

# Pennicott, Michelle

## Child Minding

Falkirk

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
10 June 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Michelle Pennicott

**Service provider number:**  
SP2015987465

**Service no:**  
CS2015341812

## About the service

Michelle Pennicott operates a childminding service from their family home in Falkirk. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time, of whom, no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom, no more than one is under 12 months. Children have access to a play space in the kitchen- diner, ground floor toilet facilities and large enclosed garden that can be access direct from the play space.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 10 June between 09:20 and 12:00. 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:

- observed two children play and received feedback from three families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were settled and having fun as they explored indoors and outdoors.
- Positive attachments had been made that supported children's emotional wellbeing.
- The childminder had a very good awareness of children's individual likes and preferences.
- Children benefitted from regular opportunities to engage with nature to support their wellbeing.
- The childminder engaged in self-evaluation for continuous improvements.
- The childminder was committed to ongoing professional development to support positive outcomes for children.
- Risk assessments should be developed for the learning in the wider community.
- Gathering families' views should be part of the self-evaluation process.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

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 key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind, caring and warm interactions from the childminder who was attuned to their likes and wishes. The childminder knew their individual personalities and was responsive in meeting their needs. Lots of cuddles and reassurance were offered that made children feel safe and secure. Families commented "My daughter always goes to Michelle for cuddles, and it is comforting to know that when I am not there, she does this.", "Couldn't ask for a better childminder, always goes above and beyond." and my children "feel happy and comfortable there. I have absolutely no concerns about my children when they are with Michelle. I know that they are safe and well cared for." As a result, families had trust that their child was safe, and their needs were met.

Children's dignity was respected when personal care routines were being supported. The childminder had a very good awareness of children's right to privacy and had a system in place that promoted this.

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and sociable. Children informed the childminder when they wanted to eat, and they supported this request. Children had a small table and chairs in the kitchen - diner that was a good size for their stage of development. Children also had the option to eat outdoors if they chose. Food choices offered by the childminder were nutritious and in line with best practice guidance. Children were encouraged to stay hydrated as fresh water was always available.

Children had personal plans in place that detailed what was important to them. Plans were reviewed with families in line with guidance. The childminder had a very good understanding of the plans and used these to record children's development and agreed next steps. This meant children were supported to reach their full potential.

Children's healthcare needs were met as the childminder had an effective system in place for the safe administration of medication should this be required. We reviewed previous records and were confident procedures had been followed in line with guidance.

The childminder had very good relationships with families. They spoke with them daily, updated them on how their child had spent their day and sent photos and observations. Families told us "Michelle keeps me updated on what the children are up to which is great. I get regular photos and updates." As a result, children benefitted from the childminders commitment to partnership working that ensured families felt involved.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children experienced a breadth of learning opportunities each day. The childminder valued the importance of outdoor play and engaging with nature had on children's wellbeing. Children went on nature walks, visited local attractions and attended music groups. The childminder knew what each child enjoyed and ensured this was part of the planned experiences. Families told us "My children absolutely love going to Michelle's. They like the varied activities and time she spends with them. They are always busy". As a result, children had fun through play that supported their development.

Planning for children's experiences were a balance of responding to their interests and intentional promotion. Children were asked what they would like to do, and this informed how they would spend their day. This meant children were consulted on what was important to them.

There was a wide selection of high-quality resources that supported children's interests and ensured there was a breadth of experiences. Children could choose to create their ideas with craft materials, enjoy role play in the small world kitchen, music resources and blocks. There were plenty good quality books that supported literacy development. Resources were arranged so children were able to make independent choices. Families commented "She changes the toys round regularly to keep them interested." And "Michelle always has different toys built up for the kids to play with for example sometimes a shop or a sensory table or musical instruments." This meant children had fun as they explored a wide selection of resources that supported them to lead their play.

Children benefitted from accessing a large, enclosed garden every day. The childminder had created an inviting area to the side of the garden where there was balance beams, a mud kitchen, chalk board and many loose parts. Families commented "They go on lots of walks and to the park regularly. My children get lots of fresh air when with Michelle. She has a great garden which is safe, and they love playing in." This meant children were able to explore, investigate and create their ideas.

### How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families experienced a setting that was homely, well maintained, spacious and benefitted from lots of natural light and ventilation. Children had access to a large play space in the kitchen- diner, enclosed back garden and ground floor toilet facilities. Families told us Michelle's house is always very welcoming and inviting.

Spaces had been carefully considered to ensure they were appropriate for children's stages of development. The environments and resources were safe and well maintained and offered children challenge and enjoyment. Children liked spending time in the garden, we could see this was a daily part of their routine. This space was well organised and safe for them to explore and investigate. As a result, children played in spaces that were well designed to meet their needs.

The childminder had detailed policies in place that reflected the service. These were reviewed regularly. There were some risk assessments in place for the management of potential risks in the setting. We suggested they develop risk assessments for how they manage risks when accessing the wider community (see area for improvement 1.)

Children and the childminder washed their hands at key times throughout the day and areas were well maintained in line with infection, prevention and control practice. We could see this practice was embedded into daily routines and meant children were cared for in a setting that promoted their health and wellbeing.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing, the childminder should ensure risk assessments are developed when using the wider community. These should be clear, easily understood and reviewed regularly.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements and led well

The childminder had a vision for the service that reflected their aspirations for children. This included daily opportunities to learn outdoors and engage with nature to support health and wellbeing. They placed importance on children being happy, having fun and feeling safe in their care and we could see this through the interactions and activities offered.

Children and families experienced a welcoming, homely ethos from a dedicated childminder who valued partnership working to meet their needs. Families were kept informed of children's learning and success through a closed online group and messaging system.

The service evaluated children's experiences by using the Care Inspectorate guidance 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare. This supported them to identify what was going well and any areas for development. We encouraged them to look at gathering families views to support their self-evaluation process (see area for improvement 1.)

## Areas for improvement

1. To support continued improvements and positive outcomes for children and families, the childminder should gather their views regularly. This will support the self-evaluation cycle and help identify what is going well and what can be further developed.

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).

## How good is our staff team?

**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 key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge & values

Children experienced warm, kind, and compassionate care from the childminder who was attuned to their needs and responsive to their wishes. Positive attachments had been made and it was evident that the childminder genuinely loved and cared for children. Families told us "Michelle is very accommodating and approachable. I know that anything I ask of her with regards to the kids she will do her best to carry it out" and "I would highly recommend Michelle as a childminder, and I am very lucky to have found her to look after my children."

The childminder was committed to engaging with ongoing training and professional reading. They kept a record of training completed and could talk about the impact learning had on practice. Training included promoting positive behaviour, mental health in young people, child protection, autism awareness and food hygiene. This demonstrated their understanding of what children need and their role in supporting them. As a result, children experienced high quality care and support from a childminder who was dedicated in ensuring they thrived and flourished.

The childminder valued the importance of building strong, trusting relationships that promoted continuity of care for children through partnership working with families. As a result, children experienced a consistent approach through kind and caring interactions which helped them feel safe and secure.

The childminder kept informed about changes to practice and guidance through the Scottish Childminding association (SCMA), Care Inspectorate updates and connections with other professionals in the area. This supported them in their role as they were able to engage in reflective discussions to support positive changes in their service.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good



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