

# Linda Shirreffs Childminding Child Minding

Aberdeen

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 January 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Linda Shirreffs

**Service provider number:**  
SP2014986037

**Service no:**  
CS2014327376

## About the service

Linda Shirreffs Childminding is provided from their property in a residential area in Aberdeen. 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 and overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to parks, shops, local primary school, and other amenities. Children have access to the living room, kitchen, upstairs bathroom, and a fully enclosed garden.

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

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 January 2026 between 12:55 and 16:45. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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
- spoke with one of their parents/carers
- received five responses to our request for feedback from parents/carers through our online questionnaire
- 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.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and settled in the childminder's care.
- Children and their families experienced a welcoming and friendly service.
- Regular walks, outings, and access to community spaces supported children to feel connected to their local community.
- Play experiences promoted children's interests and extended their learning.
- Children were cared for by an experienced childminder who was committed to ongoing professional development and used current guidance to inform their practice.

## 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 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 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 experienced a welcoming and friendly environment which reflected the childminder's aims. The service's aims and objectives included, "I want to create a warm, safe, and stimulating environment every time [children] visit". Parents commented positively on the ethos of the service. One shared, "[The childminder] always goes above and beyond to make sure children are happy". We discussed reviewing the aims and objectives with children and their families to ensure they remained reflective of current families' needs and wishes.

Children and families had some opportunities to give feedback and influence change. Parents spoken to were happy with the service and kept informed through daily discussions and messages. Children were regularly asked their views on daily experiences, including what they wanted to do and they could choose from a variety of toys and games. This helped them develop independence as they made choices which were respected by the childminder. Continuing to gather feedback from children and families through different methods and use their suggestions will help support continuous improvement.

Self evaluation and quality assurance processes were beginning to drive positive change, leading to improvements in the service. The childminder used best practice guidance to create a realistic improvement plan, with current priorities focused on promoting positive mealtime experiences. These improvements were already evident in practice, supporting children to experience calm, sociable mealtimes with nutritious food. Continued embedding of self evaluation and aligning future plans to identified priorities will further enhance outcomes for children as the service evolves.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to professional learning. As a member of a national childminding organisation, they benefitted from dedicated time to undertake training and stay up-to-date with sector developments. Forming links with other childminders allowed them to feel supported and share practice. The childminder had reviewed new guidance and used this to improve practice, including developing new meal recipes and options. Training on children's play had strengthened their ability to support learning through everyday experiences, such as recognising road signs and numbers when out walking. This enhanced the quality of children's learning opportunities and outcomes. We discussed ways to track the impact of training more effectively, which will help the childminder demonstrate how professional development leads to positive changes for children.

The childminder demonstrated safeguarding knowledge and implemented detailed policies and embedded risk assessments effectively. This consistent approach ensured children were well protected and supported their overall safety and wellbeing.

## 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 were busy, engaged, and having fun in their play. Resources and toys were appropriate to children's individual interests and stages of development. They chose to spend time doing arts and crafts, building with construction kits, mark making with chalk, and exploring sand. Children shared that their favourite things to do at the childminder's were "Lego" and "outside". Parents commented positively on their children's experiences. One advised, "My child always comes home happy and excited to tell me what fun activities [they] have been doing throughout the day". Another shared, "Variety of mindfully selected activities, adventures, lots of fun, and learning".

Children were engaged in meaningful play that reflected their interests. The childminder knew the children well and used this knowledge to plan experiences that reflected what they enjoyed. Children were also asked what they wanted to do and activities were planned based on their choices. For example, children spent time using their imagination and creativity, making pictures using different materials such as feathers, scissors, and glue. Children were confident in asking the childminder for resources they needed and the childminder supported their ideas. Children were encouraged to lead their own play and make choices, helping to build their confidence and independence. Taking part in daily routines, such as preparing snack, supported the development of children's fine motor skills and life skills.

Responsive interactions supported and extended children's play and learning. The childminder used skilled interactions to deepen children's experiences, engaging at their level and using purposeful discussion and questioning to promote their thinking. For example, when children explored chalk mark making, the childminder encouraged them to find letters in their names from letter toys, supporting emerging literacy skills. By observing children's verbal and non-verbal cues, the childminder judged when to engage and when to step back, enabling prediction, exploration, and challenge. This responsive approach, tailored to each child's age and stage, strengthened children's curiosity and enriched their learning.

Children benefitted from a childminder who had a clear understanding of how they learn and develop. Individual learning and development observations recorded within children's files supported the childminder to assess children's progress and achievements over time. Observations were regularly shared with parents, enabling them to celebrate their child's successes and discuss their ongoing development. Suitable next steps to children's learning and strategies of support were identified to further children's development and progress.

The childminder provided regular outdoor learning experiences that were enriched through strong connections with the local community. Children took part in outings to parks, groups, and trips using public transport. This supported the development of their social skills and understanding of the wider world. A floor book was used as a reflective tool to help children revisit and build on their experiences. We discussed ways to further develop this approach by strengthening children's voice, supporting the childminder to plan experiences that continue to reflect children's interests and preferences.

## 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 experienced warm and consistent care that supported their emotional wellbeing. The childminder responded sensitively to children's cues and was respectful in their interactions, supporting them to feel safe and secure. When children became upset, they were comforted and reassured, supporting their

emotional wellbeing. The childminder considered each individual child's circumstances and needs, planning their care and support around this. This approach promoted a calm and positive environment for children.

Children appeared confident around the childminder and their family, demonstrating that positive relationships had been developed. Families were warmly welcomed into the childminder's home which strengthened opportunities to build positive relationships and supported ongoing communication. The childminder valued families' input and made regular communication a priority, which allowed them to tailor children's individual care to meet their needs. Parents commented positively on their relationship with the childminder. One shared, "[The childminder] has made us feel comfortable from the very first time we met, [they are] great at communicating with us and always meets [my child's] needs". Another advised, "The most positive aspect of my child's experience is the warm, loving relationship [they have]".

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans contained information to promote children's safety and wellbeing, such as preferences and support strategies. The childminder recognised the importance of following children's individual routines and took a genuine interest in their development. For example, they made specific arrangements to accommodate children and their wishes regarding toileting and opportunities for children to rest. Plans were created in partnership with parents when children started at the service and were reviewed regularly. This ensured care and support remained aligned to children's evolving needs.

Snacks and mealtimes were sociable and unhurried. Children were actively involved in the preparation of snacks and consideration was given to their preferences. The childminder provided homecooked meals which children and families valued. One parent commented, "Great at introducing new foods for kids and there is always variety of choice". The childminder was aware of the need to sit with children to promote a safe and sociable experience, sharing that they often ate alongside children to role model positive eating habits. Children had regular access to fresh water and were encouraged to drink often, supporting them to stay hydrated.

Familiar and embedded routines helped children understand what would happen throughout the day. These routines were adapted to meet individual needs and delivered consistently, helping children move smoothly between activities. A flexible induction process helped new children and families settle in, build positive relationships, and promoted children's sense of security and belonging.

## 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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - 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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