

Play Days at Nicoles Child Minding

Peterhead

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 April 2026

Service provided by:
Nicole Richard

Service provider number:
SP2024000305

Service no:
CS2024000175

About the service

Play Days at Nicoles is a childminding service registered to provide care to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age:

- Of whom no more than six are under 12 years
- Of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school
- 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 certificate

No overnight care will be provided.

Care is provided within the childminder's home in the Aberdeenshire village of Longside. Children are primarily cared for in the living room but also access the kitchen diner and downstairs bathroom. They can also access the large, fully enclosed garden. There were four minded children present during the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 08 April 2026 between 08:45 and 12:30. This 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 and spoke to one of their parents/carers
- received four completed questionnaires from parents/carers
- spoke with the childminder
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- The childminder showed commitment to improvement through reflective practice and self-evaluation, although further review of improvement actions is needed to fully measure their impact on children's experiences and outcomes.
- Children experienced a welcoming, well maintained environment promoting belonging, independence and wellbeing through effective use of indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Children experienced engaging, interest-led play supported by appropriate resources, positive interactions and a stimulating environment promoting confidence, independence and wellbeing.
- Nurturing care and strong relationships consistently supported children's wellbeing, confidence, independence and promoted positive experiences.
- Effective communication and routines promoted continuity of care and family confidence.

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	5 - Very 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

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 clear statement of the aims of the service, which reflected children's rights and wellbeing. This was shared with parents at the point of registration. Parents and older children were involved in reviewing the aims of the service, which supported the childminder to take account of their views and ensure the service continued to align with families' needs and aspirations

Parents agreed that they and their children were meaningfully involved in the development of the childminding service. Effective communication processes ensured that the aims of the service were clearly shared. As a result, parents understood what to expect from the service and felt confident to suggest changes where appropriate.

Positive experiences for children were promoted through the childminder's reflective approach to practice. For example, they had identified beneficial changes to working hours and the layout of spaces. Children were involved in this reflection through discussions about their interests and preferences, which supported their sense of inclusion and influence within the service.

The childminder demonstrated a commitment to providing a quality service and had undertaken self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. However, this had been based on an outdated version of the Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare. We signposted the childminder to the current framework to strengthen their ongoing self-evaluation. Membership of the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) supported the childminder to keep up-to-date with sector developments, and we suggested the use of SCMA self-evaluation tools to further support improvement activity.

Where areas for improvement had been identified, the childminder had implemented changes. These had not yet been evaluated to measure their impact on children's experiences and outcomes. We discussed the importance of reviewing and reflecting on improvement actions to ensure they result in positive outcomes for children. Accessing guidance on managing improvement from the Care Inspectorate website would support this work.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

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 benefitted from a welcoming, comfortable and well maintained environment, which promoted a strong sense of belonging and being valued.

The childminder organised spaces effectively to support children's choice and independence, enabling them

to lead their own play and independently access most resources, including the outdoor area. Children's health and wellbeing was promoted as the childminder understood the benefits of outdoor play. As well as ongoing access to the garden there were trips to local green spaces and parks. The childminder supported children to consider and explore the spaces available. As a result, children felt safe, secure and confident in the physical environment.

Children's safety was well promoted through effective assessment and management of risk. Appropriate measures were in place, such as secured entrances and safety gates. The childminder demonstrated very good awareness of children's whereabouts to ensure effective supervision and ability to offer support.

Risk assessments were recorded for daily routines and outings, including the school run and community visits. We discussed the benefits of involving children in reviewing risks, which would further support their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children benefitted as the physical environment was effectively used to provide challenge and learning with a wide variety of resources available. Outdoors these included a mud kitchen, climbing equipment, water and sand play as well as bikes and trikes. The indoor environment had role play, small world and construction activities freely available. There were books and games visible for the children to use.

Children were valued and respected and encouraged to share their preferences and make choices within their play. While resources were varied, we suggested that increasing opportunities to reflect cultural and ability diversity would further enhance children's experiences.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: 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.

The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of how children learn and develop, which supported the provision of a rich and stimulating environment where children were engaged for sustained periods of time.

Resources were developmentally appropriate and reflected children's interests, enabling them to explore and experiment through play, both indoors and outdoors. The childminder was responsive in adding resources to extend children's play and learning.

An online app was used effectively to share information with families about children's daily experiences, including care routines for younger children. Families reported that they felt involved in their child's care and were happy with communication. We suggested that identifying the learning from activities when sharing information would further support parents' understanding of learning through play and help celebrate children's achievements.

Children benefitted from warm, positive interactions with the childminder, who demonstrated a good understanding of when to intervene and when to allow children time and space. This supported children's confidence and independence. Interactions sometimes promoted learning, such as the use of numerical language and discussion of colour and matching. However, there were missed opportunities to further extend children's learning through more consistent use of open-ended questioning to encourage thinking

and problem solving.

Children were playing and learning at their own pace. They were confident in moving around the childminder's home, accessing resources and approaching the childminder for support. Positive peer relationships were well established and gently supported by the childminder.

While the childminder was responsive to children's interests in the moment, planning and assessment of learning were in the early stages. The childminder recognised this as an area for development and should continue to develop how children's learning is recorded to support identification of next steps and progression.

Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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 benefitted from the childminder's strong understanding of the importance of nurturing relationships to promote their wellbeing, confidence and development. The childminder was experienced in childcare and used this effectively to provide a service where children were safe, cared for skilfully and supported to express their needs.

The childminder had a very good knowledge of individual children, including their needs, characteristics and preferences. Children were warmly welcomed into the home, and parents were encouraged to come in to share information about their child. This effective communication supported continuity of care and promoted positive, trusting relationships.

All parents agreed that they were happy with the care provided to their children. They commented that the childminder was, "Very supportive, approachable, and always go the extra mile to make sure my child is happy and well cared for" and that they had "Always been on hand to help when needed, [the childminder] is very easy to speak to and always takes the time to speak about my child with me".

Children's independence was promoted well through everyday experiences, such as putting on shoes and jackets. Children were given time to try tasks for themselves while knowing support was available. During personal care routines, the childminder consistently protected children's dignity and privacy, for example, by checking consent before carrying out care tasks. This demonstrated a strong respect for children's rights.

Snack time was a relaxed, unhurried and sociable time for children. The childminder took this opportunity to sit and chat with the children. This promoted their safety, feelings of inclusion and communication skills. A snack of fruit was provided by the childminder, with children helping to choose and prepare the fruit for that day. Parents supplied packed lunches and the childminder provided guidance to support these to align with nutritional guidelines.

Consistent daily routines, including sleep arrangements, reflected information shared by parents and helped children feel secure and confident throughout the day.

The childminder was committed to safeguarding children's health, safety and wellbeing and ensured care was informed by current best practice guidance, including 'Realising the Ambition' and 'Getting it right for

every child'. No children currently attending required medication. While some paperwork was in place to support the safe administration of medication, we signposted the childminder to further guidance to ensure all necessary detail is included before agreeing to administer medication.

Personal plans were in place and used effectively to support children's wellbeing. These were reviewed regularly with parents to ensure information remained current and relevant. The childminder demonstrated confidence and skill in describing how she met children's needs; however, this was not always fully reflected in written plans. They agreed to enhance the plans to ensure accurate and consistent information sharing if required.

All parents agreed that they had a good relationship with the childminder. This promoted the information sharing necessary to provide a continuity of care. The childminder valued input from families, and they were welcomed into the childminder's home to discuss their children. This increased connections with families and positively impacted on children's experiences.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very 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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