

Louise Slattery Childminding Child Minding

Edinburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 April 2026

Service provided by:
Louise Slattery

Service provider number:
SP2024000211

Service no:
CS2024000181

About the service

Louise Slattery Childminding is a childminding service provided by Louise Slattery. The service is provided from the family home in a residential area in the South of Edinburgh. Children have access to a dedicated playroom, kitchen/dining area and bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden for outdoor play. The service is close to local amenities including green spaces, libraries and local shops.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children under 16 years of age.

At the time of the inspection nine children were registered with the service over different days and there were two children in attendance.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 April 2026 between 09:00 and 13:00. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received digital feedback using an online survey from four families, and spoke to one family in the service
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and development and the management of the service.

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

- A clear vision, values and aims were driving improvement and were rooted in play-based, child-centred practice. The childminder demonstrated a commitment to ongoing reflection to support continued development.
- Effective self-evaluation and improvement planning ensured the service was reflective and responsive, leading to ongoing improvements in children's spaces and experiences.
- Children experienced high-quality, inclusive and well-organised spaces that supported their confidence, independence and overall wellbeing.
- Children meaningfully led their own play and learning, resulting in high levels of engagement, sustained concentration and positive progress in their learning and development.
- High-quality, nurturing interactions supported children to feel safe, emotionally secure and confident, enabling them to express their needs and build positive relationships.
- Partnership working with families was a clear strength. An open and collaborative approach supported trusted relationships, resulting in consistency of care and improved outcomes for children.

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	5 - Very 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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The childminder had a clear vision rooted in play-based, child-centred practice, which helped to inform daily practice and decision making. The service's values were evident in its organisation. For example, a dedicated, stimulating and highly inviting playroom within the home had been prioritised, demonstrating that children's play, learning and wellbeing were central to the ethos. As a result, children experienced a space that supported engagement, independence and a strong sense of belonging.

The vision and values were clearly set out in written aims and objectives, aligned to national wellbeing indicators and the Health and Social Care Standards (Scottish Government, 2017). In practice, this was reflected in the way children were listened to, and in the way plans were adapted in response to their needs and interests. Children were supported to feel safe, respected and confident. Play experiences were effectively led by children's interests and were adapted when children were not ready, or did not wish to participate, ensuring experiences remained meaningful to them, values based and responsive.

Self-evaluation was well-developed and ongoing. Regular reflection drew on a range of evidence, including observations of children's experiences, parental feedback, professional learning and reflective audits. One family told us the childminder was, "always responsive to suggestions and actively seeks parental input on a monthly basis through her update emails." A well-organised quality assurance calendar supported systematic review of key aspects of the service, including policies, development tracking and feedback. This ensured self-evaluation and quality assurance remained continuous and improvement focused.

Improvement planning was purposeful and clearly focused on outcomes for children. The previous plan appropriately prioritised the establishment of strong foundations for a new service, including resourcing, professional learning, relationships and developing confidence in practice. Identified actions had been implemented successfully and led to measurable improvements for children. For example, milestone tracking had been introduced and consistently used within children's personal plans, supported by regular observations and next steps. This resulted in detailed, individualised learning records demonstrating children's progress over time. Moving forward, aligning improvement planning with 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland 2025) would strengthen evaluative processes and ensure the childminder stayed up to date with priorities within the sector.

The positive impact of improvement was evident in practice. Learning from a nine-month mentorship programme informed developments in responsive care, planning for transitions and increased confidence in accessing the wider community. Engagement with other childminders supported reflection and further improvements, such as the development of more creative play with loose parts. As a result, children benefited from broader experiences, promoting their wellbeing and independence through regular outings and use of community spaces.

Quality assurance processes were used effectively to support improvement. Audits in areas such as infection prevention and control identified areas for development. For example, when it was identified that some children were rushing handwashing, more engaging learning approaches were introduced to promote good hygiene. This demonstrated a clear focus on improving outcomes for children.

The childminder had a good awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and concerns were recorded appropriately. To further strengthen leadership, continued reflection would support confidence in decision making around when information should be shared beyond the setting, and when notifications to the Care Inspectorate are required. This is important in ensuring that children are protected through effective information sharing across services. Ongoing reflection on how professional values underpin openness, transparency and accountability will support continued development in this area.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced high-quality, safe and well-maintained spaces that conveyed a strong message that they mattered. The available spaces within the home and wider community were used effectively to create environments and experiences that were welcoming, well-resourced and centred on children's needs, interests and wellbeing. Personal touches, such as children's photographs and individual materials, including a "my special people" book, supported children's sense of identity, belonging and connection to home.

The indoor environment was thoughtfully organised and consistently well-maintained. A dedicated playroom was used solely for children, demonstrating a clear prioritisation of their space, comfort and play. Resources were clean, well-presented and organised to promote independence, with accessible storage systems that enabled children to make choices confidently. The space was calm, attractive and nurturing, supporting children to feel secure and settled. Ongoing review of the environment ensured it continued to meet evolving children's needs and that resources remained safe, appropriate and in line with their interests and development needs.

Outdoor spaces were used effectively to enhance children's wellbeing and enjoyment. There was a clear commitment to ensuring children accessed outdoor play regularly, both within the service and in the wider community. The garden provided a range of safe and stimulating experiences, including loose parts, natural materials, bird feeding and watching and sensory opportunities. These were managed appropriately to support safe exploration while maintaining an appropriate level of challenge. For example, the use of photo cards to show children what resources were available, supported them to make informed choices and lead their own play. As a result, children benefited from varied and engaging outdoor experiences that promoted confidence, excitement, curiosity and physical wellbeing.

Safety and risk management were prioritised across all areas of the service. Clear and appropriate risk assessments were in place for the home, garden and community outings. There was a strong understanding around balancing safety with positive risk-taking, allowing children to explore and develop skills while remaining protected. During inspection, children were supervised effectively and accounted for at all times. Safety measures, including the use of stair gates, highchairs and effective infection prevention and control practices contributed to a secure environment.

Established routines and expectations supported children to understand how to keep themselves safe outdoors, without limiting opportunities for exploration and challenge. For example, children demonstrated a clear understanding of expectations, independently holding onto the buggy before confidently moving off to explore. Safety was reinforced through ongoing conversation and games, supporting children's awareness without restricting their independence or enjoyment.

Arrangements for monitoring and maintaining the environment were effective and well-embedded. For example, regular checks of safety equipment, including fire detection systems and evacuation procedures were carried out and recorded. Where any issues were identified, these were addressed promptly. This proactive approach ensured that spaces remained safe, secure and fit for purpose, supporting consistent quality for children.

Children were meaningfully involved in shaping their environment. Their preferences and interests were listened to and used to inform how spaces and resources were organised. This included adapting experiences, responding to children's choices about where and how they played, and adjusting to meet individual needs. As a result, children experienced environments that were responsive, inclusive and respectful, supporting their confidence, independence and overall wellbeing.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Children play and learn

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced a high-quality play and learning environment where they were actively engaged, confident and motivated learners. Throughout the inspection, children were meaningfully involved in leading their own play at their own pace. They sustained high levels of concentration and clearly enjoyed their experiences, demonstrating curiosity, independence and enthusiasm for learning. Engagement was consistently strong across the day and in a range of contexts. They independently selected resources and became deeply absorbed in experiences, such as creative play, building, problem solving, drawing and sensory exploration. For example, in the home a child confidently selected drawing materials and proudly shared their work, smiling and talking about what they had created. This demonstrated enjoyment, pride in their achievement, confidence and a strong sense of ownership in learning. One family told us the childminder, "must read to my child for hours a day. They love to learn and the childminder fosters a great environment for that."

Children revisited and reflected on previous experiences, demonstrating that learning was meaningful and well-embedded. For example, a child enthusiastically recalled an Easter trail at the Botanic Gardens, confidently describing what had happened and what they had enjoyed. This experience had been recorded in a floor book, which the child proudly shared and used to support their recall. This demonstrated that experiences were memorable and effectively supported children to make connections in their learning over time.

Experiences were thoughtfully planned around children's interests, supporting sustained engagement and motivation. Interests in birds, nature and transport had been successfully extended through outings, books, conversations and play opportunities.

For example, an interest in planes had led to a visit to a flight museum, while outdoor experiences supported exploration of birds, sand, water and the natural environment. As a result, children remained focused, engaged and eager to participate.

Interactions were of a consistently high quality and were a key strength in supporting children's engagement and learning. Warm, responsive and well-paced interactions extended learning without interrupting play. Language was effectively modelled, and open-ended questions supported children's thinking and problem-solving. For example, children were encouraged to consider whether objects would fit into a specified resource, what strategies they might try next and to solve simple number problems. Shared thinking approaches, such as when exploring markings on different birds, supported children's language, understanding and curiosity. As a result, children persisted, built confidence and developed their communication and thinking skills.

There was a strong awareness of when to intervene and when to step back. Children were given time and space to explore independently, with support offered sensitively when needed. For example, younger children were comforted, while older children continued their play uninterrupted. This balanced approach supported emotional security, positive relationships and sustained engagement for children at different stages.

Child-centred planning and assessment were used effectively to support individual progress. Observations were meaningful, detailed and focused on significant learning, providing a clear understanding of children's interests, strengths and development. These informed appropriate next steps and responsive planning. For example, emerging skills in numeracy, language and independence were supported through counting in routines, problem-solving in play and encouragement of self-care. Children were appropriately challenged and supported to progress at their own pace.

Partnerships with families supported continuity in learning. Regular sharing of information and photographs enabled children to revisit experiences at home, reinforcing and extending their learning. One family told us the childminder provides, "A great service, with a fantastic range of activities ranging from play to baking to gardening. At one stage our child expressed an interest in ancient Egypt, and the childminder went out of their way to find reference material and organise a museum trip, which was a lovely example of how they tailor their approach for the children."

Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced a high standard of nurturing care and support, which promoted their emotional wellbeing, sense of security and confidence. Strong knowledge of each child enabled consistently sensitive and responsive care that reflected individual needs, routines and preferences. Relationships were a clear strength of the service. Warm, responsive and trusting connections had been established, supporting children to feel safe, valued and secure. During the inspection, children confidently sought comfort and reassurance when needed. For example, when a younger child became distressed, they were responded to promptly with calm, affectionate and attuned care. The child was supported to settle while other children continued to feel reassured and secure.

As a result, children demonstrated emotional security and confidence in expressing their needs. One family told us, "The childminder's ability to nurture and help him grow in an age-appropriate way is just wonderful!"

Children's health and wellbeing needs were clearly identified and effectively supported. Detailed personal plans and wellbeing chronologies were in place and used to guide daily care. Where additional health needs were present, close partnership working with families ensured care was safe, consistent and inclusive. For example, in managing allergies, risk assessments had been completed, food provision adapted and routines adjusted to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. Clear communication with families supported a shared understanding of children's needs and this proactive approach ensured children remained safe, while being fully included in daily experiences.

Transitions and changes were managed thoughtfully to support children's wellbeing. There was a clear understanding of the impact transitions can have, and careful planning supported continuity of care. Information gathered during settling-in periods, along with ongoing communication with families was used effectively to support children through changes. This included transitions, such as changes to sleep routines, toileting and family circumstances. As a result, children experienced consistency and reassurance, supporting their emotional wellbeing and ability to cope with change. Transitions into daily routines were also well-managed and supported children to move calmly and confidently between experiences. At snack time, children were involved in choosing food, pouring drinks and counting items, with learning embedded naturally. This indicated that they felt secure, supported and ready to learn throughout the day.

Children's dignity, privacy and comfort were respected at all times. Personal care routines, including changing, toileting and rest, were carried out sensitively and in line with children's individual preferences. Privacy was maintained and routines were unhurried and respectful. Infection prevention and control practices were well-embedded within these routines, including effective hand hygiene, supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Partnerships with families further strengthened the nurturing care provided. Open, regular communication ensured that information about children's wellbeing, routines and any changes was shared effectively. This supported consistency between home and the setting. Feedback gathered during the inspection indicated that families felt confident in the care provided and reassured that their children were happy, safe and well-supported. One told us the childminder, "provides a great range of activities and gives great attention to detail in her care planning and involvement of parents, which leads to a successful setting that my child benefits from and parents trust."

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very 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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