

Mair, Carol Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 February 2026

Service provided by:
Carol Mair

Service provider number:
SP2003011086

Service no:
CS2003046922

About the service

Carol Mair is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children 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 the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

The service operates from the childminder's home in the north of Edinburgh. Children are cared for across the spacious living area, with a secure outdoor space available. The service is in a residential area close to parks, primary schools, shops, transport links and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 4 February 2026 between 11:00 and 13:15. We returned to the service on Saturday 7 February 2026 for a feedback meeting. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke/spent time with children using the service
- received two completed questionnaires from families
- spoke to staff the childminder
- observed interactions, routines, practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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 safe, happy and had fun. This was supported by the childminder's core values.
- Developing a simple improvement plan would support focus and planning for service improvement.
- Training in infection prevention and control, child protection and first aid ensured children were kept safe from harm.
- Interactions between the childminder and children were consistently warm and attentive of children's needs.
- Well considered outings enriched play and learning.
- The home premises both indoors and outdoors was developed and available to meet children's needs.
- Close partnership working between the childminder and parents was evident.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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's aims and objectives informed daily practice and contributed to positive outcomes for children. The childminder's values of safe, fun and happy were consistently reflected in the quality of children's experiences. A nurturing and reassuring environment meant children were secure to play and learn. The welcoming ethos of the service was clear. A parent said: "Our child is more than just welcomed by the childminder, we feel they are genuinely loved by her." We suggested further collaboration with children and families to enhance shared ownership of the service values.

The childminder's vision for the service emphasised the importance of community and the outdoors to support children's development. Developmentally appropriate outings and opportunities for children to interact with peers from other childminding settings, broadened their social experiences supporting early social skills. A parent told us they appreciated the opportunities their child had to play with a wider group of children.

Self-evaluation for improvement was in development helping to identify strengths in consultation with parents. The childminder had previously used questionnaires to gather feedback from families. Developing a simple improvement plan would support focus and planning for service improvement. We signposted the childminder to 'A quality improvement framework for the early years and childcare sectors: Childminding' (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland Inspectorate, 2025) to support reflective practice and ongoing service development.

Policies and risk assessments were in place, supporting safe and consistent practice. This meant children were kept safe through clear practice and procedures both in the home premises and in the community. For example, risk assessments for community outings considered the needs of very young children. A regular review cycle across policy areas and clearly documenting the process, would strengthen overall quality assurance. This would provide transparent evidence of continuous improvement and demonstrate how changes positively influence children's safety, wellbeing, and daily experiences.

Quality Indicator: Staff skills knowledge and values

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 strong observation skills in noticing and responding to young children's needs. This promoted emotional security and supported the children's development. Parents told us the childminder's knowledge and experience helped their children's development. One parent commented that the childminder knew "how best to approach things like potty training, dropping naps, doing things more independently." This told us parents felt supported and that the childminder contributed to children's skills development.

The strong values-based practice of the childminder meant children's development was supported. The children were seen valuing the childminder as a role model and as a source for learning. For example, respectful language modelled by the childminder was used by children. The positive behaviour policy spoke about realistic expectations for children depending on their stage of the development. A parent commented: 'The childminder is very warm, loving and patient.' The childminder's values-based practice meant children could play and learn securely as individuals.

The childminder's awareness of children's sleep patterns and knowledge of safe sleep practices was reflected in their policy. The childminder had developed a quiet environment in the home premises to support rest. Suitable equipment for different stages meant young children's sleep was safe. This addressed an area for improvement made at the last inspection. A parent said: 'Our childminder knows when the children are tired, and because they don't mind many children at one time they have the capacity to respond to that quickly.' Children's rest and sleep were safe and valued, supporting their growth and development.

The childminder was a member of a national childminding organisation, which helped them stay updated on sector developments and access professional learning. Training in infection prevention and control, child protection and first aid ensured children were kept safe from harm. The impact of the infection prevention and control training in particular was clear in practice. Regular handwashing, a high standard of cleanliness in the environment and the use of personal protective equipment reduced infection risks for children. We encouraged the childminder to keep a training log to support reflection on the impact of training and professional reading.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

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 benefited from an inviting learning environment with well maintained resources. Children knew what was available and approached the childminder to request specific resources, showing ownership of their play and independence in making choices.

The childminder had developed the home premises both indoors and outdoors to be available to meet children's needs. This meant that children could play, learn and rest at the home premises as well as benefit from the community learning the childminder provided. In the home premises the indoor environment was spacious and comfortably furnished to a high standard. The outdoor environment was a secure play space with a range of active play and nature play opportunities. This addressed a requirement made at the last inspection. Cleanliness and risk assessments were regularly reviewed. We encouraged the childminder to note down review dates and actions to show this ongoing reflective work.

Risk assessments and benefits for children through community experiences were well considered. This meant children could access the social and outdoor benefits of the outdoor spaces and community spaces they visited. We heard that the children had recently visited botanical gardens and other local outdoor spaces. Parent feedback was positive about children's outdoor and community experiences contributing to confidence and social skills with other children.

Information gathered by the service was appropriate and securely stored. The confidentiality policy let parents know that children's information was confidential unless a safeguarding issue arose.

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 were engaged in play due to a choice of experiences. High quality toys appropriate to the age and stage of children were organised to support choice and independence. Children's current interests were catered for. We observed children moving freely between creative play, puzzles, small world toys, and experiences offered by the childminder, such as reading books and rhymes. Children were supported to sustain interest appropriate to their age and stage. For example, a younger child was supported with a story using simple words during close contact on the childminder's knee. Overall, the experiences on offer and the childminder's support contributed to children's play and engagement.

Interactions between the childminder and children were consistently warm, respectful and attentive of children's needs. The quality of interactions contributed to the positive ethos of the service. Parents recognised this with one saying: 'Our child gets excited in the morning on the way to the childminder and wants to tell them about a toy or something they saw or did since they last saw the childminder.' This feedback demonstrated that the relationship-based practice had positive outcomes for children at the service.

Well considered outings enriched play and learning. The childminder had photos and family feedback confirming regular trips. A parent told us: 'Our child plays and explores in playgrounds, parks, playgroups, museums, libraries and sometimes little trips away on the train.' The children attended groups with other childminders and young children which gave the social experience of play alongside children outside the service. This gave the children opportunity to explore developing play and social skills. The childminder had a risk versus benefit approach to outdoor play and community learning. This meant the childminder had thought about the risks of the experience to ensure children have access to the benefits safely.

The childminder supported children's learning through written observations considering several aspects of the child's development. We spoke to the childminder about ways to use observations to strengthen planning. This would support a stronger link between individual children's learning and the experiences on offer. Children were consulted daily on opportunities available dependent on seasons and weather. We suggested consultation with children through a mind map with record of completed experiences. This would show how children's views influence planning and strengthen engagement. Parents confirmed daily feedback with the childminder about their children's experiences and learning. One parent confirmed: 'we discuss our child's care, play and learning.'

There was evidence of nurturing play activities with an emphasis on outdoor play and learning. Children were seen watering plants in the garden. This meant they had the opportunity to care for living things and observe seasonal changes. Social play with other minded children in community spaces helped develop wider social skills and life skills. The childminder spoke about quality conversations when out and about with children, for example what they do to keep safe crossing the road. This meant experiences provided by the childminder developed understanding of safety and life skills.

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 experienced nurturing, consistent care. The predictable environment and well established routines supported their wellbeing. During the inspection, children showed a high level of emotional security, reflecting strong, trusting relationships. The children were confident in expressing their needs. The close relationship families have with the childminder was commented on in feedback. One parent said: 'We feel that we know the childminder very well, we share about life and things that are going on.' The close partnership supported children to feel valued as adults worked well to care for them.

Personal planning contributed to a tailored approach for children. Review of personal planning every six months meant the childminder worked to keep information up-to-date. A parent told us: 'Because the care is so personal, our childminder can adjust their care to our child's development very individually.' Parents feedback also confirmed that informal discussions were regular and meaningful. Recording these ongoing interactions would strengthen evidence of collaborative planning.

Mealtimes provided a calm, social experience supported by the childminder. Attention given to hygiene, safety and social skills meant mealtime routines were a rich learning opportunity. Families provided packed lunches and snacks with the childminder discussing suitable healthy options in line with best practice guidance. We suggested the childminder create a brief healthy eating statement to support partnership working with families in relation to healthy eating.

Families valued the verbal daily feedback and individual WhatsApp updates. Dialogue with families sharing children's experiences and practicalities around their children's day contributed to families' sense of trust.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**Requirements****Requirement 1**

By 1 November 2024, the childminder must ensure children's health, welfare and safety needs are met consistently.

To do this, the childminder must at a minimum, ensure the domestic premises is available and used as part of a flexible and responsive service to meet children's changing needs.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of Users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is also to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I can use an appropriate mix of private and communal areas, including accessible outdoor space, because the premises have been designed or adapted for high quality care and support.' (HSCS 5.1).

This requirement was made on 20 September 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The childminder made the domestic premises available and part of the flexible and responsive service to meet children's changing needs. The environment had been developed to consider communal areas for play, care routines and accessible outdoor space. Children were observed to be secure in the environment and the relevant routines. Risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor environments were in place.

Met - outwith timescales

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

To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should improve the quality of sleep and rest times. This would ensure children are safe, comfortable and having a consistent approach with their home routine.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'If I experience care and support in a group, I experience a homely environment and can use a comfortable area with soft furnishings to relax' (HSCS 5.6).

This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2024.

Action taken since then

The children had the domestic premises available for rest and sleep. Suitable quiet areas and resources were available for children to rest and sleep. The childminder demonstrated awareness of safe sleeping practices and tailored support for individual children.

This Area for Improvement has been Met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To protect children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should take action to reduce the risk of infection spread during daily routines. This should include but not be limited to:

- handwashing for children and the childminder following personal care and before food

- the use of personal protection equipment (PPE) during personal care
- personal care for children under two years should predominantly take place in a self-contained space designed for that purpose only.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2024.

Action taken since then

The infection prevention and control policy was clear about times for handwashing. Handwashing was observed at the appropriate times. Personal care for the children took place in the designated bathroom on the premises. Personal protection equipment (PPE) was in use by the childminder to support personal care both in the home and when out and about.

This Area for Improvement has been Met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To provide children with a high quality service which supports them to reach their full potential, the childminder should keep up-to-date with changes in early learning and childcare. This should include but not be limited to using best practice and national guidance to inspire and guide quality outcomes for children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Policies were aligned with best practice guidance across several aspects of practice. The childminder was able to discuss and demonstrate aspects of changes in early learning and childcare influencing the service and their practice with the children.

This Area for Improvement has been Met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure children receive a quality service based on evidence, guidance and best practice, the childminder should engage in regular training to enhance their knowledge and skills. This should include but not be limited to:

- child protection and safeguarding training
- first aid training
- infection prevention and control training.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state, 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional or organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 20 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Relevant training has been undertaken. The childminder was able to discuss and demonstrate the impact of training on the service and in relation to practice with the children.

This Area for Improvement has 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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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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