

Happy Hands Childcare Child Minding

Inverness

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 September 2026

Service provided by:
Pamela Bisset

Service provider number:
SP2013985211

Service no:
CS2013319671

About the service

Happy Hands Childcare is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time under the age of 16 years, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months.

The childminder provides their childminding service from a semi-detached house in a quiet, residential area of Inverness. The minded children have access to a playroom, hall and bathroom. Patio doors from the playroom open directly onto a secure garden area.

During the inspection, there were two minded child present.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 31 August, 2026 between 11.15 am and 12.45pm. 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:

- reviewed feedback received from two families;
- spoke with the childminder;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and consistent care that fostered their wellbeing. They were safe, sensitively cared for and helped to express their needs.
- Children experienced care and support in a home from home environment. This contributed to children feeling loved and valued.
- Children experienced quality play and learning ,that excited and engaged them and was supported by the childminder's skilful use of their own knowledge and practice.
- Well considered and purposeful self-evaluation was enabling the childminder to deliver high quality care. The childminder sought and used the views of children and families to inform change and secure improvement.
- The childminder engaged in professional development which supported them to improve outcomes for children and their families.

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

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.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The childminder demonstrated a very strong commitment to providing high-quality care. They had a clear ethos of continuous improvement, evidenced through effective self-evaluation, quality assurance processes and ongoing professional development. This was leading to sustained positive outcomes for children and their families.

Effective communication between the childminder and families ensured a shared understanding of the service's vision, values and aims. There was an opportunity to review these further in consultation with children and families to ensure they continue to reflect the aspirations of those using the service. This would further strengthen the childminder's commitment to continuous improvement. The childminder's practice reflected their values, for example they followed their Children's Participation Policy, which highlighted the importance of involving children in shaping the service, with a strong focus on children's rights.

Well considered and purposeful self-evaluation and quality assurance processes supported improvement planning. The childminder actively sought feedback from children and families through regular conversations, questionnaires and observations of children's experiences. This ensured that children's views, experiences and preferences helped shape the care and support provided. Their reflective approach enabled them to identify strengths and areas for development, with improvement priorities informed by the views of those using the service. As a result, improvements were meaningful and responsive to the needs of children and families. Parents spoke positively about their involvement in this process. One parent told us:

"We've had a few questionnaires over the years asking about what activities the children would like more of and I know the suggestions have been implemented. There are frequent newsletters to keep people updated on changes/upcoming events."

The childminder engaged positively in professional learning and demonstrated a clear commitment to keeping practice current and responsive to children's needs. Training, professional reading and reflective practice were used effectively to enhance knowledge and inform improvements to the care provided. They reflected very well on the impact of their learning on children's experiences, ensuring professional development translated into positive outcomes. The childminder also actively engaged with the wider childminding community through local networks, providing opportunities to share ideas, learn from others and keep abreast of developments in practice. This ongoing engagement supported continuous improvement and contributed to the overall quality of the service.

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.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

The childminder demonstrated a very good understanding of child development. They used this knowledge, alongside current best practice guidance, to provide high-quality learning experiences tailored to children's individual needs, interests and stages of development. Children benefited from a rich and stimulating learning environment where they could freely access a wide range of engaging indoor and outdoor experiences. This enabled them to lead their own play, make decisions and develop increasing confidence, independence and resilience.

Children present during the inspection were highly engaged, excited and motivated in their play, demonstrating curiosity, concentration and enjoyment across a variety of experiences. The childminder skilfully used play to promote learning in meaningful ways. Water play provided valuable opportunities for children to develop fine motor control, early numeracy and problem-solving skills. Children explored capacity, transferred water between containers of different sizes and used pipettes with increasing accuracy. Throughout play and daily routines, the childminder used a range of effective strategies to promote communication and language development. They introduced new vocabulary, named objects and modelled conversations. As a result, children expanded their vocabulary, increased their understanding and became more confident communicators.

The childminder responded thoughtfully to children's verbal and non-verbal cues, nurturing their curiosity and sense of wonder about the world around them. They used effective strategies to extend children's thinking, such as retelling recent events and referring to familiar people and places. These meaningful interactions helped children make connections between their experiences and play, deepening their understanding and encouraging further exploration.

The childminder made skilful observations of children's achievements and used these effectively to celebrate success and recognise progress. Individual profiles for younger children provided detailed evidence of developmental progress linked to wellbeing indicators and clearly demonstrated progression over time. Discussions about previous achievements encouraged children to reflect on their learning, build confidence and consolidate newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Planning was centred on children. They were encouraged to share their interests and preferences, which informed the experiences and opportunities available to them. This helped children exercise choice, develop confidence and influence aspects of their learning. Older children were provided with opportunities to rest and relax after the school day, alongside access to age-appropriate resources that promoted enjoyment, autonomy and ongoing progress.

The childminder made very good use of the local community and outdoor environments to extend children's experiences. Children enjoyed playing in a well-resourced, enclosed garden area. Careful consideration had been given to incorporating literacy and numeracy throughout the outdoor space, encouraging enquiry, problem solving and critical thinking within a natural environment. The childminder regularly took children to local parks, shops and community groups, broadening their experiences and helping them develop social skills, confidence and an understanding of the wider world. One parent commented:

"Every day seems to be different during the summer holidays. Pam takes the kids on local nature walks, to the park, summer clubs/events, strawberry picking. Not to mention a seemingly endless list of craft activities. My (child) is so excited to go to Pam's. After-school, Pam has created a relaxing environment for the kids to decompress after school."

Through these varied and responsive learning opportunities, children experienced high-quality play and learning that supported their progress, encouraged their curiosity and helped them achieve positive outcomes.

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.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

The childminder was warm, caring and responsive in their interactions with the two children present during this inspection. They offered comfort and reassurance when needed, helping children to feel supported and emotionally secure. Children were confident and settled, moving freely between indoor and outdoor spaces as they explored their environment. The childminder responded sensitively to children's verbal and non-verbal cues, ensuring they felt listened to, respected and understood.

Children were supported to play both independently and alongside one another. The childminder joined play appropriately, following children's interests and extending learning through meaningful interactions. They helped children to manage their emotions, supporting the development of positive relationships, confidence and self-esteem.

Mealtimes were relaxed, enjoyable social experiences that promoted children's wellbeing and social development. The childminder provided nutritious snacks and followed best practice guidance, including Setting the Table. By sitting with children and engaging them in conversation, they created opportunities to develop communication and social skills while encouraging positive relationships.

Strong partnerships with families contributed to highly personalised care. The childminder used information gathered from parents to respond effectively to children's individual needs, routines and preferences, ensuring continuity between home and the setting. Children benefited from familiar routines and comfort items, helping them to feel settled and confident in their surroundings. Parents who gave feedback strongly agreed they had a good relationship with the childminder. One parent commented, "I feel like I'm leaving my daughter with a member of the family, with Pam. She fills me in on what (my child's) been doing at pick-up and I don't feel like I'm missing out on (my child's) teacher verbal feedback. She is a treasure." This partnership enabled the childminder to monitor children's wellbeing and development effectively and respond to changing needs.

Effective systems were in place to support children's health, safety and wellbeing. Infection prevention measures reflected current guidance, and child protection procedures were up to date and readily accessible. The childminder maintained their knowledge through relevant training, and recorded and shared information with families in a timely and professional manner. As a result, children experienced consistent, nurturing care within a safe and supportive environment.

The childminder had created a warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where children and families experienced a strong sense of belonging. One parent told us, "A key indicator of the service being nothing short of outstanding is my children's happiness when both arriving and leaving each day. That is because of the kind, nurturing environment Pamela creates." The childminder helped children maintain connections with their home lives by talking about family members and shared experiences, strengthening children's sense of identity and emotional wellbeing.

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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