

Niven, Lorna Child Minding

Lossiemouth

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 May 2025

Service provided by:
Lorna Niven

Service provider number:
SP2003904916

Service no:
CS2003008987

About the service

Lorna Niven provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of a coastal town. The childminder is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of six children at any one time up to 16 years of age; of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Children are cared for in a large kitchen/diner and an adjoining lounge; there is a toilet downstairs. There is a fenced garden with a patio and lawn, to the rear of the property that can be accessed from the kitchen/diner down some steps or from the front door.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 May 2025 between 12:15 and 15:00 and 21 May 2025 between 14:45 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. There was a maximum of four children present at each visit.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service and one parent
- received four questionnaires from families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The childminder's caring and calm approaches helped positive relationships to be established with the children.
- Children appeared to be comfortable, happy and relaxed in their surrounding and they were having fun.
- Children were encouraged children to try things out for themselves, to explore and to learn how things worked.
- Children were supported to enjoy play experiences that also enabled them to move around safely.
- The childminder maintained regular and open communication with families, and shared their child's achievements with them.
- The childminder's warmth and kindness towards the children enabled them to feel valued, loved and secure.

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 evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children appeared to be comfortable, happy and relaxed in their surrounding. The childminder's caring and calm approaches helped positive relationships to be established that enabled children to feel secure.

Children's overall development, was also supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep that promoted good habits, such as sleep mats and cosy blankets. Where children required personal care, their privacy and dignity was promoted and the warm interaction of the childminder supported children's confidence.

Children sat together at the table in the kitchen/diner for snacks and meals, it was an unhurried and a positive social experience. We suggested that placing the high chair next to the table, would help the youngest children to feel included in the overall experience and enable the childminder to remain focused on all of the children. Parents and the childminder provided foods that were nutritious, and supported dietary needs and preferences. Children had water bottles that enabled them to remain hydrated throughout the day.

The childminder had got to know the the children well so that they were able to be responsive to their individual needs. They shared information with families on a daily basis at handovers and also used regular electronic communication that helped to promote continuity of care to the children. Children's overall wellbeing was supported through the personal plan, which contained key information about them, such as contact details, health needs, personal care and interests. We discussed the benefits of a consistent approach to review of the plan every six months with families and children that enabled the childminder to be responsive to changes.

We also discussed and referred the childminder to guidance on the use and purpose of chronologies, that helped with the identification of children's needs, and directed action to support children well.

Ref: Practice guide to chronologies - [hub.careinspectorate.com](https://www.careinspectorate.com/hub/practiceguide/chronologies)

Parents told us that they had a strong connection with the childminder who communicated well with them. They felt fully involved in their child's care. Comments included:

'Lorna helps us sort, solve problems and listens to us'

'We have good communication, she always has time to chat and tell me what they have been up to'

'Childminder is always friendly, keeps us up to date through various methods of communication including daily diary, chat when dropping off/picking up'

'Personal likes and interests taken into account'.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children moved freely and confidently around the play spaces. They benefited from spontaneous, planned and fun play experiences that helped their brain development and skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

The childminder skilfully used their experience and knowledge to interact with the children that supported quality play. They had conversations with children and modelled language that supported their learning. Children were encouraged children to try things out for themselves, to explore and to learn how things worked.

Young children had fun with repetitive play filling and emptying container/boxes with a variety of items and then emptying, building structures with wooden blocks and magnetic tiles and knocking them down. They explored tactile open ended (no fixed purpose materials) such as pine cones, corks and different pieces of materials. A child was engaged in imaginary play with the different sizes of cork and moving them from the table to the floor. Children were engaged in a story with the childminder, sitting together on the sofa. School age children were drawing and writing stories and having conversations with each other. They told us that they had fun at the childminders and they often played in the garden with the mud kitchen. A school age child told us how they loved seeing and playing with the younger children too.

The childminder shared children's achievements with families. They were in the process of embedding a new format to track and record children's development and a proportionate approach to observations and assessment of learning.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through regular connections to their own and wider communities. Children visited the library for story/rhyme time, messy play group, play parks, active play sessions and natural play areas/woodlands. Parents told us that their was involved in a range of play and fun experiences that met their individual need and development. Comments included:

'Outdoor play and sometimes trips to park'

'They often take trips to the farm/library'

'Lorna takes them on days out to allow them to experience different places and ways to play, meeting up with other childminders to give them opportunities to socialise with other children'.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children benefitted from being cared for in a comfortable, clean, well furnished and homely environment. It helped to give the message to children that they mattered. Children had ample space for their needs. Ventilation and plenty of natural light contributed to children's psychological wellbeing.

The childminder had suitable equipment in place to support infection and prevention control such as, individual hand towels for washing hands and disposable gloves and aprons for personal care needs. Good hand hygiene practices were followed, children washed their hands before eating, and hands were wiped after they had eaten. The childminder had completed food hygiene training that helped to ensure safe food practices.

Children were supported to enjoy play experiences that also enabled them to move around safely. The childminder had identified and removed risks to children both indoors and outdoors and across the day. Following discussion the childminder, they agreed to amend practice related to supervision and pet management during nappy changing and mealtimes, to help ensure that a safe environment was maintained.

The indoor and outdoor spaces were structured to take account of all children's stages of development. Appropriate resources and materials that took account of children's interests were made readily available in fabric storage boxes. There was plenty of space for floor play and a large table for table top/art and craft activities. Large sofa's in the lounge enabled children to rest and recuperate.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder had appropriate records that were readily accessible. The childminder had clear policies that supported them in running the service and they were shared with parents. We suggested that having a programme of review would help to ensure they reflected the provision of the setting and aligned with good practice guidance.

They maintained regular and open communication with families who were invited into the home at handovers, and shared their child's achievements with them. Parents had been invited to share their views and thank you cards expressed parents appreciation of the service provided by the childminder. We also discussed how children's views could be captured.

Parents told us that the childminder always shared information, any developments and ideas with them. Comments included:

'With our good communication, I feel I am involved when needed'

'Lorna is always positive and encourages the children in their activities and is proud of their achievements'

To enable a consistent and manageable programme of improvement that was sustained, we discussed the benefits of a concise format for recording changes as they occurred and the impact of such changes. We also referred the childminder to the early years improvement programme for childminders - hub.careinspectorate.com

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The childminder had a clear understanding of how children developed and learned. They had substantial experience of providing a childminding service. The childminder held a relevant early years qualifications, that supported their skills and knowledge and helped to enhance outcomes for children.

Training such as child protection, first aid, observation planning and, self-improvement training, also supported the childminder's professional development and benefited outcomes for children. The childminder kept a record of their learning and we discussed the benefits of noting the outcomes of such learning and the differences it had made.

The childminder was a member of an organisation that supported Scottish childminders and regularly received relevant information from them. They also attended a local childminding support group, that was also beneficial for the sharing of and reflection of practice.

The childminder's enabling attitude was supportive of children to have fun in their play and to achieve their potential. Their warmth and kindness towards the children enabled them to feel valued, loved and secure. Children's independence, confidence and curiosity was promoted as the childminder interacted in a sensitive and responsive way.

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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