

Angela Merrick Childminding Service Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 August 2025

Service provided by:
Angela Merrick

Service provider number:
SP2013984506

Service no:
CS2013315047

About the service

Angela Merrick provides a childminding service from her detached property in Dunfermline, Fife. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children under the age of 12. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local amenities, school and park. The children are cared for downstairs and use kitchen, living room and have access to a downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on 20 August 2025 between 12:00 and 14:00. 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:

- observed the minded child using the service.
- received feedback from two families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing
- Children benefited from a service that was homely, warm, and welcoming.
- Children experienced, positive, compassionate, and responsive care.
- The childminder had created a warm and welcoming ethos within the service
- The childminder was in the early stages of evaluating the quality of the service and identifying areas for improvement.

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?	5 - Very 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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall evaluation of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

The childminder provided a warm, caring, and responsive environment where the minded child felt safe, secure, and valued. Interactions were consistently nurturing and respectful, with the childminder showing a strong understanding of the child's emotional and developmental needs. Non-verbal cues were recognised and responded to sensitively. Nurturing gestures, such as cuddles, were offered when required, fostering a sense of safety and connection. One parent commented, 'We love how kind and caring our childminder is. She has built a wonderful relationship with [child], making them feel happy, safe, and valued. [Child] enjoys the fun activities, the welcoming environment, and the sense of belonging she feels there.'

The minded child benefited from individualised care, supported by effective personal plans. The plan had been developed in partnership with the family and was regularly reviewed to reflect their changing needs and preferences. The childminder used plans effectively to guide daily routines and ensure children received consistent, tailored support.

Safe sleep practices were followed in line with current guidance. The sleep environment was calm and hygienic. Parents were kept informed of sleep routines, contributing to a strong sense of trust and partnership.

1.3 Play and learning

The minded child had age-appropriate resources available, particularly tailored to meet their developmental needs. While the quantity of toys was limited, the selection was purposeful and effectively supported their learning. The childminder provided evidence of varied learning experiences, including the use of a tuff tray and opportunities for mark-making through drawing and early writing activities. These experiences contributed positively to children's literacy development. We signposted the childminder to explore the concept of schematic play to enhance the quality of play experiences, particularly for younger children.

The childminder engaged in shared story reading with the minded child, using a calm and gentle tone of voice. Expressive facial gestures and proximity during interactions further supported language and communication skills.

Children's learning was regularly shared with families via WhatsApp, promoting strong links and fostering trusting relationships. This approach ensured that children's experiences were communicated effectively and supported continuity of care. Parents commented, 'Angela provides daily updates and photographs of our child's day', and '[We receive] regular updates on what they have been up to'.

Children developed a wide range of skills through everyday experiences. The childminder made good use of the local community to extend learning opportunities, which helped children to become familiar with their wider world and supported their social development.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced care in a homely, warm, and welcoming setting. The environment was well-organised and offered ample space for children to play, rest, and explore. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected.

Children were supported to lead their own play and learning. They had access to age-appropriate resources that promoted choice and independence. These resources were well-maintained and supported children's development across key areas of learning.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to children's safety and wellbeing. The environment was effectively managed, with relevant and regularly reviewed risk assessments in place.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were implemented. The home was clean, tidy, and well-maintained. Children were supported to follow good hygiene routines, such as handwashing, which helped reduce the risk of infection and promoted their health and wellbeing.

Children's personal information was stored securely and confidentially. Records were well-organised, contributing to the safe management of sensitive information in line with data protection requirements.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder demonstrated a clear enjoyment in caring for children, which was reflected in the nurturing environment and positive relationships established with families. These relationships supported the childminder to meet children's individual needs on a daily basis.

The use of WhatsApp provided families with instant updates which was a positive aspect of the service. This promoted effective communication and strengthened relationships. Questionnaires had been shared with parents, offering them opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to service development.

The childminder had begun to reflect on what was working well and had identified areas for improvement. Self-evaluation and quality assurance had been recognised as key priorities, and support was being accessed to develop these areas further. With the introduction of more structured approaches and formal self-evaluation the childminder would be well placed to strengthen improvement planning (**see area for improvement one**). We signposted the childminder to the upcoming 'shared framework', to support them in making progress with this area of practice. Information on the shared framework is available here: <https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/inspection-frameworks/quality-improvement-framework-for-the-early-learning-and-childcare-sectors/>.

The childminder engaged positively with the inspection process, demonstrating a welcoming attitude and a willingness to respond to questions that supported the evaluation of the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, self-evaluation should be developed, including meaningfully involving children and families. The childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance and use this to support her to reflect and plan for continuous improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which states 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?**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

4.1 Staff Skills, Knowledge and Values

During the inspection, we observed the childminder engaging in kind and nurturing interactions with the child. This approach contributed to a caring and supportive atmosphere in which supported the child to feel loved and safe. The child responded positively to the childminder's calm tone and expressive facial gestures, which supported their emotional regulation and comfort.

The childminder was committed to ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. They had developed very positive relationships with families which was reflected in their comments to us and resulted in a warm and welcoming ethos within the service. Parent comments included, 'We truly appreciate the dedication, kindness, and consistency our childminder shows. She communicates openly with us and always puts the children's needs first. We feel very fortunate to have her support, and our [child] has benefited greatly from her care.'

Policies and procedures were in place to guide practice, and these aligned with current best practice guidance. For example, a sleep policy had been developed to support safe and responsive care. We suggested policies should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain current and effective.

The childminder had undertaken core training, including child protection, and demonstrated a sound understanding of procedures to follow in the event of a concern. This contributed to a safe and protective environment for children. Whilst the childminder was beginning to reflect on their practice, they were encouraged to continue developing professionally. Engaging in informal reading or exploring early years research could help to further deepen their understanding of child development and best practice.

Membership with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) supported the childminder to remain informed of sector developments. Engagement with a network of childminders had provided opportunities to share ideas and access peer support. This was being used effectively to progress identified improvement priorities.

Overall, the childminder provided a good standard of care, underpinned by strong values and a commitment to children's wellbeing.

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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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