

# MacKenzie, Karen Child Minding

Inverness

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 January 2023

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2006959884

**Service no:**  
CS2006123545

## About the service

Karen Mackenzie provides a childminding service from her home in the Highland village of Drumnadrochit. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home, with children having access to the main lounge and dining area, kitchen area, toilet and an enclosed rear garden. The children have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property and make extensive use of the local countryside and walks.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 January 2023 between 10:30 and 13:00. We provided feedback on the day of inspection. One inspector carried out the inspection.

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:

- Reviewed two online questionnaires we received from families;
- Spoke to the childminder;
- Reviewed documents;
- Observed practice and daily life.

## Key messages

- The childminder was warm, kind and caring in her approach.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children benefitted from being outdoors in the local community.
- Children led their own play and made choices from a wide range of quality play resources.
- Children's health and wellbeing were supported through opportunities to be active and engage in outdoor play.

## 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.

During our inspection there were three minded children present who were relaxed and comfortable in the childminder's home. The children were all outside in the garden playing in the snow and happily engrossed in their play. The childminder gave reassurance when needed and offered praise at appropriate times which helped develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Personal plans were in place for all children. These contained detailed information including children's likes, dislikes, and routines. The childminder spoke knowledgeably about children's individual care needs and what she did to support them. She confidently described children's preferences, routines, and personalities. As a result, children's needs were met. She made good use of personal planning to support the children in her care, sharing information regularly with children and families. This meant that children's changing needs were responded to with compassion and sensitivity.

Communication with parents/carers was very effective and supported them to be fully involved in their child's care. This ensured good links between home and the childminding setting which supports continuity of care. Parents confirmed the childminder worked very effectively with them to ensure their child's learning, development and wellbeing needs were being met. One parent told us, "Karen keeps us updated at the end of the day of what our child has been doing and will be doing the next day, week. She sends home newsletters updating us on what they have been covering and what courses she has been undertaking". This supported children to feel secure and helped parents to feel included in their child's care.

We observed a lovely, unhurried and relaxed lunchtime experience. The childminder supported independence by encouraging some of the children to feed themselves. Food choices were nutritious and reflected the current 'Setting the Table' guidance. This contributed to a positive, social experience for children during mealtimes.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

Children had access to a variety of toys that were suitable to their age and stage of development, including loose parts and natural open-ended materials. The childminder responded to children's interests and initiations of play by providing toys, support and guidance, when appropriate.

Children had access to a fun and well equipped enclosed garden at the rear of the property. On the day of the inspection the children were happy engrossed in their play while playing in the snow. Children were very well supported to lead their own play and learning. We saw that children were confident in choosing what they wanted to do, independently leading their own play experiences. We saw some nice interactions between the childminder and the children. For example, children were listening to a story outside in the garden on a bench all snug and cosy. This experience provided opportunities to promote literacy, imagination and creativity.

The childminder recognised the importance of the outdoors to promote children's health and wellbeing. The childminder spoke about the many places they liked to visit, and we saw photographic evidence of outings such as the woodlands and playgroups. This encouraged children to make connections with their local

community.

The childminder had a range of photographs of children's experiences. We saw one minded child had a scrapbook to reflect on their experiences and progress. We suggested the childminder continues this with the other children in her care. This would promote children's ownership of their time in the childminder's care.

### 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.

The childminder's home was clean, cosy and welcoming and provided a homely environment for the children. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play, allowing them to feel safe and comfortable.

The childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with good opportunities to be outside. The childminder also made good use of the local environment with regular trips to the park, play groups and woods. The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of the potential risks to children when out in the local community, contributing to keeping them safe. This provided opportunities for them to explore a natural environment, support health and wellbeing through active play, and extend their play opportunities. These rich experiences were shared with parents daily using closed social media forums, messages and videos. This helped enrich children's learning and contributed to them forming strong links with their community.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the childminder had in place. Some risk assessments were in place, and these could be further developed. We suggested these should be clearly dated and should be reviewed and updated regularly to support a safe environment for children.

Nappy changing guidance was adhered to, and infection control measures were followed to minimise any risk of spread of infection. The child's privacy and dignity was respected and appropriate PPE was used. Both the child and the childminder washed their hands after the procedure. When children required a rest or sleep, arrangements were in place to enable them to have a quiet area away from distractions. This ensured the health and wellbeing of the children in her care.

### 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.

A clear vision, values and aims were in place which reflected the service provided. The childminder commented that these were shared with families as they joined the service.

The childminder knew children and their families well and had positive relationships with them which supported meeting children's needs. The childminder valued the opinions of those using the service and spoke to them verbally and through messages on a regular basis. Parents told us that the childminder was

always approachable and they felt able to discuss anything and openly share their views. This helped families feel respected and valued.

The childminder encouraged parents and carers to give her any suggestions as to how she could continue to improve her service. She previously made use of a questionnaire to get feedback from the families she worked with. She stated that the completed questionnaires she had received back had been positive and no areas for development had been identified by the parents. Comments from parents and carers highlighted how happy they were with the service and how the childminder had great communication and always available to chat if they had any concerns. This helped families feel respected and valued.

The childminder also had established positive links and worked with other professionals as well as the local school nursery to support the health and wellbeing needs of the children. This was clear in the personal plans for each child. The childminder was keen to identify the next steps and work with the local school nursery to support the best outcomes for each child.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place which reflected current best practice and these were shared with parents. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding 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.

The childminder was kind and compassionate. She was nurturing in her care and had formed strong attachments with the children and their families. We saw warm and nurturing interactions, encouragement, praise and help when it was needed. This resulted in children feeling valued and secure in the setting.

Since her last inspection, the childminder had completed a large range of training. She had updated her training in First Aid and completed some online training to improve her knowledge and skills. We also discussed how reviewing best practice guidance documents on: The Care Inspectorate Hub could also support practice and individual learning. This could help identify future training needs, support improvement and to provide positive outcomes for children.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to their professional development and to providing a high-quality service. The children were at the heart of the service and were being supported to reach their potential. The childminder shared ideas and best practice with other childminders in the area and read various publications and best practice guidance to support her in developing her service.

Comments from parents and carers highlighted how happy they were with the service and that their children really enjoyed going to the childminder's.

## 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



## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

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

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.