

Pennytree Childminding Child Minding

Kirkcaldy

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 January 2026

Service provided by:
Aida Morrice

Service provider number:
SP2023000063

Service no:
CS2023000087

About the service

Pennytree Childminding operates a service from their home in a residential area of Kirkcaldy, Fife. The childminder may care for 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. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family.

The service offers children two dedicated spacious playrooms where they can choose to play with a variety of toys and books. Children also have access to kitchen area and use this space to eat their snacks, supported by the childminder. At the rear of the service there is a large secure garden for children to access. The service is close to local amenities including parks and the local nursery and school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 January 2026 between 11:30 and 13:30 and on 21 January 2026 between 15:30 and 16:30. Feedback was given to the childminder on 21 January at 16:00. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with three people using the service
- received 1 completed questionnaire
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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 and families feedback was genuinely valued by the childminder.
- The childminder had a very good understanding of children's development and provided effective support to meet their needs and to help them achieve.
- Families were kept well informed about their child's achievements through shared photographs and regular conversations about their development.
- Interactions were consistently caring, responsive, and well-paced.
- The childminder provided gentle and compassionate care, supporting children's emotional wellbeing with cuddles and warm interactions.
- Systems for maintaining records, including attendance registers, medication and formal reviews of personal plans, should also be strengthened ensure they continue to support high quality care, safety and wellbeing.

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	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

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 vision, values and aims were embedded to promote positive attachments and child led play were reflected in everyday practice and experiences for children. This created an ethos that placed children right to play and feel safe at the heart of the service. We discussed involving children and families in reviewing the vision, values and aims to ensure they felt included and their views reflected.

The childminder used self-evaluation tools of best practice guidance to reflect on practice and children's experiences. This supported them to identify strengths and areas they would like to develop, recording this in an improvement plan. Children and families feedback was genuinely valued by the childminder. They had opportunities to suggest improvements, for example through questionnaires and daily discussions. The childminder listened to feedback and used this to inform change and contribute to the ongoing improvements identified.

The childminder has started to review some policies and should continue this process to ensure they reflect current legislation and best practice. For example, the sleep policy should be updated to incorporate safer sleep guidance and ensure this is consistently applied within the service. Systems for maintaining records, including attendance registers, medication and formal reviews of personal plans, should also be strengthened ensure they continue to support high quality care, safety and wellbeing.

Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as **very good**.

Children benefitted from a childminder who regularly engaged in professional reading and research which enhanced the support they offered children and families. For example, researching strategies to best support children's emotional wellbeing and health needs. As a result children experienced responsive and confident care from a childminder who was well informed and able to adapt their practice to meet individual needs.

The childminder had developed links with the local nursery which further strengthened her knowledge and understanding of early years. For example, the nursery had been reviewing risky play opportunities, the childminder conducted her own research and had started to implement more risky play opportunities within the service. This helped to ensure that children experienced consistent approaches across the settings.

The childminder had established effective links with other childminders, which supported professional dialogue and the sharing of best practice. They used these networks to reflect on current guidance and explore new approaches to improve their service. As a result, children benefitted from care that was continually enhanced through professional collaboration.

The childminder had plans to undertake further safeguarding training to strengthen their knowledge in this area. We discussed how recording their professional reading and wider learning could help to clearly show

the impact this had on children's experiences.

Children were safely supervised by the childminder as they played indoors. The childminder spent time close to children as they played and when resting. As a result, children felt safe and had a familiar adult near.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as **very good**.

Playing, learning and developing

The childminder had a very good understanding of children's development and provided effective support to meet their needs and to help them achieve. This included approaches such as noticing and responding to children's patterns of play and supporting their development of self-regulation and confidence through play experiences.

The childminder provided strong support for children's play and learning. They responded sensitively to children's ideas, interests, and stages of development. A wide range of age appropriate resources encouraged children to explore, investigate, and follow their own interests. For example, children were using a variety of resources to engage in imaginary, role play situations.

Families were kept well informed about their child's achievements through shared photographs and regular conversations about their development. Next steps for children were planned for in partnership with families to meet their individual needs. This helped families stay involved and engaged in their child's learning.

Interactions were consistently caring, responsive, and well-paced. Children benefitted from a childminder who was skilful in their interactions, acknowledging children's feelings and emotions. Children had time to process and respond, creating a relaxed and supportive environment that nurtured confidence and supported language development. As a result, this ensured that children felt listened to and understood.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as **very good**.

Nurturing care and support

Children were settled and relaxed in the service. They were confident around the childminder and within the environment. The childminder provided gentle and compassionate care, supporting children's emotional wellbeing with cuddles and warm interactions. Children were observed smiling and laughing. This demonstrated that children felt safe and loved within the setting.

Snack time was calm and well organised, with the childminder supporting children's social interactions. Snacks provided by families were served in a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. Children with dietary needs were sensitively supported, with clear additional measures in place to ensure their safety. As a result this contributed to children feeling included, well cared for, and confident during mealtime routines.

Children's wellbeing was well supported through the childminder's strong understanding of their individual needs. Personal plans were in place for all children. Plans were detailed and captured each child's key information, including health and wellbeing needs, family preferences and children's wishes. Plans were developed in partnership with families. This contributed to a continuity of care and support between the child's home and the service, and helped the childminder plan care in response to children's current needs.

The childminder had built strong, trusting relationships with families, which contributed to children feeling secure and well cared for. A parent shared "a home from home where my children are relaxed and safe" and praising the childminder as "very reliable, compassionate and professional, while also inclusive and welcoming". These positive relationships helped ensure that children experienced nurturing, consistent care tailored to their individual needs.

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 formally develop quality assurance systems to evaluate their service. This will help identify what they do well and areas for development and inform their improvement plan.

This is to ensure confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having a robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 7 February 2025.

Action taken since then

The childminder has taken positive steps to develop quality assurance processes that support ongoing evaluation of their service. They have introduced parent and child questionnaires, which provide meaningful opportunities for families to share their views about the service. Feedback gathered through these tools has helped the childminder identify strengths as well as areas for further development.

Previous area for improvement 2

To provide the best possible outcomes for children the childminder should ensure that they engage in relevant training opportunities to keep their knowledge, understanding and practice current.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the people who support and care for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which stated that 'I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 7 February 2025.

Action taken since then

The childminder has engaged in professional reading and research to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of current best practice. This has supported them to reflect on their approach and make informed decisions that ensure children receive care and support that is right for them.

In addition, the childminder has developed further professional links by maintaining communication with the local nursery and networking with other childminders. These collaborative approaches have helped the childminder share ideas, discuss practice, and enhance consistency of support for children. As a result, the service has been strengthened, and children benefit from more responsive, well-informed practice that promotes positive outcomes.

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	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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