

Kathryn's Child Care Services Child Minding

Dunblane

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 November 2025

Service provided by:
Kathryn McHale

Service provider number:
SP2014986130

Service no:
CS2014328495

About the service

Kathryn McHale provides a service from their home and operates under the name Kathryn's Child Care Services. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than six are under 12 years; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate. No overnight care will be provided. From the 25 April 2025 to 05 January 2026, the childminder may care for up to four children who are not yet attending primary school on a Tuesday between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30.

The service is based in a residential area of Dunblane and is close to green spaces, schools, and other amenities. Children use the ground floor of the property for indoor activities and have access to the bathroom, while the enclosed garden provides a safe outdoor play space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 November 2025 between 09:10 and 11:45. This inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke/spent time with one young person using the service
- received two completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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.

During this inspection we 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 were happy, relaxed, and confident in the childminder's home.
- Purposeful self-evaluation and improvement priorities promoted high quality play, learning and development.
- Children's non-verbal cues were respected and valued, which enabled them to play at a pace right for them.
- A balance of responsive and planned rich experiences developed children's skills for life and learning.
- Effectively planned transitions demonstrated that children experienced care from a skilled childminder who continually reflected on their practice.
- Strong partnerships with families and other professionals ensured that children's wellbeing was sustained.

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

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 were cared for by a skilled childminder who was dedicated to their professional development. They actively consulted families to share their vision for the service which ensured their views were valued and listened to. One parent commented, 'I know my child is happy and safe there.' Best practice guidance was used to inform thoughtful changes. For example, questionnaires had been developed in line with the Care Inspectorate document, 'A quality framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding.' This demonstrated that high-quality care was at the heart of children's experiences. We suggested methods the childminder could consider to ensure feedback was constructive and supported meaningful improvements. This would further promote family's involvement to inform change and positive outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation and improvement supported the childminder to ensure high-quality care, play and learning were at the heart of children's experiences. The childminder shared that this was enhanced through effective partnership working with other childminders. A robust approach to quality assurance demonstrated that children were central to the childminders identified improvement priorities. For example, recent reflections within the 'Setting the table' guidance had enabled the childminder to develop new menus focussed on providing nutritional and balanced meals. Well-considered and purposeful self-evaluation meant that children's wellbeing was effectively fostered and their needs met. The childminder was aware of the benefits of continual reflection to ensure identified improvements were manageable and achievable. This meant that high-quality experiences were enhanced for children and their families.

The service vision and values were evident throughout children's experiences and positively valued their wellbeing. For example, 'I aim to provide a flexible, friendly and welcoming service; that will ensure that all children are happy in my care.' The childminder was proactive, as they recognised the benefit of revisiting their vision and values to reflect the current children, and families within the service. This would ensure that their vision continued to be meaningful and inclusive of all.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Play 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's choices were respected by a responsive childminder who effectively observed their cues and vocalisations to extend their play. The childminder actively followed children's interests as they listened to them and provided resources to support their engagement. This demonstrated that younger children were confident to use their voice to request toys. When playing with the musical instruments, children were given the time, space, and support to explore sound and movement. The childminder promoted children's early literacy skills as they named instruments, sounds and modelled their use in play. As a result, children were highly motivated through a range of responsive experiences.

Interactions were kind, warm and caring which enhanced the nurturing connections formed. The childminder demonstrated that children were valued as they played at their level and showed a genuine interest in them. Smiles and praise were a natural part of children's experiences which further developed their confidence in the childminder's care. This meant that children were loved and valued.

The childminder was skilled in recognising and supporting the different stages of children's play, learning and development. They knew the children in their care very well and had introduced strategies which developed their skills for life and learning. For example, photograph books promoted children's choice when selecting resources, which meant their voice was heard and acted upon. This enabled children to experience enriched play and learning that reflected their interests.

Children were at the heart of the childminder's planning for experiences. The childminder used their knowledge of children's rights and relevant theory to support them to deliver high-quality experiences. Regular observations of children's play highlighted their progress and next steps, which valued their contributions. We suggested methods that the childminder could consider to ensure that next steps were meaningful and enabled children's successes to be celebrated. This would further support children to make progress at a pace that was right for them.

Floor books were effectively used to highlight the variety of activities that motivated and challenged children's learning. Children had opportunities to develop their sense of belonging within their community, as they explored nature using tree spotters, animal footprints, and leaf printing. Mind maps of children's ideas enabled the childminder to plan activities based on their interests. We discussed how these could be used within floor books to effectively evaluate children's experiences. This would further develop children's knowledge and understanding and extend their learning.

Children's families were valued as partners within their child's play, learning and development. The childminder shared information to support families understanding of the different types of play and their benefits, for example, messy play. This enabled them to deepen families understanding of children's learning journeys and promoted their wellbeing. One parent commented, 'My childminder regularly discusses my child's progress.' This demonstrated that children's experiences were meaningful and reflected high aspirations for their successes.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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 benefitted from warm, consistent, and responsive care that skilfully helped them to express their needs. Interactions were kind and caring and demonstrated that the childminder understood the importance of nurturing relationships. As a result, secure attachments promoted children's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Mealtimes were responsive to children's cues and provided a calm experience where their needs were met. Children were able to enjoy their snacks at a relaxed pace and enjoyed nurturing interactions with the childminder. Laughter and smiles were shared which recognised the importance of spending time together to connect and support children's development. This meant that mealtimes enhanced children's experiences.

Personal care routines respected children's privacy and dignity. Children were asked for their permission before nappy changes and when cleaning their nose. Individual hand towels helped to promote positive hygiene and gave children a sense of belonging. We asked that younger children were encouraged to use warm water and soap during hand washing. This would further develop their independence and enhance positive infection, prevention and control measures.

Effectively planned transitions supported consistency within children's routines. Visual timetables recognised the importance of children's experiences and helped to develop their sense of belonging within the childminder's home. Photographs were sensitively displayed which enabled children to develop social connections with their friends. This demonstrated that the childminder knew children very well and effectively planned strategies to meet their needs. One parent commented, 'Kathryn goes above and beyond for my child.' This meant that children's evolving needs were planned and promoted smooth transitions.

Personal plans promoted children's rights and valued them as individuals. The childminder worked proactively with families and other professionals to identify children's support needs. For example, close links had been established with speech and language professionals to aid children's communication development. This ensured that children's individualised care reflected their needs and supported their development.

A bright, warm, and welcoming home ensured that children and their families felt valued. A flexible approach to connecting with families enabled the childminder to create a space that was accessible and inclusive. Daily communications through online platforms enabled families to be fully involved in their child's experiences and development. One parent commented, 'I have complete confidence in her care and ability to look after my child.' As a result, connections with families positively impacted the quality of children's experiences.

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

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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