Highland Fling Nursery
Day Care of Children

11 Brighton Crescent East
Edinburgh
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Telephone: 0131 468 3456

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 September 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Fling Nursery Limited

Service provider number:
SP2023000362

Service no:
CS2024000023

About the service

Highland Fling nursery provides a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged between 2 years and those attending primary 1 at any one time. No more than 10 children are aged 2 years.

The service is situated in the basement of a large, detached house in a residential area in Portobello. It has a dedicated entrance and its own spacious garden area to the rear which is fully enclosed. The service is close to the parks, shops, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 9 September 2025 between 09:15 and 16:00 and Wednesday 10 September between 09:00 and 15:00. The inspection was carried out by two 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed feedback from nine families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing, and engagement in their play and learning.

This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Interactions between staff and children were warm, caring, and respectful.
- Children were supported by staff who were knowledgeable about their needs and interests.
- Children's health benefitted from daily access to the outdoors.
- Planning and tracking of children's progress should be further developed to ensure next steps in learning and development are identified and planned for.
- Staff had formed a strong team and worked well together to promote children's safety and meet their needs.

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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, having fun and engaged in play. They experienced kind, caring and positive interactions from staff. This created a welcoming and nurturing environment.
Many children were new to the service or transitioning to older playrooms. They were supported by staff who understood their individual needs. All parents strongly agreed with the statement, 'Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this service'. Comments we received included, "They are exceptionally child-centred, in a thoughtful and nurturing way" and "They are wonderful people, and we appreciate them very much".

Personal plans supported children's care, with information gathered in consultation with parents. These included key information on how the child's needs would be met, such as health needs, sleep routines, dietary requirements, and interests. Staff were knowledgeable about children's needs and preferences which provided consistency in their approach. We asked the service to include chronologies into the plans. These would ensure information was updated and changes documented.

Children's developmental needs and wellbeing had been considered in the provision of inviting areas to relax or sleep. Younger children slept in a calm and relaxed space with a small light on. Families' preferences were listened to and reflected in children's daily routines. For example, staff ensured children's comfort by following home routines such as providing favourite comforters at sleep time.

Medication procedures were in place and followed best practice guidance. Children had individual medication boxes, easily identified with their details. All health needs, dosage and stepped approach were easily accessible for each child. Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs and were clear of current medication guidance in keeping children safe.

Overall mealtimes were mostly relaxed and sociable. Food choices were nutritious and reflected current guidance. Prepared meals and snacks took account of children's allergies, intolerances, and cultural preferences. Additional systems had been added, such as coloured plates and name markers, ensuring children were safe and supported during mealtimes. Children had some opportunities to self-serve, however, this could be further developed, for example, by setting the table and clearing away dishes. We discussed with the management team a need to review the mealtime experience to ensure they are a positive experience for all children.

Children were encouraged to stay hydrated throughout the day. This supported their overall wellbeing.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun as they experienced a range of play, learning and development opportunities. Staff supported children in their play, supplying further resources if requested by the children. Mark making was a keen interest of children across both indoor and outdoor spaces. Easels with mirrors in the garden gave opportunities for creative expression and self-recognition.

Staff showed enthusiasm in their interactions with children and showed their play experiences and ideas were valued. Staff should continue to develop their skills and confidence in extending children's learning through meaningful conversations. This should include effective questioning techniques to promote deeper thinking during play.

There were opportunities for children to develop their skills in early literacy and numeracy through routines of the day. For example, storytelling and songs. Children could look at books and shared stories with staff throughout the day. These could be further strengthened across the setting, for example, through the use of a variety of environmental print.

Planning approaches within the service were child centred and responsive to the children's interests and life experiences. For example, mini beasts, the Gruffalo, and Mary Poppins. However, these were not yet fully effective in linking interests and needs to provision and progress. Learning journals were in place and contained observations and photographs. These demonstrated learning experiences which captured achievements and progress. These could be further developed to improve the quality and regularity of observations to capture learning (see area of improvement 1).

Children had good opportunities to connect with their local community. This contributed to children being active and leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, they regularly visited local parks and the nearby beach. This helped children learn about their local area, build new skills, and develop a respect for nature. Parents told us, "The almost daily trips in the local community truly enrich (child's) experience" and "The staff are so creative in providing rich experiences out in the local area".

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's progression in their learning and development, next steps in children's development should be meaningful, achievable and monitored to ensure children are supported well to reach their full potential. Observations should be regularly recorded and shared with families, identifying children's progress in their learning.

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

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from a welcoming environment which was warm, well-furnished, and comfortable. The setting was clean and tidy, which helped create a calm and inviting atmosphere. Children had access to their own space to store their personal items, which promoted a sense of belonging. One parent shared, "The care and environment is safe, secure and stimulating".

Staff worked together to ensure that children were always accounted for, undertaking regular headcounts, such as when children moved between inside and outside, and when they arrived and left the setting. Arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting and equipment were consistently applied. Clear policies and procedures for each room ensured consistent approaches across the setting. Checklists for cleaning, risk assessments and health and safety encouraged staff to take accountability.

Children were supported to be healthy through effective infection prevention and control procedures. Handwashing took place by children and staff at appropriate times. This helped to minimise the risk of spread of infection. Children who needed personal care were involved in the process. There were warm interactions during this time to support children.

We discussed with the management team how continued development of spaces for children and enhancement of resources would help deepen children's learning experiences. The use of play spaces should be freely accessible. This would ensure that all children have opportunities throughout the day to independently access core provision.

Children had access to a large, enclosed garden daily, with opportunities to enjoy active play whilst also developing their curiosity and imagination. Risky play was enabled and supported by staff through climbing, balancing and building. Children enjoyed making 'strawberry ice cream,' mark making and construction play. The mud kitchen was well resourced with pots and pans, however, required some further provocation of natural resources. This would extend more opportunities to develop children's imagination and curiosity.

Children were kept safe through a variety of measures. This included appropriate storage of personal information.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had been through a period of change and was now under new ownership. Although the service had been through challenging times the management and staff team engaged positively with the inspection process and demonstrated an open attitude to improvement. They welcomed feedback and acted on advice, showing a clear commitment to developing the service in ways that would benefit children and families.

The new provider was keen to work closely with staff, listening to ideas and encouraging collaboration. This had improved morale and promoted a stronger sense of shared purpose.

Staff spoke positively about the support they received, which promoted wellbeing and helped them feel valued. One member of staff told us, "Management are incredibly understanding and supportive".

Self-evaluation was supported through a variety of quality assurance processes. This helped the manager and staff assess and reflect on what worked well in the service and identify areas for development. For example, sharing of best practice documents, discussion through team meetings and audits, such as medication procedures. We discussed with the service they should add a monitoring system for the auditing

of accidents and incidents. This would support the service to identify and highlight any action taken or required to support children's care and wellbeing needs.

The service improvement plan had identified key priorities to support improvement. These included literacy and numeracy, the outdoors and self-evaluation. Moving forward we suggested the use of action plans, highlighting timescales and delegated roles. This would help staff feel included and take ownership of improvements within the service.

Children and families experienced a warm, welcoming, and inclusive ethos. Staff promoted the vision, values, and aims of the service through their practice and experiences offered. Parents had regular opportunities to speak with staff which helped develop relationships and communication. Staff respected families' opinions and recognised the value they could bring to the setting. All parents agreed they felt involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service and were regularly asked for feedback.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were warm, nurturing, and caring. They worked well together to create a welcoming environment for children and families. All parents told us they had a good relationship with staff. Comments we received included, "They're all fantastic, they know our child really well, communication is excellent, and we couldn't be happier" and "The staff are truly wonderful and such an asset to the service".

Staff communicated well with each other throughout the day, ensuring key information to support children's overall wellbeing was passed on to relevant members of the team. Staff treated each other and the children with respect, which helped build positive relationships. Staff were open, honest, and welcoming during the inspection process. They told us, they enjoyed working in the nursery.

The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. Staff communicated regularly about children's individual needs and when a task took them away from their post, such as supporting toileting needs or following children's interests. The manager supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. They should continue to review staffing over busy times of the day, including mealtimes to ensure all children's individual needs are met.

There was a mix of staff skills and knowledge across the service. These skills helped staff to observe children and appropriately identify how to enhance their development. For less experienced staff, there were opportunities for role modelling and to come together as a team to support professional dialogue and effective practice. This will help staff grow in confidence and support consistent practice, improving outcomes for children.

Regular opportunities to meet as a team supported staff in their roles. This allowed staff to discuss aspects of the nursery and included, planning for children's individual learning and wellbeing needs. These gave staff opportunities to reflect on priorities and plan for ongoing improvements.

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
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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