

Aitken, Karen Christina Child Minding

Bathgate

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 December 2025

Service provided by:
Aitken, Mrs Karen Christina Aitken,
Mrs Karen Christina

Service provider number:
SP2003906719

Service no:
CS2004070810

About the service

Karen Christina Aitken provides a care service from their family home in a residential area of Bathgate, West Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide care to a maximum of seven children under 16 years, of whom a maximum of six will be 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. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to local amenities including schools, nurseries and parks. The children are cared for downstairs and have access to a living/dining area, kitchen, bathroom and a conservatory with direct access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on Wednesday 10 December 2025 between 10:45 and 12:30. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- gathered feedback from four families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder interacted with children in kind, nurturing and supportive ways which met their individual needs.
- The childminder knew children well and supported their individual routines which respected their rights and choices.
- The childminder should continue to identify training or learning that will support their continued professional development.
- Self evaluation approaches should be developed to support continuous improvements.

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	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 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's values were evident in practice as they had created a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. This positive ethos meant children experienced responsive and nurturing care that met their individual needs. Effective communication with families meant they felt included and respected as partnership working was established.

Informal approaches to self evaluation were in place. Children and families' views were sought through observations and daily discussions. We discussed ways in which children could be further involved in assessing the quality of the service. For example, recording children's ideas and suggestions for activities. Pictures could be used to demonstrate how children's ideas had been used to improve the service. The childminder should also consider how families could be further involved in the development of the service.

Moving forward, the childminder should develop quality assurance and self evaluation for the service. Using best practice guidance and 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' should support this process. Referring to the quality indicators will help highlight any areas that could be further developed. For example, it would enable policies and procedures to be updated to reflect current guidance. We made an area for improvement at the last inspection which has not been met, so will restate it.

Children play and learn 4 – Good

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

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Children had access to a variety of toys and games that promoted different play experiences. The activities available were suitable for the children present, met their needs, stages of development and interests. The childminder had a good understanding of each child's current development needs and talked knowledgeably about their progress.

The childminder had created a child centred approach as she supported children well in their play. Positive, calm and responsive interactions supported children to develop their speech, language and life skills. For example, through reading books and singing children were developing their vocabulary as they repeated words and babbled. We saw that children had fun as the childminder responded to their interests and provided activities they liked such as dancing.

In addition, the local community was used to extend children's experiences. For example, going to the park enabled children to explore the natural environment and develop their physical skills.

Information was gathered about children's progress and achievements. Daily diaries shared information about children's experiences and how they supported their development. Six monthly reviews reflected children's learning. The childminder could further develop the system in place. For example, 'next steps' could be identified and used to inform planning. Parents should be encouraged to add their views to the six monthly reviews. This will support improved monitoring and enable a responsive approach to children's individual development through play and learning.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support.

All interactions with children were caring, nurturing and kind. Positive attachments and trusting relationships with the childminder and each other promoted a respectful care setting. As a result, children were happy, relaxed and confident in the childminder's care as they felt safe and secure.

Personal plans were in place for all children and most contained information that helped meet their individual needs. Children's routines, needs and personalities were known and used to promote consistency of care for children throughout the day. Procedures in place for personal care promoted children's privacy and dignity, which enabled their individual needs to be met. Children were therefore settled within the service, which promoted their overall well-being.

Effective communication with families meant that the childminder worked in partnership with parents. A child centred approach was in place as regular updates were shared with parents each day and at reviews. This helped parents feel included and involved as they knew about their child's experiences. The childminder, therefore, demonstrated a good knowledge of children's interests, personalities and development. As a result, plans supported children to achieve.

The childminder advised that children often slept in buggies, particularly if they were out in the community. This is not in line with safe sleeping guidelines. To support children's well-being, we talked about best practice and safe sleeping guidance that should be referred to. The childminder should review this and implement changes to promote safe sleeping practice.

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 continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children, the childminder should formalise their evaluation and improvement approaches. This should include effective use of professional guidance and the development of action plans to support the monitoring and assessment of identified improvements.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: '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 23 October 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had not formalised systems to demonstrate how self-evaluation was used to support continuous improvement. We advised to download a copy of A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding as this would support this process.

This area for improvement has not been met, so we will continue it at this inspection.

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
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

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