care inspectorate

Duguid, Valerie
Child Minding

Macduff

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 February 2026

Service provided by:
Valerie Duguid

Service provider number:
SP2005952271

Service no:
CS2005108050

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

About the service

Valerie Duguid operates from their own property situated in the coastal town of Macduff, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. The parts of the premises not to be used are the two main bedrooms and overnight service will not be provided.

The service is close to a local primary schools, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children play mainly in the dining kitchen. Children have access to a fully enclosed garden at the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 February 2026 between 11:45 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:

- interacted with three children using the service
- received five completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced caring and nurturing interactions.
- Children were offered a variety of freshly prepared meals and snacks.
- Children had fun and took part in a variety of play experiences indoors, outdoors, and in the community.
- Partnerships with families were very positive and contributed to positive outcomes for children.
- The childminder was committed to ongoing professional learning and the continuous improvement of the service. This contributed to high quality care and learning experiences.

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

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 was supported in their practice by a set of policies and procedures and clear aims and objectives. They aimed to provide a safe, enjoyable, and stimulating environment for children. This was evident in daily routines and interactions and meant that families understood what the service offered and felt confident in the care their children received.

Self evaluation was used well to help develop the service. The childminder used guidance and practice documents to reflect on what was working well and to identify areas for improvement. For example, they recognised that they had developed positive connections with families through settling-in visits, daily chats, and regular updates online. They discussed further developing their service by continuing to engage in professional learning and ongoing evaluation of their practice.

Children and families were encouraged to share feedback to help ensure the service continued to meet their needs. This included completing online questionnaires. Responses were very positive and parents were very happy with the service provided. Children were asked what they wanted to do and could choose from a variety of toys and games, helping them develop independence as they made their own choices.

The childminder used ongoing professional development to support the quality assurance of their service. Training, in areas such as first aid and child protection, increased their confidence in keeping children safe. Their infection prevention and control training was reflected in the clean, well maintained home environment.

The childminder had recently joined a peer partnership programme with another childminder. This partnership supported reflective practice, discussion about policies, and learning from each other's inspection experiences. As a result, the childminder advised they felt more confident, which contributed to consistent and high quality care for children. Parents commented, "I always feel my child is safe with Valerie. She cares so well for them and their house and furnishings are clean and safe" and "The environment is always clean, safe, and well maintained. Safety measures are clearly in place and I feel reassured that my child is protected while also able to explore and play freely".

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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 happy and engaged as they explored a range of good quality toys and games. This included magnetic bricks and some small world figures that encouraged children to use their imagination. Toys and games were age-appropriate and easily accessible to the children. They were regularly rotated to help sustain children's interests and engagement. Parents advised their children were always involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences that met their individual needs and supported their development. One parent commented, "My child takes part in a wide range of activities that support their learning and

development, such as arts and crafts, sensory play, reading, and outdoor play. We love seeing what they bring home and hearing about what they've been up to. The activities are really thoughtful and suited to their age and interests, and they clearly support their learning and development".

Children had fun playing in the well resourced garden, which supported active and outdoor learning. Most toys were stored in a shed that could also be used for shelter, helping children play outdoors in all weathers. Children enjoyed "fixing" the Little Tykes cars and using the seesaw. There were resources to support imaginative and creative play using loose parts, water, and sand, and the childminder told us about activities, such as obstacle courses, which supported children's physical development. There were some opportunities for gardening activities, such as planting daffodils for spring.

Children benefitted from a range of opportunities to explore and learn in their local environment. They shared photographs from a recent trip to a farm where they had been petting lambs. This was fully risk assessed to help keep children safe. Outings to the beach and forest walks helped children develop an understanding of the world around them. They also attended groups with other childminders, which supported them to grow in confidence and build new friendships. Parents commented, "My child loves to go to the beach, park woodland walks, and play on the toys in the garden".

Children had fun interacting and playing with the childminder. The childminder modelled positive listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level. They read stories and sang nursery rhymes, which the children enjoyed and which supported early language and literacy development. Positive conversations included talking about healthy foods and identifying shapes on a poster. This helped encourage children's curiosity and supported early mathematical learning.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests. The childminder knew the children well and used this knowledge to plan learning experiences that reflected what they enjoyed. Children were also asked what they wanted to do and activities were planned based on their choices.

The childminder worked closely with children and their families to share learning. Photographs were sent online to give parents an insight into their child's experiences. Observations of children at play were used to create development plans and targets that supported their individual learning needs. This contributed to happy, engaged children who were progressing well.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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, caring interactions that supported their overall wellbeing. By speaking to children at their eye level, the childminder helped them feel safe and understood. When children became upset, they were given comfort and reassurance, helping them regulate their emotions. This nurturing approach created a calm, positive environment where children were happy.

The childminder used a flexible and individualised settling process, offering visits tailored to each child's needs. This responsive approach helped new children feel comfortable and settled in the childminder's care.

Children received consistent care that followed their home routines, including sleep, nappy changing, and toileting routines. The childminder had completed safer sleep training and a sleeping child was closely

monitored to help keep them safe. Children were well supported in their personal care and good handwashing routines were fully embedded in practice.

Children experienced positive snack and mealtime routines. They were offered healthy, well presented snacks and lunches that looked appetising. Allergies and food intolerances were well catered for. Children enjoyed helping to cut up the fruit and vegetables, which supported their self help skills and independence. The childminder sat with the children while they ate, helping to keep them safe and creating opportunities for conversation and social interaction. Water was offered to drink, helping to keep children hydrated and well. Parents commented, "Great variety and choice for my child. I'm always informed about what they have eaten each day and I love that they get to choose. [They] eat fruit at Valerie's that [they] wouldn't eat at home, so I love that" and "There is always plenty of choice with healthy foods at lunch time".

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's strong knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans contained clear information to promote children's safety and wellbeing, including details such as food allergies, likes, and dislikes. These were created in partnership with parents when children started at the service and were regularly reviewed to ensure the information remained current and up to date.

Robust care plans were in place for children with medical needs to support the safe administration of medication and ensure children were protected in the event of an emergency. Medication stored in the home was kept safely out of children's reach while remaining easily accessible to the childminder.

Strong relationships had been built with families and promoted positive outcomes for children. Daily communication was open and reassuring, giving parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's care, play, and learning. Updates and photos were shared through WhatsApp and Messenger, helping families feel well informed and confident about their child's experiences. A floorbook was also used to capture what the children had been doing and shared with families. Children enjoyed looking through it to revisit their experiences and share their learning. A parent commented, "Valerie has become like a family member to us all. We fully trust her with our child and are thankful we have such a good childminder".

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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