

# Fiona Ironside Childminding Child Minding

Inverness

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 February 2024

**Service provided by:**

**Service provider number:**  
SP2013985598

**Service no:**  
CS2013323098

## About the service

Fiona Ironside Childminding provides her childminding service from her family home in a quiet, residential area of Inverness. The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of 6 children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom a maximum of six will be under 12, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. .

From 04 September to 27 June 2024 term time only (or before if a child leaves the service as identified in the variation request dated 08 July 2023) the childminder may care for a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age: of whom no more than 6 are under 12 years; of whom no more than 4 are not yet attending primary school and; of whom no more than 1 is under 12 months. This is inclusive of children of the childminder's family. Overnight care may not be provided and minded children cannot be cared for by any person other than those named on the registration certificate

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. The children have access to the ground floor only, making full use of a playroom, kitchen, hallway and toilet. A door from the playroom opens directly onto a large secure garden

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 February 2024 between 12:00 and 14:30. We provided feedback on the day of the inspection via telephone. One inspector carried out the inspection.

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:

- analysed the responses to our MS Forms survey from five family members of people using the service;
- spoke to the childminder;
- reviewed documents;
- observed practice and daily life.

## Key messages

- The childminder's interactions with the children were responsive, caring and nurturing.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Information gathered about children's needs supported the childminder to plan their care, play and learning experiences.
- Children experienced care in a well-furnished, comfortable, and homely environment. Their stages of development, interests and curiosities were well considered and reflected in the toys and resources.
- Children's interests were at the centre of their play which had a positive impact on their wellbeing and development.
- The childminder showed an interest and commitment to developing her skills and knowledge through her attendance at training courses.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

### **Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support**

The childminder provided a caring and nurturing environment for the children in their care. We saw loving relationships between the childminder and children in her care. The childminder had a very good understanding of the importance of developing secure attachments and their practice was consistent throughout our visit. The childminder used positive language and meaningful praise when acknowledging children's achievements which helped build their confidence and self-esteem.

The childminder knew the children and families very well. It was clear that she had developed close bonds with the children and was very fond of them. The child attending during our inspection were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care. The childminder's nurturing approach contributed to children feeling loved, safe and secure. Parents who provided electronic feedback confirmed the childminder's nurturing approach to care. One parent commented "Fiona, and her family, have a lovely relationship with the kids and she treats my family like her own".

From our observations and discussions with the childminder, it was very evident that she knew the children in her care very well which ensured that they were able to respond to their individual care needs. The service had detailed personal plans for each child, which contained relevant background information and details of the child's routine. These were routinely reviewed to ensure that the childminder kept up to date with any change in the child's needs and preferences. This meant children were receiving the appropriate care.

Children's mealtimes were a relaxed and unhurried experience. The children were able to feed themselves and the childminder provided praise and encouragement. This meant the minded child developed independence and a sense of achievement.

Clear policies and procedures were in place to protect children from harm. The childminder understood the role they played in keeping children safe and would continue to develop this through child protection training.

There was no medication currently administered within the setting. We noted that the childminder had appropriate systems and paperwork for recording and administering medication, if the need arose. We were satisfied that these would support safe administration of medicine. This supports the childminder to meet children's health and safety needs.

### **Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Children had opportunities to lead their own play and learning in a stimulating environment with a range of resources. They had fun while exploring a variety of play experiences that took account of their developmental needs, interests and curiosities. On the day of inspection, the minded children spent a lot of their time in the playroom. The children had fun playing together with the childminder and we heard lots of chattering and laughter. The children confidently led their own play and the childminder used skilful interactions to extend their learning.

From photographic evidence, we could see that children benefited from play experiences which provided opportunities to be creative, imaginative and develop curiosity. There was lots of evidence of children participating in arts and crafts, messy play, role play and water play. The childminder used effective questioning to support children's development. They provided play to consolidate their learning and challenged their thinking. Children's language was also supported through opportunities to sing songs and read stories together throughout the day. This experience provided opportunities to promote language, literacy and numeracy.

Children had the opportunity to visit various places in the community. We could see from photographs and children's files a range of activities children took part in. Some of these included playing, baking, messy play, singing/stories, arts and crafts, and playing with outdoor toys in the garden. They all made visits to the local woods, beaches, soft play, toddler groups and play parks. This helped to extend their play and learning opportunities and to socialise with other children.

Planning was very informal and responsive to the changing interests and needs of the children attending. We discussed how the childminder could improve upon meeting children's needs by some planning and recording next steps. This would assist in providing challenging and stimulating experiences to help children reach their potential.

## How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### **Quality Indicator 2.2 :Children experience high quality facilities**

The childminder's home was clean, cosy and child-friendly, providing a homely environment for the children. The childminder's home was relaxed and safe for the children to explore and play allowing them to feel safe and comfortable. The children made use of all the available space and confidently moved around each area of the house. A range of toys were available for the children to choose from inside as well as the outdoor area.

The outdoor area at the rear of the property was fully enclosed, secure and offered children a safe space to play and enjoy fresh air. The all-weather surfaces provided opportunities for active, physical outdoor play all year round. The childminder advised us that the garden area is used daily and the children are mainly outside all day except for nap times.

Children's furniture and resources were at child's level, this supported children to move around and explore independently. Developmental stages of children were taken into consideration when planning the layout of play spaces. This supported children who were beginning to move independently. For example, lower tables provided opportunities for younger children to pull themselves up. This allowed children to build confidence in themselves in a safe environment.

The childminder used their car to transport children, and followed appropriate safety measures, including use of suitable car seats and a well maintained car. Children were supervised and supported well during transfer from house to car.

Children attending the service were kept safe through the various systems the childminder had in place. The childminder explained that she completed daily visual checks before the children arrived as well as at

the end of the day. We sampled the risk assessments the childminder had in place and found that she was vigilant in her care of the minded children. This approach helped to make the environment safe for children. It minimised risk and helped keep children safe from harm.

Robust infection prevention and control measures supported children's health and wellbeing. The playroom and equipment were clean and well maintained. For example, children were well supported by the childminder to wash their hands effectively at key times throughout the day. This helped to minimise the spread of infection.

Nappy changing guidance was adhered and measures were followed to minimise any risk of spread of infection. The child's privacy and dignity was respected and appropriate PPE was used. Both the child and the childminder washed their hands after the procedure. When children required a rest or sleep, arrangements were in place to enable them to have a quiet area away from distractions. This ensured the health and wellbeing of the children in her care.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### **Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The childminder had visions, aims and values in place. These were shared with parents and displayed within the setting. These promoted and sustained a shared vision for the service that reflects the needs of the children, families and the wider community.

The childminder had established strong and trusting relationships with the families. This allowed for open communication and sharing of information. The childminder stated that she shared information with the parents informally on a daily basis, at drop off and collection times. She provides a flexible and accommodating service for the families she works with. We found she made good use of text messaging and private social media to communicate with families. Parents confirmed that communication was good and that the childminder sought their views and wishes. This helped to ensure parents were included in their child's care and offered the opportunity to comment and/or make suggestions for improvement

Children and families' views were genuinely valued by the childminder. The childminder recognised the value and importance of positive relationships. The views of children and families were sought to support improvements using both informal conversations and the use of questionnaires. This ensured all families were included and had the opportunity to share their views.

Effective use of self-evaluation had supported the childminder to reflect on their progress and identify strengths and areas for improvement. The childminder used the 'Quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-age childcare' to support self-evaluation and to identify where improvements could be made. The improvements were clear and achievable, targets were planned to drive forward improvement. The childminder embedded a continuous cycle of improvement which supported high quality experiences for children.

## How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

#### 4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder had a wealth of experience and enjoyed her role. She was kind and caring which ensured children felt valued, loved and secure in the setting. The childminder had been providing a service for some time and had developed good relationships with families. This ensured that children and their parents felt valued and included. One parent told us "Fiona is always lovely to both the children and parents. She's very patient, my children love her". There were three young children present on the day of the inspection who were happy, settled and relaxed in the care of the childminder. We saw lots of warm and nurturing interactions, chatting, smiles, and encouragement. Children were encouraged to be independent and supported where needed.

The childminder recognised the importance of maintaining her skills and knowledge in keeping children safe and protected. She had attended training on First Aid, Child Protection and also completed her Food Hygiene certificate. This meant that children were supported in all aspects of their care and development.

We also discussed how best practice guidance would support the childminder's professional development and improvement in the service. We signposted the childminder to the Care Inspectorate bitesize sessions and best practice documents on the Care Inspectorate hub. This would support the childminder to update their knowledge and skills of current best practice. The childminder had kept a record of training that they had accessed over the years. As the childminder attends training, it would be beneficial to record any evaluations of their learning. This would ensure training was embedded within practice.

Regular networking with other local childminders provided opportunities for discussion, learning and sharing good practice. This demonstrated a commitment to provide a high-quality service, to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	4 - Good



## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.