

# Amanda McCaffrey Child Minding

Helensburgh

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
30 July 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Amanda McCaffrey

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000092

**Service no:**  
CS2022000130

## About the service

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, 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.

The childminder offers a full daycare and after school care service to children. At the time of inspection, nine children were registered with the childminder to attend on a variety of patterns. Two minded children were present during the inspection along with the childminder's own child.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home which is a detached property in Helensburgh in Argyll and Bute. The children can access the facilities on the lower level of the house. The garden is not currently used.

The service is within walking distance of local bus routes, several primary schools and a play park.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 30 July 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. This was the first inspection of the service.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed two children using the service and spoke with five families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were well cared for, happy and relaxed in the care of the childminder and enjoyed a good range of experiences.
- The childminder knew each child very well as an individual and had the information needed to tailor care to children's individual needs.
- Parents were very happy with the quality of the service provided to their children and agreed that the childminder had developed strong and effective channels of communication with families.
- The childminder was developing her knowledge and understanding of the skills and qualities required to provide an effective childminding 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

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

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

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

4 - Good

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

The childminder knew the children in her care well. Comprehensive information gathered from the parents and older children enabled the childminder to meet children's individual needs sensitively and effectively. Written personal plans were in place and the childminder maintained records when children reached appropriate developmental milestones. Although we could see that the childminder updated children's personal plans when new information was given to her; we highlighted the need to ensure these were formally reviewed at least once every six months with parents to capture relevant changes and important developments in children's lives.

Parents told us that the childminder knew their children very well and commented: "I want to know my child is getting the best care when not with me and it's wonderful to hear and see new developments", "Amanda regularly updates my children's plans so she is up to date with medications, illness and life events to ensure they get the best care while with her" and "Amanda is very good at communicating the milestones that my child is making and she's always on top of paperwork."

The childminder demonstrated a nurturing approach to caring for the minded children, discussing the importance of getting to know children as individuals and being attuned to their individual needs. The childminder was very patient and nurturing towards children during our visit, ensuring that their needs were met and that they had toys to play with.

The childminder valued the relationships she had with children and their families. Daily communication with parents at drop off and pickup times and throughout the day using messaging apps helped to reassure parents that their children were happy, safe and well cared for. Parents valued these opportunities for communication and told us: "Amanda always gives me a detailed review of the day and events", "When I collect my children I am welcomed in and Amanda gives me a detailed handover and relays any messages from teachers or school staff" and "Amanda is always more than welcoming and is happy to discuss any concerns or even a simple chat about how your child is getting on at any time."

The childminder provided meals and snacks for children, although parents had the option to do so if preferred. The childminder told us that healthy eating was promoted to help children learn about healthy lifestyles. Appropriate seating was available to ensure children could eat at a table to enjoy safe and sociable mealtimes. We confirmed that the childminder had a good understanding of safe sleeping guidance and had appropriate sleeping and rest arrangements in place for the youngest children.

The childminder's approach to play and activities was child-centred and responsive to the children's interests, wishes and level of skill. A range of resources was easily accessible to children and could be chosen to reflect their interests. The childminder told us that most days children spent time outdoors on local walks or at the local park. Parents told us: "My child plays with the other children that attend and enjoys different experiences inside and outdoors" and "Amanda organises different little games for the little ones whether it's farmer animals songs, musical instruments, sensory toys, books, there's always lots to do."

There were appropriate arrangements in place for the safe administration of medication to children. The childminder was aware of best practice guidance and used this to inform her practice to ensure children were safe.

### 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.

We found that the childminder had created a warm, comfortable, welcoming and homely environment for the children to play and relax in. Children were able to access the lounge, kitchen, hallway and downstairs toilet. There was a good selection of play resources available. These resources were well-organised and accessible to the children to allow them to make choices.

The home was in good repair, clean and a good standard of health and safety was observed throughout. Appropriate arrangements were in place for cleaning the home and resources. Several parents commented that it was not ideal that the back garden was not currently used for children's play. The childminder may wish to consider developing this for use in the future, as it would be an ideal place for fresh air and outdoor play.

The childminder provided appropriate activities, materials and experiences for the children, both indoors and outdoors. This reflected the interests, development and learning stages of the children in her care. Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors and get fresh air. They particularly enjoyed the visits to the local play park. One parent commented: "Amanda takes into account my children's opinions and ideas when buying new resources by discussing with them what they would like to see and do more of."

The childminder was confident about her responsibilities to keep children safe and had developed risk assessments for her home, garden and outings which recorded all identified hazards and control measures needed to keep children safe. The childminder reviewed these regularly to ensure they remained up-to-date. One parent commented that it was important that their child was "Experiencing an environment with other children that promotes safety."

The childminder had developed a comprehensive policy detailing her approach to controlling and preventing the spread of infection within her home and there were good arrangements in place to prevent and control the spread of infection within the service to protect children.

We confirmed that the childminder held appropriate insurance to operate the service and that annual maintenance arrangements were in place to ensure the gas boiler and central heating were working safely.

### 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.

The childminder had previously issued questionnaires to families to obtain feedback about the service and advised that this procedure would be recommenced. At the time of inspection, the childminder relied on daily discussions to ensure that children and their families could be consulted on the day-to-day running of her service. The childminder ensured that parents were involved from the outset and through the settling in period. She shared policies and procedures at enrolment and was willing to respond to ideas and routines highlighted by parents. This was particularly relevant where the childminder and families needed to develop a consistent approach to children's care routines. Parents agreed that their contribution was welcomed and commented "If I felt there were suitable things to add or discuss I know I would be comfortable enough to do so", "We share our positive experiences with friends and always recommend Amanda's service to other parents who require childminding/babysitting services", and "Amanda is very welcoming of any feedback that can improve the service."

Through regular communication with the parents and children, the childminder was able to provide a service that met the needs and interests of the children she was caring for. The childminder regularly shared the children's experiences, successes and achievements with their parents. This approach helped parents feel they were included in their child's day. One parent commented: "My children are very comfortable at Amanda's, she listens to my requests and goes above and beyond to ensure the settings like a home from home."

The childminder advised that some children were dropped off and collected by their families at the front door of her home and other families liked to be welcomed indoors. The childminder recognised the many benefits for both children and their families of being invited into the childminding home and several parents agreed that they liked to be welcomed into the childminding setting.

The childminder used verbal feedback from the parents and children to reflect on the type of experiences they were having. This helped her develop future plans and reflect on the care and activities she provided to the children and families.

The childminder had carried out some preliminary work to assess the quality of the service against the Care Inspectorate document, A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare. The childminder had downloaded self-evaluation documents for use within her own service and should now start the process of identifying and recording strengths and areas to improve outcomes for children and families. This level of self-evaluation would form a good evidence base for the development of a service improvement plan.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. The childminder was trained in first aid to ensure she had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents or health issues arising whilst children were in her care.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

The childminding service had been operating for a relatively short period of time, but we found that the childminder was becoming more skilled and experienced with well-developed procedures and processes in place. Most paperwork was comprehensive, well-developed and maintained to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

The childminder had a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the skills and qualities required to provide an effective childcare service and ensured her knowledge and practice remained up-to-date through participation in continuous professional development.

Since registration, the childminder had participated in training in child protection and paediatric first aid and the childminder should now work to build confidence in her role in safeguarding children. Further training had been completed in food safety, infection prevention and control and food standards allergens awareness.

The childminder used informal self-reflection to consider her skills and practice and development needs. We highlighted the Care Inspectorate Hub as a good source of information and practice guidance. We suggested that the childminder accessed this resource where possible to enhance her approach to continuous professional development. <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/>

The childminder told us that she kept up-to-date with best practice guidance and changes to legislation through accessing online resources. The childminder would benefit from developing working relationships with other childminders in the area, which could provide mutual support and development opportunities. This would be an extremely effective way to highlight, share and exchange ideas and best practice advice. The childminder also had membership with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) which was a good source of information and advice.

The childminder was sensitive, kind, caring and consistent in her approach to children which helped them feel safe and secure. She was committed to ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. The childminder had developed very positive relationships with families which was reflected in their comments to us and resulted in a warm and welcoming ethos within the service. Parents told us: "Very happy with the service provided", "My children are very comfortable at Amanda's she listens to my requests and goes above and beyond to ensure the setting's like a home from home" and "Amanda is a very caring and nurturing childminder. I am very lucky to have found her. She has a great way with the children and is a very patient person."

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered. Details of any upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Detailed evaluations

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| How good is our care, play and learning?           | 4 - Good |
| 1.1 Nurturing care and support                     | 4 - Good |
| 1.3 Play and learning                              | 4 - 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?                        | 4 - Good |
| 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values             | 4 - Good |



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