

# Maureen & Michael McCrossan

## Child Minding

Forres

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
3 July 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Maureen & Michael McCrossan

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003904945

**Service no:**  
CS2003009016

## About the service

Maureen & Michael McCrossan provide a childminding service from their detached property in a small hamlet on the edge of a village and close to a town. The childminders are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of eight children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than five are not yet attending primary school and of whom no more than two are under 12 months. When one childminder is working alone, they are registered to provide a care service to a maximum of five children at any one time under the age of 16, of whom no more than three are not yet attending primary school and whom no more than one is under 12 months. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's family. Overnight care will not be provided. Numbers include the children of the childminder's family/household.

Children are cared for in a spacious dedicated playroom on the ground floor that has an adjacent toilet/cloakroom. There is a large fenced garden with a lawn that can be accessed directly from the playroom.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 July 2025 between 11:00 and 14:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. There were three pre-school children present.

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 three parents
- spoke with the childminders
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- The caring and calm approaches of the childminders enabled positive relationships to be established that helped children to feel confident and safe.
- The childminders had got to know families and children well so that they were able to be responsive to their individual needs.
- Children clearly benefited from spontaneous and planned fun play experiences, indoors and outdoors that promoted their curiosity and creativity.
- Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through regular connections to their community such as play parks, woodland walks and visits to the beach.
- The childminders maintained regular and open communication with families and shared their child's achievements with them.
- The childminders 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 surroundings. The caring and calm approaches of the childminders had enabled positive relationships to be established that helped children to feel secure.

Children's overall development, was also supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep that promoted good habits, such as travel cots and cosy blankets. Children were also able to snuggle up and rest on a large sofa. Where children required personal care, their privacy and dignity was promoted and the warm interactions of the childminder's supported children's wellbeing and confidence.

Snack and mealtimes were an unhurried and calm time for the children. The childminder was focused on the needs of the children and supported them well. We suggested that reviewing the seating arrangement so that children were seated closer together would help to enhance opportunities for social interaction. Parents and the childminders provided foods that were nutritious, and supported dietary needs and preferences. Children had fresh water at mealtimes, we suggested having water bottles visible in play areas, would help encourage children to remain hydrated throughout the day.

The childminders had got to know families and 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 with families and children (where possible), a minimum of six monthly, that also helped to ensure consistency of care.

Whilst the childminders were recording events/changes for children the format used was not helpful for the purposes of tracking. We 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.hubcareinspectorate.com)

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:

'Childminders are really good at keeping us informed and we talk loads'.

'We talk every day at drop and pick up, the childminders know my child's needs well'.

'The childminders go over everything with us and and we love seeing the photo's of their day'.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

Children moved freely and confidently around the play spaces. They benefited from spontaneous, planned and fun play experiences that developed their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. The childminders experience and their knowledge promoted children's curiosity and creativity. They had meaningful conversations with children and modelled language, that helped to support their development and

understanding. Children were encouraged to try things out for themselves, to explore and learn how things worked.

Children had fun making patterns with different coloured pens, they used brick sets to build together and also sat together to do a large jigsaw. Children clearly enjoyed being outside in the large garden and the active and exploratory experiences it provided. They climbed on the slides and enjoyed the freedom of running. Children were transporting different objects in small wheel barrows, tipping out and filling with a variety of objects. A digging area created lots of interest with different trowels, diggers and buckets. Children sang songs and looked at story books together. The childminders had got to know the children's needs and interests well. They shared children's achievements and progress with families.

Whilst there were some play materials within the playroom they were not readily visible to the young children and many items were stored in large boxes. We asked the childminders to explore the option of smaller boxes/baskets that would enable children to see what was available and encourage them to make wider choices in their play.

Ref: Growing my potential - [hub.careinspectorate.com](http://hub.careinspectorate.com)

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through regular connections to their community such as play parks, woodland walks and visits to the beach.

Parents told us that their was involved in a range of play and fun experiences that met their individual need and development. Comments included:

'Children are always in the garden and it's great that they do painting and visit parks'.

'Maureen does not hold back from children having fun and following their interests such as Scottish music and dancing'.

'Our child has lots of opportunities to learn different skills, their speech has come on so much through talking and singing'.

## 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. Ventilation and plenty of natural light contributed to children's psychological wellbeing.

The childminder had implemented infection control practices that followed best practice guidance to support children's safety. They included good hand hygiene and appropriate equipment for nappy changing such as, disposable gloves and aprons. Children washed their hands after outdoor play, before and after eating.

Children were supported to enjoy fun play experiences that also enabled them to move around freely, manage risk and learn about their own limits. The childminder identified and removed risks to children within the setting, both indoors and outdoors. Written risk assessments helped to identify action taken to minimise risk that supported safety and security of the children.

Children had ample space for floor play in the dedicated play room, there was a dining table/chairs and child size table and chairs that were also used for activities. A large sofa also helped to provide a homely feel and enabled children to have a comfortable place to rest. The large lawned garden was accessed directly from the play room that supported ease of indoor/outdoor play opportunities for the children. Further expansion of textured play materials such as wood and open ended (no fixed purpose) would also help to engage children's imagination.

## 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 childminders 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.

The childminders maintained regular and open communication with families at handovers and shared their child's achievements with them. A media platform and text were also used for the purposes of sharing information. Parents had not been invited to formally share their views for sometime and the childminders were keen to provide this. We also discussed other informal opportunities such as comments during formal review of the personal plan.

Ref: Me, my family and my childcare setting - [hub.careinspectorate.com](http://hub.careinspectorate.com).

Parents told us that the childminder always shared information and changes through general conversations that took place regularly. They always felt welcome to chat about things at anytime. Comments included:

'Really great communication and childminder's keep us informed'.

'Childminders have a friendly approach and always goes over everything with us'.

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 any difference made. We also referred the childminder to the early years improvement programme for childminders - [hub.careinspectorate.com](http://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 childminders had a clear understanding of how children developed and learned. They had substantial experience of providing a childminding service that supported their knowledge.

Core training such as child protection, and first aid benefited outcomes for children. The childminder kept a brief record of their learning. We suggested that this also included learning/action as a result of any training, and also the use of good practice guidance documents.

The childminder had links with other local childminders that was also beneficial for sharing information and practice.

Children's independence, confidence and curiosity was promoted as the childminders interacted in a sensitive and responsive way. Their warmth and kindness towards the children enabled them to feel valued, loved and secure.

## 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?	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

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

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