

Yvonne Stewart Child Minding

Tranent

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
30 March 2026

Service provided by:
Yvonne Stewart

Service provider number:
SP2006957065

Service no:
CS2006116421

About the service

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The childminder works in partnership with East Lothian Council.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home in Ormiston, East Lothian. Children have access to the living room, kitchen with dining area and downstairs toilet. The childminder's home is near local amenities, including schools, shops and parks.

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.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on Wednesday 25 March 2026 between 09:45 and 11:20 and Monday 30 March 2026 between 15:30 and 16:00. 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:

- spoke with eight children attending over the two inspection visits
- spoke with a parent dropping their child off at the setting
- reviewed on-line questionnaires returned to us from five families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder demonstrated exceptional leadership through consistent professional learning, reflective practice and active contribution to the wider childminding community.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing and highly responsive care, supported by strong, trusting relationships that helped them feel safe, valued and confident.
- A rich variety of play and learning experiences, indoors and outdoors in the local community and beyond, supported children's curiosity, independence and development.
- Families described the setting as welcoming, family centred and genuinely 'home from home', highlighting strong communication and highly effective partnerships.
- Personal plans were comprehensive and thoughtfully developed with families, clearly reflecting a deep understanding of each child's individual needs, interests and development.
- Children benefited from well organised routines, creative learning opportunities and sensitive care, resulting in consistently positive outcomes for their wellbeing, learning and development.

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	6 - Excellent
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent

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

Leadership 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

Leadership within this childminding setting was exceptionally strong and demonstrated a sustained, positive impact on outcomes for children, families and the wider sector. The childminder demonstrated clear vision, values and aims centred on love, nurture, empathy and kindness, which were consistently reflected in daily practice. Families described the setting as "welcoming, honest and family centred" and repeatedly referred to it as a "home from home". One family commented, "We are exceptionally lucky to have such a wonderful childminder who we can trust and rely on," highlighting the strength of relationships and confidence in the service provided.

The childminder demonstrated highly effective and well embedded self evaluation, which was fully embedded across all aspects of practice. A highly developed and confident understanding of the Quality Improvement Framework for early learning and childcare sectors (August 2025) was clearly evident and used to inform evaluative reflection on the quality of children's experiences. This effective use of self evaluation ensured that high quality experiences were not only maintained but strengthened over time, contributing to very positive and sustained outcomes for children.

In practice, self-evaluation was highly purposeful and carefully focused on meeting the individual and diverse needs of children. Observations, family feedback and children's engagement were used consistently to inform improvements to routines, enhance the learning environment and develop highly personalised experiences. Improvements were clearly identified, well evidenced and securely embedded in practice, reflecting a strong and sustained commitment to excellence.

Reflection drew on a wide range of evidence, including children's experiences, meaningful feedback from families and ongoing professional learning. Families clearly recognised and valued this inclusive and reflective approach, with one family commenting, "We are regularly asked what improvements can be made as well as what is working well." This ensured continuous and effective improvement within an equitable, inclusive setting where high-quality care and learning were consistently delivered.

Leadership extended well beyond the childminder's own setting and demonstrated significant professional influence. As an administrator of a national on-line childminding group with thousands of members, the childminder played an important role in supporting practitioners to understand new guidance, policies and the quality improvement framework. They had recently co-ordinated a collaborative self-evaluation project involving over 100 childminders, helping others build confidence in reflective practice and improvement planning. This work demonstrated strong professional leadership and contributed to building capacity across the sector to improve outcomes for children.

The childminder's role within the local community further strengthened leadership practice. Their long standing involvement in the local toddler group, which they had supported for over 30 years, reflected a deep commitment to community connection and inclusion. This contribution was formally recognised through the Community Hero Award presented in March 2026. Families and children spoke positively about the sense of belonging this created, reinforcing the setting's values in everyday experiences.

Improvement planning was highly effective and well evidenced. Clear priorities were identified, actions were planned with realistic timescales and progress was reviewed over time. Professional learning was extensive and carefully evaluated. The childminder demonstrated how learning was translated into practice, particularly when supporting individual children's needs. As a result, improvement was purposeful, well paced and sustained over time. Children benefited from care and learning that was carefully considered, adaptable and consistently focused on improving outcomes.

Overall, leadership was reflective, confident and influential, supporting excellent outcomes for all children and contributing positively to improvement across the wider childminding sector.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Children experienced consistently high quality play and learning that supported very positive outcomes. Children spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their experiences and clearly enjoyed the opportunities available to them. They described a wide range of activities including outdoor exploration, creative play, community outings and imaginative games. Children told us, "We go to the beach and collect sea glass and shells," and "We play hide and seek at the old railway track".

Creative play was further supported through the thoughtful use of loose parts resources. The childminder provided a wide range of open ended materials, including cardboard, pipe cleaners for threading and a variety of interesting everyday objects, which encouraged children to explore, create and problem solve. These materials supported children to use their imagination, test ideas and think creatively, rather than follow set outcomes. Children engaged deeply with these experiences, showing curiosity, concentration and pride in what they created.

Together, these experiences reflected high levels of engagement, enjoyment and motivation, as well as a strong sense of belonging and confidence in play.

Play was responsive and largely child led. The childminder demonstrated strong skill in observing children and using this information to shape experiences and resources. Experiences remained flexible and followed children's interests rather than fixed routines. Children described enjoying colour challenges, imaginative games and creative projects. One child explained, "We do voting to make things fair," demonstrating how children were meaningfully involved in decision making. Another child said, "Yvonne is creative and enthusiastic, there is always something exciting for us to do". This supported children to develop confidence in expressing opinions, making choices and understanding fairness through shared decision making.

The childminder did not use the garden for outdoor play, as it was not directly attached to the house and did not provide an accessible or appropriate outdoor play space for children. This decision was based on careful consideration of children's safety, supervision and quality of experience, rather than convenience. The childminder was clear that access to outdoor play was essential for children's wellbeing and development and took deliberate steps to ensure this was consistently achieved through alternative means.

Children accessed nearby parks, woodland areas, beaches and community spaces, which offered rich and varied opportunities for physical play, exploration and learning in real life contexts. This approach ensured

children benefited from fresh air, exercise and meaningful outdoor experiences, while maintaining safe supervision and effective risk management. The use of community spaces was well planned and supported children's confidence, resilience and understanding of their local area.

Planning for play was purposeful and informed by a strong understanding of each child's interests, strengths and stage of development. This knowledge was used to identify meaningful next steps and wellbeing considerations, ensuring play experiences were responsive and relevant. Children's records reflected this individual approach and were reviewed regularly in partnership with families, helping maintain consistency between home and the setting.

Families felt involved and informed, with one family commenting, "Yvonne works with me to highlight areas we'd like our child to develop through play" and another sharing, "We feel involved in our child's day through the updates on the app." This collaborative approach supported children to feel secure, confident and motivated in their play, contributing to positive progress over time, strong wellbeing and positive relationships.

Warm, respectful and responsive interactions were evident during play. The childminder positioned themselves at children's level and by following their lead, ensured play remained child focused. Careful listening and appropriate responses supported children to share ideas confidently and feel heard. Interactions were calm and unhurried, allowing children time to think, respond and develop their play at their own pace. Language was used thoughtfully to acknowledge children's contributions and to ask appropriate questions that supported conversation and engagement, while ensuring children retained ownership of their play.

Children responded positively to these interactions. They initiated conversations, shared ideas freely and engaged confidently during play. Children were comfortable seeking reassurance, sharing excitement and asking questions, which demonstrated trusting relationships and emotional security. As a result, children were confident communicators and active participants in their experiences.

Overall, the quality of play and learning resulted in very strong outcomes, with children demonstrating confidence, independence, creativity and positive relationships.

Children are supported to achieve **6 - Excellent**

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced exceptionally strong, nurturing and responsive care that resulted in highly positive and sustained wellbeing outcomes. Secure, trusting relationships were consistently embedded across the setting and were a clear strength of practice. These relationships supported children's sense of safety, security and belonging and were evident in children's confidence and interactions. Children moved freely within the setting, confidently initiating conversations, seeking reassurance when needed and sharing their thoughts and feelings openly.

The childminder responded to children calmly and sensitively, taking time to listen, acknowledge emotions and offer reassurance. This was evident when children sought comfort or wanted to talk through feelings and in the way everyday interactions were unhurried and respectful. Children approached the childminder naturally for reassurance, conversation and support and were met with warmth, attentiveness and

understanding. As a result, children demonstrated relaxed body language, confident communication and strong emotional regulation.

Children spoke openly about how they felt within the setting, telling us, "I feel really safe with Yvonne," and "I feel like I can be myself around everybody here." These interactions demonstrated highly effective relationship based practice, where children felt emotionally secure, listened to and valued. The consistency and quality of these interactions clearly supported children's wellbeing and contributed to exceptionally strong emotional security.

Care was highly personalised and child centred, informed by a deep and holistic understanding of each child. The childminder demonstrated detailed knowledge of children's routines, preferences, health needs and family circumstances and used this knowledge effectively to guide daily care. Personal planning was high quality and meaningful and was developed and reviewed in strong partnership with families. They felt genuinely involved and valued as equal partners in planning for their child. Plans included clear and detailed information about health, routines, wellbeing and next steps and were reviewed regularly to reflect children's changing needs. Families described the impact positively, with one saying, "We're fully involved in developing and reviewing our child's personal plan" and another sharing, "Yvonne understands my child's needs, interests and development". This ensured continuity of care and highly responsive support for children.

Children's views, choices and emotional cues were consistently listened to and respected, enabling them to influence their routines and experiences in meaningful ways. Children's rights were actively promoted through genuine opportunities to express views and participate in decisions affecting their day. As a result, children confidently shared their opinions, demonstrated respect for differing viewpoints and made informed choices within agreed boundaries. This rights based approach supported children to feel valued and respected, while enhancing their emotional wellbeing.

Care routines and transitions were delivered in a calm and unhurried manner, consistently protecting children's dignity and emotional wellbeing. These moments were handled with care and empathy, supporting children to regulate their emotions and feel reassured. Children described the childminder as "kind", "thoughtful" and someone who "makes everyone feel included". As a direct result of this approach, children were settled, relaxed and confident, formed secure attachments and engaged positively in their daily play and learning. This further provided a secure emotional base from which children could explore and learn with confidence.

Health and wellbeing needs were managed confidently, sensitively and proactively. Flexible sleep arrangements were guided by robust risk assessments and ongoing communication with families, which helped families feel reassured and informed. One family commented, "Yvonne understands and appreciates the importance of my child's daily nap and updates us every day on how and when they have slept." Outdoor play, fresh air and physical activity were prioritised as part of children's daily routines, supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Connections with families was exceptionally strong. The childminder's communication with families was strengthened by extensive experience and long standing relationships built over many years. Families benefited from a strong understanding of the importance of trust, consistency and sensitivity, particularly during times of change or difficulty. Time was taken to listen carefully, respond calmly and adjust approaches when families were experiencing challenges, ensuring children felt secure and supported. Daily handovers were used effectively to share meaningful information and sensitive matters were handled discreetly and thoughtfully. One family stated, "Information is shared discreetly when necessary, which has been very helpful," while another shared, "We feel completely at ease knowing our child is happy while we

are at work." This demonstrated highly effective partnership working that supported families as a whole, which in turn had a positive impact on children's wellbeing.

Overall, nurturing care and support was an outstanding strength of the setting. Practice was consistently warm, respectful and responsive, resulting in children who were confident, emotionally secure and able to thrive.

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	6 - Excellent
Leadership and management of staff and resources	6 - Excellent
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	6 - Excellent
Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent

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