

Megan Urquhart Childminding Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 February 2026

Service provided by:
Megan Urquhart

Service provider number:
SP2024000137

Service no:
CS2024000116

About the service

Megan Urquhart Childminding is provided from their property in a residential area of Portlethen, Aberdeenshire. 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 own family and overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to parks and green spaces, local primary schools, shops, and other amenities. Children have access to the downstairs of the property, including the lounge, kitchen, bathroom, and a fully enclosed garden.

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

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 February 2026 between 09:45 and 14:00. 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 one response 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 experienced warm and nurturing interactions from a childminder who knew them well.
- Daily opportunities to spend time outdoors supported children's health and wellbeing.
- Children's play and learning was supported through a range of interesting and fun experiences.
- Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable. Children were actively involved in the preparation of food.
- Children and their families benefitted from daily communication to support continuity of care.
- The childminder was committed to their professional development and providing a high quality service.

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	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 and families benefitted from clear aims that created a shared vision for the service. These aims were shared with families in the handbook before starting, helping them understand what to expect. They were aspirational, including the aim to "develop self confidence and high self esteem." The childminder consistently modelled these aims, promoting an inclusive and fun environment. As the service develops, involving families in reviewing the vision, values, and aims will help ensure they remain meaningful and reflect the needs of current children and families.

Children's experiences were strengthened by the childminder's reflective approach to self evaluation. Ongoing informal feedback from children and families supported improvements, such as introducing an adjustable table so all children could sit comfortably together at mealtimes. Moving towards a more structured approach to self evaluation would help the childminder identify strengths and areas for development. They were familiar with the 'Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding' and we discussed ways to use this to evaluate their service against best practice. Continuing to gather and use feedback from children and families in different ways will further support meaningful, continuous improvement.

Quality assurance processes supported children's safety. The childminder had detailed policies in place that reflected their practice and supported the smooth running of the service. A general risk assessment identified hazards and appropriate control measures. We discussed ways to further embed risk awareness, including involving children, and signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate's 'SIMOA - Keeping Children Safe Campaign'. This would help develop children's understanding of risk and support them to learn how to keep themselves safe.

The childminder actively maintained and developed their practice through regular professional learning. This kept their knowledge up-to-date and strengthened support for children's safety, learning, and wellbeing. Engagement with a wider childminding network promoted reflective practice and supported children's learning and social experiences. The childminder welcomed feedback during the inspection to support ongoing development, helping ensure the service was well led and managed for children and families.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

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 benefitted from a well maintained, warm, and homely environment that supported their comfort and wellbeing. The lounge area offered space to extend their play and learning, while a large sofa provided a calm area to relax. Children confidently stored their belongings on pegs at the front door which they could independently access throughout the day. This supported children to be comfortable in the childminder's home and promoted their sense of belonging.

Children had access to a variety of easily accessible play resources that supported their learning. Toys were appropriate for their ages and stages of development. These include dolls, construction materials, and small world figures. Children told us their favourite toys were "babies" and "dinosaurs" which were readily available to extend their play. We suggested introducing more natural materials to further enhance children's creativity and imagination.

Children's interests directly shaped developments within the environment. The childminder adjusted and rotated resources in response to what children were currently enjoying and used observations and children's comments to develop the outdoor area. Considerable work had been undertaken in the garden, which now included a variety of surfaces such as slabs, grass, and bark. This allowed children to use vehicles, explore water play, and engage in a wider range of activities. This supported children to engage in a range of interesting play opportunities that extended their development.

Children were cared for in a clean and tidy environment. The childminder had well established routines, such as wearing gloves and apron when carrying out nappy changing, as well as supporting handwashing before and after eating. They implemented effective strategies to support children's health and safety, such as removing pets from the area while children were eating. We encouraged the childminder to consider having separate hand towels for children to prevent cross-contamination. This would further support children to be safe and well.

The childminder protected children's personal information. All records were stored securely to ensure families' privacy and confidentiality.

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 happy and content as they played. They engaged confidently in play and exploration using a variety of resources that supported their learning and development. The areas children accessed had been thoughtfully set up in an interesting way, in advance of children arriving. This demonstrated that children were valued and their needs and interests had been prioritised.

Interactions effectively promoted children's language development and curiosity. The childminder held a childcare qualification and was experienced in working with young children. This enhanced their knowledge of how children learn and develop. They used their skills and experience to extend children's thinking through strategies such as wondering aloud, modelling vocabulary, storytelling, and singing. These approaches strengthened children's communication skills and confidence. Children were also given time and freedom to lead their own play, with the childminder joining in sensitively to support and extend learning when appropriate.

Children experienced a balance of planned and responsive play. The childminder encouraged them to contribute ideas and choose activities, responding flexibly to their interests. This approach enabled the childminder to follow the children's lead and build on what motivated them. Daily routines also supported children's growing independence. For example, they were encouraged to get themselves ready for outdoor play. As a result, children developed important life skills and confidence in managing tasks independently.

Children benefitted from daily outdoor play to supported their health and wellbeing. In the outdoor mud kitchen, they used their imagination to role play familiar experiences, such as "making pancakes." They also explored water play and engaged in appropriate risky play using the climbing frame and swing set. Children's experiences were further enriched through regular outings to local parks, woods, and walks, helping develop their social skills and connection to the community. The childminder was keen to continue accessing new local areas to broaden children's play and learning opportunities.

Children's progress was supported through effective planning and recording processes. Each child had an individual book with observations that identified their developing skills and next steps in learning. The childminder planned to further develop these to enhance children's progress and plan further experiences that reflected their interests. Children's learning was also shared with families through picture messages, promoting a collaborative approach. Parents valued the regular information and range of experiences. One commented, "[The childminder] knows our child well and provides activities [they] enjoy and challenges them in an age-appropriate way."

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 were relaxed and confident in the childminder's care. Warm, responsive interactions helped them feel safe and secure, with the childminder consistently recognising their cues and engaging at their level. This nurturing approach supported children's emotional wellbeing and strengthened positive relationships. One parent described the childminder as "approachable" and said, "Our child has joined [the childminder's] family environment." This meant that families felt welcomed and supported.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans were in place for each child, which contained relevant information about children's health, preferences, and routines. These had been completed when children started and were reviewed regularly through collaboration with families. The childminder used their knowledge of children's individual needs and warm interactions to provide care which was consistent with strategies used from home.

Daily routines supported children's wellbeing. The childminder was responsive to children's cues, such as offering snack when they indicated they were hungry. Familiar routines helped children feel and know what to expect and supported smooth running of experiences. Snack times were relaxed and sociable, with opportunities for children to help prepare food and develop independence. The childminder sat with the children, supporting a safe and engaging experience. Snack and meal options reflected children's preferences and encouraged them to try new foods. Children also stayed well hydrated through easy access to their own drinking bottles.

Children were treated with kindness and respect, receiving reassurance and comfort when needed. They were soothed to sleep in familiar ways, such as using a travel cot or sleep mat, supporting their sense of security. Personal care routines, including nappy changing, respected children's privacy and dignity, with reassurance provided throughout. These positive, nurturing interactions promoted children's emotional security and overall wellbeing.

The childminder was aware of their responsibility to keep children safe. This was supported by training, including child protection and first aid. They were confident in identifying and responding to any concerns, helping to ensure children's safety. We discussed the benefits of introducing chronologies to record significant events and signposted them to relevant guidance. This would further strengthen continuity of care for children and their families.

Effective communication strengthened the quality of care children received. Parents felt welcomed and valued regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. A flexible induction process helped build positive relationships and parents were able to choose how they preferred to communicate, with all opting for daily conversations at pick-up time. Parents advised they were happy with the level of information shared, commenting that "[The childminder] gives regular updates on my child's play/learning and is happy to answer any questions." This helped families feel reassured, informed, and involved in their child's experience.

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

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Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
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Children experience high quality spaces	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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