

Paxton, Paula Child Minding

Kelso

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 February 2026

Service provided by:
Paula Paxton

Service provider number:
SP2003908041

Service no:
CS2003009269

About the service

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six 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.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home in the Scottish Borders town of Kelso.

Children have access to a wooden cabin within the garden area which includes access to a toilet. The garden is directly off the cabin, allowing children to have free access to play outdoors as they wished. The childminder's home is near local amenities, including schools, shops and parks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 2 February 2026 between 11:50 and 14:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- interacted with two children using the service
- reviewed online questionnaires from three 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 experienced warm, nurturing and respectful care that helped them feel safe, valued and emotionally secure.
- The childminder used meaningful self-evaluation to guide them in direction for improvement.
- Policies and practice were strengthened through the childminder engaging in their own learning.
- Children were learning from having a variety of engaging, well planned experiences, including links within the community.
- Positive relationships with families were supported through good communication.
- Updating personal plans more frequently and welcoming families into the service would strengthen collaboration, continuity of care and effective planning.

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 setting's 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 strong, consistent leadership resulting in a warm, nurturing, and well organised service. Positive relationships with families and commitment to improvement contributed to high-quality outcomes for children. Positive relationships with families and commitment to improvement contributed to high quality outcomes for children.

The childminder provided a stable, family centred service where children experienced emotionally secure and meaningful relationships. Their vision and values were clearly embedded within daily practice, and this was reflected in the trusting, positive interactions observed. Parents described the service as, "an amazing provider, love the photos and updates, couldn't be a working mum without her" and reported that the childminder was "always welcoming when discussing my children's care." This demonstrated confidence from families that their children were being cared for in a way that promoted safety, belonging, and wellbeing, where children experienced emotionally secure and meaningful relationships.

The childminder communicated well with families and understood each child's needs. They recognised that personal plans were not being reviewed every six months and took immediate action to correct this. This showed capacity for improvement. Regular reviews will ensure children's needs remain accurate, strengthen partnership working, and support more responsive planning. This will lead to better continuity of care and improved outcomes for children.

Children's safety and wellbeing were protected through the childminder's knowledge of national protection procedures. They knew when to seek support and which agencies to involve, and clear procedures were well documented. Training was kept up to date, which ensured their practice remained current and effective. This showed a proactive and accountable approach to safeguarding, resulting in children being consistently protected from harm.

The childminder was proactive in continuous professional learning. Training records showed that learning informed changes to policy and practice. For example, sleep routines had been revised in line with best practice guidance, with parental agreements in place. This demonstrated effective application of learning to improve outcomes for children.

The childminder had recently attended training on self-evaluation and had begun aligning their self-evaluation processes accordingly. They shared how this supported them to identify areas for improvement and plan change. This illustrated dedication to ongoing development and ensuring the service continues to evolve for the benefit of children and families.

As part of their quality assurance processes, the childminder regularly sought feedback from children and families through observations, discussions, and questionnaires. This feedback informed service development and contributed to a culture of openness and partnership. Families commented positively, telling us, "Communication is great" and "If I felt they needed any ideas on improving the service, I would feel comfortable approaching them".

Overall, during our inspection we found strong evidence of meaningful self-evaluation and clear direction for improvement. This was further supported by active engagement in training, with learning used to strengthen policies and practice.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Children experienced a broad range of play and learning opportunities that promoted curiosity, confidence, and engagement. Experiences were well planned and responsive to children's interests, supporting children to be settled, confident, and engaged in meaningful play. A range of resources, such as role play materials, cars and garage sets promoted choice. There were opportunities to develop early literacy and numeracy through books, mark making and counting and sorting activities which supported children's learning and development. Families praised the breadth of experiences, noting that "activities are always ready to support development" and that children enjoyed daily outdoor play.

During play, the childminder supported children's thinking through appropriate questioning and modelling, such as encouraging them to talk about shapes, colours and size comparison. This was further extended through a balance of child and adult led interactions. The childminder remained attentive to children's engagement levels, offering alternative options when needed, while respecting their choices. As a result, children were leading their own learning, promoting independence and engagement.

Children benefitted from high quality community experiences including playgroups, Tumble Tots, dance classes, library visits, swimming, and exploring local green spaces and woodlands. Regular collaboration with other childminders provided additional social interaction and community connection, promoting children's sense of belonging. Parents told us, "They meet with other children weekly for playgroup and playing" and "The children play outside every day, which is one of the reasons I like my children going to Paula's".

Resources were clean, safe, and in good condition. Children were consulted about what they wanted and could request alternatives freely. This supported independence, decision-making, and problem-solving, leading to richer play and learning outcomes.

The childminder carefully planned experiences based on children's individual interests. For example, engagement over a long period of time with Russian dolls had been extended through themed sets linked to seasons and holidays. This maintained children's interest while increasing variety and supporting their understanding of change over time.

A diary system was used to record experiences, reflections, and information shared with families. This supported ongoing evaluation that was naturally embedded into the service's daily routine.

Developmental tracking systems were in place, including milestones, wellbeing considerations, and individual care details. This meant children were supported to make progress in their learning in a meaningful and relevant way. Careful observations and effective assessments recognised and promoted children's progress and achievements. Through discussions, the childminder was receptive to involving

parents in developmental planning. This would further strengthen partnership working and ensure shared understanding of children's next steps.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced calm, respectful, and nurturing interactions that promoted emotional security. The childminder knew children well and responded sensitively to their changing needs, ensuring they felt safe and valued. Families repeatedly praised the quality of care, telling us, "I always get updates which makes leaving your child a lot less stressful" and "she has the children's best interests at heart." Another family commented, "If I could clone her, I would." Such feedback reflected the high-quality interactions and documentation we observed.

The childminder supported children effectively through transitions both into the service and through wider life events such as toilet learning. Parents described them as knowledgeable and flexible, noting, "They support transitions with experience that makes me feel comfortable and confident leaving my child in their care"

Communication was a strength. Families received updates through daily conversations, messages, and photos. While parents did not routinely enter the home during drop-offs and collections, they reported feeling well informed and said they would be comfortable requesting further discussion. The childminder was encouraged to invite families inside when appropriate to strengthen shared reflection and continuity of care.

Personal plans clearly outlined children's needs, including dietary and medical requirements, and the childminder monitored these well. Medical plans and recording followed best practice guidance ensuring any medical needs were safely met. Children had consistent care to meet their changing needs, however written personal plans did not always reflect this. The childminder immediately agreed to implement structured timely reviews. This demonstrated capacity for improvement and a commitment to maintaining high-quality care. Regular reviews will ensure information remains accurate, strengthen partnership working, and support more responsive planning. As a result, children will experience greater continuity of care and more consistently positive outcomes.

Families provided meals and snacks. The childminder ensured alternatives were available if needed and created a relaxed, social mealtime experience. Lunches were stored in a tub in the playroom, which could present a risk of food spoilage. The childminder agreed to use a fridge or ice packs at all times to support safe food handling.

Nappy changing facilities within the cabin were clean, private and respectful of children's dignity. Appropriate personal protective equipment and procedures were in place to minimise the risk of infections being spread. Although currently no children had long term medication the childminder had procedures in place to administer medication safely. Families "strongly agreed" that their children were cared for in a safe, secure, and well maintained setting.

Comfortable rest spaces were available, such as a low sofa for cuddles and stories or a quiet space to relax after school. The childminder updated their sleep practice policy following training. This showed a commitment to the safety of all children, ensuring their care and support approaches aligned with current best practice, guidance and policy.

Families described highly positive experiences, stating, "Kids always receive love and thrive in her care," and "We couldn't expect any more care or love." Another family commented, "My children have become more confident and learnt a lot."

Overall, there was an atmosphere of calm, nurturing interaction that supported children's wellbeing with approaches being adapted to meet individual needs. Flexibility, understanding and good communication supported strong, trusting relationships with families.

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

The childminder should devise a written risk assessment for the back garden to record the areas the children can access and the daily checks and procedures put in place to ensure a safe, secure environment for children.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2: A Safe Environment.

This area for improvement was made on 3 August 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder had devised written risk assessments for the garden which recorded the areas children had access to and the daily checks carried out to ensure children's safety.

This area for improvement had been 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	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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