

Freckleton, Julie

Child Minding

Kilbirnie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 June 2025

Service provided by:
Julie Freckleton

Service provider number:
SP2013985043

Service no:
CS2013318350

About the service

Julie Freckleton provides a childminding service from her property in Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children under the age of 12. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family. The service is close to local amenities, school and park. The children are cared for in the childminder's living room, kitchen and have access to the family bathroom. Children also have access to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 25 June 2025 between 10:30 and 15:00. We gave feedback to the service virtually on 25 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 registration information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed and spoke with children using the service
- Sent out a family questionnaire and received three responses
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing and responsive care that consistently met their individual needs.
- Children were happy, settled, and confident in the childminder's care.
- Play and learning were enhanced through daily opportunities to explore the local community.
- The childminder demonstrated strong values and a clear commitment to continuous improvement.
- Families benefitted from strong, trusting relationships with the childminder.

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?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

We found significant strengths in the care provided, which supported positive outcomes for children.

Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships with the childminder. Interactions were caring and respectful, with cuddles, shared stories, and play observed throughout the day. The childminder encouraged children to share and resolve minor conflicts, supporting their emotional development and resilience. As a result, children were happy, confident, and enjoyed their time in the setting. One parent commented, "Very friendly and welcoming, feel like part of the family", and another said, "Julie is an absolute credit to the world of childminders."

Personal care was carried out to a high standard. Nappy changing took place in the family bathroom using appropriate PPE, and handwashing routines were followed. Children were treated with dignity and respect, for example, being asked if they wanted help with nose wiping. These practices supported children's health and wellbeing.

Parents provided meals, and the childminder offered snacks. Mealtimes were sociable, with children sitting together and chatting, which supported early communication skills. The childminder ensured drinks and snacks were available and planned to further promote independence during these routines.

Sleep routines were discussed with parents, and children were supported to rest when needed. While safer sleep guidance had been shared, the childminder planned to introduce a sign-off process to evidence this. One parent shared, "When my child is needing a nap, Julie settles her."

Personal plans were in place for all children and regularly reviewed with families. These reflected children's interests, routines, and needs, helping the childminder provide individualised care. Parents felt involved and valued, with one saying, "Julie will always ask for my input in what I'd like her to work on with my child."

Although no medication was being administered at the time, the childminder had appropriate policies and paperwork in place. She spoke confidently about safe storage and administration.

The childminder had recently updated her child protection training and policies, ensuring children were safeguarded. Families were involved daily through conversations, messages, and photographs, helping them feel connected to their child's experiences.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

We found significant strengths in the play and learning experiences provided, which supported positive outcomes for children.

Children were observed having fun and engaging in both spontaneous and planned play. The childminder recognised schematic play patterns and responded with appropriate resources and support. For example, children enjoyed posting coloured discs through a box, which encouraged problem-solving and fine motor skills. These experiences empowered children to lead their own learning through skilled and responsive interactions.

The environment was rich in literacy and numeracy. Indoors, children accessed books, games, and role-play materials, while outdoors they explored with push toys and climbing equipment. Resources were age and stage appropriate. The childminder supported language development by restating words, introducing new vocabulary, and encouraging children to describe what they saw and heard.

Children's interests were central to the planning of experiences. They showed a strong preference for outdoor play, which was supported by regular access to local walks, parks, and toddler groups. These opportunities promoted physical activity, social development, and an appreciation of the natural world. One parent shared, "Julie allows my child choice and listens to his preferences while meeting dietary requirements and promoting trying new things."

The childminder made good use of the local community, including visits to soft play, libraries, and childminding groups. This helped children build confidence and develop social skills with their peers. Parents valued these experiences, noting the variety and quality of outings.

Interactions were warm and purposeful. The childminder used open-ended questions and prompts at the children's level, offering both support and challenge.

Observations were recorded in personal plans and learning journals. These reflected children's progress and informed future planning. The childminder planned to further develop this by including clear next steps and dates. As a result, children experienced meaningful learning tailored to their individual needs.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

We found significant strengths in the quality of the setting and how it supported positive outcomes for children.

The childminder's home was clean, tidy, and very well organised. It offered a cosy, comfortable, and welcoming atmosphere. The space was light, bright, and well ventilated. Children moved confidently and freely around the environment, which helped them feel safe and at home. One parent shared, "I always spend time catching up and will pop into the house or garden."

Both indoor and outdoor areas were thoughtfully arranged to support children's development. Resources were age-appropriate and encouraged creativity, curiosity, and inquiry. Children were engaged and stimulated by the materials available. A parent commented, "Julie's garden is fully enclosed and extremely safe."

The setting and equipment were safe and well maintained. Resources were in good working order, and batteries were checked regularly. While the front door was locked at most times, the childminder agreed to ensure it remained secure at all times, including after visitors arrive.

Comprehensive risk assessments had been completed using SCMA and Minding Kids templates. These covered all areas of the setting, including outings, car travel, and local parks. The childminder also used dynamic risk assessments when out with the children, demonstrating a strong understanding of safety procedures.

Infection prevention and control measures were well established. Children were supported to wash their hands, and the childminder used PPE appropriately during personal care routines. These practices contributed to a safe and healthy environment.

Children's information was securely stored. Paperwork was well organised and kept in a locked cupboard when not in use. Electronic devices used for storing information were password protected, ensuring confidentiality was maintained.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

We found significant strengths in how the service was led, which supported positive outcomes for children and families.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to providing a high-quality service. Families told us that the childminder knew their children very well and took time to understand their individual needs and preferences. The service was well organised, and a thoughtful, mindful approach was evident in daily practice. One parent shared, "Julie will always discuss everything with me and ensure I'm happy with the choices."

A clear vision, values, and aims had been developed and shared with families. These reflected the childminder's commitment to creating a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment. This helped build a strong ethos of trust and partnership. Parents appreciated being involved in discussions about their child's care and learning, with one noting, "We discuss ideas, particularly for the upcoming summer, and share information on my child's interests."

Children and families were meaningfully involved in shaping the service. Their views were valued, and this helped children feel empowered and respected.

The childminder engaged in regular professional development and kept a written record of training. She was involved in a local toddler group for other childminders, creating opportunities to share good practice and support others. This collaborative approach contributed to continuous improvement and strengthened the quality of care provided.

Quality assurance processes were in place, and the childminder reflected on her practice to identify areas for development. Although no notifications or complaints had been required, the childminder was familiar with the Care Inspectorate's systems and kept all information up to date.

A parent told us, "Julie is a genuinely lovely person who I feel cares for my child as if he is her own. She is accommodating given my work commitments and has helped me out at short notice wherever possible."

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 4.1 - Staff skills, knowledge and values

We found significant strengths in the childminder's skills, knowledge, and values, which supported positive outcomes for children.

The childminder demonstrated warmth, compassion, and a strong commitment to providing high-quality care. Children were treated with kindness and respect, and their individual needs were well understood. The childminder responded sensitively to children's emotions, offering cuddles, redirection, and reassurance when needed. This helped children feel safe, secure, and loved. One parent shared, "My children are happy and thriving due to Julie. They adore her and love to see her when we're out and bump into her."

The childminder had developed a clear vision and values for the service, which created a positive and nurturing environment. Children were considered part of the childminder's extended family, and this sense of belonging was evident in daily interactions.

Reflective practice was embedded in the childminder's approach. She held an HNC in Childcare and used her knowledge to support children's development. Observations were used to inform planning, and a service improvement plan (SIP) was in place. While formal self-evaluation was not yet fully developed, reflective thinking was evident in the SIP and daily practice.

The childminder was proactive in accessing training and professional development. A training plan was in place and reflected the needs of the children. She was a member of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), used the Minding Kids app, and accessed resources through the SCMA website. Although she had not yet accessed local authority training, she was aware of available opportunities. Suggestions were made to explore the Care Inspectorate Hub and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) resources for further development.

The childminder also collaborated with a local childminding group, sharing ideas and supporting others. This commitment to continuous improvement ensured children benefitted from a well-informed and confident practitioner.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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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