

Claire's Childminding Services

Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 January 2026

Service provided by:
Claire Robertson

Service provider number:
SP2013985072

Service no:
CS2013318404

About the service

Claire's Childminding Services provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Kingswells, Aberdeen. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of seven children at any one time under the age of 16 of whom no more than six are under the age of 12 of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months old. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is close to shops, green spaces and other amenities. Children have access to the dining kitchen, play area, toilet and a fully enclosed garden.

Two children were present at the time of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 January 2026 between 10:15 and 14:15. 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 families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- The childminder placed children and families at the heart of the service, helping to shape and grow the setting together.
- Children experienced very warm and responsive care meaning they felt safe and loved.
- The childminder had a very good understanding of how children develop and learn which was reflected in the experiences offered.
- Self-evaluation was purposeful, enabling the childminder to deliver high-quality care and learning that was tailored to the individual needs of children and their families.

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	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

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**.

The childminder demonstrated a purposeful and well considered approach to self-evaluation. This supported the delivery of high quality care and learning experiences tailored to the individual needs of children and their families. A range of methods were used to gather feedback from parents, including questionnaires, written comments within floor books, informal and formal conversations and development plans. This variety of methods ensured that families were able to contribute in ways that suited them best. It was evident that the childminder used this feedback meaningfully and consistently to support positive outcomes for children and to inform ongoing developments within the service. Their proactive approach to continually seeking feedback and using a range of tools to engage families reflected a strong commitment to partnership working. considered approach to self evaluation. This supported the delivery of high quality care and learning experiences tailored to the individual needs of children and their families.

Parents told us they felt involved in a meaningful way in shaping and developing the setting. One parent commented, "The childminder will always ask for our input and we feel very much a part of supporting their service." Another parent highlighted a specific example of change influenced by feedback, stating, "The childminder often asks if there's any feedback or improvements. There was a recent example of the children benefiting from a secluded quiet corner which the childminder created, and since then I've seen every child in there having a moment - almost daily when I go to pick up. It's teaching them it's okay to have a moment, and that's life skills they'll need." This open, inclusive approach helped parents feel valued and ensured that their contributions were reflected in both the children's daily experiences and the wider ongoing development of the service.

The childminder had a quality assurance calendar in place, supporting robust processes and ensuring a continuous improvement cycle. Engagement with best practice guidance was strong, including effective use of the quality improvement framework to support self evaluation and improvement plans. The childminder also used challenge questions effectively to identify areas for development. Recent reflections highlighted the need to update the service's values, vision, and aims, with a focus on involving families more meaningfully in this process. By including children and families in shaping these foundations, the resulting vision was a true reflection of the service and the needs of those who use it. The childminder's nurturing approach, combined with the thoughtful daily experiences provided to children, consistently reflected this vision. As a result, the ethos of the setting was clearly embedded and influenced all aspects of practice.

High quality care, play, and learning were central to the childminder's practice. They made very effective use of best practice guidance and ongoing professional learning to enhance the service. For instance, recent training on the 'Setting the Table' guidance supported positive changes to mealtime routines. This improved the childminder's knowledge and confidence in offering nutritious food and encouraged them to adopt creative strategies to support children in trying new foods. These changes had a positive impact on children's health, wellbeing, and overall experiences within the setting.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Play, 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**.

The childminder was currently undertaking a BA in Childhood Practice and demonstrated a strong, research informed understanding of how children develop and learn. Their very effective engagement with theory and best practice was clearly reflected in the high quality experiences offered to children. This included a passion for outdoor learning and thoughtful use of loose parts that encouraged children to explore, create and engage in meaningful play and learning. Children spent regular, enjoyable time outdoors in the nearby woodland, where they were encouraged to investigate and engage creatively with the natural environment.

During our visit, children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences, keen to share the activities they enjoyed most. One child explained, "We jabbed leaves with a stick to make a caterpillar." This evidenced children's active engagement, imagination, and sense of discovery. The childminder's approach ensured that outdoor learning was not an additional activity, but a core element of the service that supported a wide range of developmental benefits. The childminder had been recognised locally for their strong commitment to and expertise in play and learning outdoors. As a result, they were invited to speak to parents at their child's nursery, drawing on their experience both as a practitioner and as a parent. This opportunity enabled the childminder to share their excellent knowledge and promote families' understanding of the value of high quality, play based learning experiences outdoors. By engaging with the wider community in this way, the childminder demonstrated leadership and contributed positively to strengthening parents' confidence in the benefits of child led, outdoor play.

During the inspection children were fully engaged in a variety of play experiences and enjoyed extended periods of uninterrupted play. They enjoyed pretending to cook food in the toy kitchen, read books and played a variety of games with the childminder. The childminder's skilled interactions supported and effectively extended play. The children played a game created by the childminder to support a child's confidence with visits to the dentist. The childminder supported children through approaches such as shared thinking and wondering aloud to expand their thinking. For example, as the children pretended to brush teeth during the game and sorted different types of food, the childminder talked about healthy foods and oral health. The childminder provided a responsive play environment and used skilled interactions to expand learning.

Parents told us that their children always benefited from a range of opportunities and fun experiences that met their individual needs and supported their development, including outdoor play. One parent said; "The variety of play and activities planned is really well balanced. There's plenty free play to encourage imagination and choice, supports independent play and shows them how to play together without constantly having to be entertained which is a key skill. There's always a mix of books, music, crafts, puzzles, role play, sensory play and learning which is exactly what we had hoped to find." Another parent commented; "Always have the opportunity to play outside, attend woody Wednesday, and go for walks and the park. [The childminder] promotes outdoor play and has lots on offer to keep the children busy." This demonstrated that the childminder consistently offered a rich and well balanced range of experiences, indoors and outdoors, that were highly responsive to children's learning, independence, and overall development.

The childminder took a robust and well structured approach to evaluating children's development, progress, and achievements. A range of tools were used effectively to gather meaningful, holistic information about each child's learning journey. These included a floor book, regular observations, development trackers, and personalised development plans. This informed, thoughtful planning and enabled the childminder to plan for children's experiences and share detailed updates with parents. Information shared by families was then incorporated into children's next development plans, ensuring that identified strengths, next steps, and strategies for support were accurate and responsive. This collaborative approach ensured that assessment was purposeful, child centred, and directly contributed to positive 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 benefited from very consistent, nurturing, and warm care that strongly supported their overall wellbeing. The bond between the childminder and the children was clearly evident; children used the childminder's name frequently and sought their attention and comfort naturally throughout the day. The childminder consistently positioned themselves at the children's level, which meant they were readily invited into play and were able to engage meaningfully with children's interests and cues. Through discussion, it was evident that the childminder had a strong understanding of attachment and emotional security. They spoke confidently about the importance of children developing a sense of safety and trust, and we observed this being demonstrated in practice. The childminder was responsive, attuned, and sensitive in their interactions, offering reassurance, praise, and gentle guidance when needed. This consistent approach ensured that children felt secure, valued, and confident, which in turn supported their wellbeing and positive development.

The childminder's approach to transitions and daily routines effectively supported children to feel safe, secure, and confident. Transitions were handled calmly and naturally throughout the day, helping children to anticipate what would happen next. For example, shortly before lunchtime the childminder gently informed the children that lunchtime would be soon and asked them what they would like to eat. This supported children's understanding of routines while also promoting choice and independence. Consistency in routines was clearly evident. Children confidently and independently washed their hands before and after lunch, demonstrating that these health promoting practices were well embedded.

Daily routines, including mealtimes, were calm, unhurried, and thoughtfully organised. The childminder sat and ate alongside the children, creating a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. This approach supported close supervision and provided opportunities for conversation, role modelling, and language development. The childminder was attentive to children's individual preferences and provided a healthy, nutritious lunch that reflected best practice guidance. During our visit, we discussed independence with the children, who enthusiastically shared that they enjoyed helping to prepare snacks for the older children and had made soup the previous week. These experiences contributed to children's understanding of healthy eating while also building important life skills.

Effective personal planning was in place for all children and was regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents. These plans contained meaningful and relevant information, enabling the childminder to tailor care and support to each child's individual needs. Chronologies were also maintained to record significant events in children's lives, allowing the childminder to identify emerging patterns and offer timely support to children and their families when needed. Children who required medication had clear care plans in place to support the safe administration of medication. Medication was stored securely and kept out of children's reach. During the inspection, we directed the childminder to best practice guidance to help further enhance the safe storage and management of medication. The childminder took a collaborative approach to planning which ensured that children's needs were consistently well met, with systems in place that promoted their safety, wellbeing, and continuity of care.

Parents were welcomed into the setting daily, creating regular opportunities for meaningful conversations and supporting positive settling routines for children. The childminder used a range of communication methods, including daily diaries for younger children and WhatsApp updates to ensure families received consistent, timely, and relevant information about their child's experiences and wellbeing. This approach promoted strong, open communication and helped parents feel informed and reassured. Parents spoke very positively about their relationship with the childminder and described feeling welcomed, listened to, and involved in their child's care. One parent shared, "[The childminder] will listen to any concerns we have and together we support the children. They communicate well with us, and we love all of our updates." Another parent commented, "We have trust and open, honest conversations. [The childminder] is an advocate for [our child], encouraging [their] personality to shine. We very much work as a team." This strong, collaborative communication approach fostered trust and partnership, ensuring families felt valued and children's needs were consistently 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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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