

Lilias MacDonald Childminding Service Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 March 2026

Service provided by:
Lilias MacDonald

Service provider number:
SP2014986570

Service no:
CS2014333890

About the service

Lilias MacDonald Childminding Service is situated in central Aberdeen.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 7 children at any one time under the age of 16; of whom no more than 6 are under 12; and no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school; and no more than 1 is under 12 months.

Eight children were registered with the service, and four attended during the inspection. Children are mainly cared for in a large open plan kitchen/ living area, with access to an upstairs bathroom and an enclosed garden. The service is close to a local school, playground and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 March 26 between 14:30 and 17:20 and 18 March 26 between 09:55 and 11:30. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received seven completed feedback questionnaires
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed 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.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from warm, responsive and nurturing interactions.
- The childminder's quality assurance activities supported ongoing improvements. We encouraged them to further develop aspects of these to more fully promote the involvement of all families.
- Personal plans should be further developed to include regular reviews and children's participation to ensure information remains accurate, up to date and reflective of children's needs, views and preferences.
- Children had varied opportunities to learn and develop skills as they played.
- The childminder's experience, skills and knowledge supported a safe, respectful environment where children were happy, relaxed and confident.

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

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| Leadership | 4 - Good |
| Children play and learn | 5 - Very 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

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.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

Children experienced warm and supportive interactions with the childminder, contributing to a positive and nurturing experience. They were actively involved in making decisions such as, developing the service's 'house rules'. These were clearly displayed and promoted a shared sense of ownership, collaboration and belonging. Families were provided with comprehensive information about the service, including its vision, values and aims, helping them understand what they could expect from the setting. During future reviews of this information, the childminder should ensure that both children and their families are included to ensure the current needs and priorities of those using the service are fully reflected.

Children had frequent opportunities to influence their environment and experiences. The childminder listened carefully to their views and created meaningful opportunities for children to contribute suggestions. Children were involved in planning activities and snack menus, which had been developed to reflect recently updated guidance. Parents told us the childminder welcomed any feedback. They were informally consulted on their views and had been invited into the setting to observe how new routines were supporting their children's wellbeing. We suggested that the childminder strengthen approaches to gathering parental views to ensure meaningful and equitable opportunities for families to participate in shaping the service.

Positive outcomes for children were promoted through the childminder's self-evaluation and reflective practice. Recent self-evaluation had led to planned improvements such as, the childminder developing how they used children's personal plans, and updates to key policies. An annual plan was in place to help maintain momentum and monitor progress. We encouraged the childminder to continue developing quality assurance processes by incorporating recognised tools such as, the Care Inspectorate's 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: Childminding quality indicators', to support a more cohesive and evidence-informed approach.

Children play and learn 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.

Playing, learning and developing

Children's play and learning were effectively supported through the childminder's strong professional knowledge and experience. Their previous career in teaching contributed significantly to their understanding of child development, and they used insights from training and professional reading to continually update and enhance their practice. As a result, children's individual needs were well understood, leading to high quality interactions that supported each child's wellbeing and development.

Children were supported to make choices about their play, with opportunities to share, take turns and work co-operatively. They spoke positively about the resources on offer, with one commenting, "I like playing and crafts. [The childminder] asks us for ideas and we can do them." Children enjoyed working together to build Lego models, and the childminder responded positively to their requests and needs. For example, one child was encouraged to choose and discuss a favourite book, while another was offered appropriate craft resources. This helped sustain engagement and children's motivation in their play for extended periods.

Children had regular opportunities to develop a broad range of skills through meaningful play experiences. The childminder used thoughtful questioning and conversation to extend children's thinking and support them to explore their ideas. Frequent trips to the local school playground promoted physical development as children climbed and played football.

Opportunities to develop literacy, language and numeracy skills were embedded throughout the provision, with children contributing to environmental print, playing board games and chatting with each other and the childminder. Daily routines such as, helping to prepare and serve snack, and older children supporting younger ones during transitions, helped develop important life skills. This promoted a fun, stimulating and challenging environment where children learned as they played.

Children's interests meaningfully influenced the planning of weekly activities. These plans remained flexible, allowing children to lead their own play. Parents were very happy with the range of activities available to their children and seasonal activities, such as Easter baking, further enhanced their experiences. Children spoke proudly of having made Mother's Day cards, and the childminder recognised the benefits of these experiences. The sharing of these successes with families strengthened connections between the setting and home and helped promote positive relationships.

Children are supported to achieve 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.

Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from individualised, nurturing care from the childminder, who demonstrated a strong understanding of how to promote positive behaviour in developmentally appropriate ways. They knew children well and responded sensitively to their cues, adapting their approach to suit individual needs and offering frequent praise and encouragement. Children were encouraged to be helpful and respectful, contributing to a supportive environment where children were confident and able to thrive. Children appeared relaxed and happy, telling us they enjoyed spending time with the childminder.

Children were supported to develop independence and a sense of responsibility through meaningful involvement in daily routines. For example, they confidently selected roles when preparing snack, which included a variety of fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables. The childminder sat with them during snack time, helping create a sociable and safe experience. Conversations about healthy eating supported children's understanding of how to keep themselves well, with one child enthusiastically telling us, "I love snack." Sensitive support was provided during bathroom routines, with regular handwashing encouraged to minimise risks of cross contamination.

The childminder used personal plans containing sufficient information, provided by parents, to support their understanding of children's wellbeing needs. Where children had medical needs, information was recorded clearly to ensure they received appropriate support. The childminder included some information on children's individual needs, and we suggested developing this to focus on any specific support required. Parents confirmed that they were asked to update information regularly; however, some key information required by legislation was not always included. The childminder recognised this and had begun reviewing all information with families. Further reviews were planned to ensure records remain accurate, up to date, and reflective of children's needs. We discussed ways that the childminder could continue to develop their use of personal plans to more effectively reflect children's individual preferences and goals, further promoting their participation and rights.

Strong relationships with families were clearly evident. The childminder evidenced positive communication with families when they collected their children, as well as regular messages and photos. This helped families feel reassured and well informed about their child's day. Families told us they felt welcome, informed and satisfied with the service and one parent shared, "We just feel so lucky to have [the childminder] look after [our child]... we know [child] is in a really caring environment".

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

The childminder must further develop the personal plans to reflect how they would support each child's care needs. Plans should be reviewed every six months, or sooner should needs change.

Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 3: health and wellbeing; standard 6: support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2017.

Action taken since then

Personal plans contained sufficient information to support children's wellbeing. Where children had medical needs, information was clearly recorded clearly to ensure they received appropriate support. The childminder included some information on children's individual needs, and we suggested developing this to focus on any specific support required.

The childminder had introduced regular reviews and incorporated these into their annual plan. Parents confirmed that they were asked to update information regularly; however, some key information required by legislation was not always included. The childminder agreed to ensure all elements of personal plans are reviewed at least every six months, or sooner if required, to ensure information remains current and relevant.

This area for improvement has been met; however further development is needed to embed more robust and effective practice.

Previous area for improvement 2

To follow good hand washing procedures in relation to the use of liquid soap.

Reference: National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 3: health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2017.

Action taken since then

Children had access to suitable liquid soap, which they used during regular handwashing before and after eating, visiting the bathroom and touching the childminder's pet dog.

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.

Detailed evaluations

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| Leadership | 4 - Good |
| Leadership and management of staff and resources | 4 - Good |
| Children play and learn | 5 - Very Good |
| Playing, learning and developing | 5 - Very Good |
| Children are supported to achieve | 4 - Good |
| Nurturing care and support | 4 - Good |

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