

Davidson, Nichola Child Minding

Inverness

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 April 2025

Service provided by:
Nichola Davidson

Service provider number:
SP2005953513

Service no:
CS2004058554

About the service

Nichola Davidson provides a childminding service from her home in a quiet rural area close to the city 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 no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of children of the childminder's family.

The service is located close to a local primary school and nursery, parks, and other amenities. Childminding takes place on the ground floor of the home, with children having access to the main lounge and dining area, kitchen area, toilet and rear garden. The children have access to an enclosed garden at the rear of the property and make extensive use of the local woods, parks and walks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 March 2025 between 09:30 and 11:00. We provided feedback on 01 April 2025 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:

- Spoke with two families;
- Spoke to the childminder;
- Reviewed documents;
- Observed practice and daily life.

Key messages

- The childminder was warm, kind and caring in her approach.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- The children were happy and relaxed in the childminder's care.
- Children were at the heart of the service and were cared for by a childminder who knew them and their families well.
- Children's health and wellbeing were supported through opportunities to be active and engage in lots of outdoor play.
- The childminder should continue to develop their self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.
- The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated a keenness to develop and improve practice.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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?

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.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches from the childminder which supported their overall wellbeing. Strong attachments were evident between the children and the childminder and they were comfortable, confident and happy in their care. The childminder offered physical comfort to children when needed which nurtured children's security and confidence.

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 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.

During the inspection we did not observe any mealtime experiences. However, the childminder spoke to us about how the children gave a lot of ownership and developed the mealtime experience while letting the children have more independence. Children enjoyed sitting together at the dinner table and the childminder said they had lots of conversations which supported their developing language and communication skills. The childminder also supported children with healthy eating habits, working with families to ensure children's individual needs were met.

Since the last inspection the childminder updated their paperwork for the recording and reviewing of medication. We found this was effective in ensuring medication, if given, was regularly reviewed with families.

The childminder was very aware of her responsibility to safeguard children. We were confident that the childminder was committed to her role and responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The children were happy and having fun in the childminder's care. Children confidently led their own play, exploring their interests and curiosities through a range of resources. Indoors, these included trains, cars, playdough and arts and crafts. Resources were accessible, promoting children's independence and allowing them to choose how they spent their time. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, giving the child time to play and learn.

Children made choices about their play and independently accessed a range of toys and resources which were age appropriate. For example, children engaged in imaginative play with small world toys including dinosaurs and babies. One child told us her favourite thing to do was "playing with dinosaurs and going to the bouncy castle"; the childminder ensured that the resources on offer extended children's interests and engaged them. As a result, children were happy and engaged in their play.

The childminder was aware of the individual needs of each child and had a lot of information that supported her to evaluate their progress and development. Since the last inspection the

childminder has put systems in place to effectively assess observations to support children's progression. We could clearly see the children's needs had been met with planning and recording next steps and targets, where identified. This provided challenging and stimulating experiences to help children reach their potential.

The childminder made very good use of the local area. This promoted children's wellbeing and sense of self in their community, for example, they visited the local woods, and parks in their area. These rich and varied play experiences supported children to develop skills for life.

How good is our setting?

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a home from home environment which provided a warm, relaxed atmosphere. The home was comfortable and welcoming. The children had access to the lower part of the house, which included a lounge, dining area with kitchen and downstairs toilet facilities. Children were happy, secure, and relaxed within their environment. This supported a nurturing environment for the children.

There was direct access from the lounge to a secure garden where this promoted children's choice in where they played. Although they did not play outdoors during the inspection, the childminder talked about the activities the children enjoyed outside in the garden.

The back garden had loose parts to enhance children's play and learning experiences. The mud kitchen, water areas and role play resources had created an exciting and intriguing outdoor area. This contributed to children having opportunities to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle.

Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support a safe environment. The home and equipment were clean and well maintained. Children's wellbeing was supported by a range of measures to limit the spread of infection such as ventilation and hand washing routines.

Since the last inspection the childminder had updated their risk assessments. The childminder discussed supervision around road safety with the children while on outings and ensuring children were safe. This helped children feel responsible and respected.

How good is our leadership?

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children benefitted from the childminder's positive and nurturing ethos. Their caring approach supported children to make choices, be independent and feel included. This reflected the aims of the setting, which put children at the heart of the service. Children were encouraged to share their thoughts and views which supported them to influence their experiences and the care they received.

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. As well as offering informal feedback at drop off and pick up times each day, she made use of messaging services, such as WhatsApp and diary diaries to keep in very regular contact with families. This helped to ensure parents were included in their child's care and offered the opportunity to comment and/or make suggestions for improvement.

The childminder engaged well with the inspection process and was keen to take forward ideas for improvement. Effective self-evaluation and quality assurances were in the early stages of development. Since the last inspection, the childminder has valued the views of the children attending her service, and their families, encouraging informal feedback through regular conversation and consultation as well as questionnaires. The childminder kept up to date with best practice and guidance through regular updates from the Scottish Childminding Association. The childminder has started looking at the "Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged children" to further support her self-evaluation and identify where improvements could be made.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place. This helped parents to understand the work and ethos of the childminding service.

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.

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge and values

The childminder was responsive to the children in her care, ensuring they were well supported and individual needs met. They benefitted from the childminder's warmth and nurture which helped develop strong relationships and promoted a welcoming, positive ethos. This showed children and families they mattered.

The childminder had participated in training and made good use of professional development opportunities. For example, they had undertaken training in Child Protection, Food Hygiene and First Aid.

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children developed and had been refreshing her knowledge and understanding of this recently through reading and training courses. They had started to keep up to date with best practice through accessing the Care Inspectorate hub and networking with local childminders. We discussed with the childminder, continuing to develop their knowledge and skills through ongoing training, and to use resources available to them for support, such as, the SCMA, Scottish Childminding website www.childminding.org and Care Inspectorate's Hub, hub.careinspectorate.com

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

To ensure children's healthcare needs are met, the childminder should refer to the Care Inspectorate 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' medication guidelines. This should include, but not limited to, recording written consent, clear instructions on when to administer medication and reviewing medication with families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance, and best practice (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder updated their paperwork for the recording and reviewing of medication. Even though no children required medication at this time we found this was effective in ensuring medication, if given, was regularly reviewed with families.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to reach their full potential, the childminder should review how she observes and captures children's progress and development and use this knowledge to support children's next steps and extend their experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that:

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder was aware of the individual needs of each child and had a lot of information that supported her to evaluate their progress and development. Since the last inspection the childminder has put systems in place to effectively assess observations to support children's progression. We could clearly see the children's needs had been met with planning and recording next steps and targets where identified. This provided challenging and stimulating experiences to help children reach their potential.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the environment is safe and secure, the childminder should improve the way she assesses risk to minimise hazards and reduce risk.

This is to ensure the quality of the environment is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that:

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the childminder had updated their risk assessments. The childminder discussed supervision around road safety with the children while on outings and ensuring children were safe. This helped children feel responsible and respected.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To continue to improve outcomes for children, self-evaluation should be developed, including meaningfully involving children and families. The childminder should become familiar with best practice guidance and use this to support her to reflect and plan for continuous improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Effective self-evaluation and quality assurances were in the early stages of development. Since the last inspection, the childminder has valued the views of the children attending her service, and their families, encouraging informal feedback through regular conversation and consultation as well as questionnaires. The childminder kept up to date with best practice and guidance through regular updates from the Scottish Childminding Association. The childminder has started looking at the "Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged children" to further support her self-evaluation and identify where improvements could be made.

This area for improvement has now been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The childminder should further develop her knowledge and skills, and use these to improve the quality of experiences for children. This should include, but is not limited to, accessing best practice guidance, training and information to support the development of her service. She should use her learning from these to

evaluate her service, identifying areas for development which will have a positive impact for the children

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that:

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.'

(HSCS 3.14); and

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20).

This area for improvement was made on 5 February 2024.

Action taken since then

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children developed and had been refreshing her knowledge and understanding of this recently through reading and training courses. They had started to keep up to date with best practice through accessing the Care Inspectorate hub and networking with local childminders. We discussed with the childminder, continuing to develop their knowledge and skills through ongoing training, and to use resources available to them for support, such as, the SCMA, Scottish Childminding Association.

This area for improvement has now been met.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

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

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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