

Fiona Munro Childminding Services Child Minding

Westhill

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 April 2026

Service provided by:
Fiona Munro

Service provider number:
SP2017989015

Service no:
CS2017356154

About the service

Fiona Munro provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Westhill, Aberdeenshire. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age. Overnight care is not provided.

The service is close to parks, the local primary school and other amenities. Children have access to the open plan kitchen and play area, lounge, downstairs bathroom and a fully enclosed garden.

At the time of our inspection, seven children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 April 2026 between 08:30 and 10:30 and between 14:45 and 17:15. 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
- spoke with three of their parents/carers
- received one response to our request for feedback from families through our online questionnaire
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within 'Children are supported to achieve'.

Key messages

- Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them well and planned support around their individual needs.
- Snack time promoted a homely and sociable experience.
- Play experiences reflected children's interests.
- Children benefitted from daily opportunities to play outdoors and to access the community.
- The childminder was committed to their professional development to reflect the current needs of children and 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	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.

Children and families benefitted from clear aims of the service which helped create a shared vision. The aims were shared with families prior to starting through a handbook, supporting them to understand what to expect. These included "to provide a reliable and individual service to each family." The childminder demonstrated these in their daily practice, through promoting a nurturing environment that supports children's individual needs. We discussed that as the service continues to evolve, involving families in reviewing the aims and objectives would help ensure these continue to reflect their current needs and remain meaningful.

Families were kept updated and well informed through daily conversations and updates. The childminder valued children's and families' views and sought their feedback through ongoing face-to-face discussions. They had recently issued questionnaires to families to gather more formal feedback, to support the development of the service. Parents agreed they were meaningfully involved, with one commenting, "We are always included and feedback is welcomed." Children were regularly asked for their views and could choose from a range of experiences, promoting independence and choice. A parent shared, "In the holidays the [the childminder and my child] make their plans together and involve [the children.]" This meant that children and their families played an active role in decision making and informing change.

Children's experiences were positively influenced by the childminder's informal approach to self-evaluation. Reflective practice and ongoing feedback from children and families supported the childminder to develop the service. For example, they had recently recognised the need to create more opportunities for children to be independent at snack time. As a result, they had added jugs and had recognised this promoted children's choice and supported the development of life skills. We discussed introducing a more formal approach to self-evaluation to provide clearer structure for identifying strengths and areas for development. We signposted the childminder to 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: Childminding' to contribute to the cycle of continuous improvement.

The childminder confidently described what they felt the current strengths and areas of development were, as well as the impact on outcomes for children. They advised they were looking to develop their approach to self-evaluation and had recently undertaken further learning to support this. As a result, they were exploring more effective ways to gather the views of children and families to inform practice. We discussed the value of recording improvement priorities and their impact on children's outcomes. This would support evaluation of success and help sustain improvement.

Children benefitted from the childminder actively maintaining and refreshing their professional skills and knowledge. This enhanced the quality and care and support children received. For example, the childminder had researched specific health conditions and identified further learning which was relevant to the needs of children and the service. Practice was informed by up-to-date policies which aligned with current guidance, ensuring children were cared for by a knowledgeable childminder who was committed to meeting their individual needs.

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.

Children were happy and busy as they took part in different experiences both indoors and outdoors. The childminder involved children in discussions about what they would like to do, which encouraged them to make choices and lead their own play. Children shared their favourite things to do at the childminder's were, "magic tricks", "play games" and "drawing". These experiences were all available for the children to take part in on the day of inspection. Parents commented positively on the play experiences, with one advising, "[The childminder] always creates fun and lovely experiences when [my child] is there."

Children's interests were promoted through their play experiences. The childminder was responsive to children's ideas and offered a variety of activities. Children chose to spend time playing board games, building with construction kits and drawing pictures. When children showed specific interests in rockets and football, these interests were extended by the childminder providing pictures to support their creativity. Meaningful conversations further demonstrated the childminder's genuine interest in children's ideas, helping them remain engaged in purposeful play.

Play experiences were enhanced through a well-resourced environment that encouraged children to make independent choices. The childminder engaged with children at their level, supporting their learning through shared play and discussion. Literacy development was encouraged through access to books and writing materials, while numeracy skills were effectively promoted through board games and everyday routines. For example, questioning during a "magic trick" activity supported children to use mathematical language, helping them develop confidence in practical, real-life skills.

Children benefitted from daily opportunities to play outdoors, within and beyond the setting. Children were able to freely access the childminder's garden, with the childminder sharing plans for more planned outdoor activities, including planting and growing fruit. Children advised of previous outings they had taken part in, including parks and local green spaces. One parent commented, "[The childminder] takes them for forest walks, outdoor plays and also in the garden." This supported children's physical development and wellbeing and understanding of the wider world.

Planning for learning was responsive and informed by observation and discussion with children. The childminder offered a balance of experiences across the home and wider community, using children's feedback to plan further experiences. Observations were shared with families through digital photos and messages, with families sharing they valued receiving these updates. We discussed strengthening how children's learning is tracked, including involving children in reflecting on their experiences, such as through the use of a floor book. This would support continuing to plan experiences for children's interests and ongoing 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.

Children benefitted from kind and respectful interactions. The childminder showed a genuine interest in children's feelings and responded in a caring manner. This supported children to feel secure and relaxed around the childminder and their family. It was evident that positive relationships had been formed between the childminder and children. Children described the childminder as "kind" and "fun". Parents commented, "[My child] has a wonderful relationship with [the childminder] and is extremely happy when [they are with them]."

Child-centred routines supported children to feel secure, confident and emotionally settled. The childminder prepared children well for daily activities and transitions, including school drop off and collection, tailoring routines to individual needs. Care was consistent and reflected children's home routines, promoting continuity and trust. Opportunities to rest and relax were built into the day, supporting children's wellbeing.

Mealtimes were relaxed and unhurried. The childminder provided snacks, many that were home-made, which children had been involved in choosing and catered to their preferences. Parents and children commented positively on the variety of food choices. One parent advised, "[My child] always tells me [they are] offered different choices for meals." Children sat at the table with the childminder nearby, which promoted a calm and sociable experience.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's knowledge of each child's individual needs. Personal plans were in place for every child, containing relevant information on health, preferences and routines. These were completed in partnership with families when children started and updated as changes occurred. Regular communication with families ensured the childminder maintained an up-to-date understanding of children's needs. We discussed introducing a system to review and update plans at least every six months, or sooner where required, in line with guidance (see area for improvement 1).

Strong relationships with families created a welcoming and inclusive ethos. The childminder promoted parental engagement through regular communication and daily opportunities for families to come in. Children and families were not rushed, with the childminder taking time to chat to parents and allowing children time to finish activities. Photo messages and videos were shared regularly to support continuity between home and the childminding setting. These approaches strengthened trust and supported effective collaboration with families.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and wellbeing, the childminder should review all personal plans with parents, and children where possible, at least every six months. This will ensure they hold the most up to date information about each child and identify how children's needs will be met.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); and 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

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 should develop written personal plans for each child, within 28 days of attending the service, and implement a plan for review within a six month period, or before if necessary, involving parents or, where appropriate, children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that, as a child, " My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15)

This area for improvement was made on 22 February 2019.

Action taken since then

Each child had a personal plan outlining their needs and preferences, which had been created in collaboration with families when children started. These had been updated when children's needs had changed. The childminder was knowledgeable about children's needs and reflected the strategies identified in practice. Reviewing plans every six months, or sooner if required, in line with guidance would support keeping information up to date.

This area for improvement has not been met and has been reworded under heading 'Children are supported to achieve'.

This area for improvement has not 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

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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