

Karen's Stars Child Minding

Glasgow

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 June 2025

Service provided by:
Karen Irvine

Service provider number:
SP2016988063

Service no:
CS2016347505

About the service

Karen Irvine operates a childminding service known as Karen's Stars.

The service operates from the family home in the Kirkintilloch area of East Dunbartonshire and is situated close to local amenities, a nursery and primary schools. Children have the use of a living room, kitchen and toilet facilities on the ground floor and the enclosed back garden and gated side area. The childminder makes good use of local community and parks to extend the quality of children's experiences.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three children are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 June 2025. 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 we:

- observed care for a total of two children using the service
- gathered feedback from two families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, kind, and respectful interactions from the childminder.
- The childminder had made improvements to the service since the last inspection, which resulted in improved outcomes for children.
- Children benefited from the addition of open-ended resources that supported their natural curiosity and engagement in play.
- Positive relationships were built with parents and families, with the childminder seeking their views and ideas to support the development and improvement of the service.
- The childminder should continue to undertake training to enhance their professional development and stay up to date with information from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and Care Inspectorate. This will help ensure practice and policies remain current and continue to support the delivery of a safe and high-quality service.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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 were relaxed, happy, and settled in the childminder's care. They showed confidence in their surroundings and responded warmly to the childminder's kind, caring, and nurturing approach. We saw children receive cuddles, praise, and gentle support, which helped them feel cared for and confident. Close, trusting relationships helped children feel secure, valued, and understood.

In the lead-up to children starting with the childminder, time was spent getting to know them and their families. Flexible settling in visits were arranged around each family's needs, helping to build trust and make the transition easier. This helped children feel comfortable, settle in at a pace that was right for them, and grow in confidence in their new environment.

The childminder knew the children well and had built trusting relationships with them and their families. Parents shared important information about their children's routines, preferences, interests, and health needs, which helped the childminder provide personalised and responsive care. We saw that the children's personal plans supported their needs, with up-to-date details reflecting current sleep routines, health care needs, and interests, helping to ensure continuity of care. The childminder should continue working closely with parents to regularly review and update children's personal plans. We discussed practical ways to support this, helping to ensure all parents feel involved.

There were clear procedures in place to support the safe administration of medication. While no children required medication on the day of our visit, the childminder had a medication policy and parental consent forms in place, in line with best practice guidance. These measures ensured that, when medication was required, children's health needs would be managed safely and with full parental consent.

Lunchtime was calm, relaxed, and unhurried. Children were eager to help set up the table and were praised by the childminder for their efforts, which encouraged a sense of responsibility and achievement, shown through their smiles and enthusiasm. The childminder sat with the children, engaging in conversation and offering support where needed. They respected their independence, giving them the choice to manage tasks on their own, while being available to assist if required. Children had access to their water bottles throughout the morning and during lunch, helping to keep them hydrated. Parents provided snacks and lunches. The childminder demonstrated an understanding of children's dietary needs and preferences and showed awareness of safe food preparation in line with best practice guidance. This positive mealtime experience promoted children's independence, confidence, and social skills in a warm and respectful environment.

Children had opportunities to rest and sleep in line with their individual needs. The childminder used cues from the children, along with information from their personal plans, to follow familiar sleep routines. One parent told us, their child was in a routine at the childminder's house and has a nap during the day and also gives the opportunity to rest when needed. The childminder understood the importance of monitoring children while they slept to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Sleep information was regularly shared with parents, helping to keep them informed and support consistent care between home and the setting.

The childminder respectfully supported children's privacy and dignity during personal care routines. Nappy changes were carried out in a sensitive and caring manner, and children were encouraged to use the toilet independently, with support provided when needed. This approach helped children feel safe, respected, and confident as they developed their self-care skills.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged and motivated in their play, confidently making choices about what they wanted to do, they played well together, showing kindness and cooperation, and were visibly happy and relaxed, smiling as they explored. Children particularly enjoyed using a variety of open-ended resources, such as wooden and metal items and tactile gloves that encouraged sensory play, as well as building with blocks and colour-matching cubes. Gentle music played quietly in the background, inspiring children to dance, adding to the calm and cheerful environment. These experiences helped children to have fun, learn new skills, and build confidence as they played.

The childminder listened to the ideas of both children and parents, which helped them provide a good range of experiences. Their approach was child-centred and responsive to the children's wishes and current interests, resulting in children who were engaged, confident, and enjoying their time in the setting.

Children had access to a safe, enclosed garden space, which provided a valuable area for outdoor play and exploration. Although the children did not use the garden during our visit, the childminder told us they made good use of this space and that children particularly enjoyed playing with the mud kitchen and trampoline. We discussed with the childminder the importance of continuing to build on open-ended, loose parts resources outdoors to further develop children's curiosity.

Regular outdoor experiences, such as daily walks, visits to parks, community groups, and planned trips to places of interest, further supported children's play and learning outdoors. Parents told us "The childminder takes my child to two different toddler groups each week. This is something that we really like about our childminder and my child gets the small group/mixed age, homely childminding experience but is also mixing with peers his own age at these groups", and "Out with that the childminder is always taking the kids to parks, museums, day trips, which is really important to us as we didn't want the kids to be indoors all of the time". These experiences provided meaningful opportunities for exploration, physical activity, and social interaction. The childminder made effective use of the local community to extend learning beyond the home, helping children build confidence, develop curiosity, and form positive relationships.

The childminder's dog, Alfie, was very calm and well-behaved. During most of the inspection, Alfie explored outdoors and only joined the children's play when invited. He knew to lie quietly in his bed when the children were eating. The children were fond of Alfie, and he was an important part of their experience. Through their interactions, they were learning safe and positive behaviours around dogs.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

A warm, welcoming, and homely environment had been created where children could both play and relax.

The home was clean and well-ventilated, with plenty of natural light filling the space. The living room and playroom provided ample room for children to explore. A child-sized table and chairs offered a comfortable area for table top activities, while a large sofa gave children a relaxing place to rest. The childminder utilised the dining area for arts and crafts, making good use of the space available. This setup helped children feel comfortable, supported their independence, and encouraged them to engage in a range of experiences.

Children had access to a variety of range of toys and materials that supported and encouraged their learning. These were stored in accessible canvas boxes within easy reach, allowing children to make independent choices. The resources were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development and had been further expanded since the last inspection. The childminder explained how they had incorporated more natural materials, such as metal and wooden utensils and cardboard boxes indoors, as well as shells and stones in the outdoor mud kitchen, to enrich play experiences. We discussed the importance of continuing to expand and develop these natural resources to further support children's creativity and imagination in a stimulating environment.

The childminder took appropriate steps to keep children safe by carrying out regular visual checks before children arrived, throughout the day, and before using the garden. Since the last inspection, risk assessments had been reviewed and adapted as needed to reflect any changes. Parent's strongly agreed their children were cared for in a safe secure and well maintained environment and commented "The childminder's home is safe for the kids, clean and well maintained". The childminder spoke about their approach to managing risk and how they ensured children's safety at all times. This helped ensure that the home and outdoor spaces remained safe for children's play and learning.

Infection control measures were in place and helped reduce the risk of infection. The childminder had read the most updated guidance on infection prevention and control, to support their practice. The toilet area was clean, with soap and paper towels available. The childminder wore an apron and gloves during nappy changes and positioned themselves in a way to respect children's privacy and dignity. Through a discussion about the use of potties presenting as an infection control risk in the living room, the childminder agreed for children to use the toilet area where the floor was wipeable. Good hand-washing routines were observed throughout the day at key times, including after nappy changes, toilet use, and before meals. These practices helped maintain a healthy environment and supported the children's overall wellbeing.

The childminder is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), demonstrating a commitment to protecting children's personal information. All records were stored securely, maintaining families' privacy and confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder shared the service's vision and aims with families, focusing on creating a safe, secure, and homely environment for children. This was clear during our visit, as children were happy, confident, and had warm relationships with the childminder and each other. Families were given key information, including policies and procedures, before starting, helping them make informed choices and ensuring the service met their needs.

Regular communication helped the childminder build positive relationships with families and consistently met children's needs. Parents were welcomed daily and encouraged to share information and provide feedback through questionnaires. The childminder used WhatsApp, emails, photos, and daily conversations to update parents on children's routines, activities, and achievements.

Parents commented, "We always get a full account of the children's days and the childminder is always open and honest," and "The childminder is welcoming and respectful when discussing the day." Another said, "We are always welcomed in the morning and given plans for the day, and at the end of the day we receive a detailed run-down of how our child has been". This approach helped parents feel involved and enabled the childminder to respond effectively to each child's changing needs and interests.

The childminder used feedback from parents and children to reflect on the quality of experiences provided. This supported her in planning experiences based on children's interests and needs. One parent told us, "The childminder is always open to feedback from ourselves and from my child". We discussed the benefits of recording the types of play children engaged in, along with any feedback received from families, and gave some suggestions to ensure this process was meaningful and manageable for the childminder. This would support the ongoing evaluation of the service and demonstrate how the childminder had responded to children's and parents' ideas, leading to positive outcomes for those using the service.

Policies and procedures had been reviewed and updated following the last inspection. We gave the childminder some simple suggestions on how certain policies could be further developed and discussed the importance of regularly checking updates from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the Care Inspectorate hub. This will help ensure the service remains safe and continues to provide quality care for children.

How good is our staff team?

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 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder actively engaged in the inspection process, and clear improvements were evident since the last visit. It was clear throughout the inspection that they valued the children and their families and were committed to meeting the children's needs and providing the best possible care.

The childminder holds a professional qualification and has completed training in infection prevention and control, first aid, and child protection. They had started recording their ongoing professional development, including any reading and training undertaken to build their skills and knowledge. We discussed the importance of continuing this reflective practice. We discussed that accessing further training and resources through the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) and the Care Inspectorate website would help them stay up to date with current guidance and best practice and continue to support the childminder in further developing their skills and knowledge, enhancing the quality of care the service provided.

As a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), the childminder benefited from being part of a wider professional network. They had developed positive links with local childminders and met regularly to share ideas, experiences, and good practice. These professional connections provided valuable opportunities for reflection and ongoing learning, helping to strengthen their skills and knowledge. We discussed that maintaining and building on these links would further enhance the childminder's practice and contribute to high-quality experiences for children.

A child protection policy was in place, and the childminder was in the process of updating their child protection training. They demonstrated a clear understanding of signs that might indicate a child was at risk and knew the appropriate steps to take to report any concerns. This ensured families could feel confident that the childminder was prepared to protect children's welfare and respond effectively to keep them safe and supported.

Parents shared positive feedback in the survey, showing they were happy with the overall quality of the service. Parents told us, "My child gets opportunities that he simply would not get in other childcare environments, they have a great relationship with the childminder and you can see the love she has for him", another commented, "The childminder is very approachable and is always willing to go the extra mile to help out when possible." Others said they had always had positive experiences with the childminder and would gladly recommend the service to others.

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 childminder should ensure that information held in each child's personal plan is detailed and relevant to their current care needs. The personal plans should be reviewed and updated every six months or before, dependent on the needs of the child.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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) and "My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had reviewed and improved children's personal plans to ensure they reflected current health care needs. For example, updated routines for sleep and personal care were clearly recorded in the plans and shared and agreed with parents.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should ensure that the toys available to the children are age appropriate and are suitable for their age and stage of development. She should also consider introducing natural materials for the children to use. As this would enhance their play and stimulate further their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in a way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity" (HSCS 1.15) and "My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, the childminder has expanded the range of resources available, adding more natural, open-ended materials to encourage curiosity and creativity. Children were seen fully engaged and exploring these resources with interest. We have suggested the childminder should continue further developing these resources both indoors and outdoors.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should ensure that all aspects of her childminding service have been risk assessed and the information recorded. The childminder should review and update her risk assessments as and when required. Documentation and records should show clearly how she had considered risk and how she will keep the children safe and secure while attending her service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder had reviewed and updated risk assessments, the childminder spoke confidently about some of these changes as well as how they manage risk. Daily visual checks of their home was carried out at different points throughout the day to maintain and ensure children's safety.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support the children's intimate personal care needs. The childminder should review and update her current dignity and privacy policy and procedures and bring them into line with: Health and Social Care Standards, My support my life.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed" (HSCS 5.4).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder has reviewed their dignity and privacy procedures and put appropriate measures in place to support children's personal care needs, the childminder has made changes to how routines are carried out, ensuring they respect children's privacy and dignity. They have carefully considered their positioning during nappy changes to maintain children's comfort and discretion.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The childminder should review and update her infection, prevention and control policy and procedures and bring them into line with Health Protection Scotland's document: Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings) published May 2018.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.4).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had reviewed and updated their infection prevention and control policy and procedures since the last inspection in line with current advice.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

The childminder should undertake training in infection, prevention, and control. This is to enhance her skills and support her in her childminding role.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, and able to reflect on their practise and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 5.4).

This area for improvement was made on 30 June 2023.

Action taken since then

The childminder had read and familiarised themselves with most current guidance on infection prevention and control as part of their professional development.

This area for improvement has been met.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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