

Knox, Julie Child Minding

Innerleithen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 February 2026

Service provided by:
Julie Knox

Service provider number:
SP2003908088

Service no:
CS2003009331

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 Innerleithen.

Children have access to a dedicated playroom, kitchen and living room. The garden is directly off the playroom, 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 Tuesday 10 February 2026 between 09:00 and 11:30. 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 one child using the service
- reviewed online questionnaires from nine 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 consistently warm, nurturing and relationship centred care, which helped them feel emotionally secure and confident in the setting.
- The childminder demonstrated strong, values led leadership, with a clear vision and aims that were actively embedded in daily practice to support positive outcomes.
- Self evaluation and professional learning were well established, with reflective tools and training used effectively to drive continuous improvement.
- Children benefited from rich, varied and meaningful play experiences, supported by thoughtful planning, attuned interactions and high quality indoor and outdoor environments.
- Families felt respected, included and well informed, with effective communication fostering trust, strong relationships and meaningful involvement in the service.
- Children's care routines and transitions were sensitively planned, ensuring dignity, independence, predictability and support during changes within and beyond the service.

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 values and leadership, which had a consistently positive impact on children and families. Their clear vision, values and aims were embedded across written information and daily practice. These centred on creating a warm, nurturing, inclusive and homely environment where children were supported to feel valued and secure. One child stated, "I like that it always feels happy and safe there. Julie has looked after me since I was a baby, so it feels like going to see family. We always have fun and she makes everyone feel special". We saw these values reflected in the childminder's interactions, documentation and parental feedback, showing that the vision was not only stated but actively lived.

The childminder communicated their vision effectively to families through their introductory materials, policies and ongoing dialogue. They built trusting and respectful partnerships by ensuring parents felt confident, informed and involved from the start. Parents described the childminder as professional, open and highly responsive, with one stating, "She knows my child incredibly well and has always supported their development and wellbeing. I value her advice and honesty, and we have a lovely, open relationship". This demonstrated leadership based on transparency, mutual respect and shared responsibility for children's wellbeing.

Self-evaluation was well developed and purposeful. The childminder used a range of reflective tools, including a diary, training notes, and a self-evaluation file, to review and enhance their work. They routinely recorded learning from Care Inspectorate updates, best practice documents and training, and they noted how they would implement changes. They actively monitored their own progress by dating and ticking off actions. This reflected a commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring children benefited from decisions that were informed and aligned with current national guidance.

The childminder demonstrated effective leadership in professional learning. They attended a wide range of relevant training, including courses on autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and behaviour as communication. Their notes showed thoughtful reflection on training. For example, they reflected on how best to support children, showing an understanding of children's needs and the strategies that support positive outcomes. We saw evidence of learning influencing practice, such as improvements to the outdoor area following training. This demonstrated that the childminder's professional learning contributed to enhanced outcomes for children.

The childminder's approach to quality assurance was developing well. They carried out key tasks such as fire safety checks and evacuation drills and used their diary to plan routine responsibilities. To further ensure aspects of the service were benefiting children they could extend this planning approach by scheduling regular audits of medication, accidents, children's records and parent meetings. This would provide a more structured annual cycle and strengthen the consistency of their quality assurance processes to make improvements for children.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in evaluating the service. The childminder gathered routine feedback through emails and discussions, and parents told us that their views were listened to and acted

upon. One family told us, "Julie often asks for feedback and keeps parents informed about any changes". This demonstrated responsive and collaborative leadership. To extend this further, the childminder could involve children and families in shaping the vision and aims, ensuring they reflect everyone's needs.

Overall, the childminder showed strong leadership. Their commitment to learning, reflective practice and partnership working ensured consistently positive experiences for children.

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 rich, varied and meaningful play opportunities that supported their learning very well. The childminder created an environment where play was purposeful, stimulating and relevant to children's developmental stages and interests. Thoughtful planning and understanding of individual children ensured that they remained engaged and were supported to engage meaningfully.

The childminder selected resources that promoted curiosity and exploration. Indoors, children could access puzzles, building materials, loose parts, instruments, natural resources and opportunities for sensory play. This supported the exploration of problem-solving skills, sensory play and numeracy. Outdoors, the childminder extended these learning experiences into their garden, using training and professional reading to enhance the provision. Their understanding of the benefits of outdoor play meant that children experienced frequent, high quality opportunities to develop physical, social and imaginative skills. This contributed positively to children's wellbeing and overall development.

Interactions were a particular strength. We observed the childminder singing with the child throughout care routines and play, embedding early literacy and communication naturally within daily experiences. Their gentle and attuned approach supported secure attachments, enabling children to relax, explore and take positive risks. The childminder used musical instruments, scarves and rhythm games to engage young children. These experiences encouraged curiosity, helping to extend and deepen children's play. This showed effective use of training in practice, supporting early brain development and communication skills in a nurturing, fun and responsive way.

During our visit the child we met demonstrated high levels of motivation and confidence during play. They moved purposefully around the space, selecting materials independently and signalling their choices non verbally. The childminder recognised these cues quickly and responded appropriately, offering stories, sensory play and loose parts to extend the learning opportunities. This showed strong observation skills and an ability to adapt play responsively in the moment, ensuring experiences remained meaningful and child led.

Community experiences further enriched children's learning with regular access to childminding groups, green spaces, a community garden and the library being offered. These opportunities broadened children's social understanding and provided valuable opportunities to develop friendships. In the childminder's Floor book, we saw that older children took on nurturing roles with younger children, supporting them in activities such as climbing and mealtimes. These peer interactions were enabled sensitively by the childminder and contributed to a family like atmosphere where children felt valued, safe and included.

Planning and assessment processes were well established. The childminder used responsive, in the moment planning to meet children's immediate interests, while also incorporating seasonal themes and purposeful activities. Moving forward, opportunities for children to lead in their creativity should be consistent. This would further promote imagination, problem solving and independence.

Developmental tracking was in place for younger children, with milestone observations and next steps recorded in individual folders. Older children's voices were recorded in the shared Floor book. The recognition of achievement was further celebrated through photographic observations and daily diaries. This could be further embedded through monitoring of progress through recording updates to identified next steps and embedding the use of the group Floor book.

Parents received very good communication about their child's development. Daily online updates, photographs, diaries and opportunities to take their child's folder home helped families to feel informed and included. Parent feedback highlighted that children enjoyed a, "brilliant variety of experiences," felt "part of the family," and engaged in activities that were "messy, fun, creative and educational."

Overall, the childminder demonstrated strong practice in play, learning and development, particularly in communication with families and attuned interactions.

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 warm, compassionate and relationship centred care that promoted their emotional security and wellbeing. The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to creating a nurturing environment where children felt valued, safe and respected. Their interactions were consistently gentle, calm and responsive, helping children form trusting relationships and develop confidence in the setting.

A strong sense of pride and professional love was evident throughout their work. The childminder paid careful attention to the quality of resources, environment, paperwork and communication with families. This attention to detail created a welcoming atmosphere and supported children to feel settled and at ease. Parents reported that their children were consistently happy, relaxed and secure in the childminder's care. Many described the environment as clean, safe and homely, and expressed exceptional satisfaction with the quality of care.

Transitions into the service were particularly well planned and nurturing. The childminder communicated effectively with parents before and throughout the settling in process, adapting routines sensitively to meet each child's needs. They provided families with summary reports to help them understand how their child was settling and used feedback to inform their own self evaluation. This approach ensured transitions were calm, personalised and supportive. Children benefited from the predictable and sensitive routines that underpinned this process.

The childminder also supported transitions with nurseries and schools, helping children manage change with confidence. Parents spoke positively about how the childminder reassured and prepared their children

for new environments. To strengthen this further, the childminder could develop a clearer plan for liaising with external settings and record this within children's chronologies.

Children's care routines were delivered in ways that protected dignity and promoted independence. Nappy changing areas were clean, private and well equipped, and the childminder followed safe procedures consistently. Mealtimes were relaxed, social experiences, with healthy snacks provided and meals stored appropriately. The childminder used guidance on scald prevention and positive mealtime routines to strengthen their practice, ensuring safe and nurturing experiences.

Children had access to comfortable rest spaces, including quiet areas for reading, cuddles and relaxation. These spaces contributed to a calm, soothing environment where children could regulate their emotions and rest when needed. Routines were flexible and adapted in response to children's cues, ensuring personalised care that met individual needs.

Personal plans captured children's routines, needs and wellbeing effectively. The childminder used wellbeing indicators to share feedback with families and identify supports needed to help children progress. Personal plans included information on children's likes, dislikes, medical and dietary requirements. This was gathered in collaboration with parents, ensuring continuity of care.

Relationships with families were a significant strength. The childminder knew the families very well and created a culture where parents felt welcomed, respected and included. Daily diaries, photographs, conversations and periodic care plan updates helped families feel informed and involved. Their sensitivity to cultural differences, such as incorporating other languages into learning, promoted children's sense of identity and belonging.

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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