

Smith, Jacqueline Child Minding

Peterculter

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 October 2025

Service provided by:
Jacqueline Smith

Service provider number:
SP2004916463

Service no:
CS2004059946

About the service

Jacqueline Smith provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Peterculter, Aberdeen. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to the local primary school, parks, green spaces, and other amenities.

Children have access to the family room, bathroom, and a garden at the rear of the property.

At the time of our inspection, eight children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 October 2025 between 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received three responses to our request for feedback from parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained, and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them well.
- Children benefitted from regular access to the outdoors to support their health and wellbeing.
- The childminder had developed positive relationships with families. Regular communication promoted continuity of care.
- Children benefitted from a childminder who was committed to their own professional development.
- Children experienced warm and caring interactions which supported their wellbeing.
- Sustained improvements enhanced play experiences and opportunities.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as **good**, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. The service's aims represented the ethos and daily practice, reflecting the childminder's aspirations for children. These included: "To provide a safe, comfortable, and happy environment for all children to thrive". We advised that as the service continues to develop, involving families in reviewing the vision, values, and aims would help ensure they reflect the needs of current children and families and remain meaningful.

The childminder kept families well informed through daily conversations, photo sharing, and individual communication books. They actively sought feedback from children and families using questionnaires and regular discussions. The childminder used this feedback to plan care and make improvements, ensuring families played a meaningful role in shaping the service. Parents valued the opportunity to share their views and have ongoing communication. One parent commented, "[The childminder] communicates clearly and in a timely manner, the little home books are very helpful".

Children and their families benefitted from the childminder's use of feedback and recorded daily reflections to help improve the service. Their informal approach to self evaluation positively shaped children's experiences and supported ongoing progress. We encouraged the childminder to undertake a more structured approach for identifying strengths and areas for development. We signposted them to the 'Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding', which they had planned to explore further through upcoming planned professional learning. Involving children and families in this process would support continuous improvement.

A clear improvement plan had started to positively impact on children's experiences. Current improvement priorities included developing use of the outdoors and improving mealtimes to support all children's health and wellbeing. The childminder had taken time to evaluate how improvements had positively impacted good outcomes for children. For example, they recognised that having more suitable outdoor clothing had promoted longer periods of time spent outdoors and children accessing a wider variety of outdoor spaces. Regular review and reflection ensured that improvements were sustained and embedded in practice.

Children benefitted from the childminder actively maintaining and refreshing their professional skills and knowledge. The childminder had recently completed Bookbug training and shared how this had developed their skills in supporting children's language development. For example, they were looking at ways to develop meaningful learning opportunities into children's experiences, such as modelling rhyming sounds. This helped to enhance the quality of support children received. Regularly accessing resources and best practice documents would help further promote positive outcomes for children. We suggested accessing the Care Inspectorate's 'SIMOA - Keeping Children Safe' guidance around mealtimes and safety outdoors to support them with their current improvement priorities.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as **good**, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were happy and busy as they played. The childminder actively promoted children's right to play and was responsive to their ideas, which supported them to make decisions about their experiences. Children were able to independently choose what they played with and spent time being imaginative with small world toys and building with construction kits. They enjoyed uninterrupted play, both individually and together. As a result, children were confident and enthusiastic in leading their play.

Children accessed a range of experiences that supported their development. The childminder was consistent in spending time at the children's level, modelling positive interactions and social skills. By asking open-ended questions and speaking in ways suited to children's age, the childminder supported their curiosity and encouraged problem-solving. For example, when role playing "shops", the childminder encouraged children to count out the number of items they were selling. This approach helped challenge children and engage them in meaningful play.

Activities and resources were carefully considered to ensure they were age-appropriate and stimulating. Children were able to choose from some toys and resources which were linked to their interests. One parent commented, "[The childminder] finds specific toys according to the children's interests". We discussed with the childminder that there was further scope to develop resources, including adding more natural and real-life resources to further enhance children's experiences. This would support the development of their creativity and curiosity and further enrich experiences.

The childminder planned experiences based on children's interests and engagement. Daily and weekly evaluations of experiences informed planning, where the childminder ensured children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous play. Observations and photos were shared through children's individual communication books and digital messages. This supported children's progress and development. A floor book was used to record previous experiences and we saw photos of children taking part in various activities, such as woodland scavenger hunts. We highlighted the benefits of children having more ownership over the floor book, including recording their thoughts and ideas to encourage reflection. This would strengthen their role in planning further experiences linked to their development that they enjoy.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through regular access to the outdoors. Children spoke positively about different areas of the local community they regularly explored, including "play parks" and "walk to shops". Parents commented positively on the outdoor play opportunities. One shared, "My child likes to be outside and [the childminder] will always provide this if possible". The childminder supported children's understanding of safety through walks, such as using these as opportunities to encourage independence and develop road safety skills. These experiences helped children develop confidence, life skills, and promoted wellbeing.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as **good**, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. Interactions were warm and caring, which supported children to feel comfortable. These nurturing interactions supported children's emotional wellbeing and development of positive relationships. They appeared confident around the childminder and their family which showed that positive connections had been developed. One parent commented, "[The childminder] knows each individual child and attends to specific needs, [they] communicate well with both children and the parents, [they're] so caring and passionate".

Children's families were warmly welcomed into the childminder's home. This supported regular communication and a collaborative approach to children's care and support. The childminder valued opportunities to foster relationships with families. This was promoted through a carefully planned transition process, specific to each individual child and their needs. Parents commented, "[The childminder] is happy to have us come in for five/ten minutes to help settle [my child]" and "[The childminder] has been very accommodating as we settle [my child] in". This meant that children and their families benefitted from a supportive environment which promoted a sense of belonging.

Transitions throughout the day were managed effectively. When preparing to move between indoors and outdoors or activities, the childminder involved children in conversations and decision making. This supported children's understanding and preparation at a suitable pace.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans were in place for each child, which contained relevant information about children's health, preferences, and routines. Plans were centred around children's wellbeing and identified specific strategies of support. These had been completed when children started and were reviewed regularly through collaboration with families. We encouraged the childminder to include children in reviewing their information where relevant. This would strengthen the input of children's own voice in planning for their care and support.

Daily routines were responsive to children's individual needs. The childminder tailored care and support to reflect individual routines from home, including personal care and sleep arrangements. This consistent approach supported children's wellbeing and reflected families' wishes. However, on a few occasions children slept in a pushchair which did not support their safety. We signposted the childminder to 'Safe Sleep Scotland' guidance and advised to review their sleep policy to support being safe and healthy. The childminder agreed to action this.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. The childminder provided snacks which children had been involved in choosing and catered to their preferences. Children sat at the table with the childminder, which promoted a calm and sociable experience. Parents advised their children could choose from a range of healthy foods. One commented, "My child was initially reluctant to eat very much with [the childminder] but she was patient and regularly offered a wide variety of food, making sure to always have the 'safe foods' as an option too. My child now eats more of a variety".

The childminder was knowledgeable in their role to safeguard children. They had completed and reflected on relevant training, including child protection and first aid. This supported them to have a clear understanding of their role in identifying, recording, and reporting any concerns in line with their policy. This supported children's safety.

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 stop using antibacterial handwash with the children and use ordinary liquid handwash instead.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16. Standard 3: Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 21 March 2017.

Action taken since then

Children were familiar with handwashing routines and carried this out effectively at key points throughout the day, such as after playing outdoors and after eating. Suitable handwashing facilities were available for children, including soap and warm running water. The childminder supervised and modelled effective handwashing to support children's understanding of the importance of this.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should review and update her medication administration policy and procedures and must make sure she follows current guidelines.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16. Standard 3: Health and wellbeing; Standard 4: Engaging with children; and Standard 14: Well managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 21 March 2017.

Action taken since then

The medication policy had been updated to reflect current guidance and the childminder was knowledgeable about medication procedures, in line with best practice guidance. Whilst no children currently needed medication administered, paperwork was in place should it be required. The childminder's understanding and practice was supported by their policy and promoted parents' awareness of their process.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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