

Linda Leitch Child Minding

Carluke

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 August 2025

Service provided by:
Linda Leitch

Service provider number:
SP2023000169

Service no:
CS2023000266

About the service

Linda Leitch provides a childminding service from the family home in Carluke, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children up to the age of 16. Numbers are inclusive of members of the childminder's family. There are currently six children registered with the service who attend on a flexible basis in line with the conditions of registration.

The children have access to the downstairs of the property, mainly the conservatory which is used as a playroom and a downstairs toilet. They have access to an enclosed rear garden and regularly access places in the local area. The service is close to schools, nurseries, parks and public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 August 2025 between the hours of 09:30 and 12:15. Feedback was shared by telephone at 18:30 hours that evening. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the first inspection of this service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three children using the service and received five questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder was kind, caring and knew children and families well. This nurturing environment helped children feel settled, safe and secure.
- Children were happy, having fun and took part in a variety of child-led, responsive play experiences, both indoors and outdoors over the course of our visit.
- We advised the childminder to review and update children's personal plans with parents in line with legislation. This would ensure all information was current to meet children's individual care and support needs.
- Children experienced high quality facilities at the childminder's home, which was clean, homely and well-maintained.
- The childminder was in the early stages of implementing self-evaluation and improvement plans to build and develop their service. The ongoing development of these would maintain and improve outcomes for children and families.

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?	4 - Good
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

The childminder knew children and families well and trusting relationships had been developed and maintained. Kind, nurturing interactions between the childminder and children were observed over our visit. Children were cuddled, reassured, supported and their individual achievements praised. As a result, children were happy, settled, safe and secure. Parents told us, "My child really enjoys going to their childminder's, where they feel happy, cared for and excited to play and learn each day" and "Linda provides a high standard of care for all children and always has great relationships with all children they care for."

The childminder was aware of each child's care and support needs, interests and stage of development, supporting children with taking turns and developing their independence. They were responsive to children's needs, requests and choices. This gave a message to children that their ideas and feelings were valued and mattered.

All five parents who completed our questionnaires agreed they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan. Comments included, "I am fully involved in my child's care and development, working closely with the childminder to support their growth and wellbeing" and "I don't really know about my child's personal plan but I see they are thriving since attending Linda's."

We sampled children's personal plans and advised where these should be reviewed and updated with parents in line with legislation. This would ensure each child's plan was a reflection of their current stage of development, routines, interests, health and care needs, while taking account of good practice guidelines. **(See Area for Improvement 1).**

Lunch was provided by the children's parents which met their personal preferences. The childminder also provided a variety of healthy snacks and drinks. We advised the childminder to ensure children could independently access fresh drinking water throughout the day to enable them to remain hydrated, as their drinking bottles were not in children's reach.

Lunchtime was a pleasant, sociable experience with children seated around a low table or highchair to suit their needs. Food was decanted from lunch bags on to plates which created a more homely environment and supported children to make choices about which food they would like to eat and how much. Children told us, "I like yoghurt." The childminder sat alongside children to engage in conversation and ensure they were safe from choking.

The childminder had identified the management of medication as an area for improvement within the service. They had sought information, sourced recently updated medication guidance and adapted their documentation and procedures to be in line with this. This would support children who may require medication to be administered at the service in the future.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and had fun both indoors and outdoors over the course of the inspection. They made choices of what to play with by selecting resources from low level storage boxes and shelving indoors and choosing from a selection of wheeled toys and a slide within the garden. This supported individual choice and independence. Children told us, "empty bin" and "Daddy's in the car" when playing with toy vehicles.

Outdoor activities also included blowing and catching bubbles, ball skills, playing hide and seek and singing rhymes. This supported a balance of planned and child-led play, in response to children's current interests. As a result, children were becoming increasingly independent, confident and progressing well. Parents told us their children were always involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development.

The childminder interacted well with children, used questions to extend their thinking, develop their skills and identify areas of interest or next steps for children. They planned to use observations more meaningfully and effectively. This would support children's play, learning and development, while recognising their progress and achievements.

We advised further supporting children's creativity and imaginative play through the introduction of loose parts and natural resources, both indoors and outdoors. Loose parts are everyday objects found in homes or in the natural environment which children can use in different ways to encourage and promote their imagination and curiosity.

The childminder made regular use of places in the local and wider community to enhance and expand play and learning opportunities. This included local walks, visits to parks, the library and community fun days. One parent told us, "Linda delivers a wide range of opportunities, taking the children to local parks and events. They provide a range of indoor toys, sing lots of songs and the children can have some TV time infrequently. They offer a wide range of activities including art and outdoor play."

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care and support needs and development and to ensure all information is current, the childminder should ensure children's personal plans are reviewed and updated with parents in line with legislation.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS1.15).

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 childminder's home was clean, tidy, well furnished and well maintained. Care was mainly provided from the conservatory within the childminder's home which had been set up as a playroom for children. There was a sofa, armchair and soft furnishings which offered comfortable, cosy spaces for children to rest and relax. Blinds, windows and doors ensured temperatures could be monitored and good ventilation maintained. Spaces were used well to store and display resources and materials for children to choose from. This supported children's choice, play and learning. All parents who completed our questionnaires strongly agreed their child was cared for in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment. They added, "Linda's home is very clean, safe and comfortable for all of the children" and "My child is cared for in a safe and secure environment, where they feel protected, happy, and supported in their daily activities."

Outdoors, an enclosed area within the large rear garden offered a spacious area for children to play. This was grassed with mature shrubs and fenced off with a locked gate. The garden also offered naturally shaded spaces. This meant children could participate in a variety of play experiences within a safe, natural environment in all weathers.

To ensure children's safety indoors and outdoors, risk assessments and daily checks were undertaken. The childminder was vigilant and supervised children well at all times. We shared information on the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign - Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think Act. This highlighted the importance of keeping children safe when indoors, outdoors or on outings. The childminder agreed to take immediate action to ensure the front and back doors were locked when minded children were present, with keys easily accessible in case of emergency. This contributed to maintaining a safe environment.

The family car was used to transport minded children. The required business insurance was put in place and emailed to us later on the day of inspection. The appropriate car seats were in place to suit the age, weight and height of children. This contributed to ensuring children's safety when travelling.

Good hand hygiene practices were followed by the childminder throughout the visit and children were supported to wash their hands effectively before eating and after playing outdoors. A small step would enable children to wash their hands more independently. Nappy changing procedures were discussed which followed good infection prevention and control procedures and promoted children's privacy and dignity. The changing mat was burst which meant this could not be thoroughly cleaned and posed potential risks for infection. The childminder agreed to purchase a new mat following the inspection.

Children's personal information was stored and managed safely in line with general data protection requirements (GDPR). The service was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This meant they were fully informed of their responsibilities in protecting children and families details.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The aims and policies of the service were shared with families when they started at the service. This informed and included parents in the aspirations and ongoing development of the service. Various communication methods were used to share information, photographs and gain families' views.

Recent questionnaires distributed by the childminder had resulted in positive responses from parents with no identified areas for improvement. Parents told us, "Linda asks for feedback regularly" and "My child and I are both actively involved in a meaningful way to support and contribute to the childminding service, helping to create a positive and collaborative environment."

The childminder was keen to ensure their service was of high quality and had taken positive steps to source information and support from the local authority. This had assisted with the self-evaluation of the service and devising an improvement plan with identified priorities. This included the review of medication procedures and the introduction of effective observations. These were in the early stages of implementation and once fully in place would lead to positive outcomes for children.

We signposted the childminder to documents and guidance to support the development of the service. This included discussions and links to the new inspection framework due to be launched and implemented this year, "Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors" and the relevant childminding quality indicators and childminding information accessible within "The Hub" section of the Care Inspectorate's website. This would continue to support self-evaluation and the childminder's ongoing professional development.

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

The childminder was kind and nurturing and had created a warm, welcoming environment for children. This resulted in children feeling safe, valued and loved and built their confidence.

The childminder recognised the importance of responsive attachments and interactions and spoke fondly of children. They had built and maintained strong relationships with families and offered varied opportunities for open communication, for example sending regular messages, texts and photographs to include parents in their child's day and periodically sending questionnaires. Families were welcomed daily when they arrived to drop off or collect their children. This generally took place in the garden, which offered a short time for feedback to parents about their child's day, while being mindful of the other children's care needs.

All five parents who completed our questionnaires strongly agreed they had a good relationship with their childminder and overall, they were happy with the care their child received at the service. Comments included, "Linda takes the time to let us know how our child has been each day and is always good at updating us on things they have done or are going to do" and "I have a really positive relationship with my child's childminder, built on trust, open communication, and mutual respect."

Having a professional background in childcare and being an experienced childminder in previous years had built the childminder's knowledge and skills in child development and care. They were committed to their role and had completed an induction course, prior to providing a registered childminding service again. This had informed them of changes, refreshed their knowledge and offered time for reflection of their practice and procedures. This had proved beneficial and resulted in improvements.

Being pro-active in sourcing support from the local authority had given them assistance with the self-evaluation and confidence in the ongoing development of the service. Since registering, the childminder had completed several training courses to improve their knowledge, skills and outcomes for children. Training included first aid, enhanced child protection, food hygiene and supporting children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They intended to include children's rights from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) more prominently within their setting to highlight the responsibilities adults have in working together to respect and promote the rights of children. A training log with evaluations had been maintained to record the learning, acknowledge where good practice had been identified and how learning would be used to improve practice within the service. This created an ethos of reflective practice and continuous improvement.

The childminder had a small network of childminding colleagues which offered support, opportunities to discuss practice, knowledge and training. This assisted in the provision of a good quality service.

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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