

Hoodles Childcare Day Care of Children

Academy Way
Colpy Industrial Estate
Oldmeldrum
Inverurie
AB51 0BZ

Telephone: 01651 873 995

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 August 2026

Service provided by:
Nursery Care (Grampian) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2011011583

Service no:
CS2011289681

About the service

Hoodles Childcare is a private early learning and childcare service provided by Nursery Care (Grampian) Ltd. It is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 68 children at any one time from 0 to those not yet attending primary school. Included in this number will be a maximum of 15 children in the 0 - two year age category.

The service is accommodated in a purpose-built nursery unit in the rural village of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. There are three separate playrooms and the nursery building benefits from having a large outdoor space. It is close to local amenities such as shops and green spaces.

Up to 46 children were present at the time of the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 August 2026 between 08:45 and 17:30 and 11 August 2026 between 08:30 and 12:20. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with five of their parents/carers
- received 14 responses to our request for feedback from parents and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Staff built warm, nurturing relationships that helped children feel safe, secure and valued.
- Children were happy, confident and engaged in a range of meaningful play experiences.
- Most families were included well and felt listened to, with opportunities to be involved in developing the setting.
- The outdoor environments required further development to better support children's learning, engagement and independence.
- Development of staff interactions would further support meaningful play opportunities and extend children's learning and thinking.
- Leadership was good, with supportive management and team who worked well together and felt involved in decisions.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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

The setting had recently reviewed its vision, values and aims with staff, children and families. These focused on providing a supportive, caring environment and developing strong relationships with families. They were displayed throughout the nursery and were reflected in the welcoming atmosphere and positive relationships observed during the inspection. We discussed how these could be embedded further in children's daily experiences so they become more meaningful and relevant to them.

The service was led by a motivated management team who created a positive and supportive culture for staff. Staff told us they felt valued, listened to and well supported by managers and colleagues. Regular full staff meetings, room meetings and support and supervision sessions encouraged staff to share ideas and contribute to developments within the nursery. Parents' views were actively sought and valued. The nursery used a range of methods to gather feedback and parents spoke positively about the caring relationships staff had developed with their children. Families had recently been consulted about developing the outdoor environment. In response, management introduced a "You Said, We Did" board to demonstrate how feedback had informed improvements. For example, additional creative resources such as paints and food colouring were added to outdoor trolleys, and loose parts resources were increased. We observed children using these resources during the inspection. The nursery demonstrated a commitment to listening and responding to families.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were now established and involved staff at all levels. Improvement priorities had focused on outdoor play, children's progress and parental engagement. The nursery used the new quality framework to support reflection and identify areas for development. Book Creator was used effectively to document progress, including before-and-after photographs of changes to the outdoor environment. It was clear that children had been involved in these developments and that improvements had a positive impact on their experiences.

The nursery demonstrated a commitment to professional learning and leadership development. Staff spoke positively about training opportunities and how these influenced their practice. For example, staff who had completed "Brilliant Babies" training described a greater understanding of babies' communication, behaviour and attachment needs. Senior staff had taken on leadership responsibilities such as audits, support and supervision, and were keen to continue developing these roles. We discussed further opportunities to empower staff to lead specific developments across the service.

Quality assurance processes were now effective and supported the smooth running of the nursery. A quality assurance calendar helped ensure audits, monitoring activities and support and supervision meetings took place regularly. These processes had identified areas for improvement, including extending children's learning through more open-ended questioning. Policies reflected current guidance and risk assessments supported children's safety and wellbeing. Recruitment procedures followed safer staffing guidance. We discussed the benefits of including children in the recruitment process. Induction arrangements helped new staff settle into their roles. We discussed further developing induction processes for staff moving into promoted posts. Overall, quality assurance arrangements were effective and supported ongoing improvement across the service.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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

Staff demonstrated a commitment to developing their knowledge of child development and how children learn through play. Some staff had identified training needs through support and supervision discussions and had accessed professional learning opportunities, including local authority training on two-year-olds. Staff undertaking qualifications explained how this had strengthened their understanding of child development and supported them in providing appropriate experiences for children.

Children were happy, engaged and motivated in their play throughout the inspection. Across all rooms, children had opportunities to develop creativity, problem-solving skills, language, numeracy and imagination both indoors and outdoors. For example, children used chairs to create a train outdoors, taking turns to drive and pretending they were going on holiday. Other children explored colour mixing while painting on cling film outdoors and were excited to explain how red and blue paint had made purple. Younger children made caterpillars from playdough and linked their play to the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Babies enjoyed stacking sensory bottles on top of each other and banging mashers together. Children experienced a range of meaningful play opportunities that supported their learning and development.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy skills were supported naturally through play and daily interactions. Staff regularly sang songs, shared stories and used Makaton to support communication. Mathematical language was introduced during play and routines, for example when counting blocks, discussing quantities of strawberries at lunch or comparing children's ages. Staff also encouraged children to recognise patterns and count during games. These opportunities helped children develop their communication and early mathematical skills in meaningful contexts.

The nursery provided largely child-led experiences through enabling and inviting environments. Resources were accessible indoors and children were able to choose where and how they played. Older children benefitted from free-flow access to the outdoors, supporting independence and choice. However, opportunities to further extend access to all outdoor areas should be considered to maximise children's learning experiences. We also identified some occasions where routines interrupted children's engagement, particularly during transitions into lunch. Overall, children experienced positive opportunities for choice and independence, although some aspects of the daily routine could be reviewed to better support uninterrupted play.

Staff interactions were warm, caring and responsive. Most staff showed a genuine interest in children's play and joined in appropriately. There were effective examples of staff supporting learning, however there were missed opportunities to extend children's thinking further through open-ended questions, modelling and additional resources. For example, children creating playdough caterpillars could have been encouraged to explore the life cycle of butterflies in more depth. This had already been identified by management through quality assurance processes and staff training had begun to support this.

Planning systems effectively supported children's learning and development. Staff contributed to both intentional and responsive planning and regularly evaluated the impact of experiences. Floor books were being used successfully in some rooms, allowing children to reflect on and revisit their learning. Observations and next steps were shared with parents through learning journals, and children's learning and achievements were clearly evident. Plans were in place to streamline tracking and monitoring to ensure children were fully supported. Appropriate partnerships with families and other professionals ensured supports were in place for all children.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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

Staff provided warm, nurturing care and support throughout the inspection. Children appeared happy, relaxed and secure in the setting and confidently approached staff when they needed help or reassurance. Staff responded sensitively to children's cues and emotions. For example, a baby experiencing discomfort from teething was quickly comforted, while another child in the toddler room received closeness from staff when they said they were tired. When children became upset or hurt, staff responded promptly and calmly, helping them feel safe. Interactions were respectful, with staff involving children in care routines and speaking to them at their level. Staff created a nurturing environment where children felt valued and cared for.

Children were familiar with daily routines and moved through the day confidently. They understood handwashing, snack, lunch and outdoor routines and often anticipated what was happening next. Even younger children responded to familiar cues, such as moving towards the sink when handwashing was mentioned. Sleep arrangements reflected children's individual needs and family wishes, with staff considering comforters, sleep times and settling strategies. Sleep spaces were calm and comfortable, helping children rest well. Handwashing was generally supported before and after meals, although this was not always consistent after snack time. Generally routines provided consistency and helped children feel safe and secure.

Transitions were managed sensitively and supported children's wellbeing. Staff used regular reminders to prepare children for changes in the day, such as letting them know that snack or lunch would be happening soon. Familiar routines and good relationships with staff helped children move between activities with confidence. Staff spoke positively about transition arrangements within the nursery, and records contained detailed information to support children moving between rooms. We discussed the importance of also considering emotional transitions and ensuring children received consistent support when they needed comfort. Overall, transitions were well managed and supported children's sense of belonging.

Appropriate systems were in place to keep children safe. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of child protection procedures and were clear about how to respond to concerns. Chronologies within personal plans were detailed and effectively recorded significant events and actions taken. Medication was stored safely and staff were knowledgeable about children's health needs. Record keeping was generally clear, although staff should ensure the reason for administering medication is consistently recorded. Infection prevention procedures were mostly followed, and nappy changing routines were carried out respectfully and safely. Staff demonstrated a commitment to safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing.

Mealtimes were generally calm, positive experiences. Staff sat with children, encouraged independence and created a relaxed social atmosphere. Children's dietary requirements and preferences were catered for, and alternatives were offered when needed. During the first day of the inspection, staffing arrangements affected the quality of the mealtime experience for the older children. However, management responded immediately and improvements were evident the following day. Children were well supported, supervised and able to enjoy their meals in a more relaxed environment.

Personal plans were in place for all children and provided detailed information about their wellbeing, interests and support needs. These were reviewed regularly with parents and reflected children's current circumstances. Staff used this information to tailor care and support to individual children. Parents spoke positively about the welcoming environment, daily communication and good relationships with staff. Diaries, handovers and ongoing discussions helped families remain involved in their children's experiences. Good partnership working and effective personal planning supported positive outcomes for children and families.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 23 May 2025, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children and practice by implementing effective systems of quality assurance. To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) regular and effective support and supervision for all staff is implemented
- b) staff are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding around self-evaluation processes and are involved in the systematic evaluation of their work and the work of the service
- c) clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service
- d) the management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole
- e) clear systems are in place for children and their families to provide feedback and to be actively involved in the evaluation of the service provided.

This is to comply with the - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/210. This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, 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 requirement was made on 3 October 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Support and supervisions were now in place, individual to staff members. These provided opportunities to recognise and celebrate good practice and achievements, while encouraging a collaborative approach to finding solutions. These meetings also helped identify any learning and development needs, enabling staff to access relevant professional learning opportunities and best practice guidance to support their ongoing development.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were now established and involved staff at all levels. Book Creator was used effectively to document progress. It was clear that staff and children had been involved in these developments and that improvements had a positive impact on experiences.

Quality assurance processes were now effective and supported the smooth running of the nursery. A quality assurance calendar helped ensure audits, monitoring activities and support and supervision meetings took place regularly. These processes had identified areas for improvements which the management team were supporting.

Parent's views were actively sought and valued. Families had recently been consulted about developing the outdoor environment. In response, management introduced a "You Said, We Did" board to demonstrate how feedback had informed improvements.

This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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