

Amanda McMullan

Child Minding

Fraserburgh

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 July 2026

Service provided by:
Amanda McMullan

Service provider number:
SP2005944693

Service no:
CS2005091201

About the service

Amanda's Childminding provides a childminding service from their property in the rural village of Strichen, Aberdeenshire.

The childminder is registered provide care to a maximum of 6 children at any one time under 16 years of age, of whom no more than 3 are not yet of an age to attend primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. At the time of the inspection three minded children were present.

The service is located close to local shops, parks and primary school. Children are cared for in a ground floor kitchen, first floor playroom and toilet and a separate sleeping area in a spare bedroom. They also access the enclosed garden for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 July 2026 between the times of 09:00 to 09:30 and 28 July 2026 between the times of 08:30 to 11:45. This 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 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
- 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

- Children experienced kind, warm and nurturing interactions.
- Strong connections with families and children meant they felt valued, included with a sense of belonging.
- Children were fully engaged and took part in a range of interesting play experiences both indoors and outdoors.
- Self-evaluation involving children and families supported continuous improvement and development of the 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	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

Quality Indicator: 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 had clear aims and values, including providing a local service where children learn through play. These were reflected in practice and evident in the high-quality play experiences children enjoyed. Families were informed about the service's aims and values, helping to ensure their expectations and aspirations were considered. Up-to-date policies and procedures supported consistent practice. As a result, children and families benefited from a well-managed service that met their needs and promoted positive outcomes.

Children and families were involved in the ongoing development of the service with one family sharing, "Amanda always involves us". Feedback was gathered through questionnaires, discussions and settling-in sessions and was used to make improvements. For example, parental feedback led to the planned introduction of stay and play sessions. As a result, families felt listened to, valued and involved in the service.

Children were encouraged to share their views and make choices about their play and learning. Their interests and ideas influenced experiences, resources and outings in the local community. This enabled children to develop a sense of ownership, as they were actively involved in planning and were engaged in their learning.

Effective self-evaluation processes were embedded within the service. The childminder used the quality framework key questions to reflect on practice and identify areas for development. This demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement. For example, the childminder had identified opportunities to further enhance best practice with the Childsmile dental programme, contributing to positive outcomes for children's oral health.

Effective quality assurance supported high-quality care and support for children and families. The childminder maintained relevant training, including child protection, first aid and food hygiene, helping to keep children safe and well. Their knowledge of child development informed practice and planning. As a result, children benefited from positive play and learning experiences that supported their wellbeing and development.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: 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 relaxed and engaged in their play. They were supported to learn at their own pace through calm and unhurried routines. Which supported children to feel secure and confident throughout the day.

Children experienced high-quality spaces, which were warm, spacious and supported positive learning opportunities. They played in a dedicated playroom which was well-resourced with a variety of age-appropriate resources. This included a selection of small world toys, books, games and mark making activities. They had fun playing with the ice cream cart, buying and choosing the flavours of their ice cream and created their own picnics. Digital technology like old mobile phones enhanced children's learning and imagination as they used real life materials in their play. Meaning children were happy as they were learning together.

Children benefited from a range of outdoor play experiences, accessing a safe and secure garden. Resources included a mud kitchen, climbing equipment, designated digging area, guinea pigs and fruit trees, supporting physical play and exploration. They were able to help care for the childminder's horses and guinea pigs. This helped develop kindness, responsibility and an understanding for caring for living things.

Parents shared with us, "Children had regular visits to local cafes, library and attended Bookbug sessions". As a result, children developed friendships and a sense of belonging and confidence within their community.

Children's literacy and numeracy skills were supported through everyday experiences and gentle interactions. Children were encouraged to recognise letters in stories, write shopping lists and count and buy items in local shops. The childminder used open-ended questions and gave children time to respond, supporting communication and language development. This meant children were engaged in their learning and making good progress.

Children experienced meaningful learning opportunities that reflected their interests and supported their progress. For example, their interest in hamsters led to them creating hamster homes from shoe boxes. This supported creativity, imagination and problem-solving. This meant children experienced appropriate challenge and developed a sense of achievement.

Children were encouraged to help tidy up and care for shared resources. This enabled them to develop a sense of responsibility and respect for their learning environment.

Families agreed they were always involved in their children's care. One family shared they were "always well informed and involved" in their child's care and learning. The effective use of an online app captured observations, shared children's achievements and identified next steps in learning. As a result, families were involved in their children's learning and to support progress.

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 were cared for with warm nurturing interactions. The childminder was kind and calm and provided children with cuddles, comfort and reassurance. Families agreed that the childminder has strong, positive attachments with their children supporting them to feel safe, secure and valued. As a result, children were settled, secure and confident in their surroundings.

Effective use of flexible settling-in arrangements tailored to individual needs supported children to settle quickly. One family shared that, "Amanda made the process seamless by accommodating as many settling sessions necessary". As a result, children benefited from consistent routines building confidence and secure attachments. The use of regular communication through daily conversations, online platforms and WhatsApp supported positive partnerships with families.

Children's privacy, dignity and rights were respected when supported with their personal care. Infection prevention and control guidance was followed during toileting and handwashing routines helping children to keep safe and well.

Children experienced unhurried, relaxed and sociable snack and mealtimes. Children were offered healthy and nutritious homecooked meals planned to meet individual needs and preferences. One family shared that their child often spoke about being "excited about the foods on the menu". The childminder supervised children to remain safe whilst eating and engaged them in meaningful conversations. Milk and water were available to keep children hydrated and healthy.

Children's sleep patterns from home were well supported in a designated sleep room. This promoted children's comfort, wellbeing and emotional security. Older children were provided with the opportunity to rest during quiet periods, helping them regulate their emotions and maintain their overall wellbeing. One parent commented that my child "talks fondly of having quiet time".

Children were well supported through effective personal planning. Families were fully involved in the process, and information was regularly updated to reflect children's current needs. As a result, children were cared for by a childminder who knew their health and wellbeing needs well. For one child, daily medication was not signed in and out, raising the potential for medication not to be available if needed. We discussed this with the childminder who agreed to make changes to this process.

Children and families experienced a warm and welcoming environment where they felt included and respected. Strong, nurturing relationships promoted a sense of belonging for children and their families. A planned visit to a former family who had previously used the service, demonstrated how relationships were valued and maintained over time. As a result, children and families experienced a caring environment where they felt valued.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot.

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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