

Jen's Childminding Child Minding

Alford

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 December 2025

Service provided by:
Jennifer Williamson

Service provider number:
SP2023000244

Service no:
CS2023000370

About the service

Jen's Childminding is situated in a residential street in the village of Alford in Aberdeenshire.

The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six are of primary school age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's children. Nine children were registered with the service at the time of the inspection.

Children are cared for on the ground floor of the property, with access to the living room, dining kitchen, conservatory, a toilet and enclosed garden. The service is close to local green spaces, play parks and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 December 2025 between 15:00 and 17:00 and 10 December 2025 between 09:30 and 11:05. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with one child using the service and the childminder's two children
- reviewed two completed feedback questionnaires from parents
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children were cared for by a reflective childminder who evaluated their own practice to support positive outcomes for children.
- Children and families had opportunities to share their views and positively influence their experiences.
- The childminder should consider meaningful inclusion of children and families in reviewing the vision, values and aims of the service.
- Children were cared for in clean, comfortable and homely surroundings.
- Children had access to a range of interesting and age-appropriate play resources and experiences.
- The childminder supported children to learn as they played.
- Children benefitted from the childminder's warm, respectful and inclusive approaches.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very 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 by a childminder who demonstrated a clear vision, values and aims for the service. These focused on creating a 'home from home' environment where children could play and have fun in safe surroundings. While these aspirations were not formally shared with families, they were evident in children's experiences throughout the inspection. Parents received information about daily routines and activities prior to their child starting at the service. We encouraged the childminder to share the service's vision, values and aims with families and explore ways to involve children and parents in reviewing these. This will help ensure that families are meaningfully included and their views are represented.

Families had opportunities to share their views and influence the service. Parents were invited to complete questionnaires and contributed ideas through regular conversations with the childminder. One parent told us they were pleased that the childminder had sought suggestions for activities their child would enjoy and had acted on these prior to their child attending the service. Children's suggestions were used to inform developments. For example, the childminder had increased craft materials and was planning on upgrading the climbing frame in response to children's feedback. This created an environment where children felt confident to make requests and influence their experiences.

Children's experiences benefitted from the childminder's reflective practice. Self-evaluation supported them to identify improvements and they shared good practice with another local childminder. Improvements included further developing play resources and becoming more familiar with guidance to support their practice. We encouraged the childminder to use supporting tools such as, using the Care Inspectorate's 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: Childminding quality indicators' to strengthen self-evaluation and how feedback is gathered from parents.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

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 were cared for in a welcoming and homely environment that supported their comfort and wellbeing. During the inspection, children chose to engage in craft activities at the kitchen table. The conservatory provided an additional space with a large table and easily accessed resources, arranged to promote independence and choice. Direct access to the enclosed garden further enhanced opportunities for children to make decisions about their play. This resulted in an enabling environment, where children felt secure in making choices.

Children benefitted from regular outdoor experiences. While children played indoors during the inspection, they spoke about picnics and outings to local parks and green spaces. One parent spoke positively of their child sledging in the snow and regular trips to the park. We saw photographic evidence of children using outdoor equipment such as, the mud kitchen and climbing frame in the garden. These experiences provided children with opportunities for exercise and exploration.

Children were kept safe in clean and well-maintained surroundings. The childminder demonstrated an understanding of effective infection prevention and control. Appropriate procedures such as, wiping the table before and after snack and covering it for craft activities limited the risk of cross contamination. Parents were encouraged to keep children at home when unwell, and children were supported to wash their hands. A toilet adjacent to the kitchen was easily accessed by children, promoting independence in personal care.

Risk assessments were in place to support the childminder to identify and manage potential hazards. The family pet dog was well supervised, and children were encouraged to interact appropriately with it. The childminder confidently described safe practice during outings, including supporting children in risky play such as, climbing and making sure they were familiar with the boundaries when playing in public areas. This approach enabled children to learn about managing risk while playing and exploring safely.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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's play experiences were well supported by the childminder, who demonstrated an ability to follow children's lead, making suggestions and providing interesting and age-appropriate resources to support their interests.

Children chose freely which resources they wanted to use to make Christmas decorations, and the childminder patiently supported them to try out ideas, praising their efforts and achievements. One child told us they particularly enjoyed the craft activities available. Another feedback that they, "just like everything". As a result, children remained motivated and engaged in their play for sustained periods.

Children benefitted from access to varied play resources and experiences that promoted choice and independence. As a result, children were comfortable making requests and leading their own play. Resources such as, mark-making materials, art and craft supplies, construction toys and board games enabled children to develop skills including literacy and numeracy through play.

Photos evidenced children enjoying experimenting with playdough, natural materials, junk modelling and decorating biscuits, which fostered children's creativity and provided challenge. Parents reported that their children thoroughly enjoyed attending the service and were very happy with the range of activities.

Interactions supported children's learning. The childminder chatted to children as they played, asking them questions appropriate to their stages of development to effectively extend their thinking and introduce new vocabulary. This created an environment where children could share ideas, extend and sustain their interests.

Children's experiences were planned around their interests. The childminder used informal observations of children's play to help inform the planning and extending of activities. Examples included seasonal crafts, and when children wanted to learn chess and origami, the childminder had learned alongside them. Children's successes and achievements were shared with parents through photographs. The childminder's collaborative approach contributed to individualised experiences and helped children achieve.

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 experienced warm and responsive interactions. The childminder was respectful and inclusive, ensuring that each child's views were sought and represented during play and conversation. Support was offered sensitively during activities, with the childminder asking what they could do to help and making appropriate suggestions. Children told us they felt positively about their experiences, describing the childminder as, "really kind" and saying they "really like [the childminder]."

Children's individual needs were met effectively. The childminder knew children well and adapted practice and provision to suit children as they grew and developed. When asked what would make their experiences better, one child responded, "nothing could make it better" and another that they would like to attend more. This reflected happy, relaxed children who felt welcome in the setting.

Personal plans contained key information to support children's wellbeing and were reviewed regularly with parents. Parents told us they felt the childminder knew their children well and responded to their needs. Whilst information was sufficient to support children's wellbeing, we encouraged the childminder to develop personal plans further to include information provided by children about their interests and preferences. The childminder agreed to consider this to help ensure children's voices are more robustly represented.

Families enjoyed positive relationships with the childminder. The childminder recognised the importance of positive, trusting relationships, which was evidenced during the inspection. Information about children's experiences was shared during daily conversations and through regular private messages and emails. When one child was collected, the childminder chatted to their parent, sharing information about their day. This supported continuity of care between home and the setting.

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 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	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - 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

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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.