

# Giraffe Childminding Child Minding

Newmilns

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 January 2025

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000230

**Service no:**  
CS2022000346

## About the service

The childminder provides a childminding service from their home in Newmilns, East Ayrshire. They provide care for maximum of 6 children aged up to 16 years of age of whom no more than 6 will be under 12 and of whom, no more than 3 may not be attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 may be under 1 year of age.

The service is close to public transport links, parks and other local amenities. Children are cared for in the living room, kitchen and downstairs bathroom. They also benefit from access to a fully enclosed back garden.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 January 2025 between the hours of 13:30 and 17:00. 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:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received completed electronic questionnaires from three of their families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

There were nine children registered with the service at the time of the inspection.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm and kind care. They were happy and relaxed in the childminder's home.
- Children were engaged in quality play experiences throughout our visit. We observed children laughing, having fun and leading their own play and learning.
- The childminder had developed and improved their garden since the last inspection. Children had daily opportunities to play outdoors.
- Children would benefit from more opportunities to be included in wider service development.
- The childminder was responsive to children's individual needs and it was clear that they had formed positive relationships with children and their families.

## 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 different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and kind care. They were happy and relaxed in the childminder's home. Children's needs were met through responsive and caring interactions. This meant that children felt at ease and had formed positive relationships.

The childminder knew children well. They confidently discussed individual children's needs and preferences. These were reflected in personal plans that outlined how the childminder would support them. One parent told us, "Ann regularly reviews the plans of our children during meetings. During handover we are able to discuss any issues and Ann is always quick to ensure these are included in the plans." As a result, children were well supported to reach their full potential. The childminder effectively supported children and families with various life events through the use of social stories and meaningful conversations. This supported their wellbeing and ensured children and families knew they mattered.

Children experienced a relaxed and unhurried mealtime. The childminder and children sat together at the kitchen table chatting meaningfully whilst enjoying a healthy snack. Children's independence was promoted as they helped to set up the table and were encouraged to chop their own fruit. The childminder provided similar alternatives suited to children's individual dietary requirements so that children all had the same options. This resulted in an inclusive and sociable experience.

Medication was not always administered in line with best practice guidance. Whilst permissions and administration records had been completed in full, we noted an occasion where the childminder had administered medication in a different method than stated on the prescription label. We discussed the importance of seeking advice from a medical professional prior to agreeing to alter the form or method of administering medication. This would ensure children's safety. We signposted them to the Care Inspectorate guidance document, 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services.'

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in quality play experiences throughout their day. We observed children laughing, having fun and leading their own play and learning. During our visit, children enjoyed imaginative play with transport themed resources, were building using a variety of different sizes and shapes of blocks. They also enjoyed independently accessing a large variety of arts and crafts materials. This promoted children's imagination and creativity. The childminder provided a balance of planned and spontaneous play through monthly themed experiences linked to children's interests. They responded in the moment to children's additional requests and knew when to sit back and when to ask to open ended questions. This supported children to develop their problem-solving skills and enrich their play. Children had chosen, planted and grown their own vegetables in the garden. They took vegetables home to cook with their families. This supported children to develop life skills and learn about sustainability.

Children had opportunities to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. We observed children reading stories, identifying colours and singing with the childminder. A lending library had been developed and we saw children checking books out during our inspection. Careful consideration had been given to the selection of book available. These included a mixture of fiction, non-fiction and social stories chosen to support children's individual interests and wellbeing needs. This supported children's emotional needs and helped them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through play. One parent told us, "Ann goes above and beyond for our children and our children's favourite days are when Ann picks them up. It is a safe and loving environment, and our children are supported to develop socially, educationally and individually." Children's progress was effectively monitored through clear next steps and observations. This supported children to reach their full potential.

Children's experiences were enhanced through regular opportunities to play and learn in the community. Children had daily outings to local toddler groups, parks and soft plays. They had also recently experienced full day trips to the zoo, farm parks, craft experiences and a science centre. This supported children to build meaningful connections with their community.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

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

#### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

Children were cared for in an environment that was bright and warm. There was enough space for children to play together and comfortable sofas for children to rest and relax. As a result, children were settled and felt at ease in the childminders home. Overall, the childminders home was clean and well-maintained. We asked the childminder to remind children to wash their hands after eating snack to ensure children are protected from any potential spread of infection.

Resources were regularly rotated and developed based on children's individual interests, engagement and requests. As a result, children experienced a variety of engaging play experiences suited to their preferences and stages of development. Children could independently access a good selection of loose parts; these are materials with no clear purpose. The childminder had recognised resources children were particularly interested in at toddler groups and sourced similar loose parts for their home. This supported children to develop their imagination and curiosity, enabling them to revisit play experiences and extend their learning.

Children had daily opportunities to access the outdoors and the back garden. The childminder had developed and improved their garden since the last inspection. Children had opportunities to play with a mud kitchen, slide and variety of outdoor equipment. The childminder also provided waterproof clothing for children of all ages. This meant that they could access the outdoors comfortably throughout the year. This supported children to be healthy and active.

The childminder was aware of their responsibility to keep children safe. We observed the childminder responsively assessing risk during our inspection. The childminder had developed and personalised their risk assessment since we made an area for improvement around this at the last inspection. We asked the childminder to develop these further. Whilst improvements had been made, some potential health and safety risk had not been considered. For example, the new equipment added to the back garden, and equipment used by pets within their home. As this area for improvement was not met in full it will be repeated (see outstanding area for improvement 2).

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and had a positive outlook on change and improvement. One parent told us, "I could not ask for a better childminder for our child, Ann really is fantastic and goes above and beyond to help out any way she can. I am very thankful for her." The childminder had acted on improvement suggestions made at the last inspection and was keen to provide a good service for children and families.

Families felt valued and consulted on their views. The childminder had issued feedback questionnaires following the last inspection which indicated families were happy with the service provided. The childminder was planning to repeat this process. We suggested including open-ended questions to gather more meaningful responses. This would support the childminder to gather views that could be used to influence change. We observed the childminder gathering children's thoughts and suggestions around daily experiences verbally during our visit. One parent told us, "The children's voices are listened to, and the care and experiences are led by them." We asked the childminder to consider consulting children on wider areas of service development. This would support children to be included in improvement planning.

The childminder had engaged in informal reflection in relation to their service delivery and discussed areas of their service they planned to develop. They told us their main improvement priorities were extending and developing their garden, growing a wider range of fruit and vegetables, increasing opportunities for children to play in the community and starting a university course. We suggested keeping notes on their progress in these areas and using children and families views to influence their plans. This would support the childminder to implement a collaborative, continuous cycle of improvement. We signposted the childminder to the self-evaluation guidance and bitesize videos available on the Care Inspectorate Hub for further support.

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

### 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values.

The childminder was kind and caring. This ensured that children felt happy and comfortable in their care.

The childminder was responsive to children's individual needs, and it was clear that they had formed positive relationships with children and their families. One parent told us, "Ann and I have a very good parent/childminder relationship. I never knew Ann before my child started but we have now formed a good friendship" As a result of these positive relationships, children felt secure, and families felt valued.

The childminder was committed to developing their skills and knowledge to support their role. They had gained a qualification in social services, children and young people and could demonstrate a good understanding of how it related to their practice. They demonstrated a commitment to continuous professional development and had recently started a part time university course in childhood practice. This will enable the childminder to extend their skills and knowledge to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

The childminder told us they used provider emails from the Scottish Childminding Association and Care Inspectorate to keep up to date with best practice guidance. The childminder would benefit from increasing their knowledge around children's communication through their behaviour. This would help the childminder to develop positive support strategies. We advised the childminder to keep a training record to help to consider the impact of training courses and professional reading on their practice. This would support the childminder to evaluate their skills and knowledge and identify further training opportunities that could benefit their professional development.

## What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should provide children with a safe, well-maintained environment to play outdoors. This should include, but not be limited to, ensuring that the back garden is always clean, safe and well-maintained; and making sure that children have access to a good range of experiences and resources in the outdoor environment throughout the year.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

**This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder had improved and developed the outdoor environment since the last inspection. The back garden was clean and safe. Children could choose to access the back garden which contained well-maintained resources. Waterproof clothing had been provided for all children to use to access the back garden throughout the year. The childminder had plans in place to develop the outdoor environment further through adding a new fence and extending the area children can access.

**This area for improvement was met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should develop and personalise their risk assessments to ensure that all potential risks have been considered. These should include, but not be limited to, the outdoor environment and the childminder's pets.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 17 January 2024.**

## Action taken since then

The childminder had developed and personalised their risk assessments since the last inspection. Further development was required to ensure that all areas of potential harm had been considered. This included new equipment that had been added to their garden and equipment in their home that was used for their pets.

**This area for improvement was not met.**

## 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good

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