Deana McCabe
Child Minding

Aberdeen

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 October 2026

Service provided by:
Deana McCabe

Service provider number:
SP2018989874

Service no:
CS2018366569

About the service

Deana McCabe childminding is provided from the childminder's family home in a residential area of Bridge of Don, Aberdeen.

The service 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 six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school, and no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Minded children cannot be cared for by persons other than those named on the certificate. Overnight service will not be provided.

The service is located close to local schools and public transport links. Children are cared for in the living area and dining kitchen. There is direct access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 October 2026 between 10:00 and 15:00. 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:

- spent time with two children using the service
- spoke with two of their parents/carers
- received three completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily 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 warm, nurturing, and responsive care.
- Children experienced relaxed and unhurried mealtimes. Improvements should be made to help ensure younger children are comfortable and enjoy eating and socialising together.
- Children enjoyed play experiences suited to their interests and stage of development.
- Children benefitted from regular opportunities to be active and explore outdoors.
- Positive relationships with families supported consistent and individualised care for children.
- The childminder was developing self-evaluation and quality assurance to support improvements.

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

Management and leadership 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 set of aims and objectives were in place. These included providing children with a warm, friendly, and relaxed environment where they felt safe and secure. They had been shared with families, helping them understand the values and approach of the service. However, they had not been reviewed recently to ensure they continued to reflect the views and aspirations of children and families. The childminder agreed to review these with families to ensure they remained relevant to the service.

The childminder was beginning to develop their approach to self-evaluation. They sought feedback from families through questionnaires and used this to reflect on and improve their practice. For example, parental feedback led to the purchase of resources linked to a child's interests and development. These included beads for threading and buttons to develop fine motor skills and support independence with fastening their coat.

Children's views were also considered. They were asked what they wanted to do and could choose from a variety of toys and games. This supported children to make choices and develop their independence.

The childminder reflected on their practice and used this to develop the service. For example, they had become more confident in taking children on outings and providing a wider range of outdoor play experiences, including visits to local parks. This gave children more opportunities to be active, explore, and enjoy their local community. However, best practice guidance had not yet been used to support a structured approach to self-evaluation. We discussed using 'A Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: Childminding' to support reflection and identify priorities for improvement. We also suggested 'My World Outdoors' to support further improvements to outdoor play. The childminder agreed to further develop their approach to self-evaluation using relevant guidance.

Quality assurance processes were in place and supported good quality care, play, and learning experiences. This included regularly reviewing children's personal plans with parents to ensure information remained current and reflected their needs. Core training, including child protection, first aid, and infection prevention and control, was up to date, supporting children to receive safe and appropriate care. Professional development in understanding allergens and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) further supported the childminder to provide safe and appropriate care for children and families. To continue developing their practice, the childminder should access relevant training and professional development opportunities.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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 happy, settled, and engaged in their play. They experienced warm and positive interactions with the childminder who knew them well and understood their individual interests and preferences.

Children were relaxed in the childminder's care and confident to explore and enjoy their play. Parents told us their children enjoyed attending and took part in lots of fun activities.

The play environment was welcoming and comfortable, with a suitable range of developmentally appropriate toys and resources. For example, younger children enjoyed books, toy animals, and imaginative play resources. Older children could choose from resources including puzzles, arts and crafts, and Hama beads. This provided children with choice and supported them to lead their own play. However, there were limited open-ended and natural resources to extend imaginative and creative play. We discussed introducing loose parts and real-life sensory materials to encourage creativity, imagination, and problem solving. The childminder agreed to develop this.

Interactions between the childminder and children were warm and responsive. The childminder joined children in their play and used everyday opportunities to support learning and communication. For example, the childminder and a younger child looked at pictures of animals together. The child became animated and interested as they copied animal sounds. Singing and conversations were also naturally included throughout the day. These positive interactions supported children's communication, confidence, and enjoyment.

Children benefitted from regular opportunities to be active and explore outdoors. Experiences included water play in the garden, walks, and visits to local parks. Parents told us their children regularly played outside. Children enjoyed experiences within their community, such as kicking through leaves and splashing in puddles. This supported their physical wellbeing, curiosity, and enjoyment of the outdoors. Introducing experiences, such as planting and growing, would further develop children's curiosity and understanding of the natural world.

The childminder knew children well and planned play experiences that reflected their interests and stage of development. Children's learning and experiences were recorded in a diary and photographs were shared with parents to keep them informed about what their child had been doing. However, observations were not used effectively to identify children's individual progress or next steps in learning. More detailed observations should be introduced to identify next steps and support planning that builds on children's learning and provides appropriate challenge.

Children are supported to achieve — 4 - Good

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 warm and nurturing care from the childminder, who knew them well and was attentive to their individual needs, routines, and preferences. This helped children feel happy, relaxed, and comfortable. Cuddles, reassurance, singing, and gentle conversation supported children to feel secure. The childminder also used everyday routines, such as handwashing, to engage warmly with children. Children giggled and responded positively, showing they were relaxed and at ease.

Children benefited from familiar routines that supported their wellbeing. Individual sleep routines were followed and children were supported sensitively to settle. For example, one child slept comfortably on a mat with a cosy blanket and their familiar comfort blanket. When they did not settle immediately, the childminder held and gently rocked them until they were ready to sleep. This responsive care helped the child feel comforted and reassured.

Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care. The childminder communicated with parents through conversations at drop-off and collection and through WhatsApp messages. When children first started at the service, introductory visits gradually built up to them attending independently. This helped children become familiar with the childminder and settle at their own pace. One parent described the childminder as "brilliant" and told us they were very happy with the service.

Personal plans contained information about children's routines, interests, likes, and dislikes and were reviewed with families. This helped the childminder understand and respond to children's individual needs and preferences. However, some health information needed to be more detailed. For example, there was insufficient information recorded about a child's allergy and how this should be managed. The childminder confidently discussed the child's needs and the actions required to keep them safe. To ensure children's health needs were clearly recorded and consistently met, we asked the childminder to develop a medical care plan detailing the child's allergy and how this should be managed. The childminder agreed to do this and an updated record was sent after inspection.

Children enjoyed relaxed and unhurried mealtimes. The childminder sat with children, chatted with them, and responded warmly to their communication. Children laughed and engaged happily while eating. Older children sat together at the dining table, providing a comfortable space to enjoy their meals. Younger children ate in the living room. However, only one highchair was available, which meant the younger children could not eat together and one child had to wait for their lunch. A storage box being used as additional seating did not provide children with a safe or comfortable place to eat. We discussed providing suitable seating so children could eat safely and comfortably together. The childminder agreed to review the mealtime arrangements and purchased child sized chairs after inspection.

Children were supported with their personal care through warm and caring interactions. They washed their hands after nappy changing and before and after eating, helping to protect their health and wellbeing. The childminder wore disposable gloves and an apron when changing nappies, helping to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Nappy changing took place in the living room. We discussed the importance of protecting children's privacy and dignity, particularly when older children were present. The childminder agreed to consider this when providing personal care.

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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