

McMillan, Jane Child Minding

Alloa

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 September 2025

Service provided by:
Jane McMillan

Service provider number:
SP2017988915

Service no:
CS2017355160

About the service

McMillan, Jane currently provides a childminding service from their home in a residential area of Alloa. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: 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 close to a local school, parks, woodlands and other amenities. The minded children make full use of the downstairs living room, bathroom, kitchen diner and a large and secure garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 03 September 2025 between 09:40 and 13:10. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions from the childminder.
- Children had a strong sense of belonging and were happy while they attended the service.
- Trusting relationships had been formed with children and their families.
- Children had personal spaces to store their belongings, which helped them to feel valued and included.
- Children had opportunities to explore their local and wider community regularly.
- Children had daily access to a well resourced outside play area that promoted them to develop their risky play.
- Quality assurance systems were in place that were beginning to support the childminder with a culture of continuous improvement and self-reflection.
- Children benefitted from a childminder who was committed to ongoing learning and professional development.

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?	4 - 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, kind and nurturing interactions from the childminder. The childminder was down at children's level while they played together and engaged in conversations of interest to them. A parent told us, "Jane is so warm and welcoming, so friendly and really easy to talk to". Another parent shared, "She has been the pillar of support when needed and very informative about things regarding school, childcare and nurseries". As a result, trusting relationships had been formed with children and their families.

Children had areas within the home to store their personal belongings. Children were seen to be using these areas to show each other their teddies or other items they had brought with them. This helped children to have a sense of belonging and feel like they matter.

Children had individual personal plans in place which included 'All About Me' forms. These documents gathered important information, such as emergency contacts, medical needs, dietary requirements and children's likes and dislikes. These were reviewed in line with current guidance. The childminder was currently reviewing how these updates took place and how to link them with developmental milestone checks. We asked the childminder when reviewing these processes to ensure they continue to gather dates and signatures by parents. A parent told us, "A care plan is emailed to us every few months where we fill out a detailed plan about our child's needs, interests, hobbies, likes, dislikes and routines". Another parent told us, "Jane reviews care plans regularly, she has conversations daily about how the children are". This meant that children's changing current needs were met by a childminder who knew them well.

Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills throughout their time at the childminders. Children were seen to go to the toilet as they needed, change items of clothes, drink from their water bottles and independently feed themselves. Children were confident to tell the childminder when they were hungry. Children could come back to their meal or ask for more food if they were still hungry. Children sat comfortable at the table while they ate and were reminded by the childminder how to sit safely while eating. This resulted in confident children who were able to have experiences throughout the day that met their current needs or wishes.

The childminder was trained in child protection and was confident in how to identify or handle concerns. Significant events were documented within a diary for children to help the childminder build a wider picture of the children's lives. We signposted the childminder to 'Practice guide to Chronologies' by Care Inspectorate to help them develop this further. This allowed the childminder to safeguard children and identify where support could be given to families.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children had opportunities to lead their own play and learning through a variety of planned and spontaneous experiences. The childminder knew the children well and provided experiences that interested them. For example, the childminder followed children's interests that they had developed at nursery.

They wanted to make their own letters and resources such as paper and envelopes were provided. Children were able to explore their interests at the craft table further by adding stamps and stickers. These spontaneous experiences allowed children to develop their learning across different settings.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests and were child centred. For example, a child told us about a time they went to visit the airport and wave to the pilots because they like planes. Another child shared, that they like babies and they have been looking for babies they can have at the childminders in charity shops. This demonstrated that the childminder is responsive to children's current interests and involves them in developing the service to ensure experiences were meaningful.

Language, literacy and numeracy opportunities were promoted throughout children's environments and interactions with the childminder. For example, books, puzzles, craft materials and different sized wooden blocks were available to children. Weekly activities that children attended such as, bookbug sessions and library visits were favourite parts of the week for the children. One child shared, "I like singing in the forest". This supported children's high quality play and learning beyond the service. The childminder was skilled at ensuring their communications with different children were at a level that suited their developmental stage. As a result, children were able to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills in a meaningful way.

Children benefitted from a childminder who understood the importance of links with the local and wider community. Regular trips to local parks, charity shops to find new resources and attending groups with other children took place weekly. A parent told us, "They go on walks, go to parks and they have travelled on trains to places". Another parent shared with us, "my child enjoys visiting a variety of different play parks with Jane". This helped children to have a sense of belonging within their community in a meaningful way.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment that was clean, well-presented and welcoming. They had access to ample space which promoted them to be curious and creative while they played. For example, children used resources and made a shop to role play within the living room and extended this out into the hall way as their play developed further. Children had dedicated spaces to keep their belongings within the home. This gave children a sense of belonging.

Children had free flow access to a well-resourced outside play space that supported children to access risky play. For example, the use of large wooden logs allowed children to climb, jump and balance on. Large loose parts were available for children to use, such as guttering and pipes. Children were seen to be trying to figure out how to move these to help develop their play. This meant that children were beginning to understand their capabilities and develop their problem solving skills.

Risks had been assessed and possible hazards were identified throughout most areas used by children. Outings, outdoors space and trips had formal effective assessments in place. The childminder was seen to be continually risk assessing with children while in the home. For example, they were heard asking children, "do we run in the house?", "why must we walk in the house?", "Is it safe to have all the mats up against the door like that?". This showed that continual risk assessing was in place and children were supported to assess risks themselves.

We discussed with the childminder that it would be beneficial to have a separate indoor risk assessment in place. They shared that they planned to do this with the children, like they had done before. This would further support the childminder when they reviewed their environments when assessing risks.

Children were kept safe while they attended the service. The childminder had measures in place, such as double locked gates in the garden and daily registers that children helped complete. The care Inspectorate 'Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign (SIMOA)' was used well with the use of a purple elephant teddy that children used in their play. One child told us, "This is SIMOA and he tells us how to be safe". Another child shared, "you wear a seatbelt in the car". This meant that children were beginning to understand how to keep themselves and their friends safe in different situations.

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

Children benefitted from a childminder who was committed to providing a quality service. Parents were consulted in a recent review of the services vision, values and aims. A parent told us, "Jane is always asking for ways to improve her setting". Another parent shared, "Jane asks parents opinions". This meant that a shared vision was established and families felt included.

The childminder was in the process of reviewing and developing new quality assurance systems. There was a new calendar in place that was broken into monthly tasks and this was beginning to support the childminder with ensuring essential tasks, such as reviewing of policies, risk assessments and personal plans were completed. An improvement plan was in place with goals identified. For example, improving how children's development and learning was tracked and shared with families. These were in early stages, however the childminder could share how these were already highlighting further ways to support children. Self-reflection processes prompted the childminder to reflect on the service monthly. The early stages of these processes meant that these were not yet embedded. The childminder shared that the new format of documentation was already supporting them to embed a culture of continuous improvement within the service.

Children and their families were meaningfully involved within the service. Families were welcomed into the service at drop off and pick-up times. A parent told us, "I love stepping into the house at drop off and pick-ups, hearing about the days plans and how my child got on". Another parent shared, "On collection I am welcomed into Jane's home and told what my children have been doing and have eaten". This meant that families were well informed of their children's day and helped to build positive relationships.

Policies and procedures were in place that underpinned the service. These were reviewed annually or sooner if changes occurred. We discussed ensuring the most up to date guidance was used when reviewing policies and procedures. This would also highlight when there was missing policies, for example a missing child policy. The childminder was proactive and developed and updated policies immediately. We signposted the childminder to 'Early learning and childcare service: Guidance on records you must keep and notifications you must make' by Care Inspectorate to support them with their reviews. This would ensure current best practice is followed and all policies were in place when making changes to the service.

How good is our staff team?**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 4.1 Staff skills

Children were supported to feel valued and loved by a childminder who strived to deliver a high-quality service. The childminder knew children well and was responsive to their cues and body language, enabling them to meet their needs. For example, the childminder monitored children's play and offered different experiences throughout the day. This meant that children were continually engaged through different play experiences.

Effective team working between the childminder and families had been developed. Parent's strongly agreed that they had a good relationship with the childminder. A parent told us, "I know Jane will look after my child as if she was her own". Another parent shared, "My child also feels very safe and comfortable with their childminder". As a result, trusting relationships had been formed between children, their families and the childminder.

Children benefitted from a childminder who was committed to professional development. They were committed to improving their knowledge and skills through completing additional qualifications. The childminder shared the learning within their training is helping them to improve their practice and children's experiences. Mandatory training, such as child protection and paediatric first aid is completed regularly. This meant that children were cared for by a childminder who was trained and confident in safeguarding procedures. The childminders' skills, knowledge and training support them to deliver high quality experiences and improve outcomes for children.

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

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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