

Love, Sharon Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
25 August 2025

Service provided by:
Sharon Love

Service provider number:
SP2017989270

Service no:
CS2017359014

About the service

Sharon Love provides a childminding service from the family home within a residential estate in the north west of Dunfermline. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, the local nursery and school and town centre. The service is delivered from the ground floor of the family home and children have access to the lounge, playroom, kitchen, conservatory and downstairs bathroom. Children also have access to a secure, enclosed rear garden.

The service was registered to provide a care service to a maximum of seven children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than six are under 12 years, of whom no more than three are of an age not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is less than 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those stated on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection, which took place on 25 August 2025 between 14:00 and 17:15 hours. 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.
- Intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with five children using the service.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Spoke with/gathered feedback from six parents/carers.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- Staff deployment.
- Safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors.
- The quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met.
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children are achieving as the childminder is skilled in identifying children's developmental next steps and supporting these through varied and appropriate play and learning opportunities.
- An inclusive environment and interactions supported and celebrated children's individuality and diversity, building their respect and understanding of differences.
- Self evaluation practices are supporting delivery of a well organised and high quality service.
- The childminder's commitment to professional development positively supported children's play and learning experiences.

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?	5 - Very 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 were relaxed and happy in the service. The childminder knew all children very well which allowed them to meet their needs. Children's emotional wellbeing was actively promoted through different activities enabling them to build resilience and feel secure. Yoga sessions, chill out reading time and lots of cuddles when needed, contributed to children's mental wellness. Children's interactions with each other and the childminder were respectful and they spoke about how any unwanted or distressed behaviour was supported in a positive way. They told us, 'she would check they're ok, talk about it and get everyone to do some yoga.'

Relationships with families were positive which supported relaxed, open and honest communication to support children's continuity of care. Parents spoke about how happy they were and how they valued the flexibility of the service. Use of social media applications further supported communication and shared evidence of children's experiences in the setting.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported through the safe administration of medications. Reporting of medication and accidents to parents was robust and ensured effective information sharing to support children's continued care.

Mealtimes reflected current revised guidance within the 'Setting the Table' document meaning children were supported to make healthy eating choices. Children were aware of the changes made to foods provided, as the childminder had discussed the guidance with them. This supported their understanding of what foods are healthy. They told us, 'We sometimes get apples. We get pears and oranges. Usually dry crackers, fruit. We just have water; she never gives us juice.' This ensured that children enjoyed nutritiously balanced and suitable food and drinks.

Personal plans were held and kept under regular review. We asked the childminder to ensure that dates were added where new forms were completed. 'All About Me' information was also kept under review and was completed by children themselves. This provided the childminder with up-to-date information on children's preferences enabling their current needs and interests to be met.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were supported in building friendships across cultural boundaries as the childminder routinely used key words in six different languages. This helped children to settle in and supported their connections with each other. The childminder regularly used Makaton signing to overcome children's language barriers and support their inclusion. In addition, the childminder was mindful of challenging bias and developing children's awareness and respect for different cultures and religions. This increased children's tolerance and acceptance and shaped how they see themselves and others as they grow up.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy were promoted naturally through varied quality play experiences and conversations. The childminder was skilled in fostering children's thinking and problem-solving ability through effective questioning which challenged and supported them.

Children's physical and mental agility were promoted through focused activities such as 'brain gym' exercises and lots of opportunity to build core strength. Children told us about brain gym saying, 'She also does stuff across the body for hand - eye co-ordination.' The childminder used observations and discussions to identify the need to build in these activities to support children's sense of body awareness and balance. Activities such as being able to move around on skateboards, use swings, climb and jump were offered regularly. Children also experienced lots of physical play in the school grounds after collection, in the garden, at parks and through other activities such as swimming. This ensured they remained physically active and healthy.

Personal plan records gathered information on children's play and learning along with identified next steps. The childminder's very good understanding of child development ensured that she linked what she saw to developmental milestones and recognised where further support was needed. As a result, children were achieving and respected. We suggested some minor refinements to the number of next steps identified and further clarity in regard to identified strategies of support. This is to ensure they remain clear, relevant and achievable.

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's risk of harm from accidents and injuries was reduced as the childminder maintained a safe environment. Written risk assessments identified potential risks and actions taken to minimise these. Toys and other resources were seen to be in good condition and the childminder carried out daily checks to ensure risks were reduced. Appropriate storage of hazardous items and use of safety equipment further supported children's safety.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted because the childminder routinely cleaned the toys and resources that they played with. The children learned to develop good hygiene routines that helped them to begin to understand how they could keep themselves healthy. For example, by washing their hands properly before they ate and after toileting. The childminder also followed exclusion guidance for common childhood ailments to minimise the spread of infection. These measures helped keep children safe and healthy because it reduced the likelihood of germs being passed on.

Children enjoyed a comfortable, well maintained and inviting environment which helped them feel at home and met their needs. The home and equipment were clean and tidy, and children were free to move between the spaces available to them. This gave them control over how they spent their time.

Children were encouraged to take care of resources, tidy up and respect the childminder's home. These opportunities to take care of the immediate environment increased children's sense of personal and group responsibility and empowered them.

Children were stimulated by the variety and choice of toys and games available to them. Access to electronic, screen-based technology and television was restricted. This ensured children engaged with the variety of resources available. By exploring the available resources, children were offered rich opportunities to challenge their learning, enhance problem-solving skills, and spark their creativity. Use of 'loose parts' play materials built on children's play, expanding their imaginative and exploratory play. Incorporating loose parts play indoors also helped balance current resources and stimulated children's natural curiosity.

Information held on children was stored securely within a locked cupboard. This limited unauthorised access and maintained children's and family's confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement is led well

The childminder demonstrated a reflective approach to their practice, consistently evaluating and enhancing their provision in line with current guidance and best practice. Regular discussions with other childminder's both informally and during training sessions further contributed to their own self evaluation and enabled them to make changes which improved children's care, support, and play.

The childminder had reviewed the service through measuring all aspects of provision against the quality framework indicators. This piece of self evaluation meant the childminder could identify their strengths and address their areas for improvement. An action plan also supported the childminder in maintaining progress on aspects for improvement. We asked the childminder to ensure they conduct self evaluation on a continuous basis across the full year. This would enable them to continue to provide a quality service and positive outcomes for children.

Other aspects of provision were kept under regular review contributing to a well organised service, such as policies and risk assessments. This ensured these continued to reflect current best practice and legislation. We asked the childminder to make very minor amendments to their complaints, child protection, and behaviour policies.

Regular informal discussions with families and asking opinions provided the childminder with an informal measurement of how well they were doing. Approaches to gathering the views of families had been continually re-evaluated and adjusted to enable the childminder to find the best way to gather feedback on a regular basis. Recent changes had helped to improve the number of comments received. This should continue to be progressed as identified within the childminder's own improvement plan. This enabled families to influence provision to meet their child's needs.

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, knowledge and values

Children received kind, thoughtful and nurturing care from the childminder which respected their individual likes and needs. This helped children to feel safe, happy and build strong connections with the childminder and each other. The childminder knew each child really well and their respectful and loving interactions supported children's social and emotional growth. This strong sense of security fostered in children enabled them to be independent and confident individuals.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to their professional growth by actively engaging in learning and development opportunities. They had recently begun training on a relevant qualification and had ensured that core training, such as first aid and child protection remained up to date. Additional recent learning included a range of online webinars and e-modules on a variety of subjects to support children's experiences. For example, 'effective interactions', 'school readiness' and 'mathematics.' Planned training was linked to children's needs and observations to support their continued learning.

The childminder maintained a log of their training to evidence their learning. We asked them to further develop this by also recording professional reading and the impact of any learning and development on the 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?	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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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