

# Zoe Dunsmore Child Minding

Largs

**Type of inspection:**  
Announced

**Completed on:**  
19 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Zoe Dunsmore

**Service provider number:**  
SP2015987637

**Service no:**  
CS2015343421

## About the service

Zoe Dunsmore is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Of whom, no more than six are 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 include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the certificate. The back garden should not be used for childminding.

The service is located in a quiet residential area of Largs, North Ayrshire. Areas of the home used for childminding include a designated playroom, upstairs toilet, and kitchen. The childminder's home is well positioned close to local amenities, including schools, nurseries, shops, the seaside, and local parks.

## About the inspection

This was an announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 18 March between 15:30 and 17:30. Feedback was provided to the service on Thursday 19 March 2026. 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 four children in the service
- spoke with the childminder
- received four completed Microsoft Forms questionnaires
- 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**

- The childminder demonstrated reflective leadership, using developing self-evaluation and family involvement to guide improvements and maintain a positive, values-led service.
- Further development of structured quality assurance and clearer improvement planning could have strengthened the childminder's confidence in decision-making and supported ongoing improvement.
- Children experienced a well-organised, welcoming environment with accessible resources that supported independence, meaningful play and a sense of being valued.
- Continued development of the outdoor space could have enhanced opportunities for active play and outdoor learning, building further on the positive use of community environments.
- Children benefited from varied, engaging experiences indoors and in the community, with play that reflected their interests, supported curiosity and promoted early learning.
- Developing the approach to identifying and planning individual learning targets could have strengthened assessment, continuity and progression across children's experiences.
- Children experienced warm, responsive and inclusive care, with supportive relationships and routines that promoted their safety, wellbeing and emotional security.
- Strengthening documentation, medication procedures and the use of national guidance could have enhanced consistency and supported continued improvement in children's care.

**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

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.

### Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder had created clear vision, values and aims for the service, demonstrating a commitment to providing a safe, loving and nurturing environment where children were happy, confident and able to express themselves. In practice, warm relationships and a family-style atmosphere reflected these aims well.

Children had access to a varied range of toys and activities, including opportunities to explore local parks and the beach, which supported fun and learning. The childminder treated each child as an individual and worked closely with families to tailor care. Children were listened to, included and encouraged to develop independence through daily routines and play. The childminder explained that their approach was informed by key guidance, including Realising the Ambition and GIRFEC, and supported the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This meant children experienced care that reflected a clear and meaningful vision, supporting their confidence, independence and early learning.

Self-evaluation was developing well. The childminder used reflective practice, questionnaires, daily observations and discussions with children and families to review the service. Strengthening how this information was used to identify clear priorities and inform planned improvements could have further enhanced children's experiences and helped move the service towards continuous improvement.

The environment was nurturing and welcoming, and children benefited from play and learning experiences that supported their development. Interactions were caring, and children experienced individualised care that met their needs effectively. This helped children feel confident, respected and able to thrive.

Children's views were gathered informally through conversations and observations of their play. This insight informed ongoing adjustments to practice and routines, ensuring children's experiences reflected their interests and preferences.

Parents felt included and involved, describing the childminder as approachable and open to suggestions. They valued regular communication and opportunities to contribute, such as questionnaires and daily conversations. This contributed to strong, trusting partnerships where families felt their views were respected.

Overall, self-evaluation supported tailored, good-quality care. A more structured improvement plan and more intentional use of best practice guidance could have strengthened decision-making and helped embed continuous improvement.

**Children thrive and develop in quality spaces** 4 - Good

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 experience high quality spaces**

The childminder supported children to make choices about their play, follow their interests and develop independence. Carefully selected and well-positioned resources enabled children to access materials freely, promoting creativity, problem solving and resilience. This meant children benefited from leading their own play and developing key early learning skills.

Children engaged in experiences that reflected their interests and developmental stage. The indoor environment was well maintained, welcoming and thoughtfully organised, reinforcing that children's play and learning were valued. This contributed to children experiencing an inviting, well-designed space that supported good-quality play.

While the garden was not currently used for childminding, the childminder made good use of community spaces to ensure children continued to access outdoor play. We explained the process for reviewing the registration conditions once improvements had been made, to support increased opportunities for active play, fresh air and outdoor learning.

Robust systems were in place to maintain children's safety indoors, outdoors and in the community. The childminder responded confidently to potential hazards. This helped ensure children explored safely in an environment that supported wellbeing, confidence and independence.

**Children play and learn** 4 - Good

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.

**Playing, learning and developing**

The childminder provided a stimulating environment that supported children's play and learning. Age-appropriate resources, including role-play equipment, board games, books and construction toys, maintained children's interest and encouraged curiosity.

The playroom was organised to reflect children's ages and stages. Planning was informed by observations and conversations with children. During the inspection, when children chose to build a den, the childminder responded promptly, enabling play to extend naturally. This supported meaningful, self-directed learning and nurtured children's curiosity.

Regular visits to parks and the beach extended learning beyond the home. These experiences strengthened children's sense of belonging, helped them develop life skills, and supported positive social behaviours. This contributed to children gaining confidence, wellbeing and independence.

The childminder used WhatsApp and Messenger to share learning with families. While communication was

strong, the childminder had not yet begun to identify individual learning targets or assess each child's strengths, areas for development and next steps. Developing this practice could have strengthened assessment and supported continuity across settings.

Parents reported high satisfaction with the quality of experiences provided. They felt their children were supported physically, emotionally and socially, and described regular outings and opportunities to interact with others. This helped ensure children experienced a broad range of stimulating, developmentally appropriate activities.

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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.

### Nurturing care and support

The childminder provided a nurturing environment where children's wellbeing and safety were prioritised. Policies and risk assessments supported safe practice, and updating these in line with current guidance could have strengthened this further. Sharing policies with families promoted transparency and built trust. This meant families felt confident their children were cared for safely.

Children's allergies and medical needs were recorded within personal plans, and medication was stored securely. The childminder communicated with parents about medical matters throughout the day. A more detailed medication or emergency plan could have strengthened consistency and aligned more closely with best practice. This could have contributed to even safer and more confident management of children's medical needs.

The home was organised to support nurturing routines, with comfortable spaces and thoughtfully chosen resources and furnishings that helped children feel secure and independent. Most children brought their own meals and snacks from home, and one child told us the childminder also offered healthy options such as fruit. The childminder was familiar with food guidance, and using this more actively with children could have further supported healthy habits. This could have further enhanced the health-promoting environment and supported children to develop healthy habits over time.

Personal plans were completed, regularly reviewed and reflected children's needs well. Parents felt involved and valued the childminder's commitment to updating plans, particularly where medical needs changed. Linking plans more clearly to SHANARRI could have enhanced structure and ensured wellbeing indicators were captured holistically. This could have supported more robust, wellbeing-focused planning.

Overall, children experienced safe, inclusive and nurturing care. While core practice was strong, further strengthening of documentation, medication procedures and use of national guidance could have enhanced consistency and supported continued improvement.

## 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, wellbeing and safety, the childminder should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices and safe evacuation routes are in place. This should include but not limited to:

- ensuring areas used by or for children are risk assessed and kept clean and clutter free
- porous items are stored in lidded containers.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) and 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event' (HSCS 4.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 23 January 2025.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had ensured that areas used by children were clean, uncluttered and appropriately risk assessed. Porous items were stored in lidded containers as required. These actions supported children's health, wellbeing and safety and demonstrated strengthened practice in this area.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To promote positive outcomes for children and the ongoing development of the service, the childminder should improve quality assurance processes. This should include but not limited to:

- developing self-evaluation processes
- creating ways to formally gather children and families' views
- notifying the Care Inspectorate as expected of all reportable events

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 23 January 2025.**

## Action taken since then

The childminder had developed self-evaluation processes, created ways to formally gather children's and families' views, and notified the Care Inspectorate of reportable events as expected. These improvements strengthened oversight of the service and supported positive outcomes for 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

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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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