

Thomson, Pamela Child Minding

Irvine

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 December 2025

Service provided by:
Pamela Thomson

Service provider number:
SP2007964585

Service no:
CS2007146696

About the service

Pamela Thomson provides a childminding service from their property in the town of Irvine, in North Ayrshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children up to 16 years of age. At the time of our inspection, 10 children were registered with the service. There were three children in attendance during the inspection.

The service is within walking distance to the local school, park and other amenities. The children are cared for in a kitchen/diner and have access to a downstairs bathroom. They also have access to secure outdoor play spaces.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 November 2025 between 12:15 and 15:50. 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 throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- Spent time with three children using the service
- received seven completed questionnaires from families
- 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

- Children were happy and having fun.
- Children felt safe, secure and well cared for by the childminder who knew them well.
- Children's learning opportunities were enriched by opportunities to learn outdoors and in the local community.
- Families were fully involved in their child's care, which helped meet children's needs.
- Effective self-evaluation led to improvement, ensuring high-quality experiences for 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	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

Quality Indicator: 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.

The childminder had a strong vision for their service which supported them to provide high quality care. They shared a statement of aims and objectives with families at enrolment, which outlined their commitment to enhancing children's experiences. These were evident in practice. Examples included providing a safe and stimulating environment, and forming strong partnerships with families. One parent told us, "I can honestly say that the relationship with [the childminder] couldn't be better. They are there for advice any time of the day. They are very helpful". As a result, children received consistent, personalised care in a home from home environment.

One of the service's core objectives was 'community' which was evident in daily practice and informed decision making. The childminder actively promoted community involvement by using local amenities such as the library and parks, and by attending various toddler groups. This approach helped children make new friends and develop a sense of belonging within their community.

The childminder demonstrated strong leadership through their commitment to improvement. Regular self-evaluation had supported the childminder to reflect on their practice and identify areas to develop. The childminder was pro-active about involving families in developing the service. They consulted parents through service quality questionnaires twice a year and provided opportunities for frequent informal feedback. This supported strong relationships and ensured that improvements were meaningful and responsive to the needs of children and families. They also sought the views of children attending the service; their voice was at the heart of developing a 'nurture' area. This told us that children helped shape the service and their ideas were listened to and acted on. These reflective approaches led to the development of a clear plan to support improvement. We suggested the childminder explores the challenge questions in the new shared, 'A Quality Improvement Framework for Childminders' to further support self-evaluation.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, 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 played happily and confidently throughout our visit. They had freedom and choice in their play. Toys were set out that reflected the age and interests of the children present. Children were having fun playing with the toy kitchen, and were enjoying the cars available. There was a good balance between planned activities and free play. The childminder skilfully extended children's learning. They used toys children were enthusiastic about to engage them, to develop other skills. For example, using action figures to complete a fine motor activity which would strengthen finger muscles.

As a result of having free choice in a well planned play environment, children were confident and engaged. They were developing a wide range of skills, including creativity, fine motor control, and imaginative play.

The outdoor area had recently been developed. There was space for active play such as football, pedal cars and slides. There were also areas for discovery which included a mud kitchen. These experiences supported the development of children's gross motor skills and promoted physical activity.

The childminder supported the development of early literacy skills. This included introducing tools, such as chalkboards, to play experiences to promote writing skills. The childminder read a story with the children every day which encouraged them to develop a love of books. This meant children were learning from rich experiences that strengthened language and confidence, meaning children could learn and progress. We discussed ways to further support and extend early number development.

Children benefitted from many experiences outwith the childminder's home. Children had been at a pantomime and were very enthusiastic about it. Previous excursions had included strawberry picking and boat trips. These experiences allowed children to build social skills and resilience in different environments whilst learning and having fun.

The childminder had warm and respectful interactions with children. They made learning fun, and supported and challenged children effectively by gentle coaching and modelling. For example, children were practising counting by calculating 'how many sleeps to Santa'. This led to children wanting to practise writing numbers, with the childminder's guidance. Praise and reassurance were used well to build confidence. Children were encouraged to support each other. As a result of these supportive interactions and effective modelling, children were achieving, developing skills and had built positive relationships. They demonstrated a motivation to challenge themselves and work together.

The childminder demonstrated a strong understanding of how children develop. They used detailed tracking documents to record children's achievements and identify their next steps. These were completed in collaboration with families. The childminder also observed children whilst at the setting, to assess learning. This enabled them to reflect on moments of achievement and support planning for next steps. These steps meant children experienced well?'informed, tailored support that enabled them to make clear progress and achieve their next steps in learning. One parent told us, "[my child's] development and confidence has come on leaps and bounds since being with [the childminder]".

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: 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 the childminder's warm and caring approach. They received comfort, reassurance, and support when needed, helping them feel secure and valued. Consequently, children formed strong, trusting bonds with the childminder. This promoted their emotional wellbeing and created a nurturing environment where children could thrive.

The home environment supported care routines well, with a dedicated area for children to sleep. This meant children who needed rest had a quiet space that met their individual needs. Sleep preferences were respected, with consistent nap times and comforters provided. When children woke, the childminder offered cuddles and gentle reassurance, helping them feel safe and settled. This supported children to feel well-rested and emotionally secure. They experienced continuity in their routines, which promoted their wellbeing and supported healthy development in a calm and nurturing environment.

Personal care was carried out sensitively, with children's privacy and dignity fully respected. The childminder provided calm, reassuring interactions throughout. Children appeared comfortable and at ease as the childminder chatted with them and explained each step. This approach helped children feel secure, involved, and respected during these routines. Good infection prevention and control practices were also evident, with younger children supported to wash their hands after nappy changing. This helped them to develop healthy hygiene habits.

Personal plans were in place and contained relevant and up to date information, including children's likes, dislikes and needs. This allowed the childminder to plan appropriate support strategies and meet children's needs. Parental involvement was evident through regular consultation and updates to plans. This collaborative approach ensured parents were involved and informed in their child's care. This meant children experienced care that supported their individual needs and overall wellbeing.

Families had regular opportunities to discuss their children's care, development and learning through face-to-face chats. The childminder issued termly newsletters and used a messaging group to share photographs and reminders with all families. Private messages were used to inform parents about sleep and eating routines, and communicate personal achievements. Parents were encouraged to share achievements and news from home. This supported ongoing parental engagement. One parent told us, "[the childminder] regularly keeps in contact with us and sends photos of our child throughout the day. They take the time to get to know us and our child."

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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