvement plan and making changes. The childminder was at the early stages of developing a calendar to enable a clearer overview of events and tasks such as reviewing care plans.

The childminder created clear aims and visions for their service, which was shared with families before their children enrolled. This information helped families to choose a service that aligned with their needs. This focused on the commitment to provide high quality early learning and childcare through a homely, child-centred approach that prioritised children's interests and wellbeing needs.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures that aligned with best practice guidance, including the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS). The policies and procedures were reviewed regularly and amended to support best practice guidance and frameworks. This approach ensured high-quality 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/people, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced compassionate and responsive care which enabled them to feel loved and secure. The childminder understood children's individual needs and recognised the value of strong attachments and responded sensitively to children, offering comfort and reassurance and kind words. As a result, children thrived in a nurturing environment shaped by a kind and consistent approach that ensured they felt safe, valued, and loved.

The childminder was dedicated to continuous professional development and had completed several training courses to enhance their knowledge and skills. As a funded provider with Fife Council, the childminder kept up to date with developments in the sector which also enabled further partnership working. This collaborative approach enhanced children's transitions and strengthened the overall quality of support offered the childminder, children and their families.

Parents spoke highly of the care and support provided, who shared "The childminder is so nurturing and understands my children's needs extremely well. There is no judgement and the support she offers not only to them, but to me as a parent is second to none". The approach meant children and families benefited from the childminder's very good knowledge of each family and the respectful, trusting relationships they had built.

Children benefitted from a childminder who had established close links with other local childminders and childcare professionals, which fostered a community where ideas and best practices could be shared. The

childminder used these opportunities to share her own practices within the profession. This enhanced their knowledge and skills and led to positive outcomes for children in their care.

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

## 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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent

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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