

Carter, Karon Child Minding

Peterhead

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 March 2026

Service provided by:
Karon Carter

Service provider number:
SP2004932221

Service no:
CS2004073160

About the service

Karon Carter provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. The childminder may care for 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 the childminder's family.

The service is close to the local primary schools and green spaces. Children have access to the dining kitchen, living room and a fully enclosed 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 05 March 2026 between 08:30 and 12:30. 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 12 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 well.
- Children experienced warm and caring interactions from the childminder.
- The setting made good use of the outdoors, at their home and in the wider community.
- Quality assurance practices could be improved to promote a culture of continuous improvement and 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	4 - Good
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 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.

The childminder had a set of vision, values and aims in place, which included providing a safe, homely and caring environment where children feel relaxed and enjoy their time. This was clearly evident during the inspection, as children were observed to be comfortable, confident and engaged within the setting. The childminder should now consider reviewing and updating these statements in partnership with children and families, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. Going forward, exploring additional ways to promote and embed the vision, values and aims within daily practice will help strengthen shared understanding across the service.

The childminder took children's and families' views into account when planning and delivering the service. They shared examples of actively listening to children and incorporating their ideas into daily experiences. For example, during snack time, when a child asked for lemon segments, the childminder responded to this, offering this choice to the wider group. This created a valuable sensory experience and demonstrated responsiveness to children's interests. The childminder had issued questionnaires to families during the settling in period and when children were leaving the service. However, there had been no recent feedback gathered from current families. Parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the service. One parent shared; "If there are any changes required [the childminder] would always discuss them fully and accept any feedback." Another said; "[The childminder will ask about my [child] and she knows what [they] like and dislike." The childminder demonstrated responsiveness to children's interests and positive engagement with families. The service would however benefit from establishing more regular and ongoing methods for gathering feedback from current families to support continuous improvement.

The childminder was reviewing and developing their service. For example, the childminder had identified that children would benefit from additional sensory experiences. In response, they created a sensory box, which had a positive impact on supporting children to regulate. This demonstrated the childminder's ability to reflect and respond to children's needs in practice. The childminder was aware of the new quality improvement framework (QIF) for childminding and had attended the Care Inspectorate's webinar to support their understanding. However, they had not yet begun to meaningfully engage with the framework to drive improvement. We discussed how the QIF could be used to support the childminder in identifying, evidencing and evaluating areas for development, with a focus on improving outcomes for children. The childminder should consider sharing these developments with children and families to promote transparency celebrate progress and strengthen partnership working (see area for improvement 1).

Quality assurance processes were in place to support the smooth running of the service. The childminder used a diary effectively to organise reviews, training and daily tasks, contributing to a well structured and consistent approach. The childminder also had a range of policies in place, which had been recently reviewed. Some required further updating to align with current best practice guidance, which the childminder had already begun to address. The childminder had completed core training and engaged in webinars to support their knowledge and professional development. They kept written notes from training sessions, providing a valuable resource for ongoing reference. This approach could be strengthened further by revisiting notes to reflect on whether it had improved practice or outcomes for children. The childminder demonstrated awareness of relevant best practice guidance, such as 'Setting the Table', and this knowledge had a positive influence on the quality of snacks provided. For example, offering natural yoghurt with fruit reflected a thoughtful approach to nutrition, and children responded positively by requesting this again. Overall, the childminder had established effective elements of quality assurance. Further strengthening reflective processes and ensuring consistent alignment with best practice guidance would support continuous improvement across the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To support improvement to the service and ensure positive outcomes for children, the childminder should develop quality assurance practices. This should include but is not limited to;

a) Implementing a self-evaluation process to support improvement, including the use of the new 'quality improvement framework for childminding' and involving children and families in developments.

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: Play, 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.

The childminder engaged with a range of relevant webinars that strengthened their understanding of current theory and best practice in child development, play and learning. These learning opportunities signposted them to 'Realising the Ambition', which encouraged reflection on how theoretical guidance influenced their day to day practice. The childminder explained that this professional learning helped them notice children's interests more readily and offer experiences that promoted challenge, perseverance, and resilience. As their knowledge deepened, they were able to plan experiences that were developmentally appropriate and aligned with children's emerging skills. This demonstrated that professional learning was being applied effectively to improve practice.

Children were motivated and engaged in their play throughout the inspection. They accessed resources confidently, using them well to extend their play and explore their ideas. Although some resources were stored upstairs, children were comfortable about requesting these when needed, showing they felt secure and able to influence their environment. To further promote choice, the childminder created a photo book of available toys, enabling children to select visually. This approach had proven particularly effective for an older child who had previously been less engaged. During the visit, children showed interest in a range of play experiences, including animals, vehicles, storybooks, games, and drawing. Although outdoor play did not occur on the day, children regularly accessed the enclosed garden and enjoyed walks in the local area, evidenced by their expressed desire to go for a walk in the afternoon of our visit. Children benefited from a varied environment that supported curiosity, choice and sustained engagement.

A range of age appropriate resources supported children's early literacy and numeracy development. Children chose from a bag of library books and enjoyed shared reading experiences with the childminder, helping develop early language and literacy. They also accessed mark making materials independently, spending time drawing pictures of castles. Numeracy was naturally embedded in play; for example, during a fishing game, children counted how many items they had caught to determine the winner. This helped develop counting skills and early number awareness in a meaningful and enjoyable way. These opportunities supported children's early learning well.

The childminder's interactions made a positive contribution to children's development. They observed play and intervened at appropriate moments to model skills, ask questions, and gently extend learning. When children explored Russian dolls, the childminder demonstrated how to stack them before the children continued independently, showing perseverance and problem solving. While sorting coloured sea creatures with tweezers, the childminder added a simple game by asking a child to find certain animals. This encouraged another child to enthusiastically join the game. These responsive and well judged interactions supported children to remain engaged, challenged, and successful.

The childminder used intentional and responsive planning to shape children's experiences. Seasonal activities and community outings, such as arranging RNLI boat tour tickets, provided meaningful learning beyond the home. Planning also followed children's interests, such as incorporating penguin themed activities for one child and vehicle based play for another. This ensured experiences were relevant and motivating. This reflected a thoughtful and child centred approach to planning. We discussed the potential use of floor books to record and share learning, which could help children revisit and reflect.

The childminder shared children's experiences with parents using WhatsApp, offering regular updates on play and activities. However, observations were not yet clearly linked to developmental progress or next steps. The childminder should streamline their system to ensure observations, trackers, and next steps are meaningfully connected. This would strengthen partnership working and support a clearer understanding of each child's development.

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.

The childminder was warm and responsive in their interactions with the children. Children were supported to express their needs confidently and showed no hesitation in asking for support when required. They used the childminder's name naturally throughout the day and frequently invited them into their play. The childminder consistently joined children at their level on the floor, demonstrating genuine interest and helping to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where children felt valued. They were attentive to children's cues and responded sensitively, reinforcing the bonds that had clearly developed. Children displayed trust and curiosity in their interactions, often showing interest in what the childminder and other family members were doing, further highlighting the secure attachments in place.

Transitions were supported naturally. The childminder used regular conversation to prepare children for what to expect next, rather than relying on formal cues. This included asking if children felt ready for mealtimes and discussing plans for a walk. Children were familiar with the routine for getting ready for school and demonstrated independence in locating their belongings. One child expressed excitement about arriving earlier the following day to join the 'school run', demonstrating their sense of involvement and enjoyment in the daily routine. Hand washing routines before and after eating could be strengthened to align more closely with good infection prevention practice. Despite this, the consistent and predictable routines in place contributed to children feeling safe, secure and confident.

The childminder demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Discussion took place around the importance of keeping chronologies separate from general logs to ensure information could be effectively monitored and followed up when required. Accident and incident records were appropriately completed and contained all necessary information. Risk assessments were in place and reviewed regularly, contributing to a safe environment. The childminder was signposted to benefit risk assessment approaches to further strengthen practice, particularly outdoors. Implementing these would help ensure that opportunities for challenge are not restricted while enabling children to learn how to assess and manage risk safely.

Children were safe and well supervised during mealtimes. The childminder sat beside children at a small table, which encouraged positive interactions. However, sitting and eating with children would further promote a relaxed and unhurried mealtime experience. The childminder shared that this happened when they sat together in the kitchen. Families provided lunches, and the childminder supplied snacks after school. Although 'Setting the Table' guidance had been shared with families, there remained scope to promote this further. Older children benefited from undertaking the role as 'snack helper', choosing and preparing snacks, serving others and tidying up, which promoted responsibility and independence. Tools such as a snack photo book and a preference list helped children make informed choices. During holidays, children also enjoyed preparing simple meals, such as making pizza together. Overall, mealtimes were positive and sociable, supporting children's independence and choice.

Personal plans were in place and supported children's care and wellbeing. Parents regularly shared updates through WhatsApp, keeping the childminder informed. These changes however were not always reflected clearly in the written plans. The childminder had already made changes to ensure updates were recorded, dated and reviewed with parents at least every six months. Using wellbeing indicators to form a holistic overview from the outset would further support planning. The childminder knew the children well and welcomed parents daily, maintaining positive communication and strong relationships. A flexible approach, including offering additional hours, when possible, provided valuable support to families.

Parents told us they had a strong relationship with the childminder. One parent said; "I feel [the childminder] is more like a friend than just my childminder. I fully trust [them] with my [child] and know that [they] would always have my [child's] best interests at heart. I feel like I could discuss any concerns I had about my [child] with [them]". Another shared; 'Warm, friendly and welcoming setting where inclusion and diversity is welcomed, creativeness is nurtured and consistency is key.' These positive and trusting relationships demonstrated that the childminder had established strong, nurturing partnerships that supported children's wellbeing and family confidence.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
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

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