

McCrae, Sheona Child Minding

Greenock

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 January 2026

Service provided by:
Sheona McCrae

Service provider number:
SP2005945967

Service no:
CS2005091464

About the service

Sheona McCrae is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of 6 children will be under 12, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care will not be provided. At the time of our inspection, three children were registered with the service.

The service operates from the childminder's home which is a ground floor flat property within the town of Greenock. The children have access to a living room, toilet facilities and a shared secure garden to the rear of the property. There are schools, nursery and parks nearby.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 January 2026 between 12:00 and 13:00 and 20 January between 15:30 and 16:30. 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:

- spent time with three children in the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

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

- Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships and benefitted from relaxed routines and healthy eating practices that supported their wellbeing.
- Play and learning were based on children's interests and developmental needs. Creative resources, board games and community experiences, such as museum visits, supported learning, cooperation and curiosity.
- Close working with families through personal plans and regular communication promoted continuity of care and learning.
- Engagement with SCMA and Minding Kids resources supported consistent practice. Ongoing training helped the childminder respond to children's needs and develop professionally.
- Self-evaluation was developing. More formal recording of reflections and the impact of changes would strengthen improvement planning.

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 play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The childminder's vision, values and aims of providing a warm, friendly environment where children play, laugh and learn were well embedded in the service. These values informed daily practice and helped guide decisions about how care was planned and delivered. They reflected a child-centred ethos and a commitment to ongoing development, contributing to a clear and consistent sense of direction for the service.

The childminder demonstrated reflective practice through the use of recognised childminding platforms to review and enhance aspects of the service. Although a formal improvement plan was not yet in place, the childminder understood the benefits of recording reflections, identifying priorities, and tracking progress to show positive change over time. Developing a more structured approach to improvement planning would support continued growth and help evidence the impact of changes made.

Professional networks, such as the Scottish Childminding Association, along with the use of Minding Kids resources, supported consistent and reliable approaches in policy development, record keeping, and safe practice. The childminder was open to advice about maintaining policies in line with current national guidance and demonstrated an organised approach to service management. Established systems and routines, including hygiene practices, daily safety checks and healthy snack preparation, contributed to a well-managed environment that supported children's safety and wellbeing.

The childminder was committed to professional learning and had undertaken relevant training such as first aid, child protection and children's rights. This supported a good understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and ensured the childminder was confident in recognising and responding to concerns. Children's views were respected and considered through active listening, thoughtful questioning and observation. This contributed to a culture of inclusion, respect and equity, where children influenced aspects of their day. The childminder's reflective and balanced approach to supporting independence while maintaining appropriate safety boundaries demonstrated effective, nurturing leadership.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children who attended after school were observed to be happy, relaxed and confident. A warm, welcoming atmosphere helped them transition smoothly from the school day, allowing time to unwind, share their thoughts and move naturally into play at their own pace. Children spoke openly about their interests, including creative activities, board games and sharing the Gaelic language they were learning at school. This recognition of children's cultural and language experiences supported a strong sense of identity and belonging.

During the inspection, children played with playdough for a period of time, making animals and pretend pizzas. This complemented the wide range of experiences shown in photographs, which demonstrated the variety of play opportunities available to them. Resources such as craft materials, construction sets, games and playdough supported creativity, curiosity, problem-solving and cooperation, while also providing opportunities for early literacy and numeracy through play. Children could make choices throughout their play, promoting independence and confidence.

Ongoing observations and daily communication with families helped the childminder develop a clear understanding of each child's interests, preferences and developmental needs. This ensured that activities and experiences were well matched to children's stages of development and supported their progression. The childminder's responsive approach meant learning was embedded naturally within play and everyday interactions.

Trips within the local community enriched children's learning through hands-on, real-life experiences. Visits to museums allowed exploration of history, culture and local resources, broadening children's understanding of the world around them. Flexible and responsive planning enabled learning to flow from children's ideas, helping them to remain engaged, curious and motivated.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children benefitted from a warm and nurturing environment where interactions were consistently positive, respectful and responsive. The childminder supported children well as they settled after school, offering an unhurried approach that gave time for rest, conversation or quiet play. This helped children feel safe, valued and emotionally secure.

Snack routines were sociable and relaxed. Children sat together, shared stories about their day and developed relationships in a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. Healthy options such as fruit, toast and water encouraged good eating habits, while offering the choice to bring snacks from home respected individual preferences and dietary needs. Hygiene routines were well established, and children showed good awareness of how handwashing helped keep them healthy and well. These consistent routines supported their independence and confidence.

Although no children required medication at the time of inspection, suitable systems were in place should this be needed. Personal plans were shared with families and updated regularly to reflect what mattered most for each child. This supported continuity of care and contributed to children's wellbeing and progress.

Overall, the childminder provided a caring and supportive environment where children experienced emotional security, consistent routines and nurturing relationships. A focus on wellbeing, strong communication with families and responsive care helped children feel confident, settled and well supported.

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 children's personal plans are updated at least once every six months. This will help ensure that the childminder has all the necessary current information to support children's health and wellbeing and that children receive the right support at the right time.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 23 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had ensured that children's personal plans were reviewed and updated at least every six months. Evidence showed that the plans now contained clear, current and relevant information to support each child's health, wellbeing and individual needs. This meant the childminder had access to up-to-date details, enabling them to provide the right support at the right time and ensure care was consistent, responsive and well-matched to children's circumstances.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated in line with current best practice guidance to support the childminder in delivering a quality service for children. Any updates should be shared with parents and carers.

This is to ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 23 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Policies had been reviewed and shared with families, helping them understand what to expect from the service. This included the pets policy, which had been updated following recent changes within the setting. Sharing this information promoted transparency and supported effective communication with parents and carers.

The childminder should continue to ensure that policies remain aligned with current national guidance. Keeping policies up to date would help maintain safe, consistent practice and support high-quality care as the service develops.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

Self-evaluation should be developed to ensure a quality service for children, including meaningfully involving children and families in the process.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 23 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Self-evaluation processes were developing, with the childminder using a range of sources such as the Health and Social Care Standards, the SCMA website and feedback from parents and carers. They also discussed ideas with other childminders while maintaining confidentiality. These approaches supported reflection and helped the childminder consider improvements to children's experiences and personal plans.

Although progress was positive, self-evaluation was not yet formalised. Communication with children and families was strong, and the childminder showed commitment to ongoing improvement. We signposted them to A Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding, which could help them record reflections and recognise improvements over time.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To further support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the childminder should access training and professional development. Apply their knowledge in practice, record and reflect on learning to support consistency in their practice and improve outcomes for children.

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' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 23 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had completed a good range of online training to refresh their knowledge. To further support children's wellbeing, learning and development, they should now keep brief records of self-reflection to show how this learning is used in practice and how it leads to improvements in children's experiences. This would help maintain consistency over time and demonstrate the impact of their professional development.

Inspection report

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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