

Dryden, Louise Child Minding

Livingston

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 March 2026

Service provided by:
Louise Dryden

Service provider number:
SP2006957933

Service no:
CS2006117431

About the service

Louise Dryden provides a childminding service from the family home in a residential area of East Calder. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, the local nursery and school and local shops. The service is delivered from the ground floor of the family home and children have access to the lounge, kitchen/diner and upstairs bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16 of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care is not provided. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place between 08:30 and 12:00 hours on 17 March 2026. 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
- intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we;

- spoke with two children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- gathered feedback from six parents/carers
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed relevant 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

- Warm, nurturing interactions and strong relationships with families support children to feel secure and valued, promoting their emotional wellbeing and confidence.
- Frequent opportunities to socialise with peers through attendance at groups and outings increasing children's communication, confidence, and sense of belonging within their community.
- More flexible, responsive planning would better support children's wellbeing along with supporting them to follow their interests, make choices and influence their play.
- Current quality assurance approaches are underdeveloped and children would benefit from more systematic self evaluation and planned improvement to ensure consistently high quality experiences.

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	2 - Weak
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 2 - Weak

We made an evaluation of weak for this key question. Whilst we identified some strengths, these were compromised by significant weaknesses.

Quality indicator; Leadership and management of staff and resources.

The childminder discussed what was important to them in delivery of their service. A strong focus was placed on spending time outdoors and attending groups to benefit children's social interaction. Written aims for the service were held; however, these aims were not fully reflective of current provision. To ensure these take account of children's rights, interests and needs, they should ensure inclusion of children and families in reviewing these. This would support development of a shared vision and aspirations. Review would also enable opportunity to reflect and support positive change for children and families.

Daily conversations along with a recently issued questionnaire allowed families to share formal feedback. Most parents strongly agreed that 'my child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service'. Questionnaires could now be developed using the 'Quality improvement framework' to support more targeted feedback for improvement. Other approaches to gathering the views of children in a meaningful way should now be developed. This should be used to support reflective practice and self evaluation.

Risk assessments and policies were held to guide the childminder's practice. However, some would benefit from further review and update to reflect current best practice guidance, such as the behaviour policy. Strengthening policies and using them to support delivery of positive practice would ensure safety measures are robust and support better outcomes for children by keeping them consistently safe and well cared for (see area for improvement 1).

Quality assurance and self evaluation was not fully established or effective in supporting improved outcomes for children, as a result we identified practice which did not follow current guidance and had the potential to impact on children's health, welfare and safety. Familiarisation with best practice documents including use of 'Realising the Ambition: Being me' available on the Education Scotland website should be carried out. In addition, relevant learning and development such as our 'bitesize sessions' should be accessed. Development of quality assurance to measure the impact of improvements could be supported through use of the 'health and social care standards' to verify quality. These would support understanding of how reflection supports improvement and impacts on children's outcomes. Self-evaluation processes should how be developed by making use of the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors: childminding', alongside the 'self evaluation toolkit for childminders' available on our website (see area for improvement 1).

The displayed certificate of registration and the alternative offered during inspection were both incorrect. These should be replaced with the current certificate as issued following the last variation. This is to allow parents the opportunity to inspect this at any time and to ensure families are correctly informed of the conditions of registration within which the service must operate.

The childminder had not kept effective records of attendance, and these were not accessible upon request. This meant we were unable to establish if the childminder was working within their conditions of registration. This must be established to demonstrate the total number of children in the setting at any one time to keep children safe (see requirement 1).

The childminder had not yet informed us of a member of the household turning 16 years of age. This must be addressed to ensure that appropriate checks are made to confirm that all adults present are fit to be in the proximity of children. The childminder should ensure they submit relevant notifications when required and make themselves familiar with the guidance 'records childminders must keep and required notification procedures'. This is to enable sharing of relevant information to ensure appropriate action is taken to support children's wellbeing (see requirement 2).

Requirements

1. By 1 May 2026 the childminder must keep accurate records of children's attendance to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing needs are protected by following the service conditions of registration.

This is to comply with Regulation 6 (2)(a) (Fitness of Providers) of the Social Care and Social Work and Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010). This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed (HSCS 4.23).

2. By 1 May 2026 the childminder must notify the Care Inspectorate of any members of the household who have turned 16 years old and ensure appropriate checks have been completed to confirm their suitability and to ensure appropriate safeguarding.

This is to comply with Regulation 12(2)(a) (Child minding) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed (HSCS 4.23).

Areas for improvement

1. To enable children to benefit from a service that is focussed on improvement and committed to providing high quality care, the childminder should develop their understanding of best practice, quality assurance and self evaluation. This should be used to formalise processes which support continuous improvement across all aspects of provision.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator; Playing, learning and developing.

Children had fun playing with the childminder. They modelled positive listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level and being involved and interested in their play. They read stories which the children enjoyed and there was use of some sign language (Makaton) supporting their early language and literacy development. Early mathematical language was introduced during children's play as they discussed balance and weight. Children were given time to think, respond, and explore ideas. These interactions helped to extend children's knowledge and understanding. Parents felt confident in the play and learning experiences and told us, 'I can't emphasise enough how my child is thriving'.

Photographs were shared online to give parents an insight into their child's experiences. The childminder used checklists to measure children's development and recorded written observations of their time in the service. However, written next steps to support children's development were too general. To support children's progress and development, the childminder should ensure that recorded next steps are relevant and meaningful and used to support planned play experiences and to track their progress. These records of development could be shared regularly with parents to support information sharing. One parent told us; 'I would like to be able to see what my child has learnt during their time maybe via a learning journal or something'.

Children experienced frequent opportunities to access the local and wider community. Toddler/activity groups were accessed most mornings, which we observed during the inspection. Children were engaged in their play and enjoyed craft experiences at the toddler group alongside social interaction with peers. Children were able to explore play materials at their own pace and enjoyed positive and supportive interactions from the childminder and other childminders within this setting. Outdoor play in the community was accessed following toddler group and the childminder described this as an important part of their provision. Daily visits to Mill farm and other areas supported their physical wellbeing and opportunity to connect with nature. Parents commented positively on this and told us; 'they are always out and about doing activities' and 'ninety percent of it, is out and about'.

Children benefitted from being able to freely access and explore a range of age appropriate resources within the home. This enhanced their enjoyment and supported them to make independent choices. The availability of natural resources and loose parts play materials further increased their learning experience by offering opportunities for open-ended, creative play.

Children's ideas and interests were not clearly incorporated into planned provision. The structured routines meant children had fewer opportunities to lead their play and learning or to influence the range of spaces and experiences available to them across the majority of their day. There was scope to develop planning to increase children's influence over how they spend their time in the setting in response to their current needs and interests. There was some evidence of children's voices recorded within the floor book. This could now be further developed by identifying and recording possible lines of development from individual interests. This would support planning and ensure children's play continues to support their individual development and is responsive to their needs and interests (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1.

To enable children to influence their daily activities, transitions, rest times, meals and routines, the childminder should ensure children are actively involved in planning their day in ways appropriate to their age and understanding. This will support children's individual preferences and routines.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I am recognised as a an expert in my own experiences, needs and wishes" (HSCS 1.9) and 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27)

Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator; Nurturing care and support.

Parental feedback highlighted a high level of satisfaction with the service. Communication was mainly through a digital platform, text messaging and conversations. This included parents in a way they felt valued and supported continuity of care. Parents told us they were kept informed about their child's care and general provision through the photographs sent and daily discussions. The childminder's flexible approach supported the positive relationships with families. Parents told us 'if I wanted to know anything I would ask' and 'we have a good form of communication when anything out of the normal arises'.

The childminder demonstrated a warm, caring and nurturing approach, which supported the development of positive and trusting relationships with children and their families. They knew each child well and were responsive to children's requests including when children wanted to listen to a story and have a cuddle. Children enjoyed relaxed, responsive conversations which contributed to an atmosphere where they felt emotionally secure. Parents told us 'I have always took comfort in knowing that my kids would be cuddled and cared for by a loving person' and 'my child feels safe and loved with the childminder'.

Children's risk of harm was reduced as the childminder had undertaken recent training in child protection. They demonstrated an understanding of what action they needed to take to in response to any concerns. This contributed to the safeguarding of children.

Children enjoyed a healthy, sociable and relaxed snack during the inspection. The childminder confirmed packed lunches were provided by parents which were often eaten at the toddler group, parks or cafes. Children were seen being encouraged to take part in simple responsibilities, such as clearing away their dishes and washing their hands. The childminder advised children could have some opportunities to cut fruit and butter toast at toddler group. Increasing children's involvement in preparing food for snacks and meals more often, would enhance children's independence and build life skills.

Children's emotional wellbeing was supported through activities such as cosmic kids yoga. However, approaches to dysregulated behaviour were outdated as the childminder spoke about using time out, which was also detailed within the policy. This approach should now be reviewed along with the policy to remove 'time out'. The childminder should develop strategies to support dysregulated children that will have a positive impact on children's self esteem. The childminder should ensure they remain abreast of best practice guidance and use this to evaluate and support positive practice (see area for improvement under quality indicator; Leadership and management of staff and resources).

Personal plans were held and reflected children's individual preferences and interests and routines. Most of these had been reviewed with families. The care detailed was not always consistently followed or reviewed in response to changes. For example, the sleep time requested by parents within the personal plan was not what the childminder advised was needed and another family advised that the child slept in a cot but when with the childminder they had a nap in a buggy. Children's routines need to be more individualised to follow personal plans to ensure their needs are fully met and their wellbeing supported.

Children did not experience safe sleep in line with current guidance. Children spent the majority of their time in the community and therefore buggies were routinely used for sleep. This did not allow for comfortable, relaxing sleep and increased risk to children. The childminder was aware of the national safe sleeping guidance, and a suitable policy was in place however this was not reflected in practice. This practice should be reviewed to ensure children can enjoy restful sleep on a flat surface with the ability to move naturally. Reference should be made to <https://scottishcotdeathtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2023-Safe-Sleep-leaflet-early-years-settings-5.pdf>. To further support this, daily routines should be flexible to meet each child's individual needs. The childminder should reflect on their knowledge of children's home routines whilst ensuring best practice. This would help to support calm, predictable care.(see area for improvement 1).

Handwashing was promoted before eating and after toileting supporting children to develop positive self care routines. In relation to nappy changes, infection prevention and control procedures were not always followed. Personal protective equipment needs to be used consistently during all nappy changes, along with effective cleaning of nappy changing areas to reduce children's risk of cross infection (see area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To support consistency of care and comfortable sleep the childminder should review safe sleeping practice and take account of current safe sleeping guidance. This should also take into consideration children's home routines to ensure their continued safety and wellbeing.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'my care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

2. To support children's reduced risk of cross infection and positive intimate care, the childminder should ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is used consistently and effective cleaning of changing tables/mats is carried out.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I experience high-quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources" (HSCS 4.27)

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	2 - Weak
Leadership and management of staff and resources	2 - Weak
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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