

Duncan, Julie Child Minding

Wormit

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 February 2026

Service provided by:
Julie Duncan

Service provider number:
SP2003904139

Service no:
CS2003007134

About the service

Julie Duncan provides a childminding service from their property within a residential area in Wormit, Fife which is close to local schools and nurseries. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years.

Numbers are inclusive of the children in the childminder's family. Colin Duncan is employed as an assistant. When the childminder is working with the assistant the service may provide care to a maximum of seven children at any one time under the age of 16. At the time of our inspection there were six children registered with the service.

Children have access to a living room, kitchen/dining room, playroom and downstairs toilet. An enclosed back garden is also available.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 February 2026 between 14:00 and 17:45. Inspection feedback was at the end of the visit. 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- gathered feedback from two families during our visit and two families using a survey
- observed practice and children's experiences
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- The childminder demonstrated a positive and reflective approach to leadership and improvement planning.
- Family input was valued and their views and suggestions were regularly sought.
- Children experienced a rich, warm and welcoming learning environment that supported their ideas and interests well.
- Children were engaged for sustained periods in play that enhanced their imaginations and creativity.
- The childminder's interactions were consistently warm and responsive. This supported children's engagement in their play and helped them to feel safe and secure.
- Positive relationships had been established with children and their families. The childminder promoted a welcoming and inclusive environment that supported positive connections.

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	5 - Very 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 demonstrated effective and reflective leadership. Practice was routinely reviewed and feedback from families was actively sought and used to drive improvements. For example, when families expressed a desire to be more involved in their children's play and learning, the childminder introduced opportunities for them to lead developments in the garden area. This demonstrated a strong commitment to partnership working and continuous improvement, resulting in enhancements that supported the quality of children's play experiences.

Clear vision, values and aims were in place that put children's interests at the centre of practice. This was evident throughout the inspection. The aims reflected the childminders close work with families to ensure children felt secure and well supported. Strong partnerships with families contributed to an inclusive, child centred environment.

Quality assurance systems were effective and impacting positively on the children and families. They supported the childminder to track, review and manage key tasks effectively. Regular reflection on practice enabled them to identify meaningful areas for development, such as enhancing outdoor play and digital learning. Ongoing consultation with children and families contributed positively to these improvements and ensured developments were informed by their views.

Policies were in place to support the childminder's practice. However, discussions identified that some service procedures would benefit from review to ensure they align with current best practice guidance. For example, procedures relating to notifications to the Care Inspectorate should be updated. Regularly reviewing and updating policies would help ensure the childminder's practice remains aligned with current legislation and guidance. This would strengthen the overall quality and consistency of care provided.

The childminder's proactive and continuous approach to risk assessment had a positive impact on children's outcomes. By identifying and addressing potential hazards the childminder created a safe, well managed environment where children can explore and play. They made informed decisions that kept children safe while still enabling challenge. Children were supported to understand risk through the childminder modelling safe behaviours and guiding children to think through possible hazards when engaging in activities.

A childminding assistant was employed within the service and safer recruitment procedures, including fit person checks, had been appropriately completed. The assistant understood their role and contributed effectively, providing supervision when required. This supported the delivery of safe, consistent care and helped to support positive outcomes for children's wellbeing and experiences.

The childminder engaged well with professional learning opportunities. Safeguarding children was supported through training in areas such as first aid and food hygiene. Recent child protection training had strengthened understanding and confidence in recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns. Professional development resources and guidance accessed through the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and Care Inspectorate were used effectively to guide ongoing development.

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 experienced a rich, warm and welcoming learning environment, where play was central to their development. Children benefited from having their own space for personal belongings. This supported independence and helped create a strong sense of belonging.

Children were highly engaged in play for sustained periods of time showing deep concentration, enjoyment and creativity. For example, we observed children developing their own imaginative storylines in the playroom, using boxes, small figures and role play materials to play imaginatively together. These opportunities supported children to explore their interests, develop their ideas and extend their learning through purposeful, self directed play. Children benefited from free flow play and made independent choices. This demonstrated strong ownership of their experiences. The childminder recognised that introducing more loose parts play indoors could extend children's creativity and imaginative thinking.

The childminder was highly motivated and engaged with children throughout the inspection. Warm and responsive interactions supported children's natural curiosity and deepened their learning. For example, when children were developing their ideas, the childminder sensitively joined in to extend their interests without taking over the play. They were attuned to children's cues and had a clear awareness of when to step back to allow children to lead their learning and when to step in with timely questions or prompts to sustain thinking. These high quality interactions strengthened children's confidence, supported deeper learning and enabled them to build on their ideas through purposeful play.

Outdoor play offered a wide range of experiences that encouraged challenge and creativity. The childminder adopted a proactive and child centred approach to risky play. They helped children learn how to manage risk safely while still taking part in valuable experiences. Children had opportunities to develop important life skills such as preparing food safely with real tools during cooking and baking activities. This helped children to be responsible and make safe, confident choices during their play.

The childminder had good links with the local and wider community which enriched learning further. Outings including visits to the beach, garden centres and planned trips to the science centre. This enhanced children's experiences and supported their connection with the wider world.

Children's language and literacy was well supported through opportunities for mark making, drawing and writing. Children created their own story books of their chosen interest. This allowed children to express their ideas visually and verbally in a fun way and grow more confident in communicating their thoughts.

The childminder knew children well and was responsive to their interests and ideas demonstrating a good understanding of how children learn. They shared plans to develop a learning wall or floor books to support them to record children's experiences. This would support a more effective way of tracking children's progress and achievements. Families shared in their child's experiences through daily updates and opportunities to discuss their child's progress. This helped to keep them included and informed.

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 warm, consistent and responsive interactions which helped them to feel safe, supported and valued. Children were relaxed, confident and happy throughout the inspection. Strong attachments had been formed between the childminder and the children in their care. Children confidently sought out the childminder to share their ideas and opinions and looked for praise and reassurance about their efforts and achievements. The childminder responded in ways that suited each child's needs, offering encouragement that promoted their confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Routines were flexible and responsive, enabling children to follow their interests at their own pace. Transitions were well planned and seamless as children moved between home, the setting and other establishments. During the inspection, the childminder gave a child warm and timely notice along with a description of what was happening next before leaving for a school pick up. This allowed the child the opportunity to finish their play and prepare calmly for the next transition. When returning from nursery, children settled quickly through familiar routines such as having a snack and chatting about their day. These thoughtful approaches helped children feel emotionally secure, settled and safe.

The childminder offered healthy meals and snacks that aligned with 'Setting the Table' guidance ensuring food choices were nutritious. Children's choices were considered through consultation and discussion during menu planning, which meant they ate food that they enjoyed. Mealtimes were a positive social experience and children had opportunities to be included and involved in mealtime routines. This strengthened independence, decision making and positive attitudes to healthy eating.

During our visit, discussions with the childminder highlighted that current sleep routines did not align with safer sleep guidance, as a buggy was being used for children to sleep in. Sleeping in a buggy can also be uncomfortable for a child and does not support safe, restful sleep. Following the inspection, the childminder took prompt action and introduced a travel cot, demonstrating a proactive approach to improving practice and supporting children's safety and wellbeing.

The childminder knew children very well and worked closely with families to understand their individual needs, preferences and routines. This understanding was evident in daily practice, with the childminder recognising when children needed comfort, challenge or support. They adapted routines, play opportunities and interactions to suit each child, helping them feel secure and confident. Ongoing conversations with families ensured the childminder had up-to-date information, which supported consistent, personalised care and promoted continuity for children.

The childminder promoted an environment that was warm, friendly and inclusive. This helped children and families feel welcomed. Connections with families were well established. Families provided positive feedback. One family shared that the childminder was, "friendly, approachable and professional." Families told us they valued the strong communication and the nurturing relationships that supported their children to feel settled and secure. Another family told us, "[The childminder] is wonderful and I feel so grateful to have her in our life."

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 ensure each child's personal plan is reviewed when there is a significant change in a child's health, welfare or safety needs and at least once in every six month period.

National Health and Social Care Standards: standard 1 - "I experience high quality care and support that is right for me."

This area for improvement was made on 9 July 2018.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were reviewed with families at least every six months. This meant they were up-to-date and captured the current needs of children.

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	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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