

McAulay, Amanda Child Minding

Kilmarnock

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
16 June 2025

Service provided by:
Amanda McAulay

Service provider number:
SP2011982535

Service no:
CS2016344624

About the service

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three are under 12 years, of whom no more than three are not attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 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 is not provided.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within a residential area of the town of Stewarton, East Ayrshire. The areas used to provide the service were the playroom, downstairs bathroom and garden. The childminder's home is close to local amenities, schools and parks. There were five children registered with the service and three minded children were present at the time of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an announced (short notice) inspection which took place on 10 June 2025 between 10:45 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:

- gained feedback from two parents/carers through Microsoft Form questionnaires
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- Safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors.
- The quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met.
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a childminder who was warm and nurturing in their interactions with them.
- The childminder listened to and respected the children's ideas and choices.
- Reviewing and recording risks within their home, garden and within the community would further support the childminder to keep children safe.
- The childminder must work within their conditions of registration at all times.
- A more focused approach to self evaluation would support improvements within the service.
- The childminder had built strong relationships with children and families.

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?	3 - Adequate
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

The childminder displayed warm and kind interactions with the children. The children sought comfort from the childminder, and they responded using nurturing approaches. This enabled children to feel safe and secure. Parents commented: "(the childminder) has a warm and welcoming nature."

The childminder valued each child as an individual. They provided flexible and responsive settling-in arrangements tailored to the individual needs of each child and family. This supported children's emotional wellbeing and promoted strong attachments.

The childminder knew the children well and had built up positive relationships with them. The childminder could confidently discuss the individual needs of children in their care. They were sensitive to changes in children's lives, such as starting nursery school and the arrival of a new baby in the family. This enabled children to receive the right support at the right time, and as a result, they were happy and content in the childminder's care. Parents commented: "(the childminder) is reactive to my child's needs at all times, and always discusses if my child has been more tired than usual and highlights what they have done to ensure they get the rest they needed."

The childminder respected children's rights by seeking permission before carrying out personal care tasks, such as nappy changing. The childminder used a designated area separate from where the children played to support the children in personal care, which in turn supported their privacy and dignity. This approach demonstrated a commitment to promoting children's choice, independence, and emotional wellbeing.

The childminder was responsive to the children's individual needs, enabling them to eat and sleep according to their routines. Mealtimes were calm, unhurried, and child-led. The childminder respected the children's choices and preferences by asking what they would like to eat and checking with them if they had finished before removing their food. The childminder sat with the children, which enabled them to keep the children safe while also providing a sociable experience as they chatted together. We discussed with the childminder how children could be further supported to develop their independence at mealtimes. This would support their overall wellbeing.

The childminder had recorded information to support children's health, welfare, and safety needs when they started at the service. Although information was shared verbally between the childminder and parents, such as changes to routines, this was not reflected and updated in the children's personal plans. Although the childminder had recorded targets for the children, they had not documented how they would support the children to achieve these targets, and some plans had not been reviewed at least every six months. We discussed with the childminder updating information in children's plans to reflect changes, detailing how they would support children to achieve their targets, and reviewing children's personal plans with parents at least every six months, or sooner if needed. This would ensure the childminder had relevant, up-to-date information to support children's needs.

Quality indicator: 1.3 Play and Learning

Children could choose to lead their play. The childminder incorporated resources related to the children's current interests, and the children had fun as they explored these. For example, the children enjoyed playing with dolls and discussed keeping them safe as they were babies. This supported children to develop their imaginations and life experiences through play.

The childminder supported children to develop their confidence and skills through play. For example, two children wanted to play with a small spinning chair. The childminder supported the children in taking turns by incorporating a game where each child had a total number of spins, after which it was another child's turn. This enabled children to play together and stay engaged in play.

The childminder told us they implement a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences for children. For example, they created experiences for children that enabled them to develop their knowledge of seasonal and cultural festivals. This supported children to engage in a range of experiences.

The childminder listened to and respected the children's ideas and choices. For example, the childminder informed us at the inspection that they had consulted with the children about what they wanted to play with, and they had chosen the blocks. The children and the childminder then played together with the different sized blocks, developing their imaginations through play experiences. Parents commented: "(the childminder) is very engaging with the children."

Some play experiences supported children to develop their skills in numeracy and literacy. For example, through discussions with children, access to a range of books, and counting in play experiences such as block play and turn taking. This included considering children's ideas and comments, as well as learning from their experiences. As a result, children were engaged and focused during their play.

The childminder supported parents in being part of their children's play and learning by sharing pictures of children engaged in experiences with parents through Messenger and WhatsApp. This enabled parents and carers to see what their children had been doing and share their child's achievements.

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 experienced high quality facilities

The childminder's home was warm and welcoming. Children had access to a bright, spacious playroom with areas to rest and relax as well as floor space to explore resources. This supported their overall wellbeing.

The areas where children played demonstrated that children were valued and mattered within the childminder's home. Children had their own space to store their belongings, helping them feel a sense of ownership and belonging.

Children could choose from a range of age appropriate resources within pull out drawers, and the childminder told us that they consult with children regarding what resources they wanted and they used

these consultations to replenish resources suited to the children's interests. This enabled children to self select safe resources to explore that were of interest to them.

The childminder reduced risks to children within their home. For example, they created a safe space for children to engage in physical play away from hazards, and a secure boundary fence kept children safe while they played in the childminder's garden. However, the childminder had not implemented risk assessments for the areas children use within their home, garden, and within the local and wider community. This prevented the childminder from highlighting risks and putting mitigations in place to reduce these risks. We discussed with the childminder the importance of identifying risks to keep children safe. Following our last inspection, we made an area for improvement about this. This area for improvement has not been met and has been reworded (see area for improvement 1 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support the wellbeing of children. Toys and materials were clean and accessible for children and children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating with soap and water and they used disposable towels to dry their hands. This helped reduce the spread of infection.

The childminder had good connections within the local community, and the childminder and the children often visited local parks and toddler groups. This enabled children to develop their knowledge of their local and wider community. Parents commented: "They go to playgroups, local walks and visits to the soft play."

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe the childminder should ensure they reflect current risks and implement risk assessments to reflect these involving children in the process.

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).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality Assurance and improvements are led well

The childminder knew children well, and through observations of children's interests, the childminder was able to enhance experiences within their home to support children's interests and preferences. For example, the childminder and the children frequently attended a local 'messy play' class where the children particularly enjoyed exploring the sand. This led the childminder to incorporate a sand tray into their garden to further support children's interests.

The childminder had built positive relationships with children, parents, and carers. Ongoing consultations with parents and children supported the childminder to make improvements within the service. For example, they sent pictures of children engaging in experiences to parents, which parents could comment on and discuss further with their children. This helped the childminder to highlight what was working well.

The childminder consulted with families to plan improvements, for example, by administering questionnaires to gauge their satisfaction and gather suggestions for improvement. However, this had not led to any

improvements in practice. We discussed with the childminder how they could make these consultations more focused to gain specific feedback. This would enable them to identify specific areas for improvement and achieve better outcomes for children. To support this, we signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate's guidance document 'Self Evaluation for improvement-your guide.'

Policies and procedures supported the childminder in their practice, and the childminder told us they shared their policies and procedures with parents and carers when they started at the service. We discussed with the childminder the importance of continuing to share updates to policies with families. This would support them in sharing their objectives and providing a consistent approach.

When an accident or incident occurred while the children were in the childminder's care, information was recorded detailing the cause and any action taken. However, it was unclear whether this information had been effectively communicated to parents, as some completed forms had not been signed by parents, and the time of the accident or incident was not recorded. We discussed with the childminder the importance of ensuring that accurate information was recorded and that parents sign these records to confirm they have received the information. This would ensure parents were fully aware of what had happened, helping to keep children safe.

At the time of the inspection, the childminder was in breach of their registration conditions. This had occurred on certain days due to the number of children attending who were not yet attending school. The childminder must work within their conditions of registration at all times, which include a maximum of three children who are not attending primary school, and only one of these can be under 12 months old. This would ensure all children were kept safe (see requirement 1).

Requirements

1. By 16 June 2025 the childminder must ensure they are working to their conditions of registration at all times.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of the Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27); and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

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 supported children's wellbeing through compassionate and responsive care. They had built strong relationships with children and families, and their interactions supported children's confidence. As a result, they had a positive influence on children's lives as they developed and learned. Parents commented: "(the childminder) manages to make both the children and parents feel completely at ease, and goes above and beyond to treat the children as she would their own."

The childminder recognised the importance of nurturing warm interactions with children, and they fostered a respectful atmosphere that encouraged children to develop positive relationships. They were down at children's level when interacting with them and initiated conversations with children. This supported children to feel valued and respected.

The childminder had kept up to date with relevant training for their role, including First Aid. The childminder received updates from the local authority on things such as upcoming training events and courses. We discussed with the childminder how they could utilise the resources available to them, such as the Care Inspectorate Hub, to support their development of knowledge and skills. Making good use of professional development opportunities that are directly linked to enhanced outcomes for children and keeping a log of training completed, recording the impact on their practice, would further support positive outcomes for children.

The childminder had developed positive relationships with other childminders, and they were part of a closed Facebook page for local childminders. This encouraged the sharing of good practices and ideas, providing the childminder with a network of support and promoting better opportunities and outcomes for children.

The childminder interacted with the children in a responsive and stimulating way to promote their curiosity, independence, and confidence. They recognised the importance of fun in children's play, enabling learning to be taken forward, and were committed to providing the best possible outcomes for children.

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 carry out and record risk assessments for outings and other activities carrying an added element of risk. These should include gaining parental consent, identify hazards and the steps she will take to minimise risk and support children's safety.

National Care Standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A safe environment

This area for improvement was made on 2 May 2017.

Action taken since then

Although the childminder had gained parental consent, they had not identified hazards and steps they would take to minimise risk and support children's safety. They had not carried out or recorded risk assessments for outings and other activities. Therefore, this area for improvement has not been met. It has been reworded and included as part of this inspection.

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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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