

Jennifer Thomson Child Minding

Macduff

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 April 2026

Service provided by:
Jennifer Thomson

Service provider number:
SP2003900738

Service no:
CS2003002116

About the service

Jennifer Thomson operates from their own home, situated within a residential development in Macduff, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the children of the childminder's family. Overnight service will not be provided and minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. The childminder shall not allow minded children to walk to and from school or elsewhere unless they are accompanied by her. Mr Neil Thomson is employed as an assistant. When working with the childminder the numbers will continue as above.

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 23 April 2026 between 11:30 and 16:00. 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:

- spoke with two children using the service and one family member
- received three completed questionnaires from parents
- spoke with the childminder and their assistant
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Warm, nurturing relationships helped children feel safe, valued, and settled.
- Effective personal planning supported children's health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Strong partnerships with families ensured good communication, involvement, and continuity of care.
- Children experienced a wide range of enjoyable and well planned play and learning opportunities that supported their development.
- Effective leadership and self evaluation supported continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children.

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 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

Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The childminder was supported in their practice by a clear set of policies and procedures, alongside well defined aims and objectives. These included providing a welcoming, warm, safe, and stimulating environment in which children could learn through play. The service aims were clearly reflected in children's daily routines, positive interactions, and play experiences. They were shared with families when they started at the service and were reviewed annually. This supported parents' understanding of what the service offered and helped ensure expectations were clearly communicated and met. As a result, families felt informed and confident in the care and learning provided, which contributed to positive outcomes for children.

The childminder demonstrated a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning. They had completed core training in infection prevention and control and food hygiene, which was reflected in the clean, well maintained home environment. Training in child protection and first aid ensured the childminder was confident and competent in keeping children safe and well. Additional training, in areas such as safe sleep and the management of allergens, led to the development and review of relevant policies and procedures, strengthening practice. Training on the use of observations to support children's learning and development had a positive impact on practice, resulting in improved learning experiences that supported children's progress and development.

The childminder's involvement in a local childminding group provided valuable opportunities to share ideas, explore new initiatives, and continue developing practice through peer support.

Effective self evaluation and quality assurance processes led to positive outcomes for children and families. The childminder regularly reflected on their practice, using feedback from families alongside observations of children to identify strengths and areas for development.

Questionnaires were issued to families and their views were sought regularly through discussion and text messages. Their feedback informed a flexible and responsive approach to care, ensuring that the individual needs of children and families were met. Parents told us they felt involved in and included within the service. As a result, children experienced care and learning that was well tailored to their needs, supporting their wellbeing and development.

The childminder made good use of national guidance, including the 'Quality Improvement Framework for Early Learning and Childcare: Childminding', alongside support from professional bodies, such as the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA), to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement. Improvements were clearly linked to children's experiences and wellbeing. For example, the purchase of a new Tuff tray enhanced opportunities for sensory and exploratory play, while repositioning the sandpit improved supervision in the garden, ensuring children could play safely while remaining engaged and supported. As a result, children benefited from improved play experiences in a well supervised environment which supported their wellbeing and development.

The childminder employed an assistant who provided additional support at busy times, such as school drop-off and collection, during play, and outings. The assistant had developed positive relationships with the children, and children told us they liked spending time with them. Children were happy to see the assistant and we observed warm, respectful interactions where children were treated with kindness and care.

The childminder ensured the assistant was appropriately supported and skilled, with relevant training completed, including first aid and infection prevention and control. This ensured the assistant was confident, knowledgeable, and competent when working with children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Playing, learning, and developing

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 engaged, settled, and confident learners. They had fun and took part in a range of play experiences throughout the day. They were supported to lead their own learning and make choices about how they spent their time. For example, children independently selected creative activities, such as drawing, painting and playdough, before choosing imaginative and construction play. Parents strongly agreed that their children were offered a good range of experiences that they enjoyed and which supported their learning and development.

The play environment was welcoming, well organised, and resourced with a range of age-appropriate toys and materials that supported children's interests, exploration, and problem solving. Indoor spaces were calm, comfortable, and thoughtfully arranged, helping children to focus, engage, and sustain their play. Children also played in the garden where they enjoyed outdoor play and sensory experiences in the sand tray.

Children benefitted from trips and outings in the local community. Regular walks, park visits, library visits, and shopping trips supported the development of children's confidence, social skills, and understanding of the wider world. These experiences were fully risk assessed to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

Interactions between the childminder, assistant, and children were consistently warm, responsive, and nurturing. Adults engaged at children's level, listened carefully, and responded sensitively to children's verbal and non-verbal communication. Play was effectively extended through meaningful conversation, open-ended questioning, and shared enjoyment. For example, the childminder shared stories and sang songs and rhymes, always encouraging children to join in. These positive interactions promoted shared thinking and supported the development of children's language and communication skills.

Observation, planning, and assessment processes supported children's learning and development. The childminder knew children very well and used observations of play, alongside information from families, to identify children's interests, routines, and developmental needs. This informed planning that was flexible, responsive, and meaningful.

Development records were maintained and reviewed regularly with parents. Next steps were clearly identified to support children's progress. For example, in developing communication skills and independence. Older children were asked for their views on activities and outings, ensuring their voices contributed to planning. Information about children's learning was shared regularly with families through daily discussion and photographs, strengthening partnership working and continuity of learning. As a result,

children experienced play and learning opportunities that were well matched to their individual needs and interests, supporting their progress, confidence, and overall wellbeing.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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 experienced warm, caring interactions. The childminder responded kindly and promptly when children needed help or reassurance. By speaking to children at their level, the childminder helped them feel safe, valued, and understood. Older children returning from school were welcomed, given time to talk, and were offered appropriate support. As a result, children were settled, confident, and enjoyed a calm and positive environment.

Daily routines were well organised and flexible, supporting children's individual needs. The childminder used her knowledge of each child to provide consistent care that reflected familiar home routines. Children were supported to rest and sleep when needed, with younger children comforted and soothed in a nurturing way, helping them feel safe and secure.

Children were well supported with their personal care, which helped to keep them safe and healthy. Good handwashing routines were followed and clean towels were available in both the kitchen and bathroom. Nappy changing supplies were stored safely and the bathroom was clean and well organised.

Children experienced positive and relaxed snack and mealtime routines. The childminder demonstrated good knowledge of healthy eating guidance and allergens and provided children with nutritious food choices. One parent commented, "My child is offered a variety of snacks and the childminder knows what their likes and dislikes are." Meals and snacks were attractively presented to encourage children to eat independently and to try new foods. The childminder sat nearby, offering support when needed and promoting conversation, which helped make mealtimes enjoyable and sociable. Fresh drinking water was available throughout the day, supporting children to stay well hydrated.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the childminder's strong understanding of their individual needs. Personal plans contained clear, detailed information to promote children's safety and wellbeing, including emergency contacts, GP details, and children's likes and dislikes. These plans were developed in partnership with parents when children started at the service and were regularly reviewed to ensure the information remained accurate and up to date. Parents strongly agreed that they were fully involved in their child's care and commented, "Every year I update my child's personal details and likes/dislikes." This supported continuity of care and helped children feel well cared for and settled.

Detailed medical care plans were in place to meet children's medical needs. Medication was stored safely, was accessible to the childminder in the event of an emergency, and was kept out of children's reach. This helped to keep children safe and supported their health and wellbeing.

The childminder was welcoming and inclusive, which supported strong and trusting relationships with families. Parents shared positive feedback about the care and communication they received, commenting, "They are always very welcoming when dropping/picking my child up. I receive good feedback in regards of my child and they are very accommodating and helpful" and "I am welcomed in at the start and end of each

day and get an overview, but I would be welcomed any day outwith our usual days if I wanted to discuss anything."

Introductory visits were tailored to children's individual needs, supporting smooth and settled transitions into the service. Ongoing communication through daily discussions, photographs, text messages, and daily diaries for younger children helped keep parents well informed and reassured about their child's experiences and wellbeing.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	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

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