

# Francis, Mairi Child Minding

Fraserburgh

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
5 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Mairi Francis

**Service provider number:**  
SP2008971797

**Service no:**  
CS2008185848

## About the service

Mairi Francis operates the service from her home, which is a detached bungalow within the coastal village of St Combs, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age, of whom no more than three are not yet of an age to attend primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. The parts of the premises not to be used are the main bedroom and en suite. Overnight service will not be provided.

Children are cared for in the living room and kitchen. The bungalow has a good sized garden with an open outlook over farmland. It is well situated to access the beach and other local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3 March 2026 between 11:30 and 15:30. 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:

- interacted with three children using the service
- spoke with two of their parents/carers
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

- Children were cared for with warmth, kindness, and love.
- Routines were calm, consistent, and responsive to children's individual needs.
- Children experienced positive mealtimes.
- Play and learning opportunities were varied and engaging, with regular outdoor experiences that promoted curiosity and creativity.
- The childminder was committed to ongoing professional learning which led to improved outcomes for children and families.
- Quality assurance and self evaluation processes should be further developed to support the continuous development of the 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 play and learn	4 - 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

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 supported in their practice by a set of policies, procedures, and clear aims and objectives. They aimed to provide a clean, warm, and safe environment where children could learn through play. This was evident in their daily routines and interactions, and helped families understand what the service offered.

The childminder was committed to ongoing professional learning. They had completed a childcare qualification which increased their confidence in supporting children's learning. They were passionate about developing children's communication and used their knowledge and skills effectively to support both children and their families. Their involvement in a local childminding group enabled them to share ideas, explore new initiatives, and continue developing their practice. This ongoing learning contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Children and families were encouraged to share their views and influence developments within the service. They told us they felt listened to and were comfortable to share ideas. For example, one parent told us their child was offered more messy play as a result of a conversation. Online questionnaires were used to gather feedback from parents, including whether they felt their child was safe and protected and had sufficient opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. Responses were positive and families were happy with the service provided.

Children had access to a variety of toys and games which supported their independence as they made choices about their play. Some older children had completed questionnaires about the activities they enjoyed and their ideas were used to provide experiences that reflected their interests.

The childminder used some informal self evaluation and quality assurance processes to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement. For example, they considered what had worked well each day to ensure children were safe, happy, and well cared for. To support the development of a more structured improvement plan, we signposted them to 'A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding'.

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

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 engaged as they played with a range of age-appropriate toys. They mainly played in the living room which provided space for exploration and movement, with cosy areas and opportunities for floor play. The children enjoyed showing us the models they were building and talking about the shapes of the bricks they were using. Baby sensory toys supported younger children to explore and learn through their senses. Children had fun drawing pictures and could choose from a range of coloured paper and pens. This supported early writing skills and learning using creativity and imagination. A parent told us their child loved attending the service and that they were always offered a good range of play experiences.

Children were offered regular opportunities to play outdoors, both in the childminder's garden and in the local community. Parents told us this was a strength of the service. One parent commented, "My child loves being outside and they go out in all weathers." There were a range of resources to support problem solving and creative play, including loose parts and opportunities for children to plant seeds and grow potatoes. Outings to the beach and woodland walks helped children develop an understanding of the world around them. They had collected sea glass and created artwork using natural materials they had found. Children also benefitted from opportunities to take part in outdoor cooking experiences which were fully risk assessed to identify hazards and help keep them safe.

Children had fun interacting and playing with the childminder. The childminder modelled positive listening and talking skills by getting down to the children's level. They read stories which the children enjoyed and which supported early language and literacy development. Early mathematical language was introduced as children sorted wooden shapes and named colours. Children were praised for achievements, helping to develop their confidence and self esteem.

The childminder knew the children well and used this knowledge to plan play experiences based on their routines, interests, and developmental stages. Photographs were shared online to give parents an insight into their child's experiences and development checklists were used to support planning. However, observations were not being used to record or evidence children's learning or to plan next steps. To support children's progress and development, the childminder should introduce ways to record children's learning and track their progress.

## Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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 experienced warm and loving care. The childminder sat on the floor when playing with the children and responded gently and sensitivity to their needs. By speaking to children at their eye level, the childminder helped them feel safe and understood. Children were given comfort and reassurance, helping them feel safe. This nurturing approach created a calm, positive environment where children were happy.

Daily routines were well organised and flexible, helping to meet each child's individual needs. The childminder used their knowledge of each child to provide consistent care that reflected home routines. Children were given time to understand what was happening next, supporting calm transitions. For example, they were asked if they were hungry and encouraged to help tidy up before lunch. As a result, children were settled, happy, and well cared for.

Children were supported well in their personal care to help keep them safe and healthy. They followed good handwashing routines and clean towels were changed regularly. Nappy changing supplies were stored safely and the bathroom was clean and well organised.

A cot was set up in a quiet room, providing a calm space for rest. Children were comforted with cuddles before settling to sleep and when waking. Sleep routines were responsive to children's tired cues, helping them feel secure and well rested.

Children experienced positive snack and mealtime routines. Parents provided most snacks and meals and these were presented in an appetising way. The childminder was knowledgeable about healthy eating guidance and shared information with parents to support healthy choices. They sat with the children during meals, offering help when needed and encouraging conversation. Water was available throughout the day to keep children hydrated and well.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans contained clear information to promote children's safety and wellbeing, including details such as emergency contacts, doctor's details, likes, and dislikes. These were created in partnership with parents when children started at the service and were regularly reviewed to ensure the information remained current and up to date. This meant children were well cared for and settled.

Strong relationships with families supported positive outcomes for children. Parents commented, "Mairi is just like one of our family." New families were offered visits tailored to their child's needs, helping them feel comfortable and settled. Daily communication, photos, and newsletters kept parents informed and reassured. Parents were welcomed but they did not routinely enter the home. We highlighted the importance of creating welcoming opportunities and signposted the childminder to 'Me, My Family, and My Childcare Setting'. The childminder told us parents were welcome in the hallway and often chatted while children were playing in the garden.

## 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 children's health, welfare, and safety, the childminder should further develop her policy on the administration of medication and recordkeeping in line with the Care Inspectorate's 'Management of Medication in Daycare of Children and Childminding Services'.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing; and Standard 14: A Well Managed Service.

**This area for improvement was made on 21 June 2016.**

#### Action taken since then

The childminder was knowledgeable in the safe administration of medication and a clear policy was in place to support their practice. There were no children attending the service who required long-term medication, however forms were in place if needed.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## 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	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	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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