

Gillian Barr Childminder Child Minding

Haddington

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 March 2026

Service provided by:
Gillian Barr

Service provider number:
SP2016988450

Service no:
CS2016350678

About the service

Gillian Barr Childminder provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Haddington, East Lothian. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of seven children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to parks, shops, local schools and other amenities. Children have access to the open plan kitchen and play area, downstairs bathroom, spare room and a fully enclosed garden.

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

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 March 2026 between 09:10 and 12:30. 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 children using the service
- received four responses to our request for feedback from parents/carers through our online questionnaire
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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 and their families experienced a service which was friendly and welcoming.
- Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of their individual needs.
- Daily access to outdoors supported children's health and wellbeing.
- A wide range of play and learning experiences matched children's interests and needs.
- Ongoing communication supported smooth transitions and continuity of care.
- Children and families views helped shape the service and influenced change.

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

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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 and families benefitted from clear aims that created a shared vision for the service. These aims were shared with families, helping them understand what to expect. The childminder consistently applied the values of the service, which included "nurture, inclusion and kindness". As the service continues to develop, involving children and their families in reviewing the vision, values, and aims will help ensure they remain meaningful and reflect their current needs.

Children's voices were valued and embedded in daily practice. Weekly circle time opportunities allowed children to help make decisions about their experiences, including food choices, activities and outings. The childminder was highly responsive to both verbal and non verbal cues, demonstrating a clear understanding of how individual children communicated. This inclusive practice ensured children had equal opportunities and supported their confidence.

Families had meaningful opportunities to influence change. The childminder had consulted with families through daily conversations at drop-off and collection times, as well as more formally through questionnaires to gather specific feedback. Termly newsletters supported sharing of key information. Following a parent suggestion, monthly progress updates were introduced for each child, strengthening shared understanding of children's development and next steps. This responsive approach ensured children's care and learning was reflected across both their home and the setting. Families valued this partnership, commenting that the childminder was, "very open to our ideas", "clear with all her communication" and "Always asks for suggestions and involvement".

The childminder used effective self evaluation and quality assurance processes to improve children's experiences. They regularly reviewed their practice using quality audit tools and best practice guidance to identify what was working well and where improvements could be made. A more streamlined recording system had recently been introduced, supporting clearer oversight of children's care and learning. We discussed how continuing to use this embedded self evaluation process will help to further identify areas for development and support the cycle of continuous improvement.

The childminder was experienced in their role and committed to developing their service, with high quality care central to their practice. They made effective use of support from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the local authority, which increased their confidence in specific areas of their role. Ongoing professional learning, including training on communication needs and strategies, strengthened their skills and improved outcomes for children.

The childminder demonstrated safeguarding knowledge and implemented detailed policies and embedded risk assessments effectively. This consistent approach ensured children were well protected and supported their overall safety and wellbeing.

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 were busy and engaged in their play. Resources and toys were appropriate to children's individual interests and stages of development. They spent time exploring bubbles, doing arts and crafts, building with blocks and completing puzzles. Children advised they enjoyed, "playing outside", "making pictures" and "[The childminder] always gives us things to do and there are lots of activities." Parents also commented positively on their children's experiences. They shared, "no two days are the same" and "very good at helping build confidence and giving them age appropriate responsibilities and structured but fun tasks."

Children were engaged in purposeful play that reflected their interests. The childminder knew the children well and used this knowledge to plan experiences they enjoyed. Children were actively involved in choosing different activities for the week and the childminder was flexible in their approach to accommodate their interests. For example, children chose to spend time creating pictures using different materials such as scissors, glue and pens. Children were confident in asking the childminder for resources they needed and the childminder supported their ideas. Children were encouraged to lead their own play and make choices, helping to build their confidence and independence. Taking part in daily routines, such as preparing snack, supported the development of children's life skills.

The childminder used their knowledge of child development to skilfully extend children's play and learning. By responding sensitively to children's cues and using open ended questions at their level, they encouraged children to explore ideas more deeply. For example, while building block towers outdoors, children were supported to problem solve and compare heights by measuring themselves against the towers, while the childminder supported them to recognise numbers on the measuring tape. This approach challenged children's thinking, fostered curiosity, and supported sustained engagement in play.

Children were able to independently choose where they played, across both indoors and outdoors. This supported them to lead their own play. The childminder provided regular outdoor learning experiences that were enriched through strong connections with the local community. Children took part in outings to parks, groups, and trips. This supported the development of their social skills and understanding of the wider world. Parents commented positively on the range of outdoor experiences. Their comments included, "They will go to playparks after school, walks up hills and to monuments, the animal sanctuary and a variety of other places" and "Walks, exploring, parks and many more adventures."

Children's learning was supported effectively through observations. Individual learning observations and developmental overviews were used to track children's progress. This supported the childminder to assess children's progress and achievements over time and identify clear next steps. Children's learning was shared with parents through daily conversations, photos and monthly updates. This supported parents to be meaningfully involved in their children's play and learning. A floor book was used as a reflective tool to help children revisit and build on their experiences, helping the childminder plan further experiences children enjoyed.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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 and their families experienced a warm and welcoming environment. Children appeared comfortable and relaxed in the childminder's care, with families commenting positively on feeling welcomed. They shared, "A home for home lifestyle. Which my children have loved" and "has an open-door policy and will always take time to chat". Positive and trusting relationships were evident, with children confidently seeking comfort and reassurance when needed. The childminder responded sensitively at the children's level, supporting them to feel secure. Where possible, children benefitted from regular one-to-one attention, which strengthened attachments and promoted children's wellbeing.

Embedded daily routines were predictable and helped children to know what to expect throughout the day. Routines were adapted and individualised to meet children's specific needs, for example through consistent arrangements for snack and mealtimes. The childminder demonstrated kindness and compassion in their approach, ensuring routines supported children's dignity and emotional wellbeing, including when carrying out personal care. The childminder recognised the importance of working in partnership with families to promote a consistent approach between home and their childminding setting to support children's overall wellbeing.

Flexible and sensitive induction arrangements supported new children to settle at their own pace. For children preparing to move onto another setting, the childminder worked closely with other agencies, such as schools, to promote continuity of care and support. These effective transitions helped children feel safe, confident and well prepared for change.

Children's individual needs were well supported through effective personal planning. Plans were tailored to each child, regularly reviewed and developed in partnership with families. The childminder knew children very well and ensured plans reflected their current needs, interests and preferences. This helped ensure children received support that met their individual needs.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. The childminder provided snacks and meals which children had been involved in choosing and catered to their preferences. Children were encouraged to try new and unfamiliar foods, with the childminder sitting alongside them to promote a calm and sociable experience.

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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