

Emma's Angels Child Minding

Inverurie

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 August 2025

Service provided by:
Emma-Ruth Liston

Service provider number:
SP2023000206

Service no:
CS2023000317

About the service

Emma's Angels provides a childminding service from their property in a residential area of Kintore, Aberdeenshire. 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 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.

The service is close to a local primary school, shops, parks, and other amenities. The children are cared for in the playroom, kitchen/diner and downstairs toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed rear garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 August 2025 between 08:20 and 12:00. One inspector from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- made contact with two parents of children who attended
- spoke with the childminder and children
- observed daily life and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care which supported them to feel valued, loved and secure.
- Children were cared for by a childminder who knew them well.
- The childminder had developed and maintained strong relationships with families.
- The childminder made very good use of the outdoors, including local area which offered children learning in different environments and provided strong connections to their community.
- Risk assessments could be updated to reflect benefits and support risky play in line with the experiences offered to children.
- The childminder should now take time to engage with audit tools such as the quality framework to support developments within the service.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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 different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall evaluation of good. Whilst we identified major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children, however, improvements are required to maximise wellbeing and ensure children consistently have experiences which are as positive as possible.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The childminder was nurturing and warm in their approach when caring for children. The childminder was consistently attentive to children's needs and responded to children's requests and cues which gave the message that they mattered. The childminder knew the children well and parents told us they had a good relationship with the childminder. One parent said, "[The childminder really understands [my child] and keeps in touch about [their] day with [the childminder]. [They have] a great relationship with [the childminder] and is so happy and settled there, it's truly a home from home, and we feel very fortunate that we found [the childminder]". Another parent said, "I like how local it is to us and the bond [the childminder] has with our children". This contributed to secure attachments having been established which supported children to feel safe and loved.

Personal plans were in place for each child. These were created in collaboration with families, identifying children's likes, preferences, health, and care routines which helped to promote continuity and consistency of care. We acknowledged that personal plans had been reviewed six monthly. Obtaining parents' signature would evidence their involvement in the review process. We discussed the importance of this to ensure information was current to ensure the children's care and support was right for them.

Children enjoyed snack time together with the childminder. They were given the opportunity to make pancakes and bananas for their snack. Children were keen to be fully involved in chopping, scooping, pouring and mixing, thus developing independence and important life skills. Children then sat together at the table with the childminder to enjoy their snack they had prepared. They chatted about how they had made the pancakes and were making plans for the rest of the day. As a result, snack time was a relaxed, sociable experience for the children while developing healthy eating habits. Parents told us that their children could choose from a range of healthy snacks and meals provided by the childminder. These reflected their preferences and individual needs.

There were no children in the setting requiring medication at the time of the inspection. We directed the childminder to most recent best practice guidance to ensure their policy was in line with this, stating how they would effectively manage the administration of medication. This would further contribute to children's health and wellbeing.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The childminder was very responsive in their approach to planning children's play and learning. A balance of planned and spontaneous experiences took account of children's development needs and interests. The childminder had recently introduced a floor book to document these experiences. The childminder had a very good knowledge of children's interests, provided resources, and planned activities to support these. This meant activities, resources and experiences were meaningful. Children confidently led their own play, exploring their interests and curiosities through a range of resources. These included building with wooden blocks, baking pancakes, playing snap, drawing and playing with play dough.

Children had opportunities to develop their skills in language, literacy, and numeracy through their daily experiences. The childminder played alongside children and chatted with them during their play, modelling positive use of vocabulary, and language, including mathematical language. While building with the blocks they spoke about high and long towers. This contributed to the development of the children's literacy and numeracy skills, and the foundations of lifelong learning.

Discussions with the childminder highlighted they had a very good understanding of child development. They used their knowledge to recognise children's achievements and identify where they required support. Overviews of children's development had been captured in observations which were shared with parents. We discussed carrying out shorter, significant observations more regularly while referring to the wellbeing indicators or the Curriculum for Excellence to support this. This would give a holistic overview of children's progress.

The local community was used very well to extend children's experiences. They attended local groups and there were opportunities to explore nature through walks to different parks and woods. This encouraged children to develop their social skills and provided very strong connections to their own and wider communities.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided, and how 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 very welcoming and homely. It was clean, bright and well-ventilated with direct access to the outdoors. One parent said, "[The childminder's] home is lovely, there is free access to a variety of toys, as well as easy access to the garden". Another parent said, "They are in a safe home and have other children to play with. They feel safe and comfortable with [the childminder]". This meant the childminder had created a safe home-from-home environment for children where they felt comfortable, safe and secure.

Resources were very accessible, promoting children's independence, allowing them to choose how they spent their time. The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, allowing children time to play and learn.

Children were cared for in a stimulating environment which provided ample space for them to explore. Spaces had been planned well taking account of children's interests and needs. During our visit, children played mostly indoors, exploring a variety of resources to support their age and stage of development.

Children played a game of snap together, with older children supporting the younger children with turn taking and the game rules. As a result, the older children were able to take responsibly while younger children learned new skills. Children enjoyed building with wooden blocks, a mix of coloured blocks and Jenga pieces. They created towers for animals and monsters. Open ended resources such as these encouraged children's curiosity, problem solving and imaginative skills.

Children told us that they enjoyed playing outdoors and exploring the local community. Parents told us that their children always had the opportunity to play outdoors. One parent said, "[My child] enjoys playing in [the childminders] garden and [they] used to attend an outdoor nursery with [the childminder] when [they] went to [the childminders] three days a week". This highlighted the childminder valued the importance of children being active which enhanced their health and wellbeing.

The setting was very well maintained, indoors and outdoors. Risk assessments highlighted potential risks and identified measures to support children's safety. We asked that the childminder review these to take account of the risk benefits. We discussed how they might document these and encourage children to be involved in risk assessing their own safety using the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign. This would further support children's understanding of keeping themselves safe and well.

Infection prevention and control measures were very effective with regard to reducing the risk of infection. Effective cleaning practices and hand washing procedures were in place, encouraging children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. This supported good infection control measures.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The childminder's aims and objectives clearly reflected the service provided, which included offering a safe, friendly and welcoming environment. This ethos was evident during our inspection. At the next review, we suggested these could be developed, considering input from children and families. This would ensure these were reflective of the needs of everyone using the service.

Positive relationships had been established with families. Different communication methods supported effective information sharing. The childminder valued the views of families and sought these through regular conversations, the use of What's App and emails. More recently a questionnaire had been issued to gather feedback on the service provided. We discussed how the childminder might make more effective use of this to reflect on their practice, and assess if the service was meeting current needs. The feedback we received from parents highlighted they felt they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. This meant parents felt listened to and valued by the childminder.

We acknowledged that the childminder had reflected on their practice and the service provided. They were in the early stages of implementing a more formal approach to self-evaluation using 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-aged children'. We discussed ways in which this method could help inform an improvement plan to ensure continuous improvement.

The childminder had policies and procedures in place, which were shared with parents, to support the smooth running of the service. Some of these required reviewing and we directed the childminder to best practice guidance to further support this. This would ensure children have access to a quality service and experience care that is right for them.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.1: Staff skills, knowledge, and values

The childminder was very kind and caring. We observed children's wishes and needs being met in very nurturing and naturally responsive way. It was clear strong attachments had been formed. The childminder's approach contributed to children feeling happy, very safe and secure.

Children and their families benefited from a childminder who was very committed to providing quality care. They worked well with families who given time to discuss their child's needs and to share experiences. The childminder demonstrated that they knew children and their families very well. Personal preferences and personalities were taken account of, which ensured care was provided on an individual basis and well considered to meet needs.

Parents told us they felt welcomed by the childminder and communication and involvement was good, however, some did not enter their home. One parent said, "We usually chat on the doorstep about our child's day, we pick [them] up on the way to picking up our other child so we wouldn't really have time to go inside. We feel this is sufficient to exchange information". As a result, relationships were positive and parents felt included.

The childminder had the appropriate knowledge and skills to offer high quality care and experiences. They had undertaken training and accessed reading materials and some best practice guidance to support their knowledge and understanding. The childminder kept a record of training which supported them to evaluate any learning undertaken and identify future training needs.

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	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.1 Quality of the setting for care, play and learning	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.1 Staff skills, knowledge and values	5 - Very Good

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