

Bishop, Helen Child Minding

Bathgate

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2026

Service provided by:
Helen Bishop

Service provider number:
SP2006960795

Service no:
CS2006132444

About the service

Helen Bishop provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Whitburn, West Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of eight 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.

At the time of our inspection, six children were registered with the service.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the lounge with access to a family kitchen and upstairs bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 12 January 2026 between 12:00 and 14:55. We provided feedback to the childminder on Friday 16 January 2026. 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:

- spent time with a child using the service
- spoke with one parent onsite and received six questionnaire responses from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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 experienced warm and nurturing care from a childminder who knew them well.
- Strong connections with families promoted positive relationships and supported children to experience consistent care and support.
- Children were cared for in a safe, homely and nurturing environment.
- Children's play and learning was supported through a range of interesting community experiences.
- The childminder should develop the approach to reviewing and updating children's personal plans to ensure they reflect current good practice.
- The childminder should increase the use of self-evaluation and improvement planning to support the ongoing development of the service in line with current early learning and childcare theory and guidance.

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	4 - Good
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 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The childminder provided a warm and homely service, which supported children to feel secure and relaxed. The childminder's aims reflected the care provided, as children experienced a safe and nurturing environment. One child shared, "Our childminder is kind to us and fair with everyone and makes sure we do something fun every week which I enjoy." Partnership working with parents ensured that children and families were included and valued. This resulted in children and families experiencing a positive, supportive service.

Effective communication supported parents to feel meaningfully involved in their child's care. The childminder ensured their engagement with parents was open, respectful and supportive, enabling them to influence the service and care provided. The childminder used parents ideas and wishes to plan their child's experiences. However, feedback about the service was mostly received informally. Moving forward, the childminder should consider reintroducing more structured approaches to feedback from children and families. This could support the childminder in developing activities, play opportunities and policies. For example, previously children had used floorbooks to record their comments about activities. The childminder could also ask families for feedback on specific things, such as when introducing new guidance or ideas for toys and materials. These approaches could enable further development of the service and support evaluation over time.

The childminder used informal improvement planning approaches to help them review and develop the service. For example, through reflection they had identified that they would benefit from further training in relation to supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Previously, the childminder had used tools such as a goals setting templates to identify, plan and action improvements but this was not sustained. Developing a more structured approach to improvement planning could ensure ongoing developments are consistently implemented and enable further alignment with current best practice. For example, in relation to strengthening reviews of personal plans and introducing more open-ended play materials.

Some effective quality assurance systems were in place, including daily environment checks, risk assessments, and clear attendance records. These procedures helped maintain a safe environment and ensured registration requirements were met.

The childminder had kept up to date with first aid training, which supported children's health and safety. The childminder was aware of their duties to safeguard children and could share the steps they would take to report any protection concerns. To further consolidate this knowledge, the childminder should ensure they undertake regular child protection training to revisit learning and ensure confidence. Creating a training log could help the childminder keep track of renewal dates and help them reflect on the impact of any training they undertake.

A range of policies and procedures were in place to guide the childminder in their role and to support families to understand the service. However, some policies and procedures were outdated and did not reflect current guidance or the childminder's current practice. The policies and procedures should now be reviewed and updated to ensure they reflect current practice in the service and national good practice guidance.

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's play and learning was promoted as toys and materials were developmentally appropriate and reflected children's needs and interests. Children enjoyed small world play, cars, construction, stories, games, dancing, and arts and crafts. While children were engaged and motivated in their play, to encourage even more curiosity and creativity, the childminder could add more open ended resources, like treasure baskets, shells, and natural items to the play space. Having a wider range of materials would help children make choices, be creative, and lead their own play.

Children's play and learning experiences were enriched through the effective use of local community resources. Regular trips to parks, soft play, and story and rhyme sessions supported children's social, physical, and communication skills. These experiences also helped them learn about the world around them. One parent said, "My child loves outdoors and goes on a daily walk of their choice, usually to the park or just walking around areas. My child enjoys looking at the different nature opportunities. They also have access to the garden whenever they want." The childminder's flexible approach to outings and groups meant children's needs were central to the daily plans. This supported their wellbeing and respected individual preferences.

The childminder's attentive and caring interactions supported children's wellbeing and promoted communication and language skills. By wondering aloud and asking helpful questions, the childminder enhanced children's engagement and extended their vocabulary. Playful and warm interactions were consistent throughout the inspection, showing children that their play and ideas were valued.

Children's learning was supported through flexible, responsive plans based on their interests, community experiences, and seasonal events. For example, cars and trucks were provided for a child with this interest, and local outings were planned through discussions with children. However, planning and experiences were not recorded or evaluated over time. To improve child-centred planning, the childminder should develop ways to record and evaluate both spontaneous and planned experiences. Reintroducing a floorbook approach, previously used by the childminder to plan and evaluate children's experiences, could support them to further enrich children's ongoing development and learning.

The childminder had a good understanding of child development and used this to observe and record children's learning in their personal plans. Observations were used to identify needs, strengths, progress, and next steps. Observations and photos were shared with parents, which supported them to be included in their children's learning and achievements. The childminder was receptive to discussions about how to further develop the quality of observations. For example, capturing significant learning and consistently assessing the planned next steps.

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.

The childminder had built strong relationships with families, creating a warm and welcoming environment for children and parents. One parent said, "The childminder is amazing, nothing is a hassle and always happy to support", while another commented, "The childminder is fantastic, such a nurturing and caring person."

Children's emotional wellbeing and security was supported and promoted by the childminder's warm, attentive interactions. Children's verbal and non-verbal cues were noticed and respected, helping them to feel relaxed and valued. This approach ensured they felt listened to and understood. During routines such as moving between activities and personal care, the childminder consulted with children, so they felt included and confident. Mealtimes were friendly, social moments as the childminder sat with children, chatting and making sure they were safe. As a result of these positive interactions, children experienced consistent, caring support that helped them feel secure and happy.

Regular communication with parents through daily diaries, messages and conversations supported the childminder to respect and fulfil children's needs and parental wishes. For example, routines from home were followed, helping children to feel safe and secure. One parent said, "The childminder follows my routine I have with my child and makes it fit into her day."

Children's personal plans included essential information that helped the childminder understand each child's needs, such as their routines, medical needs, consents, and any additional supports. The childminder added updates about children's progress to help plan their next steps in care and learning. However, personal plans were not always clearly reviewed with parents. The childminder should create a system to ensure reviews are recorded effectively and in line with legislative periods. This will help ensure that consents, agreements, and each child's plan follow current guidance and meaningfully reflect the care, play, and learning provided.

There were no children with medication in the service during the time of the inspection. However, the medication policy and paperwork used to guide the childminder needed reviewed to ensure it reflected current good practice guidance. We signposted the childminder to the document, 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services', (Care Inspectorate, 2024) to support this area of 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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
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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