

# Shannon's Childminding Child Minding

Inverurie

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
5 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Shannon Dewars

**Service provider number:**  
SP2017989377

**Service no:**  
CS2017360449

## About the service

Shannon's Childminding is provided from their property in a residential area of Rothienorman, Aberdeenshire. 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. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family/household. Overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to parks, green spaces, and other amenities. Children have access to the playroom, kitchen, family room, downstairs spare bedroom, garden room, and a fully enclosed garden.

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

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 November 2025 between 10:45 and 14:45. 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 three children using the service
- received five responses to our request for feedback from parents/carers
- 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 supported by a childminder who was knowledgeable about their individual needs.
- Children received warm and nurturing interactions.
- Families' input and involvement were valued and used to help shape the service.
- The childminder had an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop and was committed to their professional development to continue to expand their skills and knowledge.
- Innovative and carefully planned inviting spaces had been created to provide excellent play and learning experiences for children.
- Meaningful self evaluation drove an embedded cycle of continuous improvement.
- Children benefitted from a wide variety of outdoor learning opportunities, which enriched their experiences and supported the development of life skills.

## 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 play and learn	6 - Excellent
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

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

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement. Therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as **very good**.

Children and families benefitted from the childminder having a clear vision for the service and high aspirations for children. A consistently nurturing and rights-based approach was underpinned by the service's vision for children to "reach their full potential, try new experiences, and most importantly have fun together". Children had recently been involved in reviewing the values to ensure these remained meaningful to them. These were displayed alongside the children's mural at the entrance to the playroom, helping to communicate and promote these in an engaging way for children and families. The childminder's approach to care and support consistently reflected the vision and supported families to understand what to expect from the service.

Effective communication supported children and families to be well informed about the service. The childminder had created clear, detailed policies which aligned with current best practice guidance to support parents' understanding of the service. Children and families were involved in shaping the service through regular face-to-face conversations and questionnaires, with feedback used to identify what was important to families. Parents felt meaningfully involved through these methods, with one commenting, "[The childminder] is so approachable and you can ask [them] anything. I feel that I can contact [the childminder] at any point if I want to share something". Open and transparent communication supported families' contributions to be welcomed and valued, supporting ongoing developments.

Embedded self evaluation and robust quality assurance processes supported continuous improvement. The childminder actively used the document 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: childminding' to evaluate the service against best practice guidance. This tool supported in identifying strengths and areas for development to effectively inform improvements. Recent changes, such as creating more sociable and relaxed mealtimes, had already been put in place and were evident within the daily routine. The childminder was knowledgeable about how this had positively impacted on children's health and wellbeing.

The childminder was committed to their professional development and embraced opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge. Ongoing collaboration with other professionals and welcoming a multi-agency approach directly improved the quality of care for children. This shared learning supported tailored responses to individual needs and informed enhancements to the environment, such as creating inviting play spaces that encourage exploration and creativity. These improvements have contributed to enhancing the care, play, and learning experiences for children.

## Children play and learn 6 - Excellent

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as **excellent**, where aspects of performance were outstanding and sector leading.

Outstanding quality play and learning experiences were at the heart of the service. The childminder consistently applied best practice and tailored activities to individual interests and needs. Ongoing professional development, including a Graduate Apprenticeship in Early Learning and Childcare, strengthened their knowledge, skills, and theory-based practice. This resulted in high quality experiences that empowered children's engagement and development. Additional learning, such as signing and visual supports, ensured inclusive communication and meaningful participation. Parents shared the positive impact of this. One commented, "[The childminder] has based a lot of her studies on [my child's] development". It was evident the childminder had firmly embedded their studies into practice used these to skilfully support children.

Children's individual development was key to the childminder's approach to play and learning. Their well considered use of strategies and tailored interactions reflected an excellent understanding of developmental stages, ensuring experiences were adapted for children's needs. Skilful interactions from the childminder extended children's thinking and enhanced their ideas. The use of open-ended questions, use of verbal and non-verbal communication, and modelling of skills were exemplary for supporting their curiosity and stimulation. This supported children to reach their full potential.

Children thrived in an environment which was innovative, inclusive, and challenging. Exceptional attention to detail and creativity contributed to thoughtfully arranged spaces, providing children with a range of dynamic areas to explore. For example, a 'Coorie Corner' had been created outside, which was an inviting sheltered area with interesting provocations for play. One child spent time role playing in the mud kitchen, while another transported water using different tools around the garden. Children were given time and space to explore and try their ideas at their own pace which helped them to understand the world around them. The childminder demonstrated an excellent awareness of when to support and effectively interact with children to further promote and extend their ideas. As a result, children were making exceptional progress in their learning and development.

Outstanding play environments and experiences ensured that all children were consistently engaged in their play and learning. Their interests and wellbeing were supported through rich outdoor experiences, both within and beyond the setting. A wide variety of well planned activities created inspiring opportunities for children to develop their independence and life skills as well as lead their own play. This included attending regular community groups and Forest School sessions in the woods. The childminder had high aspirations for continuing to develop outdoor experiences, through fire pit training and growing their own vegetables. One child shared, "We made Gruffalo crumble in the woods". Parents commented positively on the outdoor play experiences. One shared, "Joining up with another childminder for outdoor learning in local woods where the children had a story and made wands. [My child] loved this session!".

Play was extremely responsive to children's individual stages of development. A balance of planned and spontaneous experiences provided children with meaningful opportunities to be imaginative, creative, and develop their problem-solving skills. The childminder had a flexible approach to allow children to make decisions about their play. For example, children's recent interest in fireworks was promoted through a craft activity. The childminder spent individual time with each child to ensure they had the support needed to reach their goals. One child was interested in colour mixing and the childminder skilfully encouraged them to experiment and make predications. Showing a genuine interest in the creations contributed towards building children's confidence and self esteem.

Assessment linked closely with observations, planning new learning, and identifying next steps to extend children's learning. It was effective and celebrated children's progress meaningfully. Children's voices were evidenced through photographs, comments, and drawings within a floor book and used to further expand on

their interests. Individual observations were shared through a digital platform and used to inform next steps in the children's learning. This meant children were effectively enabled to learn and progress.

Families were actively involved in supporting their children's play and development. The childminder had built strong, trusting relationships with families, who understood and valued the play-based approach. Parents and carers were invited in to spend time with children, inputting their own skills to enhance children's experiences. For example, children were looking forward to baking with the childminder and parent at an upcoming session. A social media page allowed families to engage with regular photos and updates, fostering connection and collaboration. These updates highlighted the specific aspects of children's development and supported families to remain informed about children's evolving interests. Parents shared, "The wide range of activities offered keeps [my child] stimulated and motivated" and "Discusses all aspects of care and learning and milestones". This partnership approach supported continuity of care and contributed to excellent outcomes for children.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement. Therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as **very good**.

Children benefitted from caring and nurturing interactions which supported their wellbeing. Through consistently warm and kind interactions, the childminder was responsive to children's individual needs and supported their wellbeing. Children were encouraged to share their views throughout the day, to influence decision-making within routines. This contributed to children feeling valued and included.

Routines were planned to meet individual needs, with consistent strategies ensuring smooth transitions throughout the day. Verbal prompts, visual timetables, and social stories supported engagement and emotional wellbeing. Thoughtfully arranged spaces, including a calm corner, registration station, and wellbeing resources, promoted independence and discussion. These approaches helped children build emotional resilience and a strong sense of belonging.

Daily routines promoted inclusion and diversity by reflecting children's individual lifestyles while maintaining consistency. Mealtimes had been developed to reflect familiarity with children's home life and the childminder used this time to engage in meaningful conversations with children. This created safe, enjoyable, and socially rich experiences for children.

Children were supported by a childminder who knew them very well. Each child had a personal plan which identified on their individual needs, routines, and preferences. The childminder was knowledgeable about children's specific needs and strategies to meet these. They valued input from families, sought advice from professionals, and welcomed multi-agency working. We identified that plans could be developed to clearly identify individual strategies of support that were being used. This would further promote continuity of care through partnership collaboration.

The childminder worked closely with parents and professionals to meet children's additional support needs. Training was applied effectively, resulting in tailored strategies that improved children's wellbeing and learning outcomes. This collaborative approach strengthened family confidence in the service. The childminder felt this was a strength of the service and parents agreed. They commented that some of the

most positive aspects of the service included, "The one-to-one care [my child] received and the attention throughout [their] day" and "Accommodating to [my child's] needs and also our family's".

Families felt welcomed and valued by the childminder. Information and updates about the service were displayed around the home, supporting families to feel included in their children's experiences and strengthened relationships. Parents commented positively on their connection with the childminder. One shared, "[The childminder] always opens the door in the morning with a great big smile on her face. She is so accommodating and flexible". Another advised, "[The childminder] is a superb childminder... We couldn't think of anyone better to look after [our child]. [The childminder] has great relationships with her minding families. Treats us like family".

## 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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	6 - Excellent
Playing, learning and developing	6 - Excellent
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good



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