

Harper, Nicola Child Minding

Johnstone

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 July 2025

Service provided by:
Nicola Harper

Service provider number:
SP2008969206

Service no:
CS2008172635

About the service

Nicola Harper provides a childminding service from their family home in the Johnstone area of Renfrewshire. The service is provided from an end terraced house with children having access to a rear back garden, a kitchen and living room and an upstairs toilet.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 6 will be under 12, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

Overnight service will not be provided and the upstairs of the premises is not included in registered areas. At the time of our inspection, six children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an full inspection which took place on 16 July 2025 between 11:30 and 14:00. Feedback was given to the childminder on the following day.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 the childminder
- Observed practice and daily life
- Spoke with children using the service
- Gathered feedback from five families through online questionnaires
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, kind, and nurturing interactions from the childminder.
- Children were having fun and could make choices about their play.
- Children were happy, settled and confident in the childminder's home.
- The childminder should undertake training to enhance their professional development
- The childminder should continue to develop personal plans for children.
- The childminder should review infection prevention and control procedures to ensure these are in line with best practice guidance.

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

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| How good is our care, play and learning? | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our setting? | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our leadership? | 3 - Adequate |
| How good is our staff team? | 3 - Adequate |

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as **adequate**, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children received warm, caring, and nurturing responses from the childminder, who used a calm and gentle tone in their interactions. As a result, children were happy, confident, and eager to engage. One parent commented, "The childminder is friendly, nurturing and caring" and another parent commented "I have every faith and trust in the childminder with my child."

Children benefited from the childminder's kind and nurturing approach as a result, children were relaxed, comfortable and having fun in the childminder's care.

The childminder knew the children well and had built strong, trusting relationships with them and their families. They responded sensitively to their needs for example offering comfort, encouragement and positive reinforcement. This enabled children to feel safe and secure. One parent commented, "The childminder provides a very welcoming and nurturing environment for my child to thrive in."

Parents provided children's meals and snacks, the childminder ensured this followed food safety guidance for example, grapes were quartered to reduce choking risk. Children sat together in the kitchen on seating appropriate to their age and stage. The childminder chatted with the children throughout, helping to create a relaxed and positive mealtime experience which supported children's communication and social skills. We discussed with the childminder that if food is being reheated, registering as a food business is required. The childminder agreed to address this.

The childminder had systems in place to record medication, which followed best practice guidance. Information was gathered from parents on children's health care needs however, on the day of inspection we found a child's emergency medication was not available and a permission form had not been completed. We discussed with the childminder the importance of having emergency medication readily available and ensuring all necessary permissions are in place. This will ensure children are kept safe and their health care needs are met. **(See Area For Improvement 1).**

Children were supported to have a sleep which reflected their individual routines. They slept in travel cots or buggies, depending on what they were used to at home. The environment was adapted to support restful sleep for example, curtains were closed to create a calm space, and the childminder offered nurturing support such as cradling, as a result children slept well supporting them to be refreshed and relaxed.

Children's wellbeing was supported through documenting some information in the children's personal plans. We discussed streamlining these, avoiding duplication of information and ensuring these were reviewed six monthly in line with legislation to support children's individual needs, and targets. This will ensure children are getting the care that is right for them. **(See Area for Improvement 2).**

The childminder had a basic understanding of their role in protecting children, however, they should undertake child protection training on The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2023. This will ensure children are safe and protected. We have made this an area for improvement under quality indicator 4.1.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were engaged and motivated in their play, confidently making choices about what they wanted to do. They played well alongside each other, and the childminder responded warmly to their needs, joining in at their level to support play and learning and supporting sharing and turn-taking. This supported children's confidence and social skills. One parent commented "My child enjoys the fun activities and the interaction with other children."

Regular community experiences, such as daily walks, visits to parks and planned trips to places of interest such as Castle Semple and Rouken Glen park further supported children's play and learning outdoors. The childminder planned outings thoughtfully, considering children's ages, needs, and safety. One parent told us "My child enjoys going for walks and going to the local parks." This supported children to feel part of their community and understanding of the world around them.

Children's literacy and numeracy skills were supported through a variety of resources, including books, jigsaws, and coloured blocks. The childminder responded thoughtfully to children's preferences, gathering materials that reflected their current interests such as shape-themed toys and musical instruments. This approach encouraged engagement and supported children's learning through play.

The childminder had developmental tracking sheets available but was not currently using them. We discussed how reintroducing these could help monitor each child's progress more effectively and support planning for their next steps in learning. This will ensure children are supported to reach their full potential.

Information about children's play and learning was shared with parents through WhatsApp, with daily photos and updates helping families stay connected to their child's experiences and progress. This regular communication strengthened relationships between the childminder and families, creating a consistent approach to care. One parent told us "The childminder provides a range of updates on my child's progress" and another "we receive daily feedback and lovely pictures about what they have been busy doing that day."

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and healthy, the childminder should ensure medication is available on the days children attend, and permissions are completed prior to storing and administering medication.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective,' (HSCS 1.24).

2. To improve outcomes for children, the childminder should further develop children's personal plans to ensure they reflect individual needs, strategies or targets and are reviewed at least every six months. Families and children should be meaningfully included in the process.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state 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' (HSCS 1.15) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as **adequate**, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder's home was welcoming, comfortable, and well-ventilated with natural light. Children had access to the living room, open plan kitchen and garden. Children were relaxed, having fun and confident in the childminder's home. The indoor and outdoor environment was structured to consider the development of children present, for example baby gates had been installed. Parents strongly agreed their children were cared for in a safe secure and well maintained environment and one parent told us "My child gets to spend time in a safe environment where they can play and spend time with other children" and another parent commented "There are baby gates where needed and locks on the main door."

Children had access to a wide variety of toys and resources that supported their learning and development. These included animals, books, doll and pram and imaginative toys such as a kitchen and car garage. A low-level storage unit in the living room allowed children to make independent choices, encouraging decision-making and confidence. The resources were appropriate to support children's current interests and curiosities. We suggested reviewing these across the indoor and outdoor environment to maximise the space and avoid duplication.

We observed handwashing practices by both the childminder and children at key times, such as before and after snacks, and following toileting or nappy changes. Lunch tables and highchairs were cleaned before and after use, helping to reduce the risk of infection. A dedicated nappy changing area, located away from play spaces, was equipped with gloves and aprons to support safe hygiene practices, however these were not utilised when supporting the use of potties. We asked the childminder to review current infection prevention and control practice to support a safe environment and reduce the spread of infection which includes the review of potties and ensure toileting routines are age-appropriate, maintain children's privacy and dignity, and meet hygiene standards. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

At the time of the inspection the childminder was not registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). We asked that the childminder register with the ICO. This will ensure that children's data privacy is respected.

The children had fun playing both indoors and outdoors. They particularly enjoyed exploring with dinosaurs and balls. Their wellbeing and physical skills were supported through use of the enclosed garden, where they could enjoy a variety of resources such as a slide, bikes, and ride-on cars. In addition, the mud kitchen and sand and water tray provided sensory opportunities, which supported children to develop their curiosity and exploration skills. Parents told us "The childminder has a great outdoor area for the kids to play which includes imaginative play props, sensory and fun ways to learn, they visit the park on a regular basis" and "my child loves playing with sand, water, cars and playing on the slide."

Areas for improvement

1. The childminder should review and update their infection, prevention and control policy and procedures and bring them in line with Health Protection Scotland's document: Health protection in children and young people settings, including education, published March 2024.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.4).

How good is our leadership?**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as **adequate**, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

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

The childminder was enthusiastic about delivering a quality service and had developed aims and objectives with a focus on providing a friendly, safe, secure environment. This ensured parents could choose a service that was right for them.

A welcome book had been developed which contained relevant policies and procedures and was shared with families, this ensured they knew what to expect from the service. We advised the childminder to update and expand these in line with best practice for example, "Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services" July 2025 and The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2023. Updating these would support service delivery and positive outcomes for children.

The childminder engaged well with parents through daily discussions at drop off and pickups and took time to share important information about the child's day. Families told us they received regular updates and photos of what children had been doing. As a result, this ensured families felt included. We suggested that the childminder further develop family engagement. This would ensure they are meaningfully involved and can influence change at the service.

The childminder engaged in reflections of their service and had made improvements to the outdoor area, including upgrades to the garden surface, secure locks, and shaded spaces to support outdoor play. These changes helped create a safer and more engaging environment for children, however we asked the childminder to document these in an action plan following the inspection, and to develop systems and processes for self-evaluation for improvement. **(See Area for Improvement 1).**

We signposted the childminder to the 'Early learning and childcare improvement programme' on the Care Inspectorate HUB and would encourage the childminder to develop self-evaluation practices.

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, the childminder should develop an action plan following the inspection outlining areas for development and tasks to be completed to support a robust model for improvement to ensure positive outcomes for children. Families and children should be meaningfully included in the process.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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?**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as **adequate**, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge & values.

The childminder supervised children well as they moved between areas, ensuring their safety. They responded to each child as an individual, adapting their interactions to suit children's age and stage of development which meant children felt valued, loved and secure.

We discussed with the childminder the importance of accessing training to enhance their practice, for example child protection and first aid. Whilst the childminder was able to reflect on their own skills, knowledge, and practice, we highlighted the need to undertake regular training and professional reading. This will help keep children safe and protected. **(See Area for Improvement 1)**

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). This provided access to up-to-date guidance and professional networks. We also encouraged the childminder to revisit best practice guidance to strengthen their knowledge and skills such as "My Childminding Experience" on the care inspectorate HUB. This will support the delivery of high-quality play and learning experiences, helping children to thrive in a well-informed and responsive environment.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should ensure they access training appropriate to their role and apply their training in practice. This should include, but is not limited to, training in Child Protection and first aid.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) and '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).

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

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| How good is our care, play and learning? | 3 - Adequate |
| 1.1 Nurturing care and support | 3 - Adequate |
| 1.3 Play and learning | 4 - Good |

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|---|--------------|
| How good is our setting? | 3 - Adequate |
| 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities | 3 - Adequate |

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

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| How good is our staff team? | 3 - Adequate |
| 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values | 3 - Adequate |

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