

# Handy, Rachael Child Minding

Kilcreggan

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
8 October 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Rachael Handy

**Service provider number:**  
SP2007965867

**Service no:**  
CS2007156400

## 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 offered a full day care service to children and was commissioned by the local authority to provide early learning and childcare (ELC). At the time of inspection, nine children were registered with the childminder aged from two to eight years. Four were present during the inspection.

The childminding service operates from the childminder's home which is a semi-detached property in the village of Kilcreggan on the Rosneath peninsula in Argyll and Bute. The children can access the facilities on the lower level of the house. There is a large garden to offer children opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play.

The service is relatively close to local bus routes, a primary school and outdoor facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Friday 4 October 2024 and we returned on Tuesday 8 October 2024. 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:

- spoke with four children using the service and eight of their families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. They were very happy, settled and confident within the childminder's home. High quality play experiences offered to children helped them to make excellent progress in their development and learning.
- The childminder provided high quality activities, materials and experiences for the children, both indoors and outdoors in an inviting setting. The childminder had made a significant investment in the outdoor area and we could see that children loved to be outdoors in the well- developed enclosed area.
- The childminder had a clear vision for the service and this positively informed practice. We could see that children and families were meaningfully involved and were able to influence change within the setting.
- The childminder was highly trained, skilled and experienced with well-developed procedures and processes in place. The childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure.

## 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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

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

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Minded children experienced warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. The childminder demonstrated how children's care was tailored to reflect families' personal preferences and promote children's independence, privacy and dignity. Where children required support with personal care, for example toileting and nappy changing, we observed interactions throughout that were warm, caring and nurturing. A parent commented "[The childminder] looks after the children independently and I am fully confident in her skills, knowledge and experience. We have never had any issues with her or communicating with her or letting her know about our needs or wants."

The childminder maintained a personal plan for each child to ensure effective arrangements were in place to support their overall wellbeing. The children worked closely with families to compile these plans taking account of the national wellbeing indicators. A system was in place to ensure that these plans were reviewed regularly which enabled the childminder to respond in a timely manner, sensitively and compassionately to changes in children's lives.

The childminder provided snacks and lunches for some children, while others were provided by parents. During our visit, the children enjoyed eating together in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere, ensuring a caring and positive social experience. The childminder told us how these daily routines provided a rich opportunity to promote close attachment. Food choices were nutritious, appropriate for children's individual cultural and dietary needs and reflected current guidance. A parent agreed and told us "[The childminder] is always offering healthy food."

Where children required medication, this was delivered in a safe and sensitive manner following best practice guidance.

Children were very happy, settled and confident within the childminder's home. Children were treated with warmth, care and affection and had formed positive attachments with the childminder and each other. Children were kind and helpful towards each other and were happy to talk to us about what they enjoyed doing and show us some dance moves.

During our visits, children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences that promoted children's choice and independence. Well-considered resources and creative approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. Play experiences offered children opportunities to develop skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

The childminder's high quality observations and skilled interactions promoted children's creativity and curiosity. Effective use of questioning, extended children's thinking, widened their skills, and consolidated their learning through play. We observed children making informed choices about leading their play and learning within a stimulating, challenging and creative setting. Recorded observations and effective assessments of information, progress and achievements were shared with parents and allowed the childminder to plan when additional support was needed.

Parents told us that they highly valued the quality of the play and learning their children experienced with the childminder. They told us how their children were making excellent progress in their learning development and commented on the breadth of activities offered. They told us:

"Our child has progressed amazingly since being with the childminder."

"My child who is an extremely active child and usually gets bored with all of the activities at home, is completely engaged in everything they do at the childminder's. My child always has fun and always comes home happy and excited and telling me all about their day and what they've been doing, my child loves arts and crafts and all the play time. My child also extremely improved their talking skills with all the learning and had a huge confidence boost thanks to the childminder."

"Sending my child to the childminder has been fantastic for their development. I am fully briefed every time I collect my child about day to day activities and anything new they have learned. It really has been first class."

"My child has come on leaps and bounds since starting with the childminder."

"The childminder offers a wide variety of toys, games, activities and outings to my child keeping me informed each day and sends photos of my child and what they have been doing."

"My child is provided with everything needed to help them grow and nourish through play and outdoor learning."

## How good is our setting?

## 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

The childminder had moved home since the last inspection and we could see that the new homely environment had enriched children's experiences. The spaces used for childminding were warm and inviting, well-furnished and comfortable. The set up of the home delivered a strong message to children that they mattered. Children had ample space for their needs and confidently explored the setting and resources independently.

Within the home children were free to move between the kitchen/lounge, playroom and outdoor area. Both indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured taking account of minded children's stages of development and learning. Resources and wall displays reflected children's current interests and curiosities to support their learning.

The home was in good repair, clean and a high standard of health and safety was observed throughout. Appropriate arrangements were in place for cleaning the home and resources. The back garden was a large and safe place for fresh air and outdoor play.

The childminder provided high quality activities, materials and experiences for the children, both indoors and outdoors. These 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 parks and activities within the community.

The childminder had made a significant investment in the outdoor area and we could see that children loved to be outdoors in the well-developed enclosed area. During our visit, they enjoyed making potions and water play.

The childminder was confident about her responsibilities to keep children safe and had developed robust 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.

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. Well-functioning arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting, equipment and vehicles were consistently implemented. We confirmed that appropriate insurance policies were in place.

Parents highlighted a high level of satisfaction with the childminding setting and told us:

"Have witnessed first hand on how clean and well arranged the setting is, children have everything they require for both learning and play activities, they have a range of things to do both outside and inside and are always busy with something interesting."

"I like the layout of the childcare. Plenty of outdoor toys and activities."

"My child loves the range of activities to be involved in. It is constantly changing with new decor depending on the time of year (holidays etc) allowing my child to feel immersed in the current time of year. It's always spotless and well maintained. My child absolutely loves the toys and activities. There is so much for the children to choose from, after a substantial time with the childminder I still don't think they have played with everything!"

"The set up Rachael has for the children is amazing."

"The garden and play area for the children was the first thing we saw when we first visited and we were immediately drawn into an inviting setting. It is safe, clean and has multiple outdoor activities to do, which get changed through the seasons."

"Indoors the area has multiple things to entice the eyes of children, things to learn about, such as letters, seasons, a world map and all different art and craft projects. The games and toys are always different and children can ask for their favourite things to do/play with."

## How good is our leadership?

## 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.

The childminder had a clear vision for the service and this positively informed practice. We could see that children and families were meaningfully involved and were able to influence change within the setting. Children and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the setting. Successes and achievements were used as a starting point for future improvements. The childminder was confident about her capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential.

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.

The childminder had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of using the views of children and families to inform planning and development of the service. Informal self-evaluation enabled the childminder to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children and families' particular needs and choices. The childminder used reflection as a tool to bring about positive changes to outcomes for children and families ensuring that high-quality learning through play was at the heart of improvement planning.

Parents told us that they had many opportunities to have their say and make suggestions.

"The childminder goes out her own way to learn extra skills and training especially kids with additional needs."

"An extremely good childminder, we always are able to discuss everything that involves the childcare, being it simple things like lunch or something more serious like child development during our time there. The childminder is an extremely understanding and supportive person with good skills and knowledge."

"The childminder is first class when it comes to communication and is constantly discussing plans for going forward and taking onboard any suggestions or development needs we have for our child."

"An amazing childminder, always keeps me informed on what they are doing and is very professional. This is why they [children] have been going for years."

"The childminder is always asking for feedback and I find that very important in a childminder."

The childminder had carried out some informal 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 and the national Realising the Ambition document. The childminder should continue this work to identify and record how well the service was doing and where areas for development could improve outcomes for children and families. The outcomes of this self-evaluation would form a very good evidence base for a service improvement plan that could be shared with families and stakeholders.

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?

6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

The childminding service had been operating for 17 years and, as a result, the childminder was highly skilled and experienced with well-developed procedures and processes in place. All paperwork was comprehensive, well-developed and maintained to ensure positive outcomes for children and families. Parents agreed that the childminder had a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the skills and qualities required to provide an effective childcare service. Their comments included:

"I am aware of the childminder's training and ongoing development. She is highly knowledgeable about children's learning needs and has years of experience which was incredibly important when we decided to send our child to her."

"There is only the childminder within the setting and I don't know where she gets her energy from. I've seen her give each child her individual attention whilst in a group setting and still managing to keep an eye on the other children."

"The childminder has always been extremely knowledgeable. Has a calm manner when discussing any topic regarding our child and can clearly articulate what is required and what the plan of action will be, no matter the situation."

"The childminder looks after the children independently and I am fully confident in her skills, knowledge and experience. We have never had any issues with her or communicating with her or letting her know about our needs or wants."

"Rachael is amazing and very well organised."

The childminder's warmth, kindness and compassion enabled children to feel valued, loved and secure. The childminder recognised the importance of nurturing, warm and responsive attachments and interactions, and provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children and taking account of their views and experiences.

The childminder had completed an SVQ Level 7 in Social Care (Children and Young People) and had embarked upon a further qualification to enhance her knowledge, skills and practice. This ensured the childminder had a clear understanding of how children develop and learn. The childminder made very good use of professional development opportunities that linked directly to enhanced outcomes for children. The childminder kept up-to-date with published research, best practice and national and local policy. The childminder reflected upon, and implemented, her learning to improve practice and children received high quality interactions and experiences.



Since the last inspection, the childminder had participated in a range of relevant training to underpin her knowledge, skills and practice including:

- Safeguarding Children Levels 1 and 2
- Infection Prevention and Control Awareness
- Food Safety 7 Hygiene Level 1
- Introduction to Child Protection Level 1
- Autism Awareness
- Child Mental Health Awareness
- How Children Develop and Learn

The childminder had developed close working relationships with other childminders in the area, which provided mutual support and development opportunities. She told us this was 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.

## 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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	6 - Excellent

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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