Margaret Craft Child Minding

Ellon

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 October 2026

Service provided by:
Margaret Craft

Service provider number:
SP2013012022

Service no:
CS2013315702

About the service

Margaret Craft is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 6 children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than 3 are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. From 18 August 2026 until 30 June 2027, term time only (or before if a child leaves the service), on a Tuesday (as identified in the variation request dated 18 May 2026) the childminder may care for one additional named child under primary school age:

- of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years;
- of whom no more than 4 are not yet attending primary school and;
- whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/ household.

The childminder's current registration lists Emma Lumsdon as an assistant. The childminder advised that she is no longer involved in the day to day operation of the service but remains available to provide cover in the event of an emergency.

The service is provided from the childminder's home within the residential area of Ellon, Aberdeenshire, close to local amenities such as schools, shops and parks. Children are cared for in the playroom and use is made of an upstairs bedroom for children requiring a nap. The kitchen and downstairs toilet are also used in connection with the service. Children also can access a good sized, fully enclosed garden at the rear of the property for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 October 2026, between 12:05 and 17:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- Spent time with children using the service
- Spoke with three older children
- Spoke with the childminder
- Observed practice and children's experiences
- Spoke with two parents
- 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

• Regular professional learning, including achieving SVQ Level 3, strengthened the childminder's practice and supported safe, nurturing care and positive outcomes for children.

• The childminder had begun to evaluate the quality of the service and should continue to build on this to further enhance children's experiences and outcomes.

• Children benefited from a range of play and learning experiences which encouraged creativity, independence and exploration.

• Regular access to outdoor play and local experiences supported children's confidence, physical skills and a sense of belonging within their community.

• The childminder's nurturing interactions supported the children to feel loved and safe.

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.

A clear vision, values and aims statement was in place and reflected the positive experiences we observed. The childminder's commitment to providing a safe, happy and caring environment helped ensure children felt secure and valued. We discussed with the childminder the benefits of involving children and families when reviewing these statements. This would help create a shared vision, strengthen partnership working and ensure the service continued to reflect the needs and aspirations of those who use it.

The childminder had begun to evaluate the quality of her service, identifying strengths and areas for further development to help improve outcomes for children and families. We discussed the benefits of using the most current self evaluation tools to help the childminder more effectively identify priorities for improvement. learning opportunities. The childminder could then use the self evaluation to develop an improvement plan for the service. This more formal and structured approach would help demonstrate how strengths and areas for development are identified and monitored over time. The childminder had recorded what she had achieved since the last inspection which included successfully completing a professional childcare qualification and extended her range of resources.

The childminder used best practice to inform and develop their approach. Regular reviews of policies and procedures helped ensure practice remained relevant and effective, supporting children's safety, wellbeing and overall outcomes.

Children and families were encouraged to share their views through regular conversations and text messages, helping to ensure the service remained responsive to their needs and preferences. Parents preferred informal discussions to questionnaires, and these were used effectively to gather feedback. The childminder provided examples of how children's and families' views had influenced decisions, including the selection of resources and activities for younger children. For children who did not yet attend school, a daily diary was used to share information about activities, sleep, meals and other significant events, supporting effective communication and continuity of care between home and the setting. A parent told us that they were happy with the level of communication provided.

A commitment to continuous professional learning was evident through the childminder's regular engagement in training, including successful completion of the professional childcare qualification SVQ level 3, first aid, child protection, elementary food hygiene and infection prevention and control. The childminder demonstrated a good understanding of how this learning informed and strengthened their practice, ensuring children experienced safe and nurturing care. Although no longer involved in the day to day operation of the service, the childminding assistant remained available to provide emergency cover. Appropriate recruitment checks had been completed, and ongoing training through their current childcare related occupation helped ensure they maintained relevant knowledge and skills to support children safely if required.

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 engaged, having fun and enjoying play experiences that supported their learning and development. We saw younger children using pots, pans and loose parts in imaginative ways, helping to develop creativity and independent thinking. Within the dedicated playroom, a good range of resources were stored at children's height, enabling children to make choices about their play and access materials independently. We observed children confidently selecting resources, supporting their autonomy and sense of ownership over their learning.

Older children's interests and preferences were clearly valued and reflected in the experiences available to them. Children told us they enjoyed building and construction play, and we observed them using wooden blocks to create structures. Photographs also showed children designing obstacle courses for balls, building with plastic tubes and constructing large towers using giant blocks. By responding to children's interests in this way, the childminder supported the children's enjoyment in play.

Regular access to fresh air and energetic play, including different playparks locally and the enclosed rear garden helped children to be healthy and to develop physical skills. Younger children attended a weekly group focusing on physical exercise and sometimes attended a local toddlers group. Regular opportunities within childminder's home to dance also supported children to move regularly and develop their balance and coordination.

Language and literacy were supported through regular opportunities for storytelling, singing and meaningful interactions. The childminder used clear, simple language and repetition to help younger children develop their communication skills and understanding. It was positive to see photographs of older children reading to younger children, supporting early literacy, confidence and positive relationships. These experiences helped children develop language, communication and an enjoyment of books.

The childminder had introduced development plans for younger children, which provided an overview of their progress and helped identify areas where additional support may be beneficial, such as walking, toilet training and language development. This contributed to children receiving support that was responsive to their individual stages of development. Developing a more structured approach to tracking progress and next steps would help ensure learning consistently builds on children's interests, strengths and developmental needs.

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 experienced care that was warm and nurturing. Children described the childminder as "fun," "happy" and "kind." The children engaged positively with the childminder which evidenced that positive relationships had been established. The childminder was responsive to changing needs, for example

providing cuddles and reassurance when a child became upset. This all helped children to feel loved and safe.

Children and families were welcomed into the service through supportive transition arrangements. A parent told us how the childminder had worked hard to help settle their child when they started at the service initially. The childminder knew the individual children and their needs well and this was reflected in how she supported them. For example, the childminder described how she would support sleep for children who needed rest and relaxation, taking account of individual needs and preferences.

Whilst nappy changing was generally carried out well, an apron was not used during the changing process. The childminder explained that wearing an apron would normally be part of her practice, however, she had run out of supplies. To support effective infection prevention and control, appropriate personal protective equipment should always be available and used to minimise infection risks and promote wellbeing.

Children enjoyed food provided from home, helping to ensure their individual preferences and dietary needs were consistently met. Fresh drinking water was readily available throughout the day, supporting children's health and wellbeing. The childminder prepared food in ways that were appropriate to children's ages and stages of development and remained with them during mealtimes, helping to promote safe eating practices and reduce risks. Mealtimes were calm and nurturing, contributing to children's enjoyment of food and positive social experiences. Creating more opportunities for children to develop independence and self help skills, such as pouring their own drinks, would further enhance outcomes.

Written personal plans provided a comprehensive overview of each child, including their individual needs, routines, interests and wider world. This reflected the childminder's strong knowledge of the children in their care and helped ensure support was tailored to their unique circumstances. Personal plan information was reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring decisions were informed by current information and enabling children to receive consistent, responsive care that met their changing needs and promoted their wellbeing.

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 gather more detail in care plans, to ensure that children receive appropriate support for any illnesses, allergies, and diseases. The childminder should review care plans on a 6-monthly basis.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 10 July 2014.

Action taken since then

Personal plans had been further developed and now contained detailed information about children's needs. Regular review of personal plans ensured that the childminder knew about and could be responsive to

changing needs. We discussed that the childminder could highlight more clearly when reviews have taken place within the personal plan documentation.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The childminder should continue to develop her approaches, to ensure that ways of working with parents and each child's care and support needs are individualised.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 7: A Caring Environment.

This area for improvement was made on 10 July 2014.

Action taken since then

The childminder completed a daily diary for children who were not yet attending school so that parents had a detailed account of their day. A parent told us that they were happy with the level of communication they had with the childminder.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The childminder should work with parents and children to develop ways of evaluating her service and involving service users.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare Up to the Age of 16 - Standard 13: Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 10 July 2014.

Action taken since then

The childminder had tried different ways of getting feedback on the quality of the service, including questionnaires. They had found that the most effective way of achieving this was through informal discussion. The childminder was able to provide examples of how feedback had influenced decision making within the service.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

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	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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