

# Clare's childminding Child Minding

Campbeltown

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 September 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Clare McAulay

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000180

**Service no:**  
CS2023000289

## About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 September 2023. The service provider is Clare McAulay. The service operates from the childminder's home, located in Campbeltown, Argyll and Bute. The service is provided from a two-storey house, with children having access to the living room, enclosed rear garden and bathroom. The service is within walking distance of the local primary school, shops and parks.

The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Numbers include the children of the childminder's household. No overnight care is provided.

At the time of the inspection, four children were registered with the service, and three were present during the visit.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by one early learning and childcare inspector, which took place on 25 September 2025. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and any intelligence gathered. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Observed practice and daily life.
- Spoke with children using the service.
- Reviewed documents.
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.
- Spoke with the childminder.
- Sent questionnaires to parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

## Key messages

- The childminder created a nurturing, cosy and engaging home from home service.
- Children engaged with a wide range of resources both indoors and outdoors.
- Children enjoyed accessing a variety of different locations in the local and wider community, supporting the development of social skills and a sense of belonging.
- The childminder gave regular and informative updates to parents and carers regarding their child's care, learning and development.
- The childminder had undertaken regular self-evaluations of the service to ensure ongoing improvement and to meet the needs of children and families effectively.

## 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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

## Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder created a warm, nurturing environment within their welcoming and engaging family home, fostering a strong homely ethos. This ethos was clearly communicated to parents through the welcome pack and consistently reflected in daily practice. One parent shared, '[The childminder] always has something planned for the wee ones and always treats them as they would her own'. As a result, children felt safe, settled, and emotionally secure.

The childminder demonstrated reflective practice by recognising the need to revisit the service's aims, values, and objectives to ensure they continued to reflect the current provision. During our discussion, the childminder acknowledged the benefits of reviewing these collaboratively and valued the opportunity to involve parents as partners in the process.

Policies were thoughtfully developed to align with best practice guidance. The childminder carefully linked key guidance within the policies, which demonstrated a clear understanding of regulatory expectations and a commitment to adopting best practice. They regularly reviewed and adapted policies as the service evolved, showing a proactive approach to continuous improvement.

To support self-evaluation, the childminder used the Care Inspectorate's "Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare". This structured approach enabled them to reflect on relevant quality indicators and identify both strengths and areas for development. In addition to this, the childminder actively sought feedback from parents twice a year. We recommended developing a clear improvement plan to capture key findings and outline specific goals and actions. This would ensure that parental feedback and self-evaluation meaningfully inform the ongoing development of the service.

The childminder had undertaken a process of professional development, completing a range of relevant training including safeguarding, infection control, and autism awareness. The training supported the childminder to respond confidently to children's needs and contributed to the delivery of safe, inclusive, and responsive service.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 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 quality indicator as very good.

The childminder created a welcoming, clean, and organised environment. Good natural light and ventilation contributed to a calm and comfortable atmosphere. The entrances and exits were secure, and the outdoor area was safely enclosed with fencing, allowing children to play freely while remaining safe.

The childminder ensured health and safety practices were followed. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was used where required, and children were supported to wash their hands at key times, supporting good hygiene habits. Children's personal care needs were met with dignity and privacy, reflecting a respectful and child centred approach to care.

Outdoor play was a regular and valued part of the daily routine, supporting physical development and wellbeing. The childminder encouraged children to engage in a variety of activities and explore carefully managed risks through a risk-benefit approach. They demonstrated a clear understanding of balancing safety with challenge, allowing children to test their abilities in a secure environment. Risk assessments were in place for outings, indoor and outdoor areas, and car use, reflecting a proactive approach to safety. To strengthen this further, we suggested documenting the risk benefit approach for identified risks and establishing a regular review process to ensure risk assessments remain current and responsive to changes.

Resources within the setting were in good working order, and areas were kept free from clutter, supporting both safety and accessibility. The environment was thoughtfully arranged, with child sized furniture positioned to promote engagement and ease of access.

Children had access to a wide range of age appropriate resources, which they could self select. This encouraged independence and enabled children to lead their own play, supporting confidence, creativity, and decision making skills. The childminder regularly reviewed resources and adapted the provision based on children's interests, promoting their engagement in play and having fun.

The childminder facilitated group projects, such as recording birds in the garden for a national survey, which promoted observation skills and awareness of the natural environment. One parent commented, "[The childminder] has a fantastic garden set up for the little ones, regularly goes to the beach or to the playparks".

Children grew their own fruits and vegetables, with herbs contributed from their own homes. This fostered a sense of ownership and a deeper connection to nature, enriching their understanding of the world around them.

A variety of sensory experiences were available, including sand and water play. A tuff tray was used for varied sensory activities, and a range of sensory toys supported exploration and engagement. Children collected materials from the various outings in the local and wider area to create their own musical instruments, promoting creativity, curiosity and a sense of wonder.

The childminder managed information responsibly, storing records securely. The childminder was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), showing a clear understanding of data protection duties. We discussed reviewing how access to physical records was managed to ensure continued confidentiality.

## Children play and learn 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 quality indicator as very good.

The childminder effectively tracked children's development using the Scottish Childminding Association's (SCMA) development guide, supporting a structured and informed approach to monitoring progress. The childminder demonstrated an understanding of child development and could clearly identify each child's stage of development. They used this insight to tailor the environment and resources to meet individual needs. Children engaged happily with carefully selected materials that offered appropriate challenge and reflected their interests. One parent told us there was a "fantastic range of stimulating and engaging activities".

The childminder extended children's learning by offering thoughtful prompts that encouraged creative thinking and imagination. For example, early language development was nurtured through engaging story time sessions that captured children's interest and enriched their vocabulary. The childminder displayed pictures at the table to encourage children to reflect and talk about their experiences. The childminder further supported language and literacy development by modelling vocabulary, expanding on children's speech and ensured books were easily accessible throughout the setting. Children played with puzzles, crafts, and other activities that supported numeracy development. The childminder responded to children's interests, offering support and encouragement to build on their play and learning. When the music box became a favourite, they added books and real world toys to expand the experience.

Children enjoyed regular outings, including visits to the toy library, Bookbug sessions, the farm, the beach, and monthly trips to a local care home. These experiences supported their social development and helped them build relationships beyond the childminding setting. By exploring different places and meeting new people, children developed confidence, communication skills, and a sense of belonging within their community.

## Children are supported to achieve 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 quality indicator as very good.

The childminder showed a nurturing and emotionally responsive approach to care. They knew the children well and spoke confidently about their individual preferences, likes, and dislikes. Their calm and reassuring manner helped create a safe and comforting environment. We observed children seeking physical comfort, such as hugs, which were warmly received, showing strong attachments and emotional security. A weekly affirmation, during the visit was "I am kind", was supporting children's emotional development and social skills. One parent told us "I trust [the childminder] completely and feel so safe and secure with her looking after my children. [They are] extremely nurturing and full of wonderful creative ideas for the little ones".

The childminder actively supported children when they did not agree and encouraged kind, respectful behaviour. They used gentle reminders about sharing and kindness, incorporating language that promoted empathy and understanding. We observed consistently warm, respectful, and encouraging interactions between the childminder and the minded children. The childminder used praise and recognition effectively to reinforce positive behaviour and build children's self-esteem.

A digital application was used effectively as a learning journal. The childminder made detailed entries with clear links to the "Realising the Ambition" document, identifying the skills children were developing. The platform supported strong communication with families, as parents were able to comment and share learning from home. This helped create continuity between the setting and the home environment. We suggested that the childminder develop strategies in partnership with parents to support behaviour, ensuring consistency between home and setting and reinforcing shared expectations. One parent told us "[the childminder] always makes sure she knows about everything that is going on with my [child] and is very good at setting up activities that interest [the child]".

Snack times were calm and respectful. Children were given enough time to enjoy their food, which supported a relaxed and positive mealtime experience. The childminder demonstrated an understanding of current best practice guidance "Setting the Table", aspects of which were embedded in daily practice. For example, children choosing their own cups, helping to set the table, and using a tablecloth. This supported a homely, inclusive environment that values children's contributions.

Children had regular opportunities to rest and relax throughout the day, supported by a calm atmosphere that promoted emotional wellbeing. The childminder created a cosy area with soft furnishings, offering a safe and comfortable space for children to relax when needed. The childminder had signed up for training on safe sleep and was applying the key principles from Sleep Safe Scotland. During the inspection, we observed the childminder checking on sleeping children at least every ten minutes, demonstrating an understanding of safe sleep protocols and a commitment to children's health and wellbeing.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good



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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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