

# The Nest Childminding by Sophie Child Minding

Aberdeen

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
15 April 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Sophie Bilsland

**Service provider number:**  
SP2024000313

**Service no:**  
CS2024000265

## About the service

The Nest Childminding by Sophie is a childminding service that is registered to provide care for up to a maximum of six children up to the age of 16 years. The service is run from the childminder's home in Aberdeen. Seven children were registered at the time of the inspection, and this included the childminder's own children.

The children have access to the ground floor of the property. Children are cared for in the dining kitchen and the living room. There is access to a downstairs bathroom and a fully enclosed garden to the rear of the property. The service is located close to local shops, a primary school, local parks and other amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 April 2026 between 08:45 and 17:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- spoke with four people using the service and one of their family members
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, positive interactions and nurturing relationships with the childminder.
- The childminder used professional development to inform their practice.
- Children were allowed to follow their interests and had fun in their play.
- Children benefitted from a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment.

## 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	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very 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 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 were cared for in a service with clear aims. These focused on providing a safe and nurturing environment where children had choice and freedom to choose where they played. These were shared with families and embedded within the environment. Children had access to a range of age-appropriate resources and moved freely between areas of the childminder's home. Families contributed to children's personal plans ensuring that individual needs were understood and supported. Where required, the childminder offered a more in-depth individual support plan. A holistic view of the child captured their needs and allowed individual strategies to be implemented.

Families were given the opportunity to discuss children's needs in more depth, and this reflected the childminder's inclusive environment. The childminder had an awareness of the need to set realistic and achievable goals within appropriate timescales. Children's views had been gathered through a survey to understand their likes and dislikes. Feedback from older children was taken into consideration. When this identified the need for more age-appropriate activities, the childminder planned activities that sufficiently challenged their developmental needs.

Support from the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) supported the childminder to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance throughout the year. Comprehensive policies were detailed and contained the relevant information to support effective practice. A development plan identified areas for improvement, including making newsletters more visible and accessible to families. Best practice guidance was shared with families and informed the childminder's practice. This included the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). There was a strong focus on children's right to play throughout the service, and the childminder demonstrated the importance of play based learning. Learning was documented using a floorbook, which showed how children's voices were valued through quotes, photographs and mark making. This was used as a method of reflection with the children and resulted in children feeling confident to express their opinions.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 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 benefitted from a well organised and safe environment. Safe transport arrangements were established. This included the use of a wheeled wagon to transport younger children when escorting older children to and from the local school. Vehicle transport was available for days where trips out with the local area were planned. The cloakroom provided adequate space for children's belongings and was secured with an alarmed front door and safety gates, preventing unsupervised access to stairs. Registration and insurance documentation, alongside best practice guidance were clearly accessible to families.

Free-flow access between the indoor areas while the enclosed rear garden supported children's outdoor play. Children experienced regular outdoor opportunities through garden play, walks to and from school, and visits to local parks. A well-resourced garden offered a mix of both natural and manmade materials. The childminder supported children's participation by recognising their choices. Younger children were

encouraged to make decisions during play, while older children contributed to snack planning and shared personal preferences.

The childminder promoted a balanced approach to risky play, using gentle reminders to support children's understanding of safety. Comprehensive risk assessments identified hazards and control measures, with reviews conducted on a three-monthly basis. Systems were in place to monitor attendance, with clear procedures followed should a child not arrive as expected. This resulted in children's safety and wellbeing being maintained at all times.

Continued professional development, relevant training and the effective use of best practice guidance contributed to the delivery of a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. The childminder had completed key training, including child protection, first aid, infection prevention and food hygiene and was undertaking a degree in childhood practice to further inform their knowledge. National guidance including Realising the Ambition: Being Me and the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators were being used to inform practice and engagement with families. This ensured that children's care needs were met in a well-maintained environment.

## 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.

There was a strong commitment to children's play and learning throughout the inspection, and children were observed having fun in their play. Children were given the chance to play together or alone. We observed children acting out past celebrations, for example, using voiles and scarves to dress up as ghosts. Planning was responsive to the children's interests and provided a breadth of learning experiences. We observed children's interests being followed, for example, water play was extended following a child's curiosity when pouring water into a cup. Opportunities to explore beyond the local community were offered. On one occasion, the service had joined a loose parts session at the city art gallery therefore expanding children's experiences. Both younger and older children were included in recording the learning in a floorbook. While the quality of play was a strength, we identified that learning observations could be more personal to better identify and support children's next steps.

A range of resources provided children with access to a variety of sensory, imaginative and physical experiences. Indoors, cushioned climbing cubes allowed children to take measured risk. Access to big cushions, water, playdough, books, creative opportunities and a quiet area enabled children to make informed choices about their play. Outside, access to shrubs, flowers and weeds gave children opportunities to engage with nature. Children were encouraged to learn about biodiversity through conversations about the importance of caring for their natural environment. Communication was supported with signs and visual prompts, enabling children to make choices and participate confidently. Both literacy and numeracy were threaded throughout the environment, either through resources or interactions from the childminder. The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of supporting children's emotional wellbeing and self-regulation. When a child became upset, the childminder got down to the child's level and asked the child's permission before giving them a hug.

## 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.

Families were meaningfully involved in decisions about their child's wellbeing. One parent told us, "Sophie is understanding and supports [child's] needs at all times". Personal plans were reviewed regularly within best practice guidance. Chronologies were in place and these were used effectively to record significant events, actions and decisions relating to the children's wellbeing. Effective monitoring was in place to show how outcomes were achieved and what additional support was required to maintain children's welfare.

Familiar routines supported children to move confidently throughout the day. Daily routines were clearly displayed and well established. Sleeping arrangements were in place and met children's individual needs. The use of travel cots and sleep mats were readily available should a child need to use them. Transitions at drop-off and collection were well managed at the door with effective information sharing. Feedback from one parent verified that they were happy with the communication and felt the childminder was responsive to the needs of their child. We discussed the benefits of inviting families into the setting to further strengthen relationships which the childminder was already considering.

Children benefitted from consistent infection prevention and control measures. Personal protective equipment was used in line with guidance and personal care routines were sensitively managed. The childminder gently supported children to access the toilet or potty whilst ensuring their dignity was maintained. There were visual supports in place such as storybooks and pictures to support children's understanding of handwashing and toilet routines.

Children were offered a variety of healthy foods and milk or water at snack times. Snack provision was well planned and shared with families through a displayed three-week menu. Both sensory and dietary needs were taken into consideration ensuring children's health and safety was acknowledged. Lunchtime routines were calm and sociable with the childminder gently offering encouragement to the children. Lunches were pre-packed and supplied by families which the childminder organised and served to the children. While younger children were supported to pour their own water, they were not involved in the preparation of food. Increasing opportunities for children of all ages to participate in preparing food for mealtimes would further enhance their life skills and independence.

## 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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.