

# Amy's Childminding Child Minding

Peterhead

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 February 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Amy Dignan

**Service provider number:**  
SP2024000435

**Service no:**  
CS2024000255

## About the service

Amy's Childminding provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire. The childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than six are under 12 years; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

The service is close to green spaces, shops and other amenities such as the library. Children have access to the living room, playroom, kitchen and an enclosed back garden.

Up to five children were present at the time of the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 February 2026 between 08:20 and 13:20. 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 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 five responses to our request for feedback from families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with the childminder
- 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 at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families very well.
- Children experienced very warm and responsive care meaning they felt safe and loved.
- The childminder had a very good understanding of how children develop and learn which was reflected in the experiences offered.
- The childminder made good use of the outdoors, at their home and in the wider community.
- The childminder should now engage with the new quality improvement framework for childminding and document developments, sharing these with children and families.

## 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 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 5 - Very 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.

The childminder had a clear set of visions, values, and aims centred on providing a nurturing, home from home environment, where children were placed at the heart of the service. This ethos was clearly reflected during the inspection, with children appearing relaxed, happy, and confident. Interactions were warm and responsive, demonstrating that these values were embedded in daily practice. We discussed the benefits of reviewing the vision, values, and aims to ensure they reflect the experiences and contributions of the children and families currently using the service, and exploring ways to promote these actively within day to day routines.

The childminder actively sought and responded to the views of children and families, using these to shape ongoing improvements. They listened to children's suggestions and made thoughtful changes. For example, when older children shared that they did not want to use toys which they felt was for younger children, the childminder introduced a "today's choices" board to support decision making and independence. They also sourced additional age appropriate games and resources to engage older children before and after school. Families were invited to complete questionnaires, and feedback was positive, highlighting strong relationships, high quality outdoor experiences, and the value of receiving photos and updates. When suggestions were made, the childminder responded promptly. For instance, after a parent proposed that their child might settle better if supported into an activity first, the childminder adapted practice by leaving the inside door open, and welcoming parents into the setting at drop off.

Parents reported feeling meaningfully involved in developing the service, through questionnaires and through children being asked regularly about preferred activities, with suggestions acted upon. This demonstrated a commitment to partnership working.

The childminder had been engaging with the quality framework to identify and monitor areas for development. They reflected on their practice, including reviewing resources after several months of operation. This led to the introduction of more open ended and realistic materials in line with theory, which supported increased engagement, problem solving, and collaboration among children. Moving forward, the childminder should consider using the new quality improvement framework for childminders and documenting improvements more formally through observations and photographs. Involving children and families more actively in the improvement process would strengthen shared ownership and demonstrate clear progress over time.

Quality assurance processes were in place to support the smooth running of the service. The childminder had a range of regularly reviewed policies which had been shared with parents. Training completed was relevant to the needs of the service, and the childminder reflected on how new learning could enhance outcomes. For example, after infection control training, they introduced individual coloured flannels for hand drying, which children used confidently during the inspection. The childminder also engaged with best practice guidance such as 'Realising the Ambition', using it to support planning and the use of floor books. Children enjoyed contributing to these and using them to revisit and reflect on their learning. Overall, the childminder demonstrated a reflective approach to professional practice, strengthening the quality and consistency of the service.

## 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.

The home was welcoming, cosy, and homely, providing a comfortable environment for children. The childminder used the whole house to support their service, giving children access to the living room, a dedicated playroom, the kitchen, bathroom, and a bedroom for sleep. Children were relaxed and at ease as they moved around the available spaces, confidently accessing the resources they needed to support their play. Resources were stored on shelves, in boxes, and in baskets at children's level, enabling independence and choice. Through reflection and engagement with best practice documents, the childminder had updated the play materials to include more open-ended and real life resources. As a result, they had noticed that children were more engaged in their play, demonstrated increased problem solving, and showed greater collaboration with one another.

Despite heavy rain during the inspection, children were keen to play outdoors. Wearing waterproof suits and wellies, they explored water, mixing and pouring, making patterns in the wet sand, and engaging in sensory and investigative play. Having focused on developing the indoor environment, the childminder had identified the outdoor space as their next area for improvement. In addition to the home environment, the childminder made effective use of the local area, regularly visiting Aden Park, the local library, and nearby shops. These experiences helped children become familiar with the wider world and supported their confidence in different environments.

As part of ongoing outdoor development, we discussed the importance of providing opportunities for risky play and involving children in simple, age appropriate risk assessments. This would help them begin to understand risk, make safe decisions, and learn how to keep themselves safe during challenging play experiences. Risk assessments were already in place and reviewed regularly, supporting safe practice. We directed the childminder to benefit risk assessments to further strengthen this area, particularly when new outdoor equipment is added or when accessing the local community.

The childminder had clear safety practices in place. Infection prevention and control (IPC) training had been completed, and good hand washing routines were being practiced. The environment was clean, well maintained and safe for children. Personal care was carried out sensitively and hygienically. Children were changed on a wipeable mat on the changing unit, with PPE being used appropriately. The childminder cleaned the area afterwards, and both the childminder and child washed their hands together, modelling and reinforcing good hygiene. The childminder was nurturing and respectful during nappy changes, asking the child for permission before beginning and gently taking their hand. The changing area was positioned to maintain children's privacy and dignity. Accident and incident forms were completed thoroughly, stored appropriately, and signed by both the childminder and parents. These practices supported children to stay safe, healthy, and well cared for within the setting.

Diversity was positively reflected within the childminder's resources. The childminder shared that they currently cared for a bilingual child. The child often used Italian words during play that the childminder did not initially understand. As they purchased Italian-English books to share with the child and learn key words together. This supported communication, showed respect for the child's home language, and helped the child feel understood and valued. During the inspection, other children were also seen exploring this book, showing natural interest and curiosity about different languages.

## Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

### Quality Indicator: Play, 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**.

The childminder had successfully completed a relevant qualification and had previously worked as a practitioner in day care before establishing their childminding service. Their background included experience with babies and preschool aged children, although working with older children was new to them. Despite this, the childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development theory, reflected in the quality of resources and experiences offered. Training and professional reading continued to strengthen their knowledge, enabling them to confidently adapt experiences to support a broader age range.

Children were motivated and engaged throughout the inspection. Younger children moved naturally between activities in line with their developmental stage, accessing resources confidently and using them purposefully. They showed clear enjoyment in exploring cause and effect toys, such as a jack in the box bunny, eagerly anticipating it popping up. They also enjoyed using a voice recording toy repeatedly, delighting in hearing their voices being played back. The childminder's passion for outdoor play was evident. Despite heavy rain, children spent time outdoors filling tubs and a watering can, creating puddles and engaging in sensory play. This demonstrated the childminder's commitment to daily outdoor experiences regardless of weather. Indoors and outdoors, children were encouraged to be creative and expressive, from collaborative drawing on a large whiteboard to energetic dancing and movement, supporting creativity, problem solving, and physical development.

Singing and sharing books formed a natural part of play, and the childminder actively promoted this. When a child approached the instruments, the childminder encouraged song choices, leading to interactive singing with puppets and familiar rhymes such as Incy Wincy Spider and The Wheels on the Bus. Children confidently copied actions and repeated key words, supporting communication and early language. Books were also used meaningfully; particularly lift the flap stories that encouraged prediction and engagement. The childminder supported early numeracy through everyday opportunities, such as counting steps on the slide. These interactions demonstrated the use of everyday play to promote early language, literacy, and numeracy naturally and appropriately.

The childminder's interactions supported children's learning effectively. They balanced stepping back along with intervening when needed, allowing exploration while remaining fully available at the children's level. Outdoors, a child repeatedly sought support to fill a tub with water, demonstrating early problem solving, which the childminder sensitively facilitated. Commentary and modelling were used effectively, such as demonstrating how to attach a trailer to a tractor or how to scoop stones with a digger. The childminder also extended play naturally, for example encouraging puddle making by jumping in puddles saying "splash, splash, splash," leading to shared fun, laughter, and rich learning opportunities.

Intentional and responsive planning was evident. Floor books captured children's experiences through dated entries, photos, children's mark making, and links to Curriculum for Excellence. Children's interests shaped planned experiences, such as exploring hibernation through a visit to Aden Museum and building a hedgehog nest. Floor books were accessible for children to revisit, supporting recall for younger children and questioning for older children.

The childminder shared daily diaries and photos with parents, who valued these updates. Six-monthly reviews were introduced following parental request, supporting shared goals and next steps. We discussed strengthening observations to focus on significant learning. The childminder also worked with other professionals, such as a speech and language therapist, ensuring consistency across settings and helping children reach their full potential.

## 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**.

The childminder was very warm and responsive in their interactions with children. Young children were supported to express their needs and frequently sought the childminder's help, showing they felt secure and comfortable. Children used the childminder's name often and naturally invited them into their play, with the childminder joining them on the floor and showing genuine interest in what they were doing. A strong bond had clearly been formed between the childminder and the children. This was particularly evident when one child approached the childminder for a cuddle, not because they were upset, but simply seeking closeness and comfort. The childminder had also developed trusting relationships with older children, taking time to listen to their thoughts and feelings. For example, when an older child shared their feelings around school, the childminder listened and supported this. The childminder discussed this with the family and suggested a supportive idea which has since been put in place and was working well. This demonstrated the childminder's thoughtful, individualised approach to supporting children's confidence, interests and

wellbeing.

Transitions were managed naturally and calmly, helping children understand what was happening next without the need for formal cues. The childminder spoke gently with children to prepare them for upcoming changes. For example, they said, "I'm going to get the little ones' suits on, you have five more minutes to play your game," allowing children time to finish activities. Children were familiar with routines and responded well to them. After returning from the school run, children headed straight to the kitchen, recognising it was time for snack, and the childminder followed their lead. They also knew the routine for going outdoors, with one child saying, "Wellies, wellies!" as they prepared. These predictable transitions supported children to feel safe, secure, and confident.

Medication was stored safely in a locked cupboard, with each child's medication in a clearly labelled box. Written consent and administration forms were in place. We discussed the benefit of including signs and symptoms for medication and ensuring parents review and sign records at least every three months. The childminder demonstrated good knowledge around safeguarding and understood the importance of recording significant events in children's chronologies, helping ensure concerns would be identified and responded to promptly.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. The childminder sat with the children during lunch, promoting good supervision, social interaction and language development. Snacks and lunches were provided by parents, and the childminder supported healthy choices by sharing 'Setting the Table guidance' with parents. Additional fruit was always available for children who were still hungry. Younger children were encouraged to feed themselves, promoting independence. Children also enjoyed baking and preparing food, such as making pizzas, often going with the childminder to buy ingredients. These experiences helped children develop early skills and enjoy meaningful, hands on learning.

Personal plans were in place and updated regularly in partnership with parents, ensuring they reflected each child's current needs. The childminder used the wellbeing indicators to provide a holistic overview and treated personal plans as working documents, dating updates clearly. We discussed ensuring that the dates of reviews undertaken with parents were consistently recorded. The approach to personal planning was effective, and strengthening the consistency of recorded review dates would further enhance the clarity and quality of the documentation. Parents told us they had strong, trusting relationships with the childminder and felt welcomed and involved in discussions about their child's care and learning. One parent shared, "[The childminder] is approachable, friendly and professional and has accommodated last minute changes [which] helped enormously." Another commented, "I always feel welcome and [the childminder] is happy to discuss anything at any time. My [child] is happy and settled." The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to creating positive, meaningful connections that contributed to children's wellbeing.

## 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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
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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