

Mairi's Childminding Service

Child Minding

Stevenston

Type of inspection:
Announced (short notice)

Completed on:
19 February 2026

Service provided by:
Mairi Barr

Service provider number:
SP2023000310

Service no:
CS2023000409

About the service

Mairi Barr, trading as Mairi's childminding service is registered to provide a childminding service from their home Stevenston, North Ayrshire. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than six will be under 12 years, of whom no more than three 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.

At the time of the inspection 13 children were registered to attend the service, most on a part-time basis. On the day of inspection, three children were present.

The service is located close to local schools, shops, parks and green spaces.

About the inspection

This was a short notice announced inspection which took place on 19 February 2026 between 11:45 and 14:15. 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:

- spent time with three young children
- reviewed six completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and experiences for children
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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 benefitted from nurturing relationships with the childminder.
- Children experienced warm and responsive care to ensure they felt safe and secure.
- The childminder demonstrated good understanding of how children develop and learn which was reflected in the experiences offered to children.
- Regular outdoor play and visits to community resources enriched children's experiences.
- Risk assessments for outings should be developed to ensure children's safety within their wider community.
- Self-evaluation processes should continue to be embedded, supporting the delivery of a high-quality service.

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

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| Leadership | 4 - Good |
| Children thrive and develop in quality spaces | 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

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.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder had clear aims and objectives for their service. Their aim of providing the best possible care and offering stimulating play experiences to support children's development was consistently reflected in practice. These aims helped guide the childminder's decision making and contributed to a thoughtful, child-centred approach to care, play and learning. The childminder's strong knowledge of each child's needs ensured routines were balanced with flexibility, supporting children's wellbeing. As a result, practice was purposeful, values led, and contributed to nurturing experiences for children.

The childminder consulted with parents when making decisions about their service. They routinely issued questionnaires and responded promptly to feedback and individual requests. This approach built strong, trusting relationships and supported consistency between home and the service. Parents told us, "Mairi is always keen to get feedback on her service. We receive questionnaires regularly and she acts on feedback," and "Mairi continues to reflect and respond to feedback. If my child has a new interest, Mairi goes out of her way to incorporate that into their provision soon thereafter." The childminder's responsive and collaborative communication ensured that children received care and activities that reflected their interests, needs, and home routines, leading to secure and positive daily experiences.

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibility to providing high standards of care and learning. Recent self-evaluation showed a proactive and reflective approach, with improvements identified that were purposeful and relevant to the needs of children and families. For example, the childminder had recognised the value of introducing newsletters as a future priority to strengthen communication with families. To further strengthen these processes the childminder should use Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland (2025) guidance, 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' to inform ongoing evaluation of their service. This will ensure children and families benefit from a service that is continually developing and responsive to their needs.

The childminder had developed a range of policies and procedures to inform families about how children were kept safe. Overall, most policies reflected good practice guidance. We suggested some updates to ensure policies fully aligned with current guidance. For example, the child protection policy should include contact details for relevant external agencies, and the medication policy should state that medication must arrive at the childminder's setting in its original container. Strengthening these documents would ensure families remained well informed and confident in the service's safety practices.

The childminder demonstrated good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and how to keep children safe. Whilst child protection training had not been completed at the time of inspection, this was refreshed later that day. Training updates should continue to be planned for as part of ongoing professional development to ensure knowledge remains current and supports effective safeguarding practice.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

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.

Quality Indicator: Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

The childminder's home environment was clean, tidy, and well maintained. It was homely and welcoming with children's work on display contributing to a strong sense of comfort and belonging for children. The childminder modelled good practice by encouraging children to tidy resources before choosing new ones, helping to maintain a calm environment and promoting respect and responsibility. Parents spoke positively about the environment, telling us "Mairi thrives to provide a safe, happy and fun environment that is relaxing and a happy place to be" and "Mairi provides the homely environment that my child loves." As a result, children experienced a safe, organised, and nurturing space that supported their wellbeing.

Children were able to direct their own play and freely access a range of developmentally appropriate and interesting resources that supported their learning. The childminder offered materials that reflected children's individual interests. For example, one parent had recently shared that their child was interested in dinosaurs and car garages, and these were made available for the child to explore. Opportunities for choice were consistently provided, supporting children's independence and decision making. As a result, children experienced play that was meaningful, engaging, and responsive to their needs and preferences.

Outdoor play was a priority within the setting, contributing positively to children's wellbeing and learning. Although the childminder's garden was not in use at the time of the inspection due to a damaged tile that was in the process of being repaired, the outdoor environment was secure, inviting, and well resourced to support a wide range of experiences. It offered opportunities for physical development, sensory exploration, and imaginative play. Parents spoke very positively about the outdoor provision, telling us "Mairi advocates outdoor learning wherever possible which has been great for my children. She has a well resourced outdoor area and enjoys taking the children to local parks as well as the beach," and "Mairi's outdoor area is absolutely fantastic and used often. Pictures are always sent of my child having the best time out in the garden." Another parent commented that the "garden is amazing, safe, secure." As a result, children benefitted from regular, meaningful outdoor experiences that supported their wellbeing, confidence, and enjoyment.

Risk assessments had been developed for all areas of the childminder's home, including clear recognition and management of potential risks. This also included risks associated with the family pet dog. Appropriate safety measures, such as child safety gates and cupboard locks, were in place and contributed to creating a safe environment for children. To further strengthen safety practices, the childminder should now develop risk assessments for the areas of the community that are accessed by minded children. This will help ensure that children experience safe and well planned outings, supporting their confidence, independence, and ability to explore the wider community securely.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children experienced a wide range of play and learning opportunities that were tailored to their stage of development. They were able to make choices from a selection of appropriate resources such as, crafts,

construction materials and books. These opportunities supported curiosity, problem solving and imaginative play. As a result, children were engaged, motivated and having fun.

Skilled and purposeful interactions from the childminder supported children's language, literacy and numeracy development. Children benefitted from sensitive support that promoted confidence and early communication skills. For example, the childminder modelled and repeated new words, narrated play and responded to the child's interests in space, dinosaurs and crafts. This helped extend vocabulary and deepen understanding. Early mathematical concepts were also introduced naturally through play, including counting, sorting and categorising objects, which promoted early numeracy in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

Children's achievements were recognised, recorded, and shared with families. Observations and some next steps were documented, helping to inform planning that were responsive and purposeful. As a result, children benefitted from enjoyable and relevant learning opportunities that supported their ongoing development and wellbeing. To strengthen this further, continuing to record observations and next steps regularly would more clearly demonstrate each child's progression and skill development over time.

Planning was mostly responsive to children's ideas and interests, with the childminder using their knowledge of each child to create an activity planner. Parents spoke very positively about the quality and variety of activities, telling us "Mairi is absolutely amazing to provide stimulating and fun activities. There is always such a great variety to suit all learning needs that is responsive to the kids interests," and "The variety of activities she provides really is something else - she is always celebrating occasions and providing learning opportunities and educational activities." Children also shared positive views, with one telling us, "Mairi always plans fun activities to do in her house and in her garden. I love crafting and we do this together." We discussed how planning documentation could more clearly record when experiences were offered in response to specific children's interests, as well as when planned activities had not taken place due to children's interests changing. This would strengthen the clarity of planning processes and better demonstrate how responsive practice supports children's learning and development.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy and settled during our visit. The childminder was kind and caring towards them, and positive, trusting relationships had clearly been established. All families who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed that they had a good relationship with their childminder. Comments included; "Mairi is nurturing, kind and really cares for the children she looks after, this is evident from the moment of first contact. She really is worth her weight in gold" and "Mairi is such a lovely, kind and caring person to both the children and our family."

The use of varied communication methods including daily verbal updates and daily diaries strengthened relationships with parents and promoted continuity of care. Parents commented, "communication is second to none, updating daily via a diary and photos throughout the day" and "Mairi is excellent at communicating." As a result of clear communication, parents felt well informed about the care their child received.

The childminder knew the children in their care well and had gathered relevant information at enrolment, including health needs and emergency contacts. They used this information effectively to inform each child's personal plan and identify appropriate development targets. We discussed with the childminder how plans could be strengthened by clearly identifying strategies and outlining how the childminder planned to meet each child's individual health, welfare, and safety needs. This will ensure children consistently receive the right support at the right time.

Mealtimes were calm and relaxing, supporting a positive atmosphere for children. Families provided packed lunches from home, and the childminder offered these at times that reflected children's individual routines and preferences. This helped ensure children were comfortable, well nourished, and able to eat in a way that suited their established patterns from home.

The childminder created a calm and reassuring sleep environment, providing cuddles soft lighting and relaxing music to help children settle. Each child had their own designated bed and bedding, to support safe sleeping practices. Parents told us that "Mairi is so responsive and allows each child to rest and relax when they need" and that "Mairi has a great set up where the kids sleep in a comfortable spot. I was delighted and emotional to see what a lovely set up Mairi had created." This approach contributed to children feeling secure, well rested, and confident that their individual routines and comfort needs were respected.

The childminder had a clear settling in policy and implemented sensitive, well planned procedures that supported children to feel secure as they adjusted to the service. This approach could be further enhanced by developing an information pack or welcome booklet to share with families at enrolment, providing relevant information about the service. This will ensure parents are fully informed and know what to expect from the service.

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

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| Leadership | 4 - Good |
| Leadership and management of staff and resources | 4 - Good |
| Children thrive and develop in quality spaces | 4 - Good |
| Children experience high quality spaces | 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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