

Erica Grove Childcare Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 June 2025

Service provided by:
Kirsty Holder

Service provider number:
SP2015987663

Service no:
CS2015343771

About the service

Erica Grove Childcare is provided by Kirsty Holder, who provides a childminding service from the family home in the Pitcorthie area of Dunfermline. 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 was registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom three are of an age not yet attending primary school, and of whom no more than one is less than 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those stated on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 June 2025 between 13:30 and 18:20. 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 the previous upheld complaint, 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 two children using the service.
- Spoke with and gathered the views of four parents/carers.
- Observed practice and daily life for minded children.
- Reviewed relevant documents to the inspection.

We followed up on progress made in regard to a requirement made as a result of an upheld complaint. Information recorded under quality indicators 1.1, 3.1 and 4.1 and under 'Outstanding requirements' identifies action taken and progress made in meeting the requirement.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from a nurturing environment where they had fun and were learning.
- Very good use of the local and wider environment and resources meant children enjoyed a variety of experiences and connection with their community.
- Parents commented positively on the service and continued to be very happy.
- The childminder was committed to improvement of their service and their own self 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

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 1.1; Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder. The childminder knew them well and their individual needs were consistently met through warm and nurturing interactions. The childminder was respectful of children's requests such as being told to 'go away' when they wanted to feel hidden whilst playing in the playhouse. Verbal responses to children were sensitive and provided them with reassurance. Physical interactions were always appropriate with cuddles and praise given regularly which enhanced children's self-esteem. This meant children felt loved, safe, and secure. One parent told us, "Children are treated with respect... they have loved their time at Kirsty's over the years and are made to feel at home in her house."

Children were fully involved in planning and preparing meals and snacks, this included regular opportunities to bake. Children enjoyed sociable mealtimes as the childminder sat and chatted with them, and they were comfortably seated. This also ensured close supervision to reduce the risk of choking. Children with allergies/dietary needs were provided with alternative foods so that meals and snacks could meet their requirements. This ensured the continued wellbeing of all children. The childminder was beginning to review menus in line with new guidance and involving children in this. Fully involving children in meal planning and preparation provided opportunity to improve children's healthy eating behaviours.

Safe sleeping practice using appropriate buggies whilst out and about and then transferring to a sleep mat on return to the home was carried out. This ensured younger children benefitted from appropriate rest, aiding their wellbeing.

Children's dignity was maintained as the childminder ensured privacy for nappy changes. This meant children were respected and experienced a nurturing approach to personal care.

The childminder had a friendly and open approach with children and families which supported the development of trusting relationships. As a result, effective communication when children were dropped off and collected kept parents informed and supported relationships with children. One parent told us, "Kirsty is so kind and caring with my daughter. She knows her well and does great activities with her." Photographs and information about children's activities and experiences were shared with families using the 'WhatsApp' digital application. This meant families were included in children's experiences and care.

Children health and wellbeing was supported through the management of any required medications. Forms recorded required information for administration and information on administration was shared with parents. We reminded the childminder to ensure a separate form is used for each separate medicine to further ensure clarity and reduce risk of confusion.

Personal plans included information to support children's health, wellbeing, and interests. These were kept under regular review ensuring key information was up to date. The childminder worked with parents to support children's specific needs. One parent told us, "She was extremely supportive when my child was going through assessment by researching and making adjustments to meet their care needs." The

childminder should now record information on specific support strategies used which will demonstrate how children's ongoing development is being supported. This information should also be reviewed and updated at least every six months or as needs change (**see area for improvement 1**).

Quality Indicator 1.3; Play and learning.

We found significant strengths in this quality indicator and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children's language and communication skills were supported well as the childminder regularly used sign along (a key word signing system based on British sign language) when speaking to children. Children were also learning 'Spanish' in a natural way through their play and daily conversations. This exposure to multiple languages enhanced children's creativity and increased their cultural awareness.

Children were encouraged to be independent and to problem solve through the childminder's supportive approach and effective questioning during their play and interactions. Children were encouraged to consider their own needs and next steps, for example, asking the child to consider what they would need if they wanted to play outside and providing an appropriate level of support. Children were therefore empowered and enabled to lead their own play and develop self-help skills.

Children enjoyed experiences which met their different ages and stages of development. The childminder used creative approaches to engage children and enrich their play and learning. For example, they had recently enjoyed learning all about bees for world bee day. Children were also involved in lots of planting and growing opportunities and were able to point this out and told us 'yummy' when pointing to the strawberries. One parent told us, "She also does special food tasting/cooking sessions as part of the learning of special occasions." A wide variety of experiences such as visits to the woods, play in the park and other activities within the local area were offered. This meant that children felt part of their community. A parent told us, "My children also attended toddler groups, soft play as well as trips to farms and playgrounds when they were younger."

The childminder's skilled interactions supported children to be curious and explore a wide range of experiences. They knew the children very well and spoke confidently about their individual needs and next steps. The childminder responded well to children's interests and extended their learning where appropriate. Planning approaches were developing as the childminder ensured any requests from children were recorded and followed up on, whilst ensuring they responded to natural provocations to learning such as national and global events. This ensured children experienced care and learning that met their interests enabled them to have fun.

Areas for improvement

1.
The childminder should now develop personal plans to record any identified specific support needs. These should also record identified strategies for support in place and be used to enable children to achieve. These should also include recording children's achievements and identify relevant, meaningful and manageable next steps. This information should be regularly reviewed and updated with parents and the child to support children's progress.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

How good is our setting?

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 2.2; Children experience high quality facilities.

The childminder's home enabled children to benefit from a bright, inviting, ventilated and child friendly space. Children could move freely between the kitchen/diner, living room and garden. A large range of resources was available and easily accessible to them at all times. We discussed making some further reduction of accessible resources to enable children to make more informed choices. Posters, photographs and children's art work displayed at their level sent a strong message to children that mattered.

Daily opportunities for outdoor play supported children to be active and connect with nature through water play, gardening and using physical play equipment. This promoted children's sense of wellbeing and supported them to be active.

Practices such as daily checks, written risk assessments, close supervision, house rules, safety equipment, fire drills and awareness raising helped keep children safe. The garden area was fully enclosed supporting children's security. A parent told us, "The garden is enclosed and home is child proofed and children have always been well supervised." The childminder had taken steps to improve children's safety when moving between the garden and the car, which enabled children to keep themselves safe. We asked the childminder to review access to some products within the main bathroom to ensure children's access is restricted. We also asked the childminder to develop the garden risk assessment to include the astro turf and potential risks from this.

Effective Infection control measures supported children's wellbeing. The childminder had developed an infection control policy and appropriate protective equipment was used for nappy changing. Children were supported to wash their hands at key times such as following outdoor play, before and after eating and when returning to the service from school. Effective cleaning procedures of the home and resources were in place, along with appropriate management of exclusion periods for illness. As a result, infection risks were minimised.

Information about children was held securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed it, to meet children's needs. As a result, children's information was protected, and storage complied with relevant best practice.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1; Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The childminder provided a warm and welcoming service, with a clear vision. Values and aims were shared with families upon starting and were evident throughout the inspection. When asked what they liked about

the service, parents told us, "It's a warm friendly atmosphere. Children feel listened to and catered for" and "Kirsty has always been approachable and open about her service. Providing a lot of feedback on my child's days." As a result of the recent complaint, parents had provided the childminder with written character references which were very positive and demonstrated their trust in the childminder.

Parents and children were able to provide their views about the quality of the service which enabled the childminder to identify areas for improvement. Questionnaires and daily discussions at drop off and pick up times enabled parents to share their views formally and informally on a regular basis. Questionnaires were also used with children and had a specific focus such as 'wellbeing.' Information was used to inform developments and support continuous improvement. Parents were confident about their involvement in improving the service and told us; "Children are regularly asked for feedback on the service." and "Kirsty regularly sends out questionnaires and asks for feedback on how she could better develop her service." We discussed how feedback from children on different aspects of provision could be enhanced, such as using a floor book and mind mapping. This would further empower and value children and ensure provision meets their needs.

The childminder demonstrated their skills of self-reflection on actions past and present which had enabled them to identify where practice or provision needed to be improved.

Continuous reflection was supported by the childminders self-evaluation practices. For example, they recorded monthly goals which were then evaluated, and made good use of best practice documents such as 'Setting the Table'. This contributed to improved practice.

The childminder spoke positively about future planned improvements such as using the new oral health programme to develop toothbrushing for children. An improvement plan was supporting the identification of actions needed to support progress over the coming year. We asked the childminder to ensure this prioritised improvement focus areas whilst remaining outcome focused for children. This would ensure progress across all aspects of provision.

Relevant policies and procedures were in place and were updated regularly to support the effective running of the service. The childminder was currently adding to policies by adding one about red weather warnings to support children's and family's safety. As a result, children were supported by a childminder who continued to review and develop their practice.

How good is our staff team?

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 4.1; Staff skills, knowledge and values.

The childminder was a reflective practitioner and spoke confidently about their thoughts around their own practice and how they could further improve themselves and the experiences for the children. The childminder was open and honest with parents about their service which was respected and valued by parents. Parents told us, "Kirsty has always been approachable and open about her service." And "I find her to be very honest and straight forward."

The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development. Interactions and learning experiences ensured activities were appropriate and supported children's interests and curiosities. Drawing

on skills from previous work roles such as use of sign along, meant children received individualised support that was right for them.

Safeguarding of children was supported as the childminder was confident in child protection procedures and recognising signs and symptoms of abuse. Appropriate training had been completed and recently refreshed. As a result, we were confident the childminder would take appropriate action to protect children from harm.

The childminder was committed and enthusiastic about their own continuous professional development. They had recently completed a course of training which was specifically sourced to support learning as a result of the complaint. They had prioritised this and actively sought out additional training and learning in this area to further improve their learning in relation to emotional wellbeing, trauma and nurture. They were confident in discussing the learning from this and putting this into practice. In addition, they had maintained completion of core training such as first aid and child protection. A log of training was completed alongside some reflection on its impact. We asked the childminder to remember to add any notes of professional reading undertaken alongside full training courses. This would demonstrate all learning and development and its impact on children's outcomes.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 16 June 2025, the childminder must ensure they maintain professional practice at all times. Providing children with warm, responsive and compassionate care to meet their care and support needs. To do this, the childminder must, at a minimum but is not limited to:

- a) Reflect on her own behaviour towards minded children and how this could impact on their emotional wellbeing.
- b) The childminder must display a good understanding of nurturing, responsive care and developmentally appropriate practice to support children's emotional wellbeing.
- c) Access training/professional development on nurturing care and trauma informed practices. The childminder must display a good working knowledge of this.

This requirement was made on 10 April 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

We had an extended inspection to allow us to follow up on the requirement which arose from an upheld complaint. During this we observed consistent warm, responsive and nurturing approaches and appropriate physical interactions. The childminder had reflected on the situation and had received support from the local authority. This had allowed them to access and complete a programme of training and development in nurturing approaches which was evident in practice and through the childminder's confident discussions. The childminder had also sourced further additional reading materials and short courses to further enable their reflection on practice in this area.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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