

Karen Lauder (Childminding Services) Child Minding

Bathgate

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 July 2025

Service provided by:
Karen Lauder

Service provider number:
SP2013984722

Service no:
CS2013316219

About the service

Karen Lauder (Childminding Services) is registered to provide a childminding 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. The service is located in a quiet residential area of the town of Bathgate in West Lothian. The childminder works with the local authority to provide funded early learning and childcare.

Children are cared for across several rooms in the childminder's home, including the designated playroom, the kitchen/diner and the living room which is mainly used for sleeping. There is a toilet downstairs and children have direct access to the garden from the kitchen/diner. The childminder uses a vehicle for childminding purposes and there are relevant safety checks and insurances in place.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 29 July 2025 between 10:30 and 13:00. 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:

- spent time with two children
- received feedback from six parents and carers
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and learning to be independent with the nurturing guidance and support of the skilled childminder.
- Children's needs, rights and choices were met consistently because the childminder worked closely with families to recognise and respect each child as an individual.
- All families were very happy with the care, play and learning the childminder offered their children in their daily experiences.
- Children enjoyed healthy, nutritious, homemade meals during relaxed and unhurried mealtime experiences.
- Children were cared for in a clean, safe and well-maintained setting that was carefully planned to respect their needs, rights and choices.
- The childminder was committed and dedicated to providing a high-quality experience for all children and tailored their own learning to find new ways to meet children's individual 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?	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 nurturing support throughout their daily experiences. The childminder was kind and loving, helping children to feel safe and secure in their care. One child told us, "I like Karen! She's nice and kind." There were strong and trusting relationships between children, families and the childminder which ensured everyone felt valued, respected and included. One parent said, "Karen's approach is very child-centred and she takes time to get to know each child as an individual." As a result, children were happy, confident and encouraged to be independent in ways that supported their emotional wellbeing and helped them to develop skills for life.

Each child had a personal plan in place that had been developed between the childminder, families and based on observations of children's experiences. The childminder listened carefully to children's actions, emotions and words to understand their needs, rights and choices. This then helped them to develop each child's personal plan and share children's learning and development with families. Children experienced very good, individualised care and support because the childminder regularly made changes to children's routines based on their discussions with families and their own understanding of children's progress. One parent told us, "Karen checks in regularly regarding (child's) care. If I had anything I wanted to add in or change about it, I would easily be able to approach her to discuss." We encouraged the childminder to improve records of children's routines so these remain accurate as children's needs change. This will enhance the very good support children were experiencing.

Some children settled to sleep in the childminder's home and the childminder provided them with a safe and comfortable space for this. The childminder was responsive to children's need for sleep, watching carefully for unique signs that they needed some rest. Children's sleep arrangements were in line with best practice; for example, children had their own bed linen and infants slept in cots with a firm, flat base. This ensured children were safe and healthy while they slept. The childminder had worked with families to ensure children slept safely, transferring them from buggies to cots, where appropriate. As a result, children enjoyed very good quality sleep that helped them to grow and develop.

Children enjoyed healthy, nutritious meals and snacks that were cooked and prepared by the childminder. The childminder was registered as a food business and had completed relevant training to ensure children remained safe and healthy. The childminder sat with children while they ate, helping the mealtime to be relaxed and unhurried. The routine was carefully considered so that children were safe and enjoying their mealtime experiences. Children washed their hands and were developing independence to feed themselves and feel included in the experience. This meant children were developing positive relationships with food that supported their overall health and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children enjoyed a very good range of fun, motivating play and learning experiences that supported them to develop. One child said, "I love the activities Karen does. She's got the best crafty stuff. I like playing with the little ones after school and helping Karen look after them." Children giggled as they played, seeking quality time with the childminder who responded skilfully and appropriately to help them learn. The childminder confidently supported children to develop speech and language, naming objects and enjoying reciprocal 'back and forth' discussions with infants. One parent commented that their child's play and learning included, "Varied activities and developmental opportunities offered. Support offered to early developmental milestones and progressing independence in terms of personal care." These experiences meant children were developing a range of vocabulary and beginning to understand that their voice was important and valued. This helped to build children's confidence while promoting important skills for life.

One parent told us, "We feel so lucky to have Karen looking after our child. She creates such a warm, nurturing, and safe environment where our little one is excited to go every day. It's been wonderful to see how much they've learned and grown under Karen's care, from developing social skills to exploring creative activities." Children spent lots of time in the local community, exploring natural spaces and meeting up with other children at group activities. This helped them to increase their understanding of the world and develop social skills. Children also enjoyed play in the childminder's home where they could choose their own experiences independently, including enjoying regular access between the indoors and outdoors. Children were offered play and learning that encouraged them to be creative, imaginative and helped them to explore their own ideas and interests. Children's ideas were respected and the childminder responded quickly to their requests for play.

The childminder recorded children's play and learning in 'floorbooks' which captured photos of children's experiences and linked their learning to their overall development. By recording children's progress in these books as well as in children's folders, the childminder was able to see where children were progressing well and where they could support children better to achieve their potential. We were confident that the childminder's skills and experience supported children to make very good progress in their learning and development. We encouraged the childminder to continue developing how they recorded their observations of children's play, so this clearly showed children's progress.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as **very good**, where major strengths promoted positive outcomes for children and there were very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a safe, clean and well-maintained setting that was planned to meet their needs, rights and choices. The childminder carefully considered children's age and stage of development to create spaces that were safe, while also offering them opportunities to learn and develop independence. For example, play resources were available in the kitchen to keep children engaged while the childminder prepared their meals. This meant children were well supervised and enjoying play while they waited for their meal. This respected their rights and choices while also keeping them safe from potential harm. One parent told us, "I fully trust Karen and that the environment she provides is safe and nurturing. Her house is very clean and tidy and the play spaces are well thought out." Children's play resources were stored safely and were freely accessible for children to choose their own experiences. The childminder was responsive to their actions, emotions and words which helped them to move through spaces in the home based on children's needs and interests. The childminder was currently reviewing the resources they had for children to ensure there was a very good range available, while also ensuring they served a valuable purpose in children's learning and development. We agreed this would further enhance children's experiences and promote targeted learning and development opportunities.

The childminder maintained a very clean, safe and well-maintained setting that was warm, comfortable and well-ventilated. We were confident that appropriate infection prevention and control measures were being implemented by the childminder to keep children safe and healthy. One parent said, "Karen's home is spotlessly clean, great facilities for children and I know my daughter is well cared for." The childminder had developed risk assessments to identify potential hazards to children's health and safety so they could reduce any risk associated with these hazards. We discussed with the childminder some additional measures that could be put in place to increase children's safety. For example, a barrier could be put in place down the side of the home outdoors and relevant child locks should be replaced on some kitchen cupboards. This would further protect children and ensure they remain safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership?**5 - Very Good**

We made an evaluation of **very good** for this key question. There was a culture of continuous improvement that did not require significant adjustment to ensure positive outcomes and experiences for children.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder's values included respect, nurture, love and compassion for children's needs, rights and choices. There was a strong sense that children's views and opinions were valued and that children were consistently encouraged to be independent and achieve their potential. The childminder had built strong relationships with children and families that were based on trust and respect. One parent said, "We feel like we have developed a lovely relationship with Karen as a family. We really value her and know she cares for our daughter. She's friendly and approachable and great at looking after (child)." Children and families were listened to carefully by the childminder who responded quickly and effectively to their requests and ideas. This ensured everyone felt included and valued as a part of the childminder's service.

The childminder was proactive in evaluating and reflecting on the quality of children's experiences in the service. They used relevant best practice and quality frameworks to support their understanding of what they were doing well and how they could improve. Families were regularly asked to give feedback and this helped the childminder to know if they were achieving their aims. One parent told us, "Communication has always been excellent, and we've felt completely at ease knowing our child is happy and well looked after."

As a funded provider with the local authority, the childminder was making very good use of the support and development opportunities this offered, taking time to learn from feedback and make changes where appropriate. As a result, the childminder's policies and procedures that were shared with families were up to date with recent best practice guidance, ensuring children experienced high quality care, play and learning in line with national expectations. The childminder was building their confidence in recording their reflections and formal evaluations of the service. There was an action plan in place to support the childminder's thinking and drive improvement. We encouraged the childminder to continue finding new and sustainable ways to review and evaluate children's experiences and outcomes in line with best practice, promoting a culture of continuous improvement. This will ensure that children's experiences continue to improve over time.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as **very good**, where major strengths promoted positive outcomes for children and there were very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

Children experienced very good care, play and learning experiences because the childminder was committed and dedicated to their role. Their passion for nurturing children's development was evident in how they supported children in their daily experiences. The childminder was warm, kind and compassionate which helped children to feel valued, loved and secure. As a result, children and families enjoyed a respectful, caring and inclusive experience that was closely linked to their needs, rights and choices. Children enjoyed extended quality time with the childminder where their development was the main priority across their care, play and learning. One parent said, "I think the most positive thing is the bond between my (child) and Karen. (Child) truly loves Karen and it's lovely to see." Another parent told us, "She is warm and creative and a naturally child centred person." We were confident that the childminder was supporting all children to develop a positive sense of wellbeing as a result of this practice.

The childminder was proactive about learning and developing their own practice so that children enjoyed relevant, tailored care and support that reflected their needs, rights and choices. For example, the childminder had recently completed 'Bookbug' training which supported them to offer infants and children high quality language and literacy experiences. This matched the range of ages of children registered in the service and helped them to achieve their potential. Children's experiences were improved following the childminder's learning which showed their commitment to remaining skilled, well trained and competent in their role. One parent commented that, "She shows clear commitment to high standards and her enthusiasm for her job and the children she works with is clear to see." The childminder was aware of recent developments and changes in best practice guidance and acted to reflect this in their practice as quickly as possible. This meant children experienced relevant, evidence-based care and support that promoted positive outcomes. We were confident that the childminder would continue researching and developing their practice and encouraged them to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment to their own learning and progress as a professional.

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

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