

MacAlpine, Kirsty Child Minding

Falkirk

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 July 2025

Service provided by:
Kirsty MacAlpine

Service provider number:
SP2003909601

Service no:
CS2003015169

About the service

Kirsty MacAlpine operates a childminding service from their home in the Carronshore area of Falkirk. The childminder is registered to 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 children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, the local nursery and school. Children have access to the ground floor of the family home which comprises of lounge, hall, kitchen and toilet. They also have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property..

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 16 July 2025 between 09:15 and 11:30. 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 children in the service
- reviewed digital responses from seven families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder knew children and families very well.
- Children were warmly welcomed and benefitted from a homely environment that gave them a sense of belonging.
- Children were happy and relaxed as their needs were being met.
- The resources provided encouraged children's natural curiosity and creativity.
- To support the continual improvement of the service the childminder should develop quality assurance and self-evaluation processes.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for with warmth, kindness and a nurturing approach. They experienced care that was well considered to meet their needs. The childminder knew children and families very well. They took into account personal preferences and personalities, which ensured the care provided met the needs of individuals.

All families "strongly agreed" when asked if they were happy with the care and support their child received in this service. They told us the childminder was kind and approachable. One family said, "Kirsty is a great childminder and nothing is ever too much for her." Children told us, "She is helpful and good fun."

Families provided snacks and packed lunches for children. Although we did not observe mealtimes, the childminder understood the benefits of everyone coming together to eat. They recognised the importance of sitting with children when possible, and remaining close by to keep them safe when eating. They also understood that a relaxed, unhurried mealtime promoted a positive social experience for children.

The childminder had developed personal plans for children in a way that worked well for the service, children and families. Important information was recorded, stored securely, and updated regularly. This meant that the care provided met the needs of children and respected the wishes of parents. Involving children and recording their wishes and choices within plans would ensure their views were clearly represented and their voices heard.

We were satisfied that appropriate policies and procedures were in place to safely administer, record and share information regarding medication.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

The childminder was responsive in their approach to offering play and learning opportunities. There was a mixture of planned adult led routines, such as attending groups, as well as spontaneous child led play.

Children present during the inspection were busy and having fun as they enjoyed leading their play and learning. They independently accessed a variety of activities offered in response to their interests, as well as their age and stage of development. Children enjoyed exploring open ended and natural resources, such as chiffon fabric and wooden hoops. These resources promoted their natural curiosity and creativity and supported them as they developed problem solving skills.

The childminder had developed a closed and private Facebook group where children's experiences were shared with families. We discussed how this provided opportunities for children to tell their parents and wider family what they had been doing at the childminders. Children's developmental progress was recorded in updates within children's personal plans.

Children benefitted from experiences in the local community. They visited local play parks and enjoyed opportunities to meet with other adults and children when they attended regular group sessions. As a

result, children's opportunities for play and learning were improved as they developed connections to their community.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The entrance and hallway to the childminders home offered children a warm welcome. The childminder had thoughtfully considered ways that gave children a sense of belonging. For example, a notice board displayed information and some children's work. Routines such as children finding their painted figure and placing in a small wooden house to register, and a place to hang their belongings and store outdoor shoes further supported this. We discussed ensuring the service registration certificate was displayed and clearly visible for families whilst the childminder was working.

Children benefitted from a homely environment that was comfortable, well-furnished and offered them space to play, rest and relax. The childminder had given thought to creating quieter spaces for children as they extended play areas into the hallway. Appropriately sized tables and chairs for all children allowed them to sit together comfortably to eat and play. The organised layout meant children could access toys and activities and gave them a message that they mattered.

The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air. The childminder made use of the local community which included local parks, and walked to and from the school every day. This ensured children had regular physical exercise and fresh air as they developed an understanding of the importance of an active lifestyle.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place. Regular cleaning routines meant the spread of infection was minimised. Handwashing at key times was encouraged, and further enhanced infection prevention and control measures.

The property was well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised. At the time of inspection the childminder was having work carried out in the front garden area. They had created an additional risk assessment to ensure children and families safety as they entered and exited the property. As a result, children were cared for in a safe and secure environment where their wellbeing was prioritised.

The childminder understood the importance of keeping children's personal information secure. They asked families for permission before taking photographs and shared their confidentiality policy with families using the service.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The vision, values and aims of the childminding service were evident in the warm, responsive and fun

interactions we observed throughout the inspection. One family told us, "Kirsty's is a very welcoming and happy atmosphere."

The childminder knew children and families very well and their views were important to the childminder. Positive relationships and regular communication supported the informal ways used by the childminder to evaluate their service. For example, daily chats with families as they dropped off and collected their children, and by observing and talking to children about their thoughts and interests.

The childminder should develop ways to record their reflections as they evaluate the service. We highlighted best practice guidance which could help with this. For example, the Care Inspectorate bitesize resources. This could support them to find ways that suit them to reflect and record what is working well in their service and what could be improved. This may also support children and families to have more meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the service (see area for improvement 1).

The childminder recorded children's attendance at the service. We discussed the importance of ensuring records remain up to date and accurate as this supports them to operate within the conditions of their registration.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children receive high quality care and support, quality assurance and self-evaluation methods should be further developed. Opportunities should be created to formally gather and include children and families' views. This will help to identify areas for improvement that will impact positively on outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion in the fun interactions we observed throughout our visit. The rights of the child were promoted and evident in the childminders practice and in how they communicated with children. For example, the childminder sat at children's level as they listened and chatted with them. There were lots of smiles and very good eye contact between them. As a result, secure attachments had been developed and children were happy and relaxed as their needs were being met.

Children told us they liked going to the childminders and had fun playing with their friends. One child said, "I like the activities Kirsty does with me. I like Kirsty and how kind she is and she takes good care of me." One family told us, "We think she is fabulous and are very grateful for her." Another said, "She is always so welcoming and will always communicate openly."

The experienced childminder had a good understanding of child development. They were mindful of this as they planned play and learning experiences to ensure activities were age and stage appropriate.

The childminder made use of their Scottish Childminding Association membership and had accessed some online training relevant to their service. They had started to record training events they had attended and were beginning to reflect on the relevance and impact on their service. The childminder spoke confidently about their learning and how they had taken this forward with children. For example, purchasing and introducing new resources to further support children's understanding of emotions.

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 access further professional development opportunities such as reading current guidance and reflecting on their learning. This will support the improvement of outcomes for children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 3 April 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had attended training courses to support their professional development. They were developing ways to record the impact of training and spoke confidently about ways in which their knowledge, understanding and practice had improved as a result. This was evident in the resources and experiences available to children.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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