

# Leona Dean Childminder Child Minding

Inverness

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
26 January 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Leona Dean

**Service provider number:**  
SP2012984044

**Service no:**  
CS2012311554

## About the service

Leona Dean Childminder is a childminding service situated in the Westhill area of Inverness. The service is provided from the childminder's home.

The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of four children aged under 16 years old.

The service is situated in a residential area near shops, a primary school, local woods, play parks and other amenities. The children are cared for in a detached family home and have access to a lounge/dining/kitchen area and a downstairs toilet. The garden is not registered for use during childminding business hours.

Three young children were being minded during our inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 January 2026 between 09:00 and 11:30. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke/spent time with children using the service
- received two completed questionnaires received from families/carers of children
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within Leadership and management of staff and resources.

**Key messages**

- Children were enabled to feel secure, happy and confident as the childminder was responsive to their immediate needs.
- Children were generally content and settled during play although limited resources reduced their ability to lead and make choices about their play.
- The childminder should now develop formal quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, to support continual improvement to meet children's needs effectively and promote positive outcomes.
- Further training and professional reading would help enable the childminder to deliver practice which is current and reflects best practice documents.
- We made a requirement that the childminder addresses gaps in their understanding of their professional responsibilities in relation to registered conditions.

**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	2 - Weak
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

## Leadership 2 - Weak

We made an evaluation of weak for this quality indicator, as there were some strengths but these were compromised by important weaknesses.

### Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder invited parents to provide some feedback about how well the service met the needs of their family. In response to our digital survey, a parent told us, "Leona is often looking for feedback on anyway she can improve my children's experience with her." We discussed with the childminder how this information, used in a meaningful way, could provide opportunities to reflect on and evaluate aspects of the service. This feedback was not always incorporated into a self-evaluation process that was supported by the use of best practice documents to strengthen knowledge and skills. This would enable improvements to be identified to influence positive impacts on children's outcomes.

Approaches to reflecting on and improving practice were not fully effective. As a result, some aspects of practice did not align with best practice guidance, which impacted the quality of children's play, learning and development. We signposted them to Realising the Ambition: Being Me and A Quality improvement framework for the early learning sectors: childminding, to support understanding of developmental play and reflective quality assurance.

**(See section, What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection, area for improvement 3).**

Quality assurance processes to identify service strengths and areas for improvement were at a basic level. The childminder was reflective about some aspects of their practice, for example, giving consideration to developing an emergency contact system for outings. Thought should now be given about how this is discussed and agreed with parents. This would be to ensure that children's safety, protection and that personal information is effectively managed in accordance with data protection legislation.

We found some gaps in the childminder's understanding of their professional responsibilities. Some aspects of the service, affecting the registered conditions, needed immediate action as they had the potential to affect children's safety and overall wellbeing. These included complying with the registered conditions related to use of the childminder's garden, as stated on the registration certificate. We advised the childminder of their responsibilities and made a requirement as a result.

**(See requirement 1).**

### Requirements

1.

By 01 May 2026, the provider must, at a minimum ensure that they are adhering to registered conditions including:

- a) Ensuring the certificate of registration is displayed in the home while the service is provided so that the children's parents and carers can read it.
- b) Complying with conditions of registration stated on the registration certificate.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes." (HSCS 3.14)

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

### Children experience high quality spaces

Children were cared for in a safe and secure home that was warm, welcoming, and well maintained. The environment benefited from plenty of natural light and opportunities for ventilation. Surfaces used for food preparation were clean and tidy.

The childminder's home was comfortably furnished, which supported children to feel relaxed and secure, contributing to a positive environment. During the inspection children sat at an adult-sized bench to eat snack at a large dining table. The bench seating was not suitable for the younger age group attending the service that day as it increased the risk of a fall. The childminder identified that a child height table would have been more appropriate but had not ensured that this was available when younger children were present. The childminder could consider that seating arrangements reflect the age and stage of the children attending the service.

While the childminder recognised the benefits of outdoor play and made use of the local environment the quality of these experiences was unclear. We discussed how this could be improved. The childminder was keen to consider submitting a variation to enable their garden to be included in their registered conditions. This would ensure it can be used safely to enhance children's play, learning and development experiences.

Some infection prevention and control practices should be strengthened to benefit children's overall health and wellbeing. At times, children had to wait to have their hands washed. This led to playdough being spread onto surfaces and increased cleaning demands. The childminder talked through their nappy changing routine. We advised that infection prevention and control risk assessment and measures should follow up to date guidance, particularly for children under two years old. A previous area for improvement relation to infection prevention and control remains in place.

**(See section, What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection, area for improvement 2).**

The range of play resources and equipment was limited, which meant children did not always have sufficient variety to spark their interest or keep them fully engaged. A broader variety of materials would have enriched children's play experiences and supported them to explore, experiment, and follow their natural curiosity. Limited resources reduced opportunities for children to develop social skills, including sharing. A previous area for improvement relating to improving outcomes and experiences for children through robust quality assurance processes remains in place.

(See section, What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection, area for improvement 3).

## Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

### Playing, learning and developing

Three young children were generally content and settled during play. A limited range of toys, resources and materials led to reduced opportunities for exploration, creativity and imaginative play. There were few open ended play experiences which meant that children's ability to develop their knowledge, understanding and natural curiosity was not fully supported. We signposted the childminder to the national curriculum document, Realising the Ambition, to promote professional understanding of developmental play. (See section, Leadership and management of staff and resources).

Children's ability to lead and make choices about their play was reduced as there were limited resources available for them to select from. A wider range of materials, alongside improved storage arrangements, would enhance accessibility and enable the childminder to support children's emerging interests responsively. Children enjoyed a sensory play experience with playdough. There was scope to increase the variety of sensory and play experiences offered.

While there were some opportunities for children to develop early language, literacy and numeracy skills and understanding, these could be strengthened. For example, a larger variety of drawing and mark making materials could be provided for further exploration. Developing the use of high quality interactions, such as wondering, extending and explaining could support children to build vocabulary and deepen understanding.

Regular visits to the local community, such as the library, play parks, woods and the shore, helped children form connections to their community and the environment. These experiences could be further strengthened by linking activities to further learning, such as exploring books or videos related to what they observe outdoors.

Although the childminder used informal observations to understand children's interests and perspectives, these could be developed further to identify progress and next steps more effectively. Using best practice guidance, including Realising the Ambition, would support the development of effective observations.

## Children are supported to achieve

## 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

### Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring interactions which fostered their wellbeing and helped them form good attachments with the childminder. Children were enabled to feel secure, happy and confident as the childminder was responsive to their immediate needs. As a result, children readily sought reassurance and comfort from the childminder. This was supporting the three young minded children to develop self-regulation.

Children enjoyed a sociable and relaxed snack time. Children's food was served, from their lunch boxes, onto plates which added to the homely experience. The childminder was attentive and focused on children to ensure they ate safely. Some fruit was not prepared in accordance with best practice guidance. Further steps should now be taken to minimise the risk of choking. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate's Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children document.

Children's basic care and wellbeing needs were being met. The childminder knew children's individual needs and preferences. There were in the process of transferring children's personal planning information onto a digital platform. Some basic care information reflected children's current eating and sleeping routines. The childminder could consider continue adding to children's basic personal information, seeking regular input from parents to reflect their young children's changing needs. Developing this information further should contribute to creating detailed and accurate records that effectively support each child's care, play and development. This information should be updated as needed and reviewed with parents within regular timescales.

## 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

To keep children safe and healthy and to promote their wellbeing, the childminder should improve infection prevention and control measures.

This includes but is not limited to:

a) ensuring through effective and consistent supervision that correct and effective

handwashing routines are maintained  
b) appropriate use of PPE for personal care.

This is to ensure that infection prevention and control practices are consistent with the Health Protection Scotland document: 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)'.  
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

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**This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Children were well supervised when washing their hands which ensured that handwashing was effective. Children had to wait to have their hands washed after some messy play. We discussed with the childminder how this could be better managed.

We were not able to observe personal care being delivered to children during our inspection. We asked the childminder to talk us through their procedures for carrying out personal care. They were able to tell us about measures that they took during personal care to reduce the risk of cross infection. We advised the childminder fully risk assess infection prevention and control in accordance with best practice guidance. To support this process, we signposted the childminder to the Public Health Scotland document, Health protection in children and young people settings, including education.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health and wellbeing the childminder should review and improve their practice to ensure children are safe around their dogs. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring effective infection prevention and control measures are in place
- b) reviewing and improving practice to reduce any potential risks to children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Some infection prevention and control measures had been taken to reduce the risks to children's health and safety around the childminder's pets. For example, food and water bowls were not visible or accessible to children during childminding hours.

To further support children's health and safety, the childminder should review their pet policy to ensure children's needs are met and the wishes of families are reflected. We found that measures to keep pets out of the childcare space, were not always effective, and a pet accessed seating used by children. Without reinforcing strategies to reduce associated risks, there was an increased risk that children could be exposed to potential cross infection.

The childminder should consistently review their practice as part self-evaluation and quality assurance processes.

**(See sections, Leadership and management of staff and resources, and, in this section, area for improvement 3).**

This should include effectively assessing risks and reducing infection prevention and control risks where children and pets are sharing the same spaces.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

### Previous area for improvement 3

To improve outcomes and experiences for children, quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, should be developed. The childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance and use this to support them to reflect and plan for continuous improvement.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) regular opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation of practice
- b) regular monitoring of the quality of children's experiences and care, including personal planning.

This is to ensure that staff knowledge, skills and understanding are consistent with national practice guidance for early years in Scotland, "Realising the Ambition: Being Me".

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and '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 23 February 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Emerging practice of reflective thinking was evident. The childminder was not yet supporting their reflections with current best practice guidance. This would deepen and update their understanding and knowledge about quality experiences and care for children. As a result, some experiences were having a limited impact on their learning and development. The childminder should use the best practice guidance documents highlighted to them to enable identification of improvements that can be made to aspects of their practice and service.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

## 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	2 - Weak
Leadership and management of staff and resources	2 - Weak
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children experience high quality spaces	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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