

# Mandy's Childminding Service

## Child Minding

Larbert

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
24 April 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Mandy Kennedy

**Service provider number:**  
SP2024000104

**Service no:**  
CS2024000296

## About the service

Mandy Kennedy operating as Mandy's childminding service provides a childminding service registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. The numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own family.

The service is close to local amenities, schools and parks. The children have access to the open plan kitchen/lounge area and bathroom facilities on the ground floor of the premises. There is a large, enclosed garden suitable for outdoor play at the back of the property.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 April 2026 between 11:15 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with two children in the service
- spoke with the childminder
- received four completed questionnaires from parents
- 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

- The childminder's ethos of kindness and respect and their commitment to provide high quality play and learning opportunities were reflected in their daily practice.
- Improvement plan and self-evaluation were being developed. They demonstrated the childminder's ability to begin implementing changes that could have a positive impact on the overall quality of the service.
- Effective consultation with children and their families meant that children enjoyed fun, rich and meaningful learning experiences which reflected the children's interests, needs and preferences.
- The childminder used everyday routines as opportunities to consolidate learning and to enhance the children's positive sense of self.
- Children had developed a very positive attachment to the childminder based on a strong sense of belonging and a deep level of emotional safety.
- The childminder knew the children well and dedicated time to record significant learning to ensure they experienced a broad curriculum and were supported to achieve.

## 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	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

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 demonstrated their leadership approach through a clear and well-articulated vision that guided the direction of the service and was consistently reflected in daily practice. The values underpinning the service were visible in every interaction, creating an ethos based on kindness, respect and nurturing relationships. This approach ensured that children felt valued, safe and supported. The childminder's commitment to children's rights was evident in the way these principles influenced decision-making and practice.

A strong sense of professional accountability shaped the childminder's practice. Their commitment, passion and desire to improve outcomes for children were consistently demonstrated. The childminder adopted a reflective approach to professional learning, engaging in an extensive range of training opportunities and using a learning log to evaluate the impact of new knowledge on children's experiences. This willingness to adapt and improve ensured that practice remained dynamic, informed and responsive.

As part of ongoing development, the childminder should now review their vision, values and aims at the end of the two-year cycle. Involving children and families in this process will help ensure that they remain meaningful and representative of the needs and preferences of the children and their families.

Policies within the service were well-organised and reflective of the childminder's ethos. A review of the behaviour policy, with explicit reference to children's rights, would further strengthen alignment with rights-based practice.

The childminder told us they identified the need to improve effective communication with families around policies, so that they would engage more easily with key-information. The childminder responded positively to our suggestion to highlight one policy at a time in the quarterly newsletter. Ensuring that all policies remain accessible and meaningful would support transparency and shared understanding among families.

We discussed with the childminder the possibility of developing a quality assurance calendar to help plan and track key tasks such as policy reviews, safety checks and record updates throughout the year. This would support a more consistent and proactive approach to quality assurance and help ensure that high standards in policies and procedures were maintained over time.

Improvement planning and self-evaluation were at a developing stage and should now be embedded more effectively. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of keeping the improvement plan simple, focussed and outcome-driven. This would support clarity and help ensure that actions led to meaningful change. The plan should include clear priorities for improvement, evidence of progress over time, parent feedback and a clear description of the impact on children's experiences. By sharing improvement priorities with parents, the childminder would make sure that developments remained relevant and responsive to the needs of children and families.

Self-evaluation tools and reflective questions had been simplified and adapted well to suit the childminder's reflective style. This made the process manageable and meaningful. The childminder had begun to identify strengths and areas for development with increasing confidence. Moving into a new cycle of continuous improvement would help the childminder build further confidence in identifying the direction of the service and planning next steps in their improvement journey.

## 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 experience high quality spaces

The childminder's home was safe, secure and well maintained. Effective measures were in place to minimise risks including safety door stoppers, locked gates in the enclosed garden and detailed risk assessments. These demonstrated a proactive approach to safety and a good awareness of potential hazards. Resources, equipment and furnishings were kept in good condition, and infection prevention and control procedures were robust. Handwashing was firmly embedded in daily routines, helping children develop healthy habits and an understanding of personal hygiene.

The childminder gave careful consideration to risky play, including offering woodland experiences. Children were actively involved in risk-benefit discussions, which helped them develop confidence, responsibility and awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Children experienced a strong sense that they mattered within the home.

A varied range of resources was available to support children's play and learning. Most items were stored in baskets at the children's level with a regular rotation of materials on offer. The childminder responded positively to suggestions about consulting children on how to make the environment feel more like their own. Ideas such as more permanent cosy indoor spaces, imaginative play nooks or quiet dens could help children develop a stronger sense of ownership of the indoors environment. We also discussed the importance of reflecting on how well the environment represented the different ages and stages of children in their care. Balancing choking-hazard precautions for younger children with the needs of older children to explore open-ended and natural materials (such as buttons, pinecones, stones) safely was another area for reflection. The childminder could also explore ways to display resources more invitingly to promote independent exploration and choice.

Children's needs, preferences and views were listened to, valued and acted upon. They influenced daily decisions, such as choosing when to play outdoors and how long to stay outside. We noted a child's enthusiasm for outdoor play, which was a clear example of children leading their own experiences. Children were also consulted about the resources they wanted in the setting. Recent examples included purchasing two new balls and supporting children's interest in planting within the greenhouse. The childminder encouraged children to take on responsibilities, such as watering plants, moving buckets and switching the outdoor tap on and off. These experiences helped children learn about caring for the environment and supported their independence. Documenting children's contributions more explicitly within improvement planning would strengthen this further.

Personal information was stored, processed and shared safely and securely, in line with best practice and legislative requirements. The childminder demonstrated strong compliance with data protection expectations.

## 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.

### Quality indicator: Play, learning and developing

Children's development was well supported through a wide range of fun, meaningful and purposeful learning experiences. This ensured children accessed a broad and rich curriculum that reflected their interests and developmental needs. Children were regularly consulted and encouraged to lead their own learning, helping them develop confidence, independence and ownership of their experiences. Parents confirmed: "Mandy always involves children when deciding what activities they'd like to do".

Learning opportunities clearly reflected what mattered to the children, as evidenced in the floorbook. Their voices were captured through drawings, early writing, photographs and items collected outdoors, showing how their ideas shaped the learning environment. As a next step, the childminder should consider how to introduce additional challenge for children who would benefit from deeper or more complex learning experiences.

The childminder used an online platform to share and develop play experiences in close partnership with parents, whose insights were actively sought and valued. This collaborative approach ensured that learning remained relevant and responsive to the child's wider context. The childminder's ability to work closely with families contributed significantly to the quality and continuity of the learning provision and encouraged parents to share the learning that was happening at home. Parents commented: "Mandy maintains an online journal for [my child] and is brilliant at sharing details, photos, videos of activities, developments, trips etc. Everything is done in a timely manner".

Children regularly attended childminding playgroups, soft-play centres, the library, local parks, woodland areas and outings such as feeding the ducks. These opportunities broadened their experiences and helped them develop a sense of belonging to the wider community.

The childminder used daily routines as opportunities for learning and interaction. Before lunch, the children explored books together while the childminder talked through the plan for the afternoon and encouraged them to make choices within safe, predictable boundaries. During this calm routine, the children practised social skills, shared resources and engaged in early learning as the childminder supported them to count, identify objects and describe what they noticed.

Resources were accessible and positioned at children's level, offering choice without being overwhelming. The selection reflected the children's interests, as documented in the floorbook. We discussed with the childminder how introducing more open-ended materials (sometimes referred to as loose parts) would further enhance opportunities for exploration and problem-solving. These are resources that children can move, combine, and transform in creative ways, such as sticks, stones, boxes, shells, or fabric scraps.

Children experienced high levels of fun, excitement and joy in their play. Early language, literacy and numeracy were promoted through a skilful balance of adult-initiated and child-led interactions. There was a strong understanding that engaging with children, for example through nursery rhymes or while engineering a game of funnels and water, helps build their vocabulary, sparks curiosity, and deepens their understanding of the world. This approach supported children in developing new skills, extending their thinking, and consolidating their learning.

The childminder skilfully used observations of significant learning to assess children's development and identify meaningful next steps. As a result, children were making steady progress in early literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Parents shared with us: "The way [my child] has thrived - their physical development, mental development, skills [...]. Mandy has helped a lot in honing these and giving [my child] the opportunities to explore and learn in a safe and fun environment. I'm also very happy about how [their] social skills have improved".

## 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.

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced consistently warm, nurturing and responsive care within the childminder's setting throughout the day.

The children greeted the inspector with smiles and proudly shared the finger puppets they had set out, showing real enjoyment in the activity. They sang nursery rhymes together, matching the puppets to the images in the book, while the childminder encouraged them to take the lead and choose the next song. While playing with some bouncy balls, the children took turns well, interacted positively with each other and invited the inspector into their play. Their excitement and joy were evident as they laughed, shared the toys and demonstrated strong social skills. When play finished, the children tidied up willingly, showing responsibility for the resources and an understanding of familiar practices.

The childminder was highly attuned to children's verbal and non-verbal cues, responding sensitively to their needs and emotions. As a result, the children experienced smooth transitions. The childminder used calm, consistent guidance to help the children resolve small disagreements, manage emotions and develop social skills. Routines such as mealtimes, handwashing, personal care and moving between activities were used purposefully to build confidence, independence and understanding of expectations. Parents confirmed: "My child feels secure and happy in their routine".

During lunch, the childminder encouraged conversations about healthy food, textures and fruit, helping the children build language and awareness of healthy choices. The children also spoke confidently about the potatoes, strawberries and cucumbers they were growing in the greenhouse.

The childminder effectively supported the children with their personal care needs, speaking to them with kindness and reassurance. This sensitive, attuned approach helped the children feel secure and develop a positive sense of self.

Personal plans were in place and reflected children's routines, preferences and developmental needs. The childminder maintained strong communication with families, who valued the daily conversations and updates about their child's progress. The childminder demonstrated a reflective approach and adapted support responsively as children's needs changed. Parents shared with us: "Mandy has always kept me up to date on [my child]'s care and progress".

Plans could be strengthened further by including clearer strategies used to support emotional wellbeing and development, such as agreed nap routines, approaches to solving disagreements, and methods used to build independence.

Strong, trusting relationships with families were evident. Parents felt included and well informed, and they expressed confidence in the nurturing care their children received. Parents shared with us: "Mandy's services are just great. I honestly cannot think of anything that needs improving. She's brilliant"; "we have had a conversation at the end of every pickup detailing how the day has gone and what they have been doing and learning".

Continuing to involve families in reviewing personal plans and gathering structured feedback periodically would further strengthen partnership working.

## 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

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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	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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