

Brandsmill Farm Childcare Services Child Minding

Dunbar

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 November 2025

Service provided by:
Angela Balharrie

Service provider number:
SP2012011893

Service no:
CS2012310744

About the service

Angela Balharrie, trading as Brandsmill Farm Childcare Services is a childminding service registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children under 16 years at any one time, of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children.

The service is provided from a detached family home on the outskirts of Dunbar, East Lothian. Children have access to a large lounge/playroom, downstairs toilet facilities and a grass paddock for outdoor play. The childminder uses local community groups and spaces regularly along with trips to the beach and nearby country walks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 November 2025 between 9:15 and 11:00 and 14 November 2025 between 14:00 and 15:15. 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.

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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children in the care of the childminder
- reviewed comments made by six parents who use the service
- observed practice and daily experiences for children
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were cared for in a warm and nurturing environment.
- The childminder could further evaluate the service against the quality framework to identify areas of strength and areas of improvement.
- A good balance of outings into the community and use of groups helped children develop social skills and a sense of community involvement.
- Play and learning could be further strengthened by planning for some play experiences and proportionate tracking of development.
- The childminder had positive relationships with parents and used these to provide good levels of support.
- The childminder knew children in her care very well but could improve recording of areas where they were supporting 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	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the childminder's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator - Leadership and management of staff and resources.

The childminder had developed vision, values and aims for the service which were based on creating positive experiences for children. Parents confirmed that the vision to provide home care which focussed on outdoor and community experiences were actively promoted in the setting. "It feels like a home from home and (the childminder) is very caring and nurturing." " (The childminder) has brilliant outdoor resources at her house and often takes them out on fun outdoor adventures to playgrounds and local nature."

Parents confirmed that communication with the childminder enabled them to share their views and gain information about their child's time in the setting. "Communication is great between us and Ange, we discuss every aspect of our daughter's care and development regularly." "(The childminder) gives feedback on how (my child) is doing, I feel involved and in the know about what's going on."

Policies and procedures which were used in the setting had recently been updated to reflect current good practice. The childminder had begun to familiarise themselves with 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding.' (Care Inspectorate 2025). This document could be used by the childminder to evaluate her service and identify further improvements which could be made.

There was evidence that the childminder made improvements and changes to the service to meet the changing needs of children. Developing ways to enable parents to contribute to the evaluations of the service would enable parent to influence changes and continuous improvement.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the childminder's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator - Playing, learning and developing.

The childminder had a good understanding of how children learn and develop. They provided a good range of age appropriate resources to support children's fun and engagement in their learning. On the day of our visit children were accessing story books to read with the childminder, playing with small world resources such as the farm set and making pretend cups of tea. They were engaged and having fun in a range of age appropriate play activities.

The opportunities for outdoor and community experiences further supported physical play, social development and a connection with nature. Parents valued the range of experiences out with the home which were provided. "(The childminder) is great with the children, does a variety of activities- a lot of outdoor activities which we like." "Great variety of groups with other kids, lots of time in nature." "Always going to great playgroups and the resources at home are fantastic." The childminding premises included a small paddock where children could run, climb and use natural materials for making and building.

The childminder supported children's play, learning and development through being responsive to children's interests and stages of development. They recognised children's verbal and nonverbal cues, offering praise and encouragement at an appropriate pace to build confidence and engagement. Interactions such as discussing children's play and wondering aloud stimulated children's curiosity and communication.

Strengthening the approach to observations and assessment could further improve planning and ensure assessments were clear informative and support children's progression over time. The childminder acknowledged this during the inspection and was receptive to suggestions for improvement.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the childminder's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator - Nurturing care and support.

The childminder demonstrated a warm natural and positive relationships with children in their care. Children were comfortable and secure with the childminder and sought comfort and reassurance. The childminder knew children's needs and preferences very well and supported children to be capable individuals. Parents commented "(The childminder) is very kind and caring with both children and parents. She takes time to get to know everyone and their families which creates a feeling of safety and engagement." "The relationship between my child and (the childminder) has been fantastic. She looks forward to going weekly and seems very relaxed and happy in her care."

Personal plans were in place for all children and had been developed with families. Registration information included key details such as health needs and routines. Discussion with the childminder evidence that they had a very firm knowledge of each child and their needs. Parents confirmed that regular verbal communication helped the childminder stay responsive to changing needs. While updates were shared these were not consistently recorded in the personal plans. Plans had not been reviewed with families every six months in line with legislation, limiting their effectiveness as working documents to support children's wellbeing.

The childminder used community groups and outings regularly. They ensured that children knew what the routine was for the day and planned transitions throughout the day carefully. This helped to ensure that children felt safe and relaxed as they knew what was happening next.

Parents provided meals and snacks for children. Meals were eaten together in the main playroom. This promoted a relaxed and social experience for children. The childminder was aware of food allergies and the need to promote healthy eating for children.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through good procedures for the administration of medication, assessment of risks and infection prevention and control practices. Children's privacy and dignity was taken into account of during nappy changing and starting the process of using the toilet.

The childminder knew the families using her service well. Parents told us that the childminder created a warm and friendly environment "The childminder is communicative, supportive and suggests different things if (our child) is struggling." "She is like part of our family now!" "(The childminder) is friendly, helpful and super caring to our child. She communicates often and sends us pictures of what they have been up to." The childminder provided daily feedback to parents about their child's day and communicated regularly

with them through Facebook and WhatsApp. This helped to ensure that parents were included in the life of the setting.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.