

Julie Thomson Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 April 2026

Service provided by:
Julie Thomson

Service provider number:
SP2023000173

Service no:
CS2023000275

About the service

Julie Thomson childminding is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of five children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than one are not yet attending primary school. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided.

The service operates from the childminder's home in Trinity, North Edinburgh. Children are cared for across the living area, with an outdoor space available. The service is in a residential area close to parks, primary schools, shops, transport links and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 30 March 2026 between 14:15 and 17:00. We had a further meeting with the childminder to share inspection feedback. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke/spent time with children using the service
- received three completed questionnaires from families
- spoke to the childminder
- observed interactions, routines, practice and daily life
- spoke with one parent
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvements are necessary throughout the report.

Key messages

- Children had formed warm, loving relationships with each other and with the childminder.
- Self-evaluation for improvement was at an early stage.
- Some cleaning issues in the environment required attention to promote children's wellbeing and help them feel valued.
- The childminder supported children's engagement with the local community.
- Children's development was supported as the childminder had a good understanding of supporting risky play safely.
- Play and learning in the home may be improved by de-cluttering and defining play spaces.
- Families felt involved in their children's experiences through the childminder's regular updates and daily conversations.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The childminder's vision was to provide a safe, warm, nurturing, stimulating, creative, friendly, educational and fun environment. Children experienced these values through the childminder's interactions with them. We were told: "The childminder is always so nice and welcoming." We spoke with the childminder about embedding the values through the development of the home environment, for example organising resources to create a more stimulating environment. In addition, review of their vision, values and aims with children and families would support service development.

Self-evaluation for improvement was at an early stage. A parent told us: "The childminder is always happy to hear my views and answer questions." We encouraged the childminder to familiarise themselves with the self-evaluation framework for childminding services. We signposted them to 'A quality improvement framework for the early years and childcare sectors: Childminding (Care Inspectorate and HMIE, 2025.) Evidencing self-evaluation could support them to recognise what was working well in the service and identify areas for development.

While children were kept safe through strong relationships and supervision, the service did not have their Care Inspectorate registration certificate displayed. We explained how families benefit from seeing the conditions of registration and that the certificate should be displayed at all times. The childminder actioned display of the certificate during the inspection process and we advised this should continue.

During the inspection we pointed out some cleanliness issues in the environment that required attention to promote children's experience and help them feel valued. These included the carpet in the playroom that required vacuuming and a mirror and toys with sticky marks. We advised the childminder of the need to promote cleanliness across the environment for children at all times. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Quality assurance processes which supported service quality were informal and required development. These should include regular reviews of areas such as policies and the quality of the environment. For example policies written at the point of registering as a childminding service would benefit from review. Updating policies to include changes in the service and best practice guidance would support improvements in the quality of the service.

Safety measures within the home environment and the community reduced most risks for children. For example, the childminder planned for children to pick raspberries and brambles safely when visiting the allotment. We also observed the childminder carrying out visual, in-the-moment safety checks during the inspection. The childminder recognised that developing their formal systems would benefit the children. We encouraged the childminder to develop their risk assessments to include aspects not yet recorded, such as the guinea pigs in the home, and transport options used in the community. Recording safety measures in risk assessments will strengthen the consideration for children's safety already in place.

The childminder was a member of a national childminding organisation which gave access to sector developments and professional learning.

While the childminder had good knowledge of child development we discussed training that would benefit children's wellbeing such as first aid training, child protection training and online training targeted at childminders. Developing a simple training log would evidence training undertaken and its impact on the service.

Areas for improvement

1.

To support children's experience and ensure the indoor environment and resources are consistently clean to promote a safe, welcoming environment where children feel valued.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I have a clean and comfortable environment where the wellbeing of myself and other people using the service is protected." (HSCS 1.31)

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Children were kept safe in the home environment as the childminder ensured it was secure. Some consideration had been given to experiences in different areas of the environment. For example, there was an identified playroom and a quiet space at the kitchen table for arts and crafts. We saw children supported by the childminder to use several areas to play. An older child taking part in an art experience was absorbed in the rich, multi-sensory opportunities this offered. This meant the planning for quiet, creative experiences at the kitchen table promoted a positive experience for children.

In the play room, toys and resources were cluttered and disorganised. The children did not always know how to access toys and what play experiences were on offer, affecting their choice and independence. For example a play tent had other toys and resources filling the interior so children could not go inside it. The childminder acknowledged the need to remove older items that were no longer suitable. A broken play bus was removed during the inspection process. We spoke with the childminder about decluttering and organising spaces and resources so children had inviting spaces to play and learn. This would support child-led play and foster choice and independence. (See Area for Improvement 1).

The childminder supported children's engagement with the local community through visits to the beach and going on walks. A parent described experiences: "They will often play in the garden or go to the childminder's allotment which encourages learning and play." The childminder had a good understanding of supporting risky play such as tree climbing and the benefits to children's development. These experiences enriched children's learning and social development by building confidence, forming relationships, and developing a sense of belonging within their local community.

Children's voice and choice was encouraged by the childminder in choosing play activities in the moment.

We saw the childminder offer choices of art and craft experiences and group games, which the children responded positively to. We discussed building on this consultation for longer term planning so that children had more ownership of experiences and could affect change.

Areas for improvement

1. To enhance children's play and learning experiences, the childminder should declutter and organise resources within the play environment. Creating more clearly defined play spaces will make the environment more inviting, encouraging choice and independence. This should contribute to a higher quality learning environment and improved outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I am supported to play and learn in an environment that is well designed for me." (HSCS 2.27)

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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.

Varied experiences supported children's development. The childminder demonstrated a commitment to creativity, outdoor learning and active play. We observed social play between the children at the park and the children were offered art activities and group games in the home. A parent commented on the impact on their child saying: "They are always getting up to fun activities and I feel like having the childminder in my child's life is great for my child's development." Children's engagement was prioritised as the childminder listened to children's preferences about what they would like to do after school. This meant the children benefited from a child-led approach.

Children played together as a small community, forming warm, loving relationships with each other and with the childminder. Interactions were nurturing, respectful and responsive. The childminder used simple, developmentally appropriate language to support communication for some children. This promoted children's language development, strengthened trusting relationships and supported broader learning. Conversations about children's interests and family life further reinforced that they were valued.

The childminder regularly observed children's play and learning, providing feedback and updates to families. A parent commented: "The childminder is always updating me with everything." Further parent feedback told us the childminder contributed meaningfully to children's development. We discussed strengthening this approach by linking to children's personal planning to record and evaluate children's progress.

The childminder's positive behaviour policy reflected the rights-based approach the childminder used. We observed the childminder actively support children during social play and listen when issues arose. Children's social learning was promoted through this responsive and respectful approach. We advised the childminder on developing their house rules with the children to reflect the rights-based approaches observed. This would develop children's ownership of their rights in the service and strengthen the emotional security of the children.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good**Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support**

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 experienced nurturing, consistent care through strong relationships that supported their wellbeing and play. During the inspection, children showed a high level of emotional security, reflecting the childminder's attention to a predictable, supported routine. One parent told us: "My kids are extremely happy when they know it's a childminder day. They will jump for joy and run to the childminder when they see them and that's all because they make them feel safe and secure."

The childminder's consistently warm and responsive approach with the children created respectful interactions. The childminder listened attentively to children and supported individuality and children's rights. This approach promoted children's confidence, safety and inclusion.

Personal planning demonstrated knowledge of the children as individuals and how the childminder planned to meet their needs. One parent described the childminder's sensitive support with their child's language and communication strategies. Children were also able to contribute their preferences and interests to personal planning. We spoke with the childminder about ways to strengthen personal planning. For example, evaluating children's individual strategies and noting specific supports for transition to school would develop meeting children's needs further.

Families provided their children's snacks. The childminder supported healthy snack choices through discussion with parents and sharing their nutrition policy with them. The childminder recognised the challenges for families around healthy eating for children. We signposted the childminder to the Setting the Table (Scottish Government, 2024) guidance which has ideas for partnership work with families. Building on the healthy eating support for families would strengthen partnership working further.

Families valued the childminder's regular updates and daily conversations, which contributed to a strong sense of security. One parent commented: "I can communicate anything with the childminder and they are more than happy to help." This illustrated how effective partnership working supported children's consistent, trusting care and overall wellbeing.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children experience high quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.