

# Helping Hands Child Care Child Minding

Dumfries

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
30 September 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Robyn Ross

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023001408

**Service no:**  
CS2024000050

## About the service

Robyn Ross provides a childminding service from the childminder's home in the town of Dumfries, 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, 13 children were registered with the service. There were six children in attendance during the inspection.

The service was walking distance to the local school, park and other amenities. The children were cared for in the kitchen/diner, upstairs playroom and an enclosed garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 September 2025 between 15:10 and 17:30. 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 six children using the service;
- received feedback from five parents/carers;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and having fun.
- Children felt safe, secure and very well cared for.
- The childminder was committed to improvement.
- Children were fully involved in the development of the service.
- The environment was safe, clean and well presented.

## 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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

## Leadership 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The setting was warm, welcoming and focused on providing high-quality care and learning. The childminder's aim to create "a setting that both children and parents will love and enjoy" was clearly achieved as we saw happy children who were having fun. Children's rights were embedded in everyday practice. For example, the childminder spoke respectfully to children. Children were given opportunities to make choices and express their views. This included being consulted on snack choices, and outings and places to visit. Older children were encouraged to take on age-appropriate responsibilities, which acknowledged their growing independence and maturity. This approach helped ensure all children felt nurtured and respected. Families were pleased with the care their children received with one parent telling us, "[childminder] is fantastic at their job; both the kids love going to the point they complain when they don't need to go. They would love to go every day."

The childminder regularly reflected on their work and had used the new Quality Improvement Framework to self-evaluate. The childminder used the challenge questions from the new framework to assess what they currently do and where they could improve. This reflective approach had led to sustained improvements, for example, regularly consulting with children. This resulted in the introduction of new resources that were reflective of children's current interests. This told us that children helped shape the service and their ideas were listened to and acted on.

The childminder was pro-active about involving families in developing the service. This included consulting parents through regular questionnaires and providing opportunities for informal feedback daily. A parent told us, "[the childminder] is friendly, approachable and lovely to communicate with." We discussed ways to maintain parental involvement to help guide further improvements. This demonstrated the childminder's commitment to providing a high quality service.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were cared for in a safe, secure, homely environment. The space was welcoming and attractive, with toys and games displayed attractively in a way that supported children's choice. The childminder regularly changed the environment to keep children engaged and to suit their interests. For example, changing the role play area to a café to follow the children's lead. Children's artwork was displayed, which helped them feel proud and have a strong sense of belonging.

Children had access to a variety of spaces. As a result, they could choose to play independently or in a small group, depending on their interests and choice. For example, some children sat together at the table to play dominoes, whilst some played with other toys. There were comfortable sofas for children to rest and relax. One parent told us "[the childminder] provides a safe calm space that my child knows they can play or relax in." This enabled children to feel comfortable and have fun in the childminder's home.

There was a wide range of toys and games to suit children's different ages and interests. This included playdough, train sets and imaginative play materials such as dressing up costumes and puppets. The outdoor area was a particular strength of the service. There was space for active play such as ball games and areas for discovery, including a mud kitchen and tuff trays. The availability of these experiences resulted in children developing their creativity, problem-solving and physical skills.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. The childminder's home was clean, tidy and well maintained. This supported children's wellbeing. The childminder followed good hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of infection. For example, they encouraged handwashing at key times such as before and after eating. The childminder was vigilant and kept a close eye on children, ensuring they were safe while still able to explore freely.

Children were supported to build self-confidence and learn how to manage risk. For example, they built and played on a 'rollercoaster' safely and independently. This helped them develop important life skills in a fun way.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were clearly having fun and were very happy and engaged in their play. One child said, "I love going there." Children played freely in both indoor and outdoor spaces. They were confident and led their own play, showing independence and creativity. For example, children used loose parts to devise their own rollercoaster. Planned experiences including baking, painting and scavenger hunts supported children to develop new life skills such as measuring and road safety. This balance of free play and planned experiences gave children choice and challenge, and the childminder responded well to their interests. A parent told us, "the activities planned by [the childminder] are fantastic... It's all child led, relevant to current events, individual, sensory, sustainable and building their meta skills."

There was a wide range of activities that supported the development of a broad range of skills including literacy, language and numeracy. For example, there were books, storytelling puppets, Kapla, Magformers and dominoes. These enriched children's play and learning experiences.

The childminder demonstrated warm and respectful interactions with children. They supported learning effectively by asking open-ended questions and offering gentle prompts that encouraged children to think for themselves and explore ideas, while still allowing children to lead their own learning. Children were enthusiastic in their play and were keen for the childminder to be involved. On multiple occasions the children called for the childminder to come and see what they had made or achieved. The childminder responded positively with praise. This helped create a nurturing ethos which supported children to thrive.

Planning was clearly based on children's individual interests as their ideas were used to shape experiences. The childminder carried out observations of children to help them identify and plan for next steps in learning. For example, a solar water fountain had been added to the water play to extend learning. The childminder had introduced a 'big book' which was used well to capture shared learning and celebrate success. This included children praising each other. As a result, children were flourishing and making progress.

Individual learning folders showed how children were involved in leading their own learning. Photographs and observations were used to show the variety of experiences children took part in and document progress. This included children learning how to keep themselves safe. These folders were shared regularly with parents. One parent told us, "[the childminder] shares pictures and information regarding what my child has been doing. We feel involved in our child's care." This allowed families to be involved in their child's progress and helped the childminder support children effectively.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children's needs were met with kindness and compassion. The childminder made time for every child and showed genuine warmth and affection. Relationships were respectful and caring, which supported children to feel safe and valued. The childminder chatted with children about their lives in a way that showed they knew them well. A child said "[the childminder] is very kind and caring." A parent told us, "[the childminder's] friendly nature and caring approach makes my child feel safe secure and happy. My child has fun and enjoys their interactions with the other kids."

Personal plans were in place and contained relevant and up to date information, including children's likes, dislikes and needs. This allowed the childminder to plan appropriate support strategies and meet children's needs. The childminder used these plans to celebrate achievements from home, and parental involvement was evident through regular consultation and opportunities to update plans. This collaborative approach ensured parents were involved and informed in their child's care support children to make progress.

The childminder supported children to co-operate and socialise. For example, children played board and card games together, and built an obstacle course for their cars. This gave children of all ages a chance to build relationships, work as a team, and feel part of the group.

Mealtimes were a fun, enjoyable and sociable experience. Older children supported younger children if required, for example when pouring from a large jug of milk. Children were encouraged to be independent through self-serving and clearing away dishes. These routines supported children's confidence and wellbeing and developed their social skills. This contributed overall to a quality mealtime experience for children.

Families had regular opportunities to discuss their children's care, development and learning through face-to-face chats. The childminder also used text messages and a social media page to share photographs and achievements directly with families. Additionally, a termly newsletter allowed families to stay informed about key dates and activities, supporting ongoing engagement. This meant families felt well-informed and involved in their children's care and learning.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good



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