

Kate Ross Childminding Child Minding

Newton Stewart

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 September 2025

Service provided by:
Kathryn Ross

Service provider number:
SP2023000247

Service no:
CS2023000374

About the service

Kate Ross Childminding provides a childminding service from the childminder's home in the town of Newton Stewart, in Dumfries and Galloway.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. At the time of our inspection, three children were registered with the service and in attendance.

The service is walking distance to the local school, park and other amenities. The children are cared for in the kitchen/diner and living room. Children also have access to an enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 September 2025 between 11:30 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 registration information and intelligence gathered. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spent time with three children using the service;
- received feedback from three parents/carers;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children felt safe, loved, and cared for.
- Children had fun and learned through play.
- Children felt part of their community by going to local groups.
- Children were well cared for by a skilled and qualified childminder.

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?	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?

4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy and relaxed. Their needs were met through warm and nurturing interactions. The childminder responded to children sensitively, providing reassurance and cuddles when needed. Children were comfortable and had playful chats with the childminder. This meant children felt loved, safe and secure.

It was clear the childminder knew the children very well. They knew their interests, personalities and preferences. As a result, children had a positive relationship with the childminder. The childminder had sound knowledge of children's individual needs and was confident in how to support these. A parent told us, "I feel I have a very good relationship with my childminder. I am able to go to them with any thoughts or worries about my child's care needs." Another said, "they have extensive knowledge of their needs and caters to them brilliantly! We couldn't ask for a better childminder." This demonstrated children's individual needs were being met.

Personal plans reflected each child's health, safety and wellbeing needs. Plans contained up to date information that had been gathered with parents. These were reviewed regularly to ensure children's needs were met. Parents told us, "I am able to look at my child's own folder at any time. We discuss my child's personal plan regularly." This ensured parents felt involved in their child's care.

Children benefitted from a relaxed and unhurried mealtime. They sat together in the kitchen and enjoyed a packed lunch from home. The childminder engaged in meaningful conversations, providing support when required. This ensured children were safe whilst eating and they had a sociable experience. Water was available throughout the day which helped children stay hydrated.

The childminder followed safe sleep guidance. They used a travel cot when children needed to sleep, and made sure children were laid down on their back. This meant children slept safely and comfortably. The childminder recognised it was important for children to have rest and one parent said, "my child is able to relax throughout the day at the childminders. [They] know their cues on when they are needing a rest from play."

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and enjoying themselves playing with a wide range of toys. These had been chosen thoughtfully to reflect the ages and interests of the children. For example, action figures and Spiderman playhouses had been provided to support an interest in superheroes. The childminder's warm interactions during play supported children to have fun and feel secure. One child told us, "I like playing with [the childminder], it's fun."

Literacy and numeracy skills were being developed through play. For example, the children had fun with alphabet jigsaws and magnetic number puzzles. The childminder supported the children with identifying letters, helping them to learn and make progress.

The childminder was responsive to children's wishes. They offered a range of experiences and strongly believed children should lead their own play. One parent told us, "my kids are always involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences. From soft play, to play parks, the ladybird garden, book bug, music groups, walks to feed to ducks. Lego building, painting, crafts and lots more. They have a range of different activities for both ages." This approach allowed children to feel involved and valued.

Whilst the childminder had recorded children's achievements from home, they had not recorded observations of children's progress whilst at the service. We suggested the childminder develop this to allow them to identify and plan children's next steps. This would support children to make good progress.

Children's play experiences were enhanced from opportunities within their community. These included going to outdoor play sessions, Bookbug classes and local parks. As a result, children were developing their social skills and building their confidence.

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 warm and inviting, with space for children to play and relax. This helped children feel comfortable and secure in their surroundings. Toys and activities were well organised and easily accessible. This allowed children to be independent.

Indoors, children had access to a good variety of toys, such as puzzles, dolls, animals and playhouses. The outdoor area was spacious and fully enclosed, with appropriate safety measures in place. Children had access to a wide range of suitable toys and equipment, including a slide, mud kitchen and messy play tray. There were open-ended resources that encouraged children to be creative and imaginative. A parent told us, "[the childminder] has a great garden and the kids love playing in it. They take wellies and puddle suits so that they can go out in the rain too." A garden shed stored additional toys for children to access but this storage space was shared to provide storage for gardening tools. We suggested that the childminder separate children's toys from household items. This would support children's safety.

Some risk assessments were in place which identified potential hazards and measures put in place to reduce any risks. This supported children's safety. Measures were also in place to support infection prevention and control. For example, children were supported to wash hands at key times such as before and after meals. This helped prevent the spread of infection.

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 childminder engaged positively in the inspection process and demonstrated a clear commitment to providing a high-quality service. This meant they were well placed to make improvements. The aims of the service to provide a 'welcoming, friendly, nurturing home' were embedded in the service. Parents told us, "it's a home from home and it puts me at ease going to work knowing they will have a great time with them", and "[the childminder] provides a safe and nurturing space for them to grow learn and have fun." This helped families feel confident and reassured.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to improvement. They sought feedback from children and involved them in decisions about the service. For example, children were asked what could be better, and together they identified a need for new toys. The childminder supported children to choose these resources themselves, visiting charity shops and looking online. This helped children feel included and have ownership of their play space.

Parents felt involved in the development of the service. One parent told us "we give feedback regularly about all aspects of childminding." To further support quality assurance processes, we signposted the childminder to use the new 'Quality Improvement Framework' challenge questions to support self-evaluation. This would help to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure positive outcomes for children.

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

The childminder was very committed to her role and supported children through compassionate and responsive care. One parent told us, "[the childminder] goes above and beyond to help in whatever way they can." Another parent said, "[the childminder] is very caring and that's what my children love. [My child] needs a good routine and needs to know what's going on and [the childminder] understands this and lets them know what the plans are. They are very accommodating to them. [My child] would go to [the childminder] everyday if they could, they are always asking to go." This supported children to make good progress.

The childminder's HNC in Early Education and Childcare provided them with an understanding of children's learning and development. Their part-time role in a nursery enabled access to training, which was effectively transferred into their childminding practice. This led to improved outcomes for children.

Training was used purposefully to enhance practice. The childminder's knowledge from professional learning opportunities on play approaches were clearly evident in the childminder's interactions. For example, the childminder's enthusiasm for child-led, responsive play led them to continuously reflect on their own actions to ensure they were for the benefit of the child. This commitment to professional development supported high-quality care 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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