

Cosy Corner Child Minding

Ellon

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2026

Service provided by:
Iona West

Service provider number:
SP2023001491

Service no:
CS2024000119

About the service

Cosy Corner childminding operates from their own home, situated within a residential development in Ellon, Aberdeenshire.

The service 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 attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household. Minded children can only be cared for by persons named on the registration certificate. Overnight care will not be provided. The part of the premises not to be used is the first floor.

The service is well situated close to a local school, shops, parks, and other local amenities. Children are cared for in the living room and kitchen. They have access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 March 2026 between 11:45 and 15:45. 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, and information submitted by the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- interacted with two children using the service
- spoke with one parent/carer
- received six completed questionnaires
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing care.
- Strong connections with families contributed to individualised care and support for children.
- Children played in a clean and bright environment. However, improvements should be made to ensure toys and games are attractively stored and easily accessible.
- Children took part in a range of enjoyable, child-led play experiences.
- The childminder was committed to ongoing professional learning which led to rich learning experiences outdoors.
- Self evaluation and quality assurance process were developing and led to positive outcomes for 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	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	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

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 aimed to provide a service based on respectful parenting, child-led play, natural consequences, and meeting each child's individual needs. This vision was clearly reflected in the child-led environment, nurturing interactions, and strong focus on outdoor experiences. The childminder had not yet checked with families whether they were happy with the service aims. We suggested seeking their views to support greater involvement and to help ensure the service fully met their families' needs.

The childminder was supported in their practice by a set of policies and procedures. The child protection policy did not reference current guidance, 'National Child Protection Guidance in Scotland 2021 - Updated 2023', and the complaints policy did not have a 20 day timescale for resolution. We highlighted these changes to the childminder who agreed to update them.

The childminder was beginning to use self evaluation and quality assurance processes to support continuous improvement and development. The guidance 'A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding' was used to help identify where improvements could be made. As a result, they had changed how they recorded evidence of children's learning. They had also recognised the need to declutter children's play areas and this was ongoing. A strong commitment to professional development was evident, with the childminder using research and reading to build skills in outdoor and nature-based learning. This led to rich outdoor learning opportunities for children.

Parents and carers strongly agreed that they felt fully involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. A way to gather suggestions and comments included completing online questionnaires. Responses were very positive and parents were very happy with the service provided.

Children were asked what they wanted to do and could choose from a variety of toys and games, helping them develop independence as they made their own choices.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

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.

Children were cared for in a bright and welcoming home. Children played in the living room and kitchen areas which were spacious with plenty of room to play on the floor and move freely. However, the storage of toys and games could be improved to better support children's independence and choice. The large number of toys made the space appear cluttered. This had already been identified in the childminder's improvement plan and work to improve how toys were organised was ongoing.

Children played in a clean and well maintained environment. Floors were swept after baking and worksurfaces were tidied, helping reduce the risk of infection and keeping children safe. Children were

sharing a hand towel after washing their hands which increased the potential for illness and cross-contamination. We suggested using individual flannels or paper towels and the childminder agreed to make this improvement. A purpose-built nappy changing table, along with disposable aprons and gloves, was available, supporting children's dignity, privacy, and safety during personal care.

Children benefited from opportunities to play in the garden. This was fully enclosed with gates to the rear and front of the property. One gate was unlocked, raising the potential for children to leave the premises. We highlighted this to the childminder who took immediate action to secure the gate.

The childminder promoted an inclusive environment where all children were respected and differences were celebrated. Children's artwork was attractively displayed, creating a welcoming space that showed their achievements were valued and helping them feel proud and confident in their learning.

The childminder's knowledge and training in nature-based play supported children to learn about sustainability and how to care for their natural environment. Regular visits to gardens and woodlands helped children develop an early understanding of looking after and preserving the world around them.

Children's personal information was stored safely and securely, supporting their confidentiality and meeting general data protection requirements.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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 happy and relaxed as they played. They had fun and took part in a range of experiences including baking, a matching game, and trampolining. These helped support children's physical development, encouraged sharing and turn-taking, and introduced mathematical language and numeracy. A parent commented, "Our child is exposed to every type of learning. Crafts, free child-led play, baking, learning through play, games, boards/card games, and puzzles."

Children benefitted from opportunities to play and explore outdoors. They regularly walked to the school, helping them become familiar and confident in their local environment. They had fun playing in the childminder's garden, taking turns on the trampoline and playing in the mud kitchen. Children often went on outings to explore the local woods and parks. Some children attended music class and, on occasion, visited the local bike track. Parents commented, "I am happy that my child is involved in a lot of activities outdoors" and "[The childminder] is very outdoor-focused and always goes out in all weathers!"

Children had fun interacting with the childminder and her children. The childminder was skilled at supporting children with conflict, helping them manage their emotions and offering reassurance when they were upset. Conversations were warm and respectful, supporting children's language and social development. Children were praised for their achievements, helping build their confidence and self esteem.

The childminder knew the children well and used this knowledge to plan play experiences based on their interests and developmental stages. Developmental checklists and observations of the children at play were used to plan experiences they enjoyed. However, next steps were not identified or used to support children's

progress. To further strengthen children's learning and development, we discussed introducing ways to record children's learning and track their progress. The childminder agreed to take this forward.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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 experienced warm, patient, and responsive care. Children were given comfort and reassurance, helping them feel safe. They played in a relaxed and homely atmosphere and had fun playing with the childminder's own family. They were very included and told us they liked going to the childminder.

Daily routines were well organised, helping to meet each child's individual needs. The childminder followed children's sleep patterns from home, providing them with appropriate opportunities to rest and recuperate. A parent commented, "Napping is a priority for us and our child gets the rest and downtime they need and deserve." A travel cot was available to support safe sleep. However, during the inspection one child was soothed to sleep in a pushchair. This did not fully support their safety and comfort in line with safe sleep guidance. The childminder explained this was to meet the child's individual needs and we asked that this information be added to the child's personal plan. The childminder agreed to action this.

Children experienced positive mealtime routines. Parents provided most snacks and meals, and these were presented in an appetising way. The childminder sat with the children during meals, offering help when needed and encouraging conversation. This gave older children opportunities to share information about their day, promoting positive relationships and developing friendships. Water was offered to help keep children hydrated and well.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's strong knowledge of their individual needs. Personal plans were created in partnership with parents, who told us the childminder knew their child very well and identified this as a strength of the service. As a result, children were well cared for and settled. Key information to support their safety and wellbeing was recorded and additional plans were in place to guide the safe administration of medication. However, there was not enough recorded information about children's daily routines, increasing the potential for inconsistency in care. The childminder agreed to review the forms and add this information.

Strong relationships with families supported positive outcomes for children. New families were offered visits tailored to their child's needs, helping them feel comfortable and settled. Daily communication and photos kept parents informed and reassured. Parents felt very welcomed in the service and commented, "[The childminder] hosts an open door policy to make sure we feel happy with the play environment and discuss any needs" and "We couldn't hope for better childcare, [the childminder] goes well over and beyond!"

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

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Children experience high quality spaces	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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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