

# McLeod, Mary Child Minding

Glenrothes

**Type of inspection:**  
Announced (short notice)

**Completed on:**  
21 February 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Mary McLeod

**Service provider number:**  
SP2013985355

**Service no:**  
CS2013320846

## About the service

Mary McLeod operates a childminding service from their home in Markinch, Glenrothes. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school, and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months old. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminders family.

The service offers children a dedicated indoor playroom, access to the downstairs toilet and kitchen/dining area for snacks and mealtimes. The fully enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the property offers children a safe and secure area to play. The service is close to local woodlands which are used regularly for outings and adventurous play.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 21 February 2023 between 11:30 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:

- spoke with two children using the service and received email feedback from two families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children were cared for in a setting that was clean, tidy and comfortable.
- The childminder understood the importance of good communication. This supported the positive relationships which had been developed with children and families.
- Children had regular access to fresh air and exercise as they had fun and made use of outdoor spaces in the local community.
- The childminder should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.

## 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

The warm and caring approaches children experienced meant that they were relaxed and happy in a service which supported their overall wellbeing. The childminder knew children well and offered support and encouragement to promote their independence. The childminder understood the importance of developing positive, honest relationships with families to ensure consistency of care and routines for children. Parents told us that they were confident that if any concerns arose they would be listened to. One parent shared that the childminder "has an open door policy which is great. I know if I do have any concerns, I can call/speak to them and it will be dealt with." As a result, the care provided met the needs of individuals and respected the wishes of parents.

All meals and snacks were provided by the childminder. Although we did not observe snack or mealtime, the childminder spoke knowledgeably about the importance of everyone coming together to eat. They also recognised how children can benefit from being involved in the preparation and choice of what they ate. The children smiled and happily agreed that they liked the foods they ate at the childminders. Involving children in this way meant that they had opportunities to learn about healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

Personal plans for children had been created and were stored securely. These were updated regularly with families. We suggested ways in which children could be more involved and represented in their personal learning journals. This would give children a sense of ownership and pride in their successes and achievements.

At the time of inspection no children required medication. We were satisfied that appropriate procedures were in place to safely administer, record and share information with families when it was needed.

### Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were busy and engaged in arts and crafts activities during the inspection. They told us that they were making a telescope and were planning to use it later when they went for a walk. When children asked for help they were gently encouraged to give things a try. For example, one child was trying to stick buttons onto their "telescope" but they kept falling off. The child persevered for some time, showing patience and determination before deciding that a sticker might work better. This meant that children were developing resilience and independence skills in a way that made them feel safe and supported. We suggested that children would benefit from more opportunities to lead their own learning and be involved in the planning of activities. This would encourage their confidence further and continue to promote self-esteem.

Children's experiences were photographed and recorded in floorbooks and in their personal learning journals. The childminder also used photographs, with appropriate permissions, to share children's daily experiences with parents using WhatsApp. This provided opportunities for children to share their experiences with families and talk about their day. We discussed how the childminder should record observations of what children had learned from these experiences. This would support them to clearly

recognise and celebrate children's progress and inform what children's next steps in learning might be. As a result children would be encouraged to reach their full potential.

### 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

Children benefitted from a setting which was clean, tidy and comfortable with lots of natural light and ventilation. The dedicated playroom was well organised and offered children ample space to play and relax. Children also had access to the kitchen-dining area for snack and mealtimes and used the dining table to explore arts and craft activities. The layout enabled them to join in with activities and gave them a message that they mattered. At the time of inspection the playroom was being prepared for re-decoration. We discussed with the childminder ways in which they could offer cosy, quiet spaces where children could choose to rest during the day. The childminder spoke of wall displays that would exhibit children's work and highlight their current interests and learning. This would help to emphasise children's sense of belonging in the setting.

The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air. The large paved area provided opportunities for active, physical play in all weathers. Children also had regular access to fresh air and exercise as they had fun and made use of outdoor spaces in the local community. Outdoor experiences meant children were learning about the benefits of an active lifestyle that promoted their health and wellbeing.

The property was very well maintained indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised. The childminder ensured maintenance work was planned and carried out when children were not in the setting. This minimised disruption to their routines whilst ensuring the setting was safe and secure.

### 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 improvements are led well

The childminder had a clear vision and aim for the service "to provide a secure and nurturing home from home. A place where children can come and play and learn." Their values were evident in the caring interactions observed throughout the inspection. The positive ethos meant that children felt loved, valued and secure.

Secure, trusting relationships had been established with children and families and the childminder knew them well. The views of families and children were gathered through questionnaires and informal discussions with the childminder. These were used to influence the care provided and should be considered further when planning improvements within the service. This would help to ensure children and families felt involved and that their views were considered in the service provided.

The childminder should consider developing a more formal way to record their own evaluation of the service. We discussed ways for them to document their reflections and highlighted best practice guidance which could support this. For example, Realising the Ambition: Being Me and A Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding, and school aged childcare. This could support the childminder to evaluate what is working well and may help to inform further improvements to the service.

## 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 nurturing and responsive interactions we witnessed supported children to feel loved and secure. The childminder understood the importance of listening to children and families. This enabled them to build relationships and provide appropriate care and support for individuals. As a result children's emotional wellbeing benefitted from positive attachments.

The experienced childminder demonstrated an understanding of how children develop and learn. They were a member of the Scottish Childminding Association and worked in partnership with Fife Council to provide funded childcare for children. We discussed how the childminder could access further training opportunities to build on their existing knowledge. The self-evaluation process may help to inform this and ensure that additional training is meaningful and relevant to the service. The childminder should record their learning and formally reflect and evaluate the impact it had on their service and on outcomes for children. This would help them to develop a clear learning action plan.

## 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 complete full written risk assessments on the home, garden and outings. These should demonstrate the hazard and the control measures. These should be reviewed annually or sooner if there is any new risk identified or any changes to the environment.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2 - A safe environment.

**This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2015.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had developed risk assessments on the home, garden and outings. These were reviewed regularly and updated if any new risks were identified.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should ensure all personal plan information is reviewed with the parents at least every six months or when requested to do so by the service user or representative and whenever there is a significant change in a service user's health, welfare or safety. The childminder should also ensure that next steps are identified and recorded within children's records of development. This would enable her to keep up to date records on the children's development stage, formally share her plans with parents and carers and use the information to plan future activities which will support the children's individual learning.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing and Standard 7 - A caring environment.

**This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2015.**

#### Action taken since then

We could see that personal plans are now being reviewed and updated regularly with families. Children's experiences were recorded in their personal learning journals and next steps in learning were considered. The childminder should ensure next steps are formally recorded and shared with families.

This area for improvement has not been fully met and will be continued.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://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	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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