

Susan Hay Child Minding

KIRKLISTON

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 March 2026

Service provided by:
Susan Hay

Service provider number:
SP2003906086

Service no:
CS2003012361

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. When Susan Hay and Johanna Hunt work together the service may be provided to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16 of whom no more than 5 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. Johanna Hunt is employed as an assistant.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home in Kirkliston, Edinburgh. Children have access to the playroom, dining area and toilet. The garden is directly off the playroom. The childminder's home is near local amenities, including schools, shops and parks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 5 March 2026 between 11:15 and 13:15. 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 four children at the inspection
- reviewed five online questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder and their assistant
- observed practice and daily life
- 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 and assistant worked as a strong partnership, creating a safe, nurturing and homely environment where children experienced stability, continuity and warm relationships.
- Children's personal plans were reviewed at least every six months, with meaningful family involvement and clear documentation of needs, routines and changing circumstances.
- Children experienced a rich mix of indoor and outdoor learning in the community and outings, supported by responsive interactions.
- Nurturing, respectful and responsive care underpinned the service, supported by strong communication, effective partnership working with families and consistent attention to children's wellbeing, routines and medical needs.

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 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 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.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

The childminder and assistant demonstrated a shared commitment to creating a safe, nurturing and homely environment. They worked together as a cohesive partnership, ensuring children experienced continuity, stability and warm relationships throughout the day. Their values emphasised respectful care, high quality interactions, positive attachments and open communication with families. Families consistently described the childminder and assistant as highly trustworthy and reliable, saying they, "Trust them totally" and that the care provided has been, "The best thing for my children." Families felt the relationship was warm and family like, explaining that the childminder and assistant were, "Like family friends now" and "As close to being watched by family as possible".

Policies were reviewed annually, however, we discussed that the childminder now needed to ensure that these reviews were not only routine but also informed by current best practice, national guidance and early learning and childcare developments. For example, the child protection policy was in need of strengthening, by adding the local safeguarding contact numbers and include clearer wording on making referrals when necessary to protect a child's safety. The childminder addressed this immediately after the inspection.

Six monthly reviews of children's records ensured that children's needs, preferences, routines and personal information remained accurate and up to date. Families were able to participate in these reviews either in person or at home, promoting meaningful partnership working. Forms, developmental checklists and permission records were used to support reflective discussion and ensured that any changes in family circumstances or changing needs were clearly documented. Personal data such as doctors details, emergency contacts and medical requirements were reviewed regularly to ensure strong safeguarding practice.

Through day to day reflection, the childminder and assistant identified areas for improvement and took action to improve outcomes. The childminder had purchased a floor book, however, it has not yet been developed or used in practice. During our conversation, the childminder and assistant recognised that children in the setting enjoyed recalling past events and sharing their experiences. Moving forward with the floor book would support this interest and provide a valuable way to capture children's voices, photographs, learning experiences and achievements.

The assistant was well integrated into the setting, with a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and expectations. Both the childminder and assistant held up to date paediatric first aid and followed consistent procedures for medication and personal care. Their strong working partnership, shared ethos and open communication contributed to a stable and well managed service where children and families felt valued, respected and supported.

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 had access to a variety of play and learning experiences that reflected their interests, developmental needs and emerging skills. Play experiences supported curiosity, independence, creativity and exploration while being flexible and child led.

Daily outings formed a central part of the learning environment. Children regularly visited Almond Park, woodland areas, beaches and heritage sites through the family's Historic Scotland membership. Trips to the zoo, 'Bounce' class at the leisure centre, soft play and local parks offered a balance of physical activity, sensory experiences and imaginative play. These outings supported children's wellbeing, resilience, confidence and physical development. Many families highlighted how joyful and meaningful these experiences were, describing them as, "Brilliant excursions" that broadened their children's world. The childminder ensured that outdoor trips and learning was accessible to all, by providing waterproofs and spare wellies when needed, enabling children to enjoy puddles and mud experiences without restriction.

Indoors, the environment was warm and inviting, with resources chosen carefully to spark curiosity and learning. Families praised the, "Wonderful playroom with fun toys and games" and felt the environment was, "Perfect" for keeping children engaged. Posters at child level and themed images, such as bugs, were used to prompt play that was of interest to children, leading to activities like bug hunts and nature exploration. A large dining table supported group interaction and social learning, while the playroom offered opportunities for imaginative play, construction, early literacy and sensory experiences.

Interactions between the childminder, assistant and children were responsive and attuned to children's needs. During story time, children showed independence by preparing the rug, while the assistant used sensitive dialogue, shared enjoyment and open ended questions to enrich children's language and communication skills. These interactions contributed to children feeling secure, confident and ready to learn. Families said their children had, "Come on leaps and bounds with their learning and confidence" because the childminder and assistant took great care to understand them as individuals.

Observations of children's play were completed once or twice monthly, capturing children's achievements, emerging interests and developmental progress. These observations were shared with families, who signed and provided comments, ensuring shared evaluation and consistency between home and the setting. The use of a development rainbow sheet for each child supported meaningful discussions with families about milestones and next steps. One family summarised the impact, telling us, "My child has grown in confidence, language and independence. They seem to know exactly what every child needs to thrive".

Children are supported to achieve 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: Nurturing care and support.

Nurturing care was at the heart of the setting, with strong, trusting relationships forming the basis of children's wellbeing. Children experienced consistent, warm and responsive care that supported their emotional security and sense of belonging. The daily routine combined familiarity with opportunities for exploration, ensuring that each child's individual needs were met. Families described the care as deeply

nurturing and warm, with children who were, "Very happy and excited to go back." Families valued the strong, family like relationships and said the childminder's felt like, "Extended family".

Communication was highlighted as open and respectful, with families appreciating that they could discuss their child's needs freely and were, "Fully involved in developing and reviewing the personal plan". Families also expressed confidence in the safety and quality of the home, saying they knew it was, "Safe and stimulating". All families reported that there was nothing they would change, with comments such as, "Honestly, it's perfect for us." One family summed up, "I really can't emphasise enough how happy we are that we found the childminder and their assistant".

Daily WhatsApp updates enabled families to see photos, activities and moments from their child's day, enhancing transparency and strengthening relationships. Each family had an individual WhatsApp chat thread, ensuring privacy and allowing sensitive information to be shared appropriately. Verbal handovers at collection provided families with clear information about meals, sleep, nappy changes, daily experiences and wellbeing. This level of detail promoted continuity of care and reassured families that their child's needs were understood and prioritised. Families felt listened to and involved in decisions about care, saying the childminder and assistant asked about their child's needs and preferences and held, "Open honest conversations" about their wellbeing. Many said they, "Could not ask for a better environment" for their child.

Personal planning processes were detailed and centred on children's needs. Reviews every six months or sooner if needed, ensured accuracy, with families encouraged to contribute. Plans for children with medical needs reflected clear management procedures, with families providing regular health updates and medication stored appropriately. Photos shared by families when their child absent and at home demonstrated strong partnership working and mutual trust. Similarly, records clearly reflected children's dietary needs, ensuring appropriate care and risk management. Keeping these plans up to date supported safe, consistent practice.

Care routines were respectful and nurturing. Families felt that routines were managed sensitively, with sleep needs supported in a flexible and respectful manner. One family said their child, "Is given time and space to go to sleep," another explained that the childminder communicated closely about rest, adjusting routines when necessary and another observed that their child, "Sleeps better at the childminder because they follow their routine". Even when children no longer napped, families noted that the childminder, "Always facilitate rests as needed". Whilst we appreciated that families were satisfied with their child's sleep routine, the childminder should move towards ensuring that sleep in buggies was the exception rather than the norm, in line with safe sleep guidance and best practice.

Overall, children benefited from strong emotional connections with both the childminder and assistant. They responded positively to comforting interactions, predictable routines and supportive guidance that promoted confidence and independence. Partnerships with families were highly effective, with families involved in planning, reviews and daily communication. This collaborative approach ensured that care was tailored, responsive that matched with the child's routines at home.

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

The assistant should update her certificate in food hygiene. National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16, standard 14: well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 27 January 2017.

Action taken since then

The childminder's assistant had now completed the required Food Hygiene training.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should ensure anyone living at the premises aged over 16 has the appropriate checks carried out. National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16, standard 13: improving the service and standard 14: well-managed service.

This area for improvement has been met.

This area for improvement was made on 27 January 2017.

Action taken since then

All required checks for individuals aged 16 and over living at the premises were completed immediately following the last inspection. Since that time, no new household members have moved into the home and no one had reached the age where further checks would be required, meaning no additional checks have been needed.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - 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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