

Ford, Gillian Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 August 2025

Service provided by:
Gillian Ford

Service provider number:
SP2004942456

Service no:
CS2004084928

About the service

The service is provided from the childminder's family home situated within a quiet residential area in the south west of Glasgow. The mid terraced property provided children with access to a lounge, kitchen, downstairs toilet and back garden. The service is conveniently located close to other schools, nurseries, shops and parks.

The service is registered to provide care for 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. An assistant was registered to support the childminder in the service. When they are present the service may accommodate five children not yet attending primary school. The childminder had variation to have these numbers temporarily increased until 28 January 2016. We have asked the childminder to submit a variation to have this temporary condition removed.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 August 2025 between 09:15 and 12:15. Feedback was given to the childminder on 7 August 2025. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. During our inspection there were 2 children present. 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:

- received electronic feedback from six families who used the service
- spoke with the childminder
- spoke with the childminder's assistant
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children received outstandingly high care and support within a secure and responsive childminding environment.
- Children experienced extremely high levels of engagement which supported their play and learning.
- Children benefited from a warm, well-organised, and stimulating environment that supported their play, learning, and emotional wellbeing, with thoughtful spaces and resources tailored to their individual needs and interests.
- The childminder should provide opportunities for parents to spend time within the play environment could further strengthen relationships and enhance their understanding of their child's experiences.
- A continual focus on improvement led to outstanding experiences for children and families.
- The childminder and the assistant contributed positively to the continuity and quality of care, with warm, trusting relationships and valuable skills that supported children's wellbeing and strengthened family confidence in the 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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

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

Children experienced outstandingly nurturing care which was warm, consistent, and responsive care within the childminding environment. The childminder demonstrated a strong understanding of each child's individual needs, offering personalised support that promoted emotional security and wellbeing. Interactions were kind and compassionate, and routines were adapted to suit the children's preferences and developmental stages. We observed children engaging confidently in play and learning activities. Children were very settled and felt secure in the childminders care. They were independent and were beginning to manage their emotions well. They interacted positively with one another during play and daily routines.

Children appeared very happy and settled throughout the observation. The childminder cared deeply for the children in her care. They played independently and confidently, requiring minimal support from the childminder. There were warm, nurturing interactions between children and the childminder, marked by frequent praise, encouragement, and affectionate gestures such as kisses and cuddles. These moments reflected a strong emotional bond and a secure attachment, contributing positively to children's overall wellbeing and development. We received very positive feedback about the nurturing care and support children and families received at the service. Parents comments included:

"The childminder goes above and beyond! She builds up strong, loving relationships with both the children and her families. When my oldest child was still at the childminder's and my baby was born, they went above and beyond to help support during this difficult transition phase of being a big sister. The childminder is very nurturing and is always so positive and supportive to us as parents and the childminder is just amazing. I love the nurturing nature and warm welcome I receive."

The childminder had ensured that each child had a personal plan in place, developed in partnership with parents who provided detailed information about their child's routines, preferences, and needs. These plans had been reviewed and updated every six months to reflect any changes, ensuring that care remained responsive and tailored. This approach had supported continuity between home and the childminding setting, which helped children feel safe and secure.

The childminder provided nutritious, home-made snacks and lunches for the children. Mealtimes were an important and meaningful part of the day. Snack time was relaxed and sociable, with children sitting together and chatting naturally as they ate. The older child present showed independence by pouring their own water and cutting up their banana with gentle support. These moments encouraged the development of practical life skills and supported social learning, as children observed and learned from one another. The childminder used mealtimes to promote conversation, reinforce good manners, and create a sense of community. Parents had expressed appreciation for the care and thought put into the meals, recognising the childminder's commitment to healthy eating and positive routines. Some of their written feedback included: "Home cooked meals and choices of snacks are often far better than options at home! Great appetite for food and trying different foods, encouraged by the childminder and the childminder provides healthy meals and snacks, my kids love eating at the childminder's. She makes sure she has variety to offer."

The childminder shared that they had recently completed safe sleep training and had taken steps to review and improve their practice. As part of this, sleep mats had been purchased, and each child had their own individual bedding, which was laundered regularly within the service. These changes demonstrated a proactive approach to ensuring children's safety and comfort during rest periods. The childminder's commitment to following best practice helped reassure parents and contributed to a safe, nurturing environment that supported children's wellbeing.

As an experienced childminder and former foster carer, the childminder had demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Their experience had clearly informed their practice. This strong foundation helped ensure that children were safeguarded and that parents felt confident in the childminder's ability to protect and promote their child's wellbeing.

The childminder maintained informal contact with several children and families following the conclusion of their formal care arrangements. This ongoing contact included occasional visits and phone conversations. The childminder's ongoing contact with former families reflected the strong, trusting relationships built during the period of care.

1.3 Play and learning

Children engaged in rich, high-quality play experiences that fostered creativity, collaboration, and deep learning. The childminding environment had been thoughtfully set up to support child-led learning through a variety of stimulating and creative resources. Although the space was homely, it offered rich opportunities for exploration and play, including magnetic shapes, magnifying glasses, small world toys, cars, soft toys, and a selection of books.

During the visit, a child had been highly engaged in building a house using magnetic shapes. The childminder supported them sensitively, extending their learning through meaningful interactions. They had introduced shape names, encouraged counting, and posed open-ended questions such as, "What happens if we put the two triangles together?" and "Where does this go if you want to build a tall one?" This approach promoted early numeracy, language development, and critical thinking. The child responded enthusiastically, saying, "Let's make it again!" once they had completed their structure, showing enjoyment and a desire to revisit and build on his learning. The childminder's responsive and encouraging style had a clear impact on the child's engagement and development, fostering independence and creativity.

Children were regularly provided with opportunities to explore and engage with their local community, including visits to nearby parks, the local library, and woodland areas. These experiences were thoughtfully planned and supported by the childminder, who demonstrated a strong understanding of the value of outdoor and community-based learning. Outings within their local community supported children to build confidence, independence, and social skills. Interactions with peers and members of the public helped children develop respectful relationships and a sense of belonging. Parents who provided written feedback valued the opportunities their children had to learn in and be part of their local community. Some of their comments included:

"They love going on adventures in the woods. My child loved highland cows and they would regularly visit them in Pollok park. They often go to the park, library or even just outside playing in the mud kitchen and the childminder takes the children to the park, library, garden. If our son expresses an interest in a particular topic, Gillian will find activities that suit, eg castle book and jigsaw, Spiderman toys, map making"

The childminder had created a big book that captured photos and observations of children's experiences in the setting. These were thoughtfully linked to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), demonstrating how

activities supported key areas of learning and development. The book was clearly valued by the children and inspired their play. One child in particular enjoyed showing it to the inspector and talking about the photos, proudly sharing their achievements. Children's voices were captured throughout the journal, with their comments and reflections included alongside observations. By actively incorporating children's views, the childminder was able to plan meaningful future outings and experiences that enriched children's learning and demonstrated excellence in responsive, child-led practice."

The childminder recorded observations of children's learning and progress, capturing meaningful moments across a range of experiences. These observations were used effectively to identify and plan next steps, ensuring that activities remained responsive to each child's interests and stage of development. This reflective and individualised approach had a positive impact on children's learning, helping them build on existing skills, stay engaged, and feel supported in their development. It also enabled the childminder to track progress over time and share meaningful updates with parents, strengthening the partnership between home and the setting.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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.

The childminder's home was observed to be warm, welcoming, and well-prepared for children. The environment was clean, tidy, and well-maintained, creating a safe and comfortable space for play, rest, and learning. The layout and organisation of the home reflected thoughtful planning and a strong commitment to providing a high-quality experience for children.

The childminder had thoughtfully arranged the environment and resources in a way that sparked excitement and curiosity in the children. Activities and materials were clearly chosen with the children's individual stages of development and interests in mind. Areas were set up to invite exploration, creativity, and problem-solving, with a balance of quiet, imaginative, and active play opportunities.

The childminder had made creative use of space within their home to enhance the learning environment. A storytelling den had been thoughtfully created in the hallway using soft furnishings, a canopy and a selection of age-appropriate books. This inviting space was clearly designed with children's interests and comfort in mind. The den offered a quiet retreat where children could relax, self-regulate, and feel safe. This contributed positively to their emotional development and sense of belonging within the setting.

Children were observed moving confidently between areas, engaging deeply in their play, and showing enthusiasm for the experiences on offer. For example, one child was observed engaging in an extended period of focused play with magnetic construction materials. The child then transitioned independently to completing puzzles in the kitchen area, followed by drawing and painting. Each area was well-prepared and accessible, allowing the child to move freely and confidently between activities. The activities observed supported a range of developmental areas, including fine motor skills, problem-solving and creativity.

Children had direct access from the kitchen to a very safe and secure rear garden. The outdoor area was well-resourced, featuring a playhouse, climbing frame, and a variety of age-appropriate toys. The garden also benefitted from natural shade provided by mature trees, creating a comfortable and inviting space for outdoor play in all weather conditions. The childminder's outdoor environment was thoughtfully designed

and well-maintained. It offered a rich and stimulating space for children to explore, play, and learn. The secure access and natural features contributed positively to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, and overall development.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining effective infection prevention and control practices throughout the setting. Children were consistently encouraged and supported to wash their hands at appropriate times, including before eating and after using the toilet. The childminder modelled good hygiene practices and used age-appropriate strategies to help children understand the importance of cleanliness. Additionally, safe and hygienic nappy changing procedures were observed, with the childminder following best practice guidance. This included the use of disposable gloves, cleaning surfaces before and after use, and ensuring privacy and comfort for the child.

The childminder had effective communication with parents and regularly consulted them about their child's care. However, we noted that parents did not currently have the opportunity to spend time within the play environment. One parent told us "Although we haven't been inside Gillian's house for a while, we have no reason to believe the setting is not well maintained or unsafe." This meant parents may have missed out on seeing first-hand how their child played, learned, and interacted in the setting. Offering access to their home could help strengthen relationships and give parents a fuller picture of their child's experiences. We encouraged the childminder to reflect on this aspect of practice and signposted them to the Care Inspectorate guidance document "Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting" to support further development in this area.

How good is our leadership?

6 - Excellent

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

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

The childminder demonstrated exemplary leadership and management, underpinned by a clear commitment to continuous improvement and reflective practice. Through robust self-evaluation and strong professional values, the service was well-organised, inclusive, and responsive to children's needs. This ensured consistently high-quality experiences that supported children's wellbeing, learning, and development.

The childminder had a strong grasp of quality assurance and had taken part in training around self-evaluation and improvement planning. This helped them reflect on what was working well and what could be better. A quality assurance calendar was used to keep track of important tasks and checks. This approach supported positive outcomes for the children and families. Children benefited from a safe, well-run environment where their individual needs were met, and parents felt confident in the childminder's commitment to providing high-quality care. Their reflective and structured way of working helped build trust and created a positive experience for everyone involved.

The childminder was extremely confident in making changes to practice when they felt they would benefit the children. They involved families in the process by talking things through and listening to their views. One example was their decision to stop using the car for outings, choosing instead to walk with the children. This gave children more time outdoors, enjoying fresh air and getting regular exercise. This supported their physical health and wellbeing. They also made thoughtful changes to sleep routines to make sure children were resting safely and comfortably. These kinds of changes highlighted the committed they put into meeting children's needs, while also working in partnership with families. As a result of these changes the

children were more active, healthier, and well cared for. Families felt reassured knowing their childminder was always thinking ahead and making improvements with care and confidence.

The childminder initially sought to gather feedback from families through the use of questionnaires; however, the response rate was limited and did not provide the level of engagement they had hoped for. Demonstrating a reflective and responsive approach, they adapted their strategy and now shares the aims of her service with families on a termly basis. This revised method invited parents to confirm whether they agreed with the stated aims, suggest any additions, and provide feedback on whether they felt the service is meeting those aims in practice. This approach led to more meaningful and consistent communication with families, fostering a stronger sense of partnership and shared responsibility. All six families who provided feedback strongly agreed or agreed that they and their child were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. This demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and a child-centred approach, both of which are key indicators of high-quality care.

How good is our staff team?

6 - Excellent

4.3 Staff Deployment

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

The childminder's husband was registered as an occasional assistant and was primarily involved in supporting the collection of older children from school. Although not working at the time of our inspection, they were seen taking over the care of a minded child while the childminder attended to an important phone call. The child was clearly very pleased to see the assistant and was comfortable in their care. The assistants interactions were warm, compassionate, and reassuring. This contributed positively to the child's emotional wellbeing. The assistants professional background in the care sector brought valuable transferable skills to the role, including a sound understanding of safeguarding, empathy, and effective communication.

The childminder and the assistant worked together with ease and mutual respect, creating a calm and nurturing atmosphere for the children. They shared a common ethos centred on kindness, empathy, and a genuine desire to offer high-quality care. Their communication was open and supportive, allowing them to coordinate daily routines smoothly and respond to the children's needs in a thoughtful and consistent way. As a result children were happy and settled in their care.

The assistants role ensured that the childminder could continue to offer care to families whose children had transitioned to school. This ensured continuity of care and reassurance for children and families. Families who provided feedback wrote very positively about the relationships and care they and their children received from the childminder and the assistant. They all strongly agreed that they were happy with the service and that they had exceptionally good relationships with the childminder and the assistant. Some of their comments included:

"The assistant has built a strong loving relationship with my children"

" The childminder and the assistant are such positive role models in my children's lives"

"The childminder's family are lovely and always professional"

"I have a great relationship with the childminder and assistant and appreciate all their help and support. I would be lost without them".

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?	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?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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