

# Kerry's Out of School Care Child Minding

Alford

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
29 October 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Kerry-ann Butler

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000154

**Service no:**  
CS2023000236

## About the service

Kerry's Out of School Care Service is registered to provide a childminding service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time, up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is situated in a residential area of Alford, Aberdeenshire, and is close to local schools, shops and other amenities. Children have access to a dedicated playroom, toilet facilities, supervised access to the kitchen and an enclosed outdoor area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 October 2025 between 07:25 and 08:55 and 29 October 2025 between 07:15 and 09:20. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the first inspection of the service.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with one of their parent/carers
- received six responses to our request for feedback from parents
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- The service vision, values and aims were embedded in everyday life and helped to inform practice and how the service would be delivered.
- Children experienced warm, responsive care that supported their emotional security.
- Children were engaged in their play and interested in the experiences and resources available to them.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes supported positive outcomes for children.
- Families felt welcomed into the service and their engagement with the childminder had a positive impact on the quality of their child's experiences.

## 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	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

## 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 quality indicator as very good.

### Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder had established clear vision, values and aims including "to provide a secure, welcoming and happy environment for children." These were shared with families in an information booklet prior to starting, helping them understand what to expect from the service. The childminder was committed to their role of supporting children and working closely with parents to provide high quality care for children. A child commented, "I like everything at [the childminder's], we play lots of fun games, make crafts, bake yummy things, and have lots of fun together. It's good fun all the time." A parent commented: "The fact my child loves going there and doesn't want to leave at pick-up shows they are well cared for and feel safe."

The childminder regularly reflected on their practice and actively sought feedback from children and families using both informal conversations and questionnaires. Consultations with children through discussions and monthly meetings informed planning experiences and resources. Parents shared that the childminder regularly provided updates and actively asked them and their children for their feedback. A parent commented: "[The childminder] always asks for feedback on what can be improved." This demonstrated that children and their families were at the heart of the service.

Self-evaluation, using national guidance, helped the childminder identify strengths and areas they would like to develop further. We discussed how introducing challenge questions from A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding could support this further. An improvement plan had been developed and current improvement priorities included supporting children's digital skills and online safety. The childminder's professional approach and commitment to improvement supported high quality care, play and learning.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to professional development and actively engaged in opportunities to refresh and enhance their skills, knowledge and understanding. This approach contributed to keeping up-to-date with best practice and supported children's health, safety and wellbeing.

The childminder was a member of a national childminding organisation and met regularly with other local childminders to share practice and plan joint experiences, such as outdoor hunts. These enhanced children's social experiences and supported professional reflection.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 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 quality indicator as very good.

### Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

Children thrived in a well-maintained, comfortable and welcoming environment where they clearly felt at ease. The playroom was warm and inviting, with thoughtful touches such as fairy lights and seasonal decorations. Children's artwork was displayed which promoted a sense of ownership and self-esteem. A parent commented: "Our child feels safe and comfortable in the setting and treats it as an extension of our own home."

Toys and resources were easily accessible supporting children to make choices about their play and learning. There was a variety of resources available to the children which reflected their interests. These included arts and crafts, dolls, Lego, dressing up clothes and board games. Resources were clean, in very good condition and appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported by a clean, well-organised environment. Children confidently explained when and why they washed their hands, demonstrating an understanding of infection prevention. The use of individual hand towels further reduced the risk of cross-infection.

The childminder recognised the importance of outdoor play and its benefits for enhancing children's wellbeing. The enclosed garden offered children space for physical games and outdoor play equipment included a swing set, climbing frame and football goals. Photographs showed children engaging in outdoor play in various environments including local parks and the childminder's garden. A parent commented: "There are lots of outdoor activities both at the setting and in the surrounding public use areas." This meant that children's health was supported through energetic play.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments to support the safety and wellbeing of children. These documented benefits, potential risks and measures in place to support a safe environment. Children were guided and supported to stay safe through discussion. During the walk to school, children were encouraged to consider road safety. The childminder promoted a sense of responsibility whilst keeping children safe and well.

Children and families' personal information was securely stored, and the childminder had registered with the Information Commissioner's Office to protect personal data. This helped to protect children and families' privacy.

## Children play and learn

### 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 quality indicator as very good.

#### **Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing**

Children were happy, engaged and having fun. They confidently led their own play, choosing what and where to play with a range of toys. This included board games, imaginative play and model building, some of which were saved for children to return to later, supporting continuity in learning.

The childminder held a relevant childcare qualification and demonstrated a strong understanding of child development. Children benefited from the childminder sitting alongside them to support them in their play. Children involved the childminder by inviting them to play games. The childminder responded enthusiastically, making eye contact and commenting on what they were learning. This promoted communication and positive relationships.

Language, literacy and numeracy was naturally woven into daily experiences, for example, when playing board games together. Children were able to access a variety of mark making resources and regularly visited the local library which encouraged literacy skills. As a result, children were happy and developing confidence in their abilities as they learned through play.

Planning approaches were clearly child led and responsive. Observations of children's play and development informed experiences that reflected their interests and individual next steps. Outdoor learning was prioritised and supported children's natural curiosity. Progress was regularly shared and achievements were celebrated with families. The childminder's reflective practice ensured all children remained engaged, included and progressing in their learning. Parents commented positively on children's play experiences. One parent commented: "My child enjoys arts and crafts as one of their favourite hobbies and they are always making something at [the childminders]." Another parent shared, "[The childminder] provides a good variety of experiences - outdoor play, park trips, movie days, themed days, party days and talent shows."

## Children are supported to achieve 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 quality indicator as very good.

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, relaxed and confident in the care of the childminder. They experienced warm and nurturing care and had formed strong connections with the childminder and members of the childminder's family. Sensitive and caring interactions ensured that children's needs were met which meant they felt safe and secure. Parents commented positively on the care their children received and described the childminder as, "welcoming", "trustworthy" and "very friendly". A child commented: "[The childminder] takes us to the park and [they] really like us."

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge and understanding of the children. During discussion, they demonstrated a very good understanding of the children's care and learning needs and how these were being met. Personal plans were in place and children had completed 'all about me' information that detailed their likes/dislikes and interests. Chronologies were maintained to record significant life events and support children's emotional wellbeing. Parents strongly agreed the childminder knew their children well and appreciated the flexibility and support they were offered. As a result, children experienced consistent care that was right for them.

Children experienced positive social interactions as they ate together in a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. Independence and life skills were developed as they served their own breakfast. Children proudly showed placemats they had created and described the snack routine, supporting a sense of belonging. National guidance shared with parents helped promote healthy eating habits.

The childminder had carefully considered children's transition into the service. They were flexible to children's needs and ensured they had time to become familiar with the childminder and build a trusting, supportive relationship. This helped children to settle at their own pace and supported families to feel confident and reassured during this important time.

Children were kept safe by effective medication systems and procedures. Whilst children did not currently need medication administered, paperwork was in place should it be required. A policy supported the childminder's understanding and practice and promoted parents' awareness of their process.

Children's families were welcomed into the childminder's home. This supported positive relationships and information sharing. Communication with families was through a secure digital platform which included photos, observations and updates. This enabled parents to engage with their child's learning and share experiences from home, supporting continuity between the setting and home environment.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service registered. Details of upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)



## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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