

# Donaldson, Moira Child Minding

Edinburgh

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Moira Donaldson

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003906747

**Service no:**  
CS2003013028

## About the service

Donaldson, Moira is a childminding service provided by Moira Donaldson. The service is provided from the family home in a residential area in the South of Edinburgh. Children have access to the lounge, kitchen/dining area, and bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, libraries and local shops.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children under 16 years of age.

At the time of the inspection ten children were registered with the service over different days and there were six children in attendance.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 November 2025 between the hours of 11:40 and 13:30. We returned to complete the inspection later on the same day. 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:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received digital feedback using an online form from seven families
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and development and the management of the service.

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.

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

- A strong vision, values and aims informed daily practice and was leading to improved outcomes for children.
- Quality assurance and self evaluation approaches were resulting in sustained and improved outcomes over time.
- Children were engaged, having fun and motivated in a range of different play experiences.
- High quality interactions and child led planning approaches were leading to children making progress in their development and learning.
- Strong partnerships with families, predictable routines and effective personal plans enhanced nurturing care and support for all children.

## 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 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.

Children experienced positive outcomes due to a strong vision, values and aims shared between the childminder, families and children. The focus on creating spaces, experiences and interactions to promote children's happiness, safety and wellbeing was evident in daily practice. For example, all children presented as happy and motivated on inspection and told us they loved coming to the childminder after school. Their interests and wishes were listened to and acted upon, and there was clear evidence of the childminder mirroring routines from home. The childminder's values also focused on boundaries which encouraged mutual respect, and made the children feel valued and secure within the environment. When asked, children confidently discussed the things that made them happy when being cared for by childminder as well saying any rules were "very fair."

Children and families were actively involved in shaping the service which enhanced trust and communication. The childminder regularly sought their input both informally on a daily basis, and more formally with questionnaires. Families strongly agreed they felt involved in service development, one telling us the childminder, "is always open to any ideas the parents have." Another said the childminder, "is extremely reliable and approachable. They provide an update at pick up and send lovely pictures and messages throughout the day. Our children have always been so happy there and settled in quickly."

Children were frequently asked their views on experiences and outings and were free to lead their play or rest when needed. This child led approach reflected the vision and values of the service and was improving outcomes for children. When asked their feelings about the childminder and the service, children used words like "happy," "fun," "excited" and "cosy." This warm, inclusive approach ensured children's interests and needs informed planned developments, leading to positive outcomes.

Alongside family's views, the childminder undertook purposeful self-evaluation against best practice frameworks to identify areas for improvement. An example of this was highlighted by the identification of healthy eating and physical activity as an area to develop. Children were asked their favourite recipes, and the childminder introduced music and dance. Positive impact was recorded against this aim. To strengthen this further the childminder could also record next steps as appropriate to keep this going over time. The childminder had also carried out robust self-evaluation to improve their approach to transitions which had led to improvements in the process and was highly valued by families.

The childminder was a member of a national childminding organisation which helped to ensure they kept up to date with sector developments as well as enabling them to undertake any professional learning identified as a gap or interest in service delivery. Their close working relationship with another childminder allowed for sharing of good practice which informed improvement.

Well-organised systems were in place to monitor and update the service which enabled sustained improvement and compliance with core assurances. This meant the childminder could adapt their service according to the specific needs of children and keep them safe by ensuring robust quality assurance of the environment. These approaches resulted in a reflective and improvement-focused service that prioritised children's wellbeing and learning. It also ensured the service kept up to date with sector developments.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality indicator: Children play and learn

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 highly engaged in play due to a choice of high-quality, planned and responsive experiences. Older children spoke enthusiastically about after-school routines such as football, gymnastics, and tig at the astro pitch or visiting the park. One said, "I love getting to play outside in the garden with the other children. We always get taken to the park and go on fun outings."

Indoors, children selected experiences reflecting their interests, played cooperatively, and moved freely between role play, construction, board games and imaginative play. The atmosphere was lively, and children sustained interest for long periods. Ongoing projects, such as a large jigsaw left out for completion, showed an approach that valued children's efforts and promoted continuity, as children were excited to complete it over several days. One family shared, "My child much prefers going to the childminder's than nursery and wishes every day was a childminder day."

Well-considered outings enriched play and learning and promoted engagement. Photo books, questionnaires, discussions with children and family feedback confirmed regular trips to the beach, farms, museums, and seasonal events like pumpkin carving. Older children loved torch play in the dark, while younger ones developed social skills through toddler groups, stay and plays and visits to another childminder. One family member said, "My child loves going and taking part in the experiences that the childminder has to offer. They especially love toddlers on a Tuesday morning!" Another told us, "They always find new and fun places to go. My child loved the teddy bear picnic last summer."

Interactions were warm, respectful, and responsive. The childminder used developmentally appropriate strategies such as narrating actions and copying gestures to support communication and language development in babies. Older children benefited from strong peer relationships as well as with the childminder, and playful interactions strengthened their bond. Conversations about their lives at home, such as one child who had a new puppy, reinforced that children were valued. Families told us, "The childminder always responds to my children's needs and interests." Another said, "My child's speech has developed since attending and they have made great friends who now attend nursery with them."

Children experienced a high-quality play and learning environment where their interests drive planning. Families told us, "The childminder often takes the children on fun trips but also educational trips such as the Museum of Scotland and recently the Museum of Transport in Glasgow which my child loved." Experiences were varied and flexible, enabling progress at each child's pace, and some were tracked against wellbeing indicators. Families valued the daily feedback and WhatsApp updates telling us the childminder, "provides a detailed debrief/report on my children's day each evening at pick up and updates via WhatsApp over the course of the day." One family told us that the childminder, "goes above and beyond. The children are happy in their care. From cosy movie afternoons in the rain, to baking, to day trips, to beach days, to water fights the childminder does it all."

## 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 were nurtured and supported through individualised care and learning routines, experiencing high levels of emotional security throughout the day. The childminder was warm and responsive, offering cuddles and maintaining predictable routines that helped children feel safe and settled. For example, they sensitively responded to babies' cues during feeding and respected their choices, promoting confidence and trust.

Strong observation skills enabled the childminder to notice changes in children's needs and discuss these with families. They mirrored home routines while allowing children to lead play, reflecting a proactive, partnership-based approach. Families told us the childminder was, "Very caring towards my child and attentive to their needs. They are always so happy arriving in the morning and talk about their day on pick up." Another said, "It is very reassuring leaving my child with the childminder and knowing they would get the same care as I or a family member would give them."

Children were well settled, confident, and able to express needs clearly. Transitions were flexible and well organised, with scheduled visits and community outings helping children build relationships before nursery which eased that transition. Families praised the settling-in process: "When we joined, the childminder had a structured plan where my little ones had time to get used to them and their house, with me staying and gradually leaving once they were comfortable."

Children felt safe because routines were predictable and well embedded, shown by children anticipating what came next and settling calmly to sleep. Older children were confident speaking about procedures for trips, snack or routines in house, which gave them a sense of belonging. Families highlighted nurturing activities like reading and crafts, and WhatsApp videos showed joyful, inclusive celebrations at parties. The childminder also used daily routines like nappy changing and snack times to connect further, talking and laughing with children in warm nurturing ways.

Snack time was calm and offered choice. Families' preferences were valued and followed. Children spoke enthusiastically about snacks, and families praised healthy options and creative ideas: "My child is always offered a variety of snacks. The childminder is famous for their 'Toddler Tapas!' Something we now implement at home."

Children were cared for in a secure, clean home with a safe outdoor space offering varied play opportunities. Risk assessments were in place and reviewed, and more dynamic checks were evident throughout the day. Families trusted the childminder telling us, "My child is so happy on arrival I know they're in a safe and well cared for environment. I get daily communication updates. Highly trusted."

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal plans, promoting individuality and respecting rights. Plans were reviewed regularly with families. To further strengthen progress, the childminder could consider adding simple goals to complement existing practice of recording experiences against wellbeing indicators. This would provide clearer evidence of development and progress.

Children benefitted from a highly nurturing, responsive environment where emotional security and wellbeing were prioritised. Transitions were managed effectively, and strong partnerships ensured continuity of care. The home was safe, welcoming, and well-resourced, and routines promoted confidence and independence.



## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

The provider should review all information regarding minded children and their care needs at least once every six months or sooner if required along with parents. This will help to ensure that an appropriate personal plan is in place and remains up to date which will help the childminder to adhere to current legislation. The provider should identify any developmental progress and show how she intends to support any gaps in each child's development and celebrate achievements using the SHANARRI indicators. **National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 6 - Support and Development, Standard 3 - Health and Wellbeing**

This area for improvement was made on 5 June 2017.

#### Action taken since then

Personal plans were regularly reviewed. As part of planning and tracking children, she had also set up SHANARRI photo books to show how children's development was tracked across wellbeing indicators, showing a variety of experiences and spaces offered to help children achieve. This area for improvement was met.

### 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 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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