

# McDonald, Jacqueline Child Minding

Aberdeen

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
10 February 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Jacqueline McDonald

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003907207

**Service no:**  
CS2003020148

## About the service

Jacqueline McDonald provides a childminding service from their home in the Altens area of Aberdeen.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16; of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school; and of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. (On a Monday from 9 June 2025 until 10 April 2026 or before if a child under 12 months leaves the service, no more than 2 children are under 12 months).

Eight children were registered with the service and two attended at the time of the inspection.

Children are cared for in the living room and dining kitchen with access to an upstairs bathroom and an enclosed garden. The service is close to local parks and amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 10:00 and 12:30 on 10 February 2026. 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 two children using the service
- spoke with the childminder
- received five completed questionnaires from parents/carers
- 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

- Positive experiences for children were promoted by a childminder who valued continuous improvement.
- Children and their parents had opportunities to be meaningfully involved in contributing to service development.
- Children were cared for by a knowledgeable, experienced childminder.
- Children experienced a wide range of interesting experiences and were well supported in their play and learning.
- Children benefitted from the childminder's warm and nurturing interactions.

## 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

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.

### Leadership and management of staff and resources

Children were cared for by a childminder who demonstrated a relaxed, friendly and professional approach which reflected the vision, values and aims of the service. This was evident through warm, supportive interactions that helped children feel secure and valued. The service's vision, values and aims were shared with parents along with service information and policies supporting them to understand what to expect from the service. We encouraged the childminder to further involve children and parents in reviewing these statements to ensure their voices are fully reflected in future developments.

Families had opportunities to be involved in developing the service. Questionnaires returned to the service by parents provided very positive feedback, reflecting that they felt listened to and able to influence aspects of the service. Parents' suggestions were respected and acted upon. Children were also routinely consulted, offered choices and encouraged to share their views. This contributed to them feeling valued and meaningfully involved in decisions that shaped their daily experiences.

The childminder regularly evaluated their practice to identify areas for development. The use of recognised tools, including the Care Inspectorate's Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: "Childminding quality indicators" resulted in robust self evaluation to promote positive outcomes for children. Planned improvements included, updating how learning from training was recorded, purchasing new nappy changing equipment and developing a refreshed feedback questionnaire for parents. While progress was monitored regularly, this could be strengthened by evaluating the impact of these changes on children's experiences.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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.

### Playing, learning and developing

Children experienced a wide range of interesting and engaging play opportunities that reflected their interests and developmental stages. Activities were responsive and thoughtfully planned. For example, during a period of cold weather, children explored ice, investigating how it felt and melted. When a child shared that they enjoyed playing with small cube lights at home, the childminder introduced these into the setting, enhancing play and supporting children to experiment and investigate their interests. Parents told us of regular outdoor play at local parks and in the childminder's garden which provided opportunities for children to benefit from physical play.

The childminder supported children's play effectively. They joined in alongside children, listening carefully and extending their thinking by asking thoughtful questions. When children's interests changed, the childminder responded promptly and positively, providing resources such as, toy cars and supported children in building a den. Play was child led, with the childminder skilfully taking cues from the children. This contributed to sustained, meaningful play where children felt confident and comfortable exploring their own ideas.

The childminder's interactions supported children's learning and understanding. Their use of language encouraged children to think more widely and helped embed early numeracy, language and literacy skills across daily activities. Additional opportunities, such as meeting up with other local childminders and attending storytelling and singing groups in the community, further enriched children's learning.

Children's learning was recorded through observations shared with parents using an online platform. Parents were able to contribute their own comments and share children's achievements from home. Next steps were identified and reflected parents' views, helping to plan for children's ongoing progress.

## Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

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.

### Nurturing care and support

Children enjoyed a relaxed, welcoming environment where they were cared for by a childminder who knew them well. Personal plans were used to record relevant information from parents about children's needs, and they were able to update details online. We reminded the childminder to ensure parents formally confirm they have reviewed their children's information at least every six months, in line with guidance to ensure no important changes are missed.

Children benefitted from the childminder's strong understanding of child development. A relevant professional qualification and their commitment to ongoing learning helped ensure that children experienced consistently positive outcomes. They demonstrated a positive and nurturing approach, anticipating children's needs and supporting smooth transitions by giving clear, age appropriate cues. For example, using a countdown before lunch helped children to happily finish their play calmly before tidying up. Interactions were respectful, and the childminder consistently promoted children's dignity, offering reassurance and explanations that supported their understanding.

Child centred routines helped children to develop independence. For example, children used the bathroom with appropriate support while the childminder sensitively maintained their privacy. Mealtimes were relaxed and positive. Children brought packed lunches from home, and the childminder respected their choices while encouraging them to try food items. Children were encouraged to drink water at both mealtimes, and throughout the day, supporting them to stay hydrated.

Families experienced positive and trusting relationships with the childminder. Parents spoke highly of the care provided, with one commenting that the childminder treated their child as one of their own. Daily diaries helped share information about children's routines and experiences, contributing to strong communication and consistency 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](http://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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