

# Yellow Giraffe Childminding Child Minding

Biggar

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
7 January 2025

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000031

**Service no:**  
CS2023000040

## About the service

Michelle Shannon provides Yellow Giraffe Childminding from their home in the rural area of Thankerton, between Lanark and Biggar. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the property with children having access to a large open plan kitchen/living space, and separate lounge. Children also have access to a large enclosed rear garden.

The service benefits from being located on a working farm and very close to woodland.

The childminder may care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 07 January 2025 between the hours of 10:05 and 12:20. Feedback was provided on the same day between 13:20 and 14:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

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

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with the childminder
- observed children's play experiences
- observed interactions between the children and the childminder
- looked around the home and garden
- reviewed documents and records
- received electronic feedback from two parents/carers.

**Key messages**

Children's needs were met through nurturing, responsive and loving interactions.

The childminder had developed positive relationships with families who were very happy with the quality of care provided.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted with daily access outdoors.

The childminder made good use of the local environment which provided children with rich learning experiences.

The childminder should continue to develop their outdoor space to promote children's natural curiosity.

The childminder made good use of community resources such as toddler groups and gymnastics.

**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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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 were welcomed into the service by the childminder who was warm, loving and supportive in their interactions. One child was in attendance during the inspection, they were provided with reassurance from the childminder when the inspectors arrived. The child was happy, settled and secure during the inspection visit. This showed the childminder had created strong attachments within a nurturing environment where young children could feel safe.

New families were welcomed into the service to meet the childminder, their family and other minded children. Settling in visits helped to build positive relationships around the family's needs and emotional wellbeing of the children. The childminder recognised this as an important step for new children and their families, this helped support positive transitions.

Personal plans supported children's wellbeing and development and helped the childminder to meet children's needs. The childminder knew children well and confidently described their needs, preferences and stage of development. Children's experiences were recorded within learning journals and were shared with parents regularly. These recognised children's achievements and recorded their developmental progress. There was photographic evidence, which was shared with parents. These evidenced the wide range of activities that showed the depth and sustained nature of play which children took part in. One parent told us "we are able to approach [childminder] with any requests easily. [They are] receptive to our routine and any changes in development".

The childminder had robust processes in place to administer medication, which were observed during our visit. The childminder agreed to review their medication policy to include accurate exclusion periods and the use of over the counter medication. This would support the childminder to meet children's health needs, in line with current guidelines.

The childminder told us they sat with the children at the large table in the kitchen for snack and lunch. Lunches were provided by parents/carers. We observed that children experienced a positive, relaxed snack time where their needs, choices and preferences were respected. Children were seated safely and comfortably and they were able to enjoy the sociable experience in an unhurried way. This encouraged positive social interactions and learning experiences associated with eating and drinking together.

Children had access to fresh drinking water, which was kept in the fridge. We discussed how this could be developed to encourage independence ensuring water is freely available throughout the day.

Children's emotional wellbeing and security was developed through safe and sensitive sleep routines. The childminder recognised when children appeared to be tired and offered them space to sleep and rest when needed, which also reflected families wishes and children's routines

### Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and were having fun with the childminder. Leading their own learning whilst the childminder used effective questioning to develop language skills and to enhance the experiences. Children had access to a wide range of toys and resources which included small world play, construction, role play and a large selection of books. All resources were presented at the appropriate height in open trays and boxes. This allowed children to make informed choices to lead their own play and learning experiences.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their outdoor environment and wider community. They were provided with opportunities to extend their experiences through accessing groups such as gymnastic in the local community. Parents/carers told us that they were very grateful for the opportunities their children had. The children accessed the farm regularly which supported them to develop an understanding of their wider world.

Loose parts play was in the early stages of development with the childminder engaging in best practice guidelines to support the process. The childminder was aware of the benefits of children having access to loose parts materials. We encouraged them to continue to build on the range of natural, sensory and open-ended resources to stimulate children's curiosity, exploration and imagination.

The childminder used children's interest and their observations of children's play to plan and extend children's learning. This included discussions with children. Photographs were used to show children's learning experiences. We discussed how this could be further developed by referencing current relevant documentation. This would allow the childminder to further evidence positive outcomes for children.

### How good is our setting?

**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 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from being cared for in a bright, clean, well-furnished and well-ventilated environment. Children had dedicated space for their personal belongings and had opportunities to sign in as they arrived. This helped support the children's sense of belonging allowing them to feel welcome and relaxed in the setting.

We observed children's safety was ensured by all doors with access to outdoor spaces being locked with adult access to the keys. The childminder had systems in place to ensure emergency evacuations were effective which kept children at the heart of all processes.

Children had access to an extensive indoor play space. In the family room, soft furnishings were available to allow children to rest and access cosy spaces. The hallway accommodated role play including dolls house and kitchen. The large kitchen area benefited from a separate playroom which was well resourced. Most resources were stored in a way that allowed children to lead their experiences. Some storage boxes were very full, which made it harder for children to access and see what was available to them. It would be beneficial for the childminder to review the volume of resources available and how they are stored. This could help to develop children's independence and promote and extend play experiences through easy to access, welcoming and inviting play materials.

Children benefitted from an extensive, well-resourced garden. Outdoor play and learning were a priority for the service and good use was made of the garden and surrounding woodland spaces. There were a large amount of resources available in the garden. The childminder told us that children enjoyed being outdoors in all weathers, supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Risk assessments were in place for all areas of the home and for activities out with. These were reviewed regularly and updated when required. This helped ensure children were protected from potential harm whilst in the care of the childminder.

Children were transported to nursery and community activities using the services mini bus. Appropriate insurance was in place and age appropriate restraints were used to ensure safety whilst travelling.

## 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.

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

This was the childminder's first inspection since registration in February 2023. They demonstrated knowledge of providing a quality service, and had received positive feedback from parents/carers, giving the reassurance that they were providing a service that met their needs.

The childminder understood the importance of partnership working and had developed positive relationships with parents and carers. The childminder worked closely with them to ensure children were receiving high quality care. Daily updates were sent to families, including pictures of activities their child had engaged in, videos of key moments, observations of the day and achievements within their learning and development. One parent told us "[Childminder] is very warm and friendly and provides a safe atmosphere. [They are] trusting and communicates exceptionally with us".

The childminder communicated with families via regular WhatsApp updates, verbal hand overs and newsletters, as well as regular reviews of personal plans. This supported parents to be informed about children's care, play and learning and provided opportunities for comments and feedback.

The childminder identified that the outdoor space was a development need for the service. They volunteered in an outdoor nursery to gather experience and knowledge to develop a forest school in adjacent woodland. We discussed how this project could be recorded in the service improvement plan. The childminder agreed this would be a good way to celebrate success with the children and families showing how they were involved. This would further support the children to see that their views are respected and valued.

The childminder had an improvement plan where they identified areas to improve the service. This should be further developed to enable the childminder to clearly evidence progress and development. This would show the child's voice and how there were empowered to be involved in the development of the service. The childminder was aware of "A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school aged children". We discussed how the childminder should continue to further embed this document within their evaluation process. This would support the health and wellbeing of the children in their care.

There were robust policies and procedures in place including child protection, medication and complaints. All policies had recently been reviewed or amended, the childminder agreed the policy documents would benefit from being dated for quality assurance. This told us the childminder was familiar with the policies and procedures, which enhanced the experiences of the children.

During our inspection visit the childminder sought advice and was open to ideas for how they could develop their practice, ensuring that they continue to contribute to positive outcomes for children. The childminder regularly engaged in professional discussions with other childminders in the area who they met weekly for shared activities with children. This reflective practice and professional dialogue demonstrated the childminder's commitment to improving their service.

## 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 and values

We found the childminder to be warm, caring and compassionate to the children. Children appeared secure in their care and responded to the childminder in a loving and affectionate manner. Values based practice was evident throughout all areas of the service mirroring the identified vision and aims.

The daily routine was flexible and adaptable to the needs of the children. The childminder was positive, approachable and cheery. This created a warm and welcoming environment for children and their families. Relationships with children and their parents were positive, caring and nurturing. The childminder spent time getting to know children and worked closely with parents to meet children's needs. This ensured the pace of the day supported children's health and wellbeing, and the childminder was responsive to the individual needs of those who use the service.

The childminder had a good understanding of the importance of play and valued play opportunities, ensuring children were having fun whilst learning. This contributed to children being happy and engaged in their play.

The childminder accessed training appropriate to their role, including safeguarding. They planned to attend forthcoming child development training through Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). Being a member of the SCMA, receiving updates from the Care Inspectorate and using ways to engage with other childminders helped the childminder to keep up-to-date with new developments and explore topical issues.

The childminder had a very good understanding of their professional responsibilities. They worked within their conditions of registration and ensured children's safety by gaining insurance, keeping registers, and maintaining the premises to a good standard.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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