

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:
4 December 2025

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 was registered in June 2011 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 operates between the times of 7.30 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday. In partnership with the local authority, the service provides funded pre-school education sessions for children aged from three to five years.

The service is accommodated in a purpose-built nursery unit on the Colpy industrial estate in the rural village of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. There are three separate playrooms for babies, toddlers and older children. The nursery building benefits from having a large garden area. Two of the playrooms lead directly into the garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 and Wednesday 3rd December 2025, with feedback on Thursday 4th December 2025. 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:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with the children using the service
- spoke with families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- reviewed 18 completed questionnaires, 12 from family members and 6 from staff
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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.

During this inspection we 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

- Children were happy, confident and having fun.
- Children experienced warm, kind, nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well and were responsive to their individual needs.
- Positive working relationships had been established with families.
- Improvements had been made to both the indoor and outdoor play areas. Children experienced rich play and learning experiences which supported them to be imaginative, curious and creative in their play. The service should continue to develop the outdoor spaces to further promote children's play experiences.
- Planning for children's learning was being developed. Staff were being supported to develop skills and confidence in this area.
- Management and staff were committed to the continued development of the service to improve outcomes for children
- New approaches to quality assurance and self evaluation had been introduced and were starting to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. Management and staff should continue to develop and embed these systems.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strength just outweighed the weaknesses.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

Since the last inspection there had been a change of manager, however the new manager had previously managed the service. The management and staff remained committed to providing a quality early years service which provided positive outcomes for children and their families.

The management team demonstrated a commitment to improvement and were now more reflective in their approach. Staff were positive about the service and felt included in the improvement journey, fostering a shared sense of responsibility and a positive team culture. Staff fully engaged with the inspection process and demonstrated a positive attitude towards change and improvement.

The vision, values and aims for the service had been reviewed and updated. The manager had fully involved the children, staff and families in the process. This promoted a shared understanding of the service's purpose and strengthened partnerships with families. We discussed with management how staff could continue to actively promote the service's vision, values and aims through their daily practice and interactions with children.

The management and staff actively listened to and respected the views of children and their families and acted on their feedback. Working in partnership with families was a priority for the management and staff. They recognised the importance of establishing strong partnerships with families and having opportunities for parents to visit the setting and share in their child's care and learning. There was an open door policy and parents were welcome into the nursery at any time. Parents commented that they were invited to offer their views and feedback and felt involved in a meaningful way to help development the service. The service should continue to develop partnership with parents in all aspects of nursery life.

There was an improvement plan in place which supported the ongoing improvement of the service and outcomes for children and families. It identified key areas the service wished to improve. The areas for development the service had been working on included improvements to personal planning; observations, monitoring and tracking children's progress; and effective support and supervision for all staff. We were able to see the improvements which had been made since the previous inspection and how they had impacted positively on children's experiences, their play, learning and development. For example, improvements to the personal care plans now ensured that children were being consistently provided with the individualised care and support they required to meet their needs.

Quality assurance processes supported children's wellbeing. There were quality assurance systems in place including audits for accidents, incidents and medication, alongside some formal monitoring of practice. These helped to identify what was working well and areas for development to support improvement of the service.

Following a full inspection of the service in October 2023, a requirement was made in relation to quality assurance and self evaluation. Up until February 2025, little progress had been made to meet this. However, since then management and staff have been developing their confidence and skills in implementing self

evaluation and quality assurance processes. Some regular self evaluation was now taking place with all staff being actively encouraged to be involved in the process. Regular individual support and development meetings had been set up for all staff as well as regular team meetings. These meetings offered staff the opportunity to reflect on practice and to be proactive in introducing improvements. To support continuous improvement and help promote positive outcomes for children, robust approaches to self evaluation and quality assurance activities should become more embedded in practice. The previous requirement will be repeated with a new timescale. (See section, What the service has done to meet any requirements made at or since the last inspection).

Recruitment and induction followed clear, safe practices, in line with safer recruitment guidance. New staff benefitted from a structured induction and opportunities to shadow experienced colleagues. This helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. The management demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to the management of staffing and resources.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

Children were welcomed into a bright, inviting and engaging nursery where they were recognised and celebrated. Good use of soft furnishings, rugs, fairy lights and natural resources created a calm and homely space. The layout of the playrooms allowed children to freely move around indoors. Their artwork and photographs were displayed and they had access to their own space to store their personal items. The setting was visibly clean and well organised, with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. These details let children know that they were loved, valued and provided them with a sense of belonging.

Children very much led their play and were able to independently select resources of their choice. We recognised the positive changes which had been made to the indoor environment. The layout had been reviewed and the range of resources and experiences had been extended to create a more engaging and interesting space. Indoor spaces were well organised and promoted independence and confidence. There was a good range of open-ended, real life, natural resources and loose parts in each of the playrooms. Opportunities to support and develop children's early literacy, language and numeracy skills had also been increased. Children were able to freely access material, choosing where and with whom to play. The different play areas offered a balance of quiet and creative experiences which reflected the children's interests. The displays of children's artwork celebrated their achievements.

Since the previous inspection, improvements had been made to the outdoor area, especially the upper area, which was well used by the children on a daily basis. Children in the 3 - 5 room benefitted from free flow which supported children's choice, independence and wellbeing. Staff encouraged outdoor exploration and supported children to investigate and learn about the world around them. The outdoor spaces were now better organised and promoted learning through real life experiences. The management and staff explained that the ongoing development of the lower outdoor area had been identified as an action point in their current improvement plan. Parents spoke positively about the outdoor space and how popular it was with their children. Comments made included: 'They are very outdoors and go outside in all weathers which is fantastic for learning opportunities, creativity, health and wellbeing and building resilience', 'My child loves the outdoors and has the opportunity to spend time outside every day he is there', and one parent

commented their child enjoyed 'making potions, obstacle course construction and play, mud kitchen, bikes, loose parts play'.

The safety and security of the children was a priority for the management and staff. Secure entry systems and close monitoring of visitors by staff contributed to children remaining safe. There were appropriate risk assessments and daily checks were completed which enabled children to explore freely in a safe environment, promoting confidence and wellbeing. Tools such as updated registers and regular headcounts helped children to move safely around the setting. Staff also made good use of walkie talkies when children were moving freely around both the indoor and outdoor play areas.

All children and families' personal information was stored securely within each of the playrooms. There were locked cupboards available in each of the rooms and the office. This ensured confidentiality was maintained and complied with best practice guidance.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this heading as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Playing, learning and development

Children in each of the playrooms were busy and having fun as they played both indoors and outdoors. The environment and experiences sparked the children's interests and enriched their play and learning across the day. Children were observed being engaged, happy and motivated as they confidently explored the various play experiences which were developmentally appropriate and reflected their current interests. The pace of the session was unhurried and we saw children confidently leading their own play and learning. For the majority of the time, children benefitted from uninterrupted play, allowing them to be engaged in their play in a purposeful and meaningful way.

Staff had benefitted from training around interactions and supporting children's learning. As a result we observed skilled interactions from staff encouraging curiosity, problem-solving skills and promoting development of creativity and imagination. Staff confidently got down to children's level, picked up on children's verbal and non verbal cues, showed genuine interest and enthusiasm, gave praise and celebrated children's achievements.

Since the previous inspection, work had been completed to improve the range of resources both indoors and outdoors. Indoors, the various play areas were well resourced with loose parts, real life and open ended resources which were easily accessible for the children. These enriched children's experiences and sparked their curiosity, supported problem solving and imaginative thinking.

The outdoor space promoted active play with natural resources, loose parts and sheltered areas encouraging rich sensory exploration. Work had been completed to improve the range of resources and play experiences available to the children, especially in the upper outdoor area which was well used throughout the day. The manager explained that developing the lower part of the outdoor space was an identified action point in the service's improvement plan.

Children had the opportunity to be curious, use their imaginations and develop literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy and numeracy were embedded across the service and evident across the day in each of the playrooms. For example we saw babies enjoying familiar music and songs and responding with giggles and

excitement to words and sounds made by staff during an activity with tinsel. Children aged 2 - 3 explored sand, water, mark making, playdough and gloop, developing early maths, numeracy, fine motor and communication skills. Staff were regularly being approached by children with books they wanted read to them. The older children were equally engaged in a range of activities and experiences including mark making, construction, role play, sand and water play. Some particularly enjoyed using the notepads and envelopes on offer to write letters to Santa.

Planning had been an area for improvement following the previous inspection. The local authority had offered some support to the service to develop staff's understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps. We looked at the observations shared with parents for a number of children in each of the play rooms. Observations for individual children were now completed more regularly, were more focussed and identify children's learning and next steps. We discussed the benefits of dating when development overviews were being completed to highlight progression.

Some staff had completed floor book training and discussed the positive impact this had had on supporting meaningful planning and how to involve the children. More staff were due to complete the training in due course. Floor books were being used effectively to capture children's voices, ideas, and spontaneous planning in the 3 - 5 year olds room.

Staff used an online app to share children's learning journals, helping parents to stay connected to their child's experiences, learning and development. Parents appreciated the use of the app to share information about their child's progress. As well as being able to access their child's learning journal on the online app, parents were also invited to attend parents evening twice a year. These offered staff the opportunity to share children's learning, development and care needs with parents. Achievements from home were also celebrated with the children. Parents could attach photos from home into their child's online learning journal. These were printed off and shared and celebrated with everyone.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this heading as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from a warm and welcoming environment where staff interactions were nurturing, caring and responsive. Positive relationships were evident, with staff knowing children well and responding sensitively to their individual needs. Staff were kind, helping children to feel safe and settled. Appropriate comfort, cuddles and reassurance was offered, supporting wellbeing, for example during sleep routines. Parents we spoke with were complimentary of the staff team and described them as friendly, kind and caring. Comments made included: 'The staff are the real asset', 'The staff create a very friendly and supportive atmosphere for children', and 'Great team and they really engage with children'.

The management and staff recognised the importance of establishing good working relationships with parents and the positive impact this had on outcomes for children. Positive working relationships with parents promoted and supported good communication and informing sharing which in turn supported consistency and continuity of care for children. We observed parents being welcomed into the playrooms during drop off and pick ups and being provided with good levels of feedback about their child's day. The

parents appreciated being able to go into their child's playroom and being able to see the range of activities their child could take part in.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning approaches. All children had personal care plans which set out how the nursery staff would meet their individual health, wellbeing and safety needs. Staff were able to confidently discuss the care and support needs of the individual children in their care. This resulted in children receiving consistent care and being effectively supported to reach their full potential. Parents advised that they were fully involved in the development and review of their child's personal care plan.

Parents were also involved in reviewing and planning for their child's learning with regular updates, achievements and successes being shared with them via an online app. Parents were invited to add comments as well as add any photos from home. There were also regular parent meetings where parents were invited into the nursery, could meet staff and discuss their child's play, learning and development. These approaches helped families feel involved and strengthened working in partnership which supported children's learning and wellbeing.

Snacks and mealtimes were positive, social experiences. They were sociable, relaxed and unhurried, allowing children to enjoy eating and chatting with friends. Children were provided with home cooked lunches which took account of children's allergies and dietary requirements. Independence was promoted as children helped to prepare snack, collected their plates and self served their food, giving them a sense of responsibility and ownership of routines. Staff sat and had lunch with the children which provided opportunities to form and maintain relationships, and support the development of language, communication and social skills.

Staff understood the importance of supporting transitions, whether starting nursery, moving between rooms, moving to school or during daily routines. Transitions were flexible and supportive. Staff worked with parents to understand preferences and needs. Settling in visits were flexible and informal. Improvements had been made to transitions within the daily routines. They were now responsive, child led and provided a more nurturing flow to the day.

Personal care was carried out sensitively, with staff supporting children's independence where appropriate. Sleep routines reflected family preferences and home practices, for example specific sleep times and comforters. This helped to create a sense of continuity, consistency of care and security for children.

Medication processes were in place that supported staff with the safe administration of medication. Forms were in place which gathered appropriate information with parent signatures and dates. Medication was stored in line with good practice guidance, ensuring it was secure but accessible. Regular audits and reviews were completed to ensure that records were up to date. This meant staff had the information they needed to promote children's health and safety.

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

The management and staff had implemented clearer systems for self-evaluation and quality assurance and were now starting to see the benefits of these in relation to improved outcomes for children.

They had introduced systems to encourage all relevant stakeholders to be actively involved in the self-evaluation process. This was confirmed by comments from staff who were able to confidently talk about how improvements they had already put in place had impacted positively on children's experiences and what future changes would be made to improve the setting. Families also confirmed that they were routinely asked for feedback.

There was a clear system of induction for new staff and all staff were provided with regular support and development meetings to discuss their progress, training needs etc. Regular monitoring and observation of practice within the rooms was completed with feedback provided whether verbal or written.

For more detailed information about quality assurance and self evaluation, please refer to the recording under the heading of Leadership and management of staff and resources.

Although we recognize the progress which has been made, time is needed to fully embed these systems and for children to receive consistently high quality play, learning and development experiences.

This requirement has not been fully met therefore it will be continued with a new timescale of 31 March 2026.

Not met

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To ensure each child receives appropriate care and support and their needs are met, the provider, manager and staff should ensure:

- a) personal plans set out children's current needs and how they will be met
- b) all staff are aware of and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to effectively meet each child's needs
- c) personal plans are routinely reviewed with parents and carers and, where necessary, updated.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 3 October 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff all knew the children well and could confidently discuss the needs of all the children in their care. All children had a personal plan which was completed and reviewed with parents. Parents confirmed that they were routinely asked to be involved in the development and review of their child's personal plan.

Staff had received training in relation to personal plans from the local authority. They appeared more confident in relation to the purpose of personal plans and ensuring that they were completed and routinely reviewed. Staff were given time off the floor to ensure that personal plans were up to date.

Personal plans were included in the audit processes and routinely reviewed by a member of the management team and, on occasions, the local authority. Personal plans and relevant training were now routinely included in full team meetings.

We recognized the work that had already been done and the service's commitment to continue to review personal plans as part of their quality assurance processes.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve, the service should improve the approach and skills of staff in relation to planning for children's learning and tracking and monitoring their progress. Staff should be supported to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 11 February 2025.

Action taken since then

Training had been provided to staff both by the manager and the local authority. The result has been staff who were more confident in the planning process and the tracking and monitoring of children's progress. Staff have taken on board feedback following any audits and used this in future improvements. Staff were becoming more reflective and more confident in their observations and tracking.

We looked at a number of observations of children's learning shared with parents via the app. They were now clearly identifying children's learning. Parents appreciated the observations which were shared with them.

Staff were now seeing the benefits of the processes and the positive impact on outcomes for children. Staff were seeing children who were more engaged in activities and recognizing the progression in their learning.

Staff were now taking a lead from children's interests and using these interests when completing intentional planning.

Planning, tracking and monitoring children's progression will continue to be included in the service's ongoing quality assurance and self-evaluation processes.

Going forward, management and staff need to embed the systems they have in place.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To promote children's continued learning, development and enjoyment, children should have access to a wide range of resources and experiences which are challenging and suitable to their individual interests and stages of development. There should be a sufficient amount of resources both indoors and outdoors to enable children to make independent choices and engage in deep and meaningful play.

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

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 11 February 2025.

Action taken since then

There have been improvements to the indoor setting and the resources readily available to children. Staff have been actively involved in auditing areas and the identification of resources which would be extend children's learning. In all the rooms, we saw children who were engaged, having fun and learning.

As part of their quality assurance and self-evaluation processes, the service themselves have identified that the indoor environment now offers children a richer learning environment. They can see children who are more engaged and are benefiting from an environment which is extending their curiosity, imaginative play and learning.

Improvements had been made to the upper area of the outdoor space. Greater range of resources and activities to extend and enrich children's play and learning experiences. These included water play and water wall, building / construction area, story corner, arts and crafts. Less work has been done to the lower garden area however it is on their improvement plan.

Parents commented on the access to outdoor play and learning and how much their children enjoyed and benefited from these opportunities. Parents spoke about the improvements which had already been made to the outdoor environment especially the planting activities which their children enjoyed and spoke about.

We recognize the progress that has been made and the impact on children's experiences, play and learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

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

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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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