

Sue's Childminding Child Minding

Livingston

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 December 2025

Service provided by:
Susan Gallagher

Service provider number:
SP2016987967

Service no:
CS2016346702

About the service

Susan Gallacher operates a childminding service registered as Sue's Childminding. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than five are 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 provided from the childminder's home in Livingston, West Lothian, and is close to a local school, nursery, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in the lounge and kitchen, with access to a downstairs toilet. Children have direct access to an enclosed garden, which includes an outdoor play cabin.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 December 2025 between 11:30 and 13:30. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke to the minded child present
- spoke with the childminder
- received feedback from four families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure that 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.

During this inspection we 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 children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in the setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing interactions, which supported them to feel safe and secure.
- The childminder demonstrated a strong understanding of individual needs, and adapted practice to support each child's wellbeing and development.
- Quality assurance, self-evaluation, and improvement planning were purposeful, and positively influenced outcomes for children and families.
- Respectful relationships with children and families fostered strong partnerships that enhanced wellbeing and learning.
- Respectful relationships with children and families contributed to strong partnerships that supported children's wellbeing and learning.
- Children's play, learning, and development were enriched through engagement with the local and wider community.

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

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder demonstrated a clear vision for their service, and a strong commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring positive outcomes for children and families. Their aims and values were embedded in practice, and relevant policies and procedures were in place to support the delivery of service. These were regularly updated, to ensure they were reflective of current best practice. The childminder ensured records were stored in a way that were well-organised, accessible, and meaningful.

Children and families were actively involved in the setting. The childminder valued parent's and children's views, and actively sought feedback on the service, gathering views through daily discussions, WhatsApp communication and questionnaires. We discussed the use of questionnaires, and ways they could have a more focused approach, to further benefit and strengthen self-evaluation. Children's interests influenced activities and outings, reinforcing that their voices mattered, and demonstrated how they informed future planning.

A strong commitment to improvement was evident through the use of best practice guidance, including the Care Inspectorate quality framework for self-evaluation. This process identified strengths and areas for development, informing priorities within the improvement plan. The plan was meaningful and included a focus on enhancing outdoor play provision and learning experiences. The childminder's professional approach and commitment to improvement helped to ensure that children experience consistently high-quality care, play and learning.

The childminder was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association, and accessed resources through the Care Inspectorate Hub to stay informed of updated guidance. Recent training included child protection, first aid and autism awareness. We recommended recording post-training reflections to evaluate learning and its impact on practice and outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

The minded child present was relaxed, happy and engaged in play. They were encouraged to choose resources independently, promoting choice and autonomy in their learning. The childminder demonstrated a sound understanding of child development, ensuring experiences were tailored to individual needs and interests. The daily routine was flexible and child-led, allowing children to explore both indoor and outdoor environments freely. Parents told us, "Sue is always doing great activities and learning experiences".

Interactions between the childminder and the minded child were consistently warm, responsive and respectful. The child approached the childminder with ease, and often invited them into play, reflecting strong, trusting relationships. The childminder demonstrated sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal cues, effectively supporting emotional wellbeing and a sense of security.

Children had access to a wide range of resources, including books, puzzles, role play and mark-making materials, including paints and craft materials. These helped support early literacy and numeracy in meaningful ways. Purposeful interactions such as commenting, explaining and extending play encouraged curiosity and problem-solving. To further enhance learning, incorporating digital tools could be explored.

Planning was child-centred and responsive, with experiences linked to individual interests and personal plans. The childminder tailored the environment to each child's needs, and documented observations and next steps alongside photographs in individual folders, providing a clear record of progress. Photos captured children participating in a variety of play and learning experiences, both indoors, and out in the community.

Outdoor play and community experiences enriched learning and wellbeing, offering opportunities for physical development, social interaction, and exploration of nature. Children regularly visited local parks, green spaces and community groups, strengthening social skills and community connections. Parents praised the childminder for providing varied experiences, including outdoor play in all weathers, with a commitment to safety, choice and enriching learning opportunities. Parents shared "My child plays outdoors most days, and in any weather, which I find great for (child)".

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

The minded child present was happy and settled in the childminder's care, receiving nurturing interactions that supported their wellbeing. The childminder demonstrated a strong understanding of individual needs, responding with kindness and reassurance to ensure the child felt safe and secure. The environment was welcoming, and parents praised the quality of care. One parent commented "I know she looks after them as her own and keeps (child) safe always, while allowing them to explore". Further comments included, "Sue is wonderful with the children, and very much in tune with all of their individual needs," and "Susan is honestly one in a million, we are very lucky to have found someone so caring and fun".

The childminder recognised the importance of smooth transitions for children. They worked closely with parents to create an approach that met children's individual needs, and supported their wellbeing. This included adapting the length of settling in sessions that went at the pace of the child. The childminder's home was well-organised, with designated areas for play, meals and rest, and routines were adapted to meet individual needs, including sleep routines.

Personal plans captured key information, which supported children's individual needs such as interests, routines, dietary requirements and any medical needs. Parents contributed meaningfully, ensuring that care was individualised and responsive. This collaborative approach ensured that children received care and support tailored to their needs. Plans were regularly reviewed and linked to wellbeing indicators, with observations and photos documenting progress.

No children required medication at the time of the inspection. The childminder had a clear medication policy and appropriate recording templates, with best practice guidance to safeguard health and wellbeing. The childminder had shared their medication policy with parents should this be required.

Strong connections with families were central to the service. Parents were warmly welcomed, and daily communication both in person and through digital platforms kept families informed, and supported a continuity of care. This approach fostered trust and partnership working.

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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