

Carlin, Deborah Child Minding

Strathaven

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 December 2025

Service provided by:
Deborah Carlin

Service provider number:
SP2010978983

Service no:
CS2010269963

About the service

Deborah Carlin provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Strathaven, South Lanarkshire. The childminder is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children. At the time of our inspection, six children were registered with the service.

Children are cared for in the living room, kitchen and downstairs bathroom. At the time of the inspection, the childminder was not using their garden for childminding purposes. The service is close to primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 December 2025 between 12:45 and 14:30. 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 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 children using the service and gathered feedback from two of their family members.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- 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.

Key messages

- The childminder carried out some informal self-evaluation within the setting to identify improvements. We discussed formalising this to help support changes, contributing to good outcomes for children.
- The childminder confidently shared their vision, values and aims, which reflected their approach to caring for children.
- The childminder should review and become familiar with current best practice, to help with the delivery of service.
- Children could choose from a variety of toys and materials, helping to support their choices and wishes.
- The childminder engaged well with children during play, helping to extend their ideas and thinking.
- Children experienced interactions that were kind and warm, helping them feel safe and secure.
- Personal plans should be further developed to include information on children's likes, dislikes and interests. This would help the childminder to meet individual needs.

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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

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

The childminder carried out informal self-evaluation to identify and make improvements within the setting. This included reviewing toys and materials to help ensure these were reflective of children's age and stage of development and interests. We discussed with the childminder formalising their approach to self-evaluation, to help support them making improvements. The childminder agreed to review this.

A vision, values and aims of the service included providing a safe and welcoming environment for children, where they could feel happy, safe and valued. This meant children experienced positive and caring ethos. Parents told us "[the childminder] is a kind caring positive individual, [they are] patient and loving towards our [child] and [they] love to spend time with [the childminder]".

We discussed with the childminder on reviewing best practice guidance and training opportunities, to help develop their knowledge and skills. This included; safe sleeping, child protection refresher and further guidance relating to their service. This childminder provided assurances they would make this a priority. An area for improvement was made at the last inspection and will be repeated. More information can be found at the back of this report.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

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.

Children enjoyed choosing from a variety of toys and materials, supporting their choices and wishes. They explored dolls and prams, building blocks, trains and drawing. They happily invited the childminder into their play, who interacted in a supportive way, helping to extend their thinking and ideas. Parents told us "[my child] loves the toys and the other children and drawing pictures".

The children spent time exploring stories and jigsaws, helping to support their literacy development and problem solving. They showed excitement when looking at stories of animals with the childminder. The childminder responded in a way that mirrored children's joy, creating a fun experience.

The childminder was responsive to children's cues and requests. Such as ensuring children had the toys and materials they wanted and supporting them with peer conflict. They engaged with children on the floor, at their level. This helped children feel heard and valued when sharing their ideas and play experiences.

Children experienced daily outdoor opportunities within the local community. They visited local parks, forests and fields. This provided time for children to be out in the fresh air and to develop a sense of wonder and connection with their wider world.

Parents commented positively on outdoor experiences and told us "[the childminder] plays with the kids and takes them out to the park, for adventures and to see animals" and "[our child] loves to be outside and [the childminder] makes sure [they] get the option to go for a walk or visit a park on a regular basis".

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

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.

Children were happy and settled in the setting and sought out the childminder for comfort, reassurance and to include them in their play experiences. The childminder interacted in a kind and gentle way that helped children feel safe and secure. Parents commented positively on the childminder's approach and told us "[the childminder] is caring and nurturing" and "as soon as [the childminder] answers the door when we arrive my child has the biggest smile on [their] face and goes in quite happily".

Mealtimes was a relaxed experience for children and they enjoyed their meal. Some children brought their own food options and others had food prepared by the childminder. Children told us "we had pizza" when sharing what they had for lunch. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of reviewing current best practice and signposted them to the 'Setting the table' document. Reviewing this would contribute to ensuring healthy food options are provided for children. The childminder agreed to review this.

Personal plans were in place for each child and contained important information about them. For example, family details, emergency contacts and some health information. We discussed with the childminder on reviewing personal plans, to ensure these included information on children's likes, dislikes and interests. An area for improvement was made at the last inspection and will be repeated. More information can be found at the back of this report.

Children were offered opportunities for sleep and rest, helping to support their wellbeing and had comforters to help them feel comfortable when going for a sleep. However, the childminder used buggies for children to sleep in. We signposted them to current best guidance on safe sleeping and suggested this was to be reviewed, to ensure practice was reflective of current guidance. We have repeated an area for improvement under "Leadership and management of staff and resources", in relation to becoming familiar with up to date guidance.

Communication with families took place through daily verbal discussions and through text messaging. Parents were welcomed into the setting daily and they told us "[the childminder] welcomes me at any time to sit in and watch or play with my child in her home and makes us all welcome". This helps to strengthen relationships and connections with families and one told us "[the childminder] feels like family to us".

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

Further develop children's personal plans to include an "All about me". National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to age 16. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2017.

Action taken since then

Whilst personal plans contained important information, such as family contact details, some health information and health professionals, information on children's likes, dislikes, comforters and interests were not available. We discussed with the childminder on developing this to ensure they were aware of individual needs and preferences.

Therefore, this area for improvement is not met and will be repeated at this inspection.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should access a range of training courses to further develop her knowledge and skills including.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to age 16. Standard 14: Management and Leadership.

This area for improvement was made on 26 June 2017.

Action taken since then

We acknowledged the childminder had completed some informal reading and accessed online resources. However, they had not kept up to date with current best practice, such as safe sleeping. In addition, whilst their child protection policy contained important information, the childminder had not refreshed their child protection training.

Therefore, this area for improvement is not met.

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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