

Claire Thomson Childminding Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 February 2026

Service provided by:
Claire Thomson

Service provider number:
SP2017989143

Service no:
CS2017357815

About the service

Claire Thomson Childminding is provided from their property in a residential area of 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 own family and overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to shops, parks, local primary school, and other amenities. Children have access to the downstairs of the property, where there is an open plan kitchen and play area, bathroom, and a fully enclosed garden.

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

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 February 2026 between 08:00 and 10:15 and between 14:45 and 16:45. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke to one of their parents/carers
- received two 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 the core assurances.

Key messages

- Children had developed positive relationships with the childminder.
- Daily communication supported continuity of care.
- Personal plans should be reviewed with children and families regularly to ensure they are kept up to date and relevant.
- Snack times were sociable and relaxed.
- Children benefitted from play opportunities that reflected their interests.
- Quality assurance and self evaluation processes should be developed to promote positive outcomes for children.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as **satisfactory/adequate**, where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The childminder had created a welcoming and homely environment. This aligned with their aims and objectives and helped families understand what to expect. However, these aims had not been reviewed for some time. Involving children and families in regularly reviewing the service's vision, values, and aims will ensure these remain relevant and reflect their needs and preferences.

Children and their families had some opportunities to influence change through ongoing communication. Positive relationships had been created through daily conversations and digital messaging. Children were regularly asked for their views and could choose from a range of toys and activities, promoting independence and choice. The childminder should continue to gather and use feedback from children and families to drive continuous improvement and enhance positive outcomes.

Self evaluation and quality assurance processes had not led to sustained improvement. Although one previous area for improvement had been addressed, two remained outstanding. This meant some information was out of date and required review to ensure it aligned with current guidance. We discussed the benefits of using quality audit tools and best practice guidance and signposted the childminder to the 'Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding'. This would support identifying strengths, target areas for development, and plan actions that would improve outcomes for children. Reviewing risk assessments and policies in line with current guidance would further support consistent and effective implementation within the service. An area for improvement was made at the previous inspection and has been reworded (see area for improvement 1) (see also section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' of this report).

Training opportunities, such as child protection and first aid, supported the childminder's confidence in keeping children safe. Embedding meaningful self evaluation will help identify professional learning priorities that reflect the evolving needs of children and the service. The childminder was aware of the Care Inspectorate Hub and received provider updates. Making regular use of these resources and best practice guidance will further support continuous improvement and enhance outcomes for children (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support positive outcomes for children and families, the childminder should develop self evaluation and quality assurance processes.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) Gathering and using children and families' views to inform change.
- b) Developing a self evaluation process to support improvement.

c) Accessing development opportunities to support their knowledge of best practice guidance and updating policies to reflect this.

d) Reviewing risk assessing processes, involving children where relevant.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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 were engaged and having fun in their play. The childminder knew their individual interests and was responsive to their ideas. Children could independently choose from a range of activities, including puzzles, arts and crafts, and stories. Parents commented positively on the range of experiences. One parent advised the most positive aspect was "Opportunities to discover new games/activities". This promoted confidence, independence, and choice, supporting positive play experiences.

Activities and resources were carefully considered to ensure they were age-appropriate and stimulating. Children were able to choose from some toys and resources which were linked to their interests. One commented, "I like all of the toys, games, and books, and that my friends [come here]". The childminder advised that they had introduced a wider variety of resources, such as role play equipment, to support imaginative play. We discussed with the childminder that there was further scope to develop the use of open-ended, real life resources to further enhance children's experiences and support their creativity.

Children were engaged through the childminder's responsive approach to play. By regularly seeking their views and offering choice, the childminder enabled children to learn at their own pace. Positive and well timed interactions, such as offering support when a child explored a puzzle and stepping back to let them explore, helped maintain challenge and motivation. This approach strengthened children's problem solving skills and built their confidence.

Planning approaches were informal and centred on children's interests and routines. Open communication helped maintain strong links between home and the setting. Children developed key skills through purposeful play, including literacy through writing materials, books, and word-based puzzles, and numeracy through indoor and outdoor board games. The childminder recognised children's achievements and understood their developmental needs. We discussed strengthening how children's learning is tracked, including involving children more actively in reflecting on their progress. This would support continuing to plan experiences for children's interests and ongoing development.

Children benefitted from regular outdoor access, with free-flow use of the garden, supporting independent exploration. Resources, such as torches, were used to spark curiosity and regular visits to local parks and shops helped strengthen children's connection to their community and sense of belonging.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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 were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. Interactions were kind and caring, which supported children to feel comfortable. These nurturing interactions supported children's emotional wellbeing and development of positive relationships. Parents described the childminder as "welcoming" and "understanding", and a child advised that "[the childminder] looks after us well".

The childminder was knowledgeable about children and their families' needs. Regular communication and information sharing through daily conversations and messages supported continuity of care. Children's personal plans contained basic information, such as contact details and medical needs and some information about their preferences. However, these had not been reviewed with parents every six months as required by legislation. This increased the potential to miss key information to fully support children's changing needs. We asked the childminder to review children's personal plans with parents, and children where suitable, and they agreed to action this. An area for improvement was made at the last inspection to develop personal plans and will be reworded (see area for improvement 1) (see also section 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection' of this report).

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. The childminder provided snacks which children had been involved in choosing and catered to their preferences. Children were encouraged to be involved in the preparation of snacks. They shared examples of recent food related experiences they had taken part in, making pancakes together for breakfast. This supported children's independence and the development of their life skills. Children sat at the table with the childminder, which promoted a calm and sociable experience.

Child-centred routines supported children to feel secure and confident. The childminder prepared children for daily activities and transitions, using drop-off and pick-up times to build positive relationships with families. Parents valued the flexibility offered to children in following their interests. One parent shared, "My child often takes a book to read and is able to just do this instead of taking part in group activities when [they like]". This approach promoted children's choice and sense of being listened to.

The childminder was aware of their responsibility to keep children safe, which was supported by child protection and first aid training. They were confident in identifying and responding to any concerns, helping to support children's safety. We advised updating the child protection policy to reflect current guidance and practice and discussed introducing chronologies to record significant events, further strengthening children's wellbeing.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should review all personal plans with parents, and children where possible, at least every six months. This will ensure they hold the most up to date information about each child and identify how children's needs will be met.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); and 'My personal plan

(sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure minded children's health, safety, and wellbeing needs are recorded and met by the childminder, the childminder should continue to develop each child's personal plan.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder had developed their personal plans to include some information about children's likes and interests. However, these had not been reviewed regularly which meant there was a potential for the information to no longer be relevant and limited opportunities to plan for children's individual interests and needs. We signposted the childminder to 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning' to support them with updating these to reflect current guidance.

This area for improvement has not been met and has been reworded under heading 'Children are supported to achieve'.

Previous area for improvement 2

In order to provide children with high quality play experiences, the childminder should review and improve the resources available.

This to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation, and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30); and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self esteem, and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder had introduced some new resources since the previous inspection. For example, a variety of role play materials, such as dressing up and play food. The childminder advised this had supported children's imaginative play and widened their experiences, linked to real life scenarios. Children were also involved in selecting some new resources during the inspection, such as books. Children shared the specific books they

would like and the childminder was responsive to their requests. These opportunities promoted quality play experiences for children in line with their interests.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should develop a robust process which evaluates her service.

This is to ensure that the childminder works to the best practice standards within the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 February 2019.

Action taken since then

The childminder sought children and their families' views informally through daily conversations. However, there were limited opportunities to evaluate the service against best practice guidance. Developing a more systemic approach would promote a culture of improvement and reflection. We signposted the childminder to 'A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding' and discussed ways to involve children and their families in evaluating the quality of the service. Use of structured self evaluation would provide further opportunities to improve the service and involving parents in this process would enhance transparency and strengthen collaborative improvement.

This area for improvement has not been met and has been reworded under heading 'Leadership'.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.