

Aitken, Dorothy Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 November 2025

Service provided by:
Dorothy Aitken

Service provider number:
SP2010979391

Service no:
CS2010271372

About the service

Dorothy Aitken provides a childminding service from her home in the village of High Valleyfield in Fife. The service is close to a local school, nursery, shops, parks, woodland, public transport links and other amenities. The children are cared for in a lounge, kitchen with an area for dining and hallway which provides access to a downstairs toilet. Children have direct access to an enclosed garden.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of five minded children under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three may be of an age yet to attend primary school and of whom no more than one may be under 12 months (except in the case of twins). These numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's own family.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 12 November 2025 between 14:30 and 16:40. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with one child using the service and one parent
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

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.

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 experienced kind, caring and responsive interactions from a childminder who knew them well.
- Quality assurance systems needed to be developed to assess the work of the service and identify areas for improvement.
- To improve outcomes for children, the childminder should identify training, professional learning, and best practice guidance that would support their practice.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder had created a welcoming environment where children and families felt welcome. This enabled communication so that relevant information could be shared.

The approach to self-evaluation and improvement was mainly informal. It is not at the stage of being meaningfully used to sustain improvement. The childminder should consider ways that will develop the use of quality assurance to evaluate the service. As part of the process, children and families should be asked for their views.

To support improvement, the childminder should become familiar with 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding'. This document is aimed at helping services evaluate their work. It will help identify what is going well and areas for development. In addition, using guidance such as Realising the Ambition would support this work. The bitesize information on the Care Inspectorate hub about quality assurance may also be useful. This will help improve outcomes for children. We made an area for improvement at the last inspection. It has not been met, so we will restate it. (See area for improvement 1.)

Quality Indicator: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

The childminder had updated their First Aid certificate. They had not completed any training or learning to help promote their professional development. This meant that the service was not developing and improving in accordance with current best practice in early learning and childcare. There was scope to deepen their knowledge about current practice that should promote positive outcomes for children. For example, identifying learning that would support children's individual needs, enabling them to achieve.

The provision could therefore be enhanced through keeping up to date with developments in early learning and childcare. They planned to secure training opportunities through their membership with Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). We also signposted the childminder to best practice guidance on the Care Inspectorate Hub. The childminder should maintain effective records that records the impact of their learning on children's experiences. At the last inspection, we made an area for improvement about professional development.(see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development the childminder should identify training and professional reading to develop their skills and knowledge. This should include, but not be limited to, updating child protection training.

The childminder should record learning and demonstrate how it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

2. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development the childminder should identify training and professional reading to develop their skills and knowledge. This should include, but not be limited to, updating child protection training.

The childminder should record learning and demonstrate how it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Planning was done on a daily basis and in response to children's interests. Resources were available where children could choose what they wanted to do. School age children preferred to have a quiet time after school. They told us they liked to "Watch TV" and "Play football at the all weather pitch."

The community was used to extend children's experiences. Children's health and well being was supported as they had freedom to explore the natural environment. For example, they explored the woods and used large equipment at parks.

The childminder used some observation to capture children's achievements and progress. For example, we saw children had developed confidence in their physical abilities. The childminder should use this information to identify 'next steps' to support children's continued learning and development. We talked about how this information could be used to plan activities that promoted children's interests and enabled their continued progress. (See area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's learning, development and progress, the childminder should improve the use of observation and assessment to record children's progress, achievements and identify next steps.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me.' (HSCS 1.27)

Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Interactions with children were caring, respectful and kind. Settling in processes helped children develop relationships with the childminder and other children. As a result, children were relaxed and confident in the childminder's care as they felt safe and secure.

Basic information was recorded with personal plans which had been reviewed with parents. Daily contact with parents allowed information to be shared between home and the service, which helped promote continuity for children. Through discussion the childminder demonstrated a good knowledge of children's individual needs, personalities and interests. While we concluded children's needs were met, personal plans could be used more effectively if they contained current information about children. This will support children's overall wellbeing as their care can be planned for. It will support continuity, note their progress and enable next steps to be identified. (See area for improvement 1).

Meal times were a social occasion for children as they chatted with each other. The childminder explained about dietary preferences that limited choices for some children. We talked about supporting children to try new foods to extend their choices and develop positive relationships with food. The childminder was aware of 'Setting the table' guidance that could be used to support their practice. Creating opportunities for children to be involved in the preparation of meal times could enhance this.

Areas for improvement

1. To contribute to children's care and support needs being met all of the time, the childminder should continue to develop the use of personal plans. They should ensure information contained in the plan clearly shows how children's individual needs are being supported

This would ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a careplan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 October 2024, the provider must ensure that children's information is recorded clearly and reviewed within personal plans. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

- a) detailed information is recorded to support and meet children's individual needs, health, wellbeing, interests, and progression
- b) personal plans are reviewed with parents, carers and children updating information at least every six months, and when necessary
- c) plans are signed and dated by parents and carers, upon review or update.

This is to comply with Regulation 5 (2)(b)(i)(ii)(iii) Personal Plans. The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210).

This requirement was made on 29 May 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

There was a personal plan in place for the minded child. Information was recorded about their interests, development and achievements. It had been reviewed with parents.

Met - outwith timescales

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

To support children's wellbeing accidents and incidents must be consistently recorded.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 29 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not needed to record any accidents. We are satisfied there is a system in place should they need to.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To further support quality assurance, evaluations and improvements in the service, the childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance including the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school aged children'.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 24 October 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not developed meaningful quality assurance or self-evaluation systems.

We will update the area for improvement to reflect current guidance and restate it in this report.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development the childminder should identify training and professional reading to develop their skills and knowledge. This should include, but not be limited to, updating child protection training. The childminder should record learning and demonstrate how it has improved experiences and outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 29 May 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had renewed their First Aid certificate since the last inspection. They still need to undertake a range of learning to demonstrate how they keep up to date with current practice.

We will restate this area for development.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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