

Flowerpots Childcare Ltd. Day Care of Children

Pavilion 2
Kingseat Business Park
Kingseat
Newmachar
AB21 0AZ

Telephone: 01651 869 078

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 March 2026

Service provided by:
Flowerpots Childcare Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2009010588

Service no:
CS2009232725

About the service

Flowerpots Childcare Ltd. is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 85 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 23 are aged under two years of age.

The outdoor space has been taken into account when agreeing the maximum number of children aged over two years.

Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:

- under two years - 1:3
- two to under threes - 1:5
- three and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than four hours per day, or
- 1:10 if the children attend for less than four hours per day if all children are over eight years old and over 1:10.

The service is accommodated in a business unit within the Kingseat development. The interior of the premises has been designed to provide three separate playrooms, each with immediate access to a spacious outdoor play area. The service is relatively close the local school and amenities such as the library, park, and woods.

About the inspection

This was unannounced inspection which took place on 24 March 2026 between 08:30 and 16:30 and 25 March 2026 between 08:30 and 15:30. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with five of their parents/carers
- received 18 completed questionnaires from families
- received 10 completed questionnaires from staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily 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.

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

- Children were cared for with warmth and kindness.
- Staff managed children's health, wellbeing, and safety effectively, ensuring children felt safe and well cared for. Some improvements to children's personal planning would further support consistency and continuity of care.
- Children were offered nutritious and appetising meals and snacks.
- Children experienced engaging, high quality play and learning.
- Outdoor play opportunities were a strength of the setting.
- Strong leadership and effective self evaluation and quality assurance processes led to high quality care and learning experiences for children.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 5 - Very Good**Leadership and management of staff and resources**

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.

The service's clear and well embedded vision promoted curiosity, child-centred play, and outdoor learning. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of these aims, which were consistently reflected in practice. As a result, children were supported to make choices, follow their interests, and engage in high quality play experiences. Parents had been meaningfully involved in developing the service's vision and values and were well informed when joining the service. This ensured expectations were met and contributed to parents' high levels of confidence in the care and learning their children received.

Leaders showed a strong commitment to self evaluation and continuous improvement. They had undertaken improvement training, which supported their approach to evaluating practice and making meaningful changes. This led to high quality care and learning and positive outcomes for children and families.

The service used guidance, including 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors', to identify strengths and areas for development. A wide range of views informed self evaluation, including those of staff, children, and parents. This inclusive approach ensured that improvement activity was relevant and effective.

Staff were encouraged to reflect on their practice through regular team and room meetings. Key information was shared through the family app and staff messaging groups. Reflections were recorded in floor books, which supported consistent practice and helped identify improvements, such as increasing literacy and numeracy resources in playrooms.

Parents were actively encouraged to share feedback and influence improvement. The service used a range of effective strategies, including polls and a parent forum, enabling leaders to respond promptly where changes were required. For example, parents were consulted during the winter months on how best to communicate closures and session changes, resulting in clearer and more responsive communication. A parent commented, "We are given regular surveys asking for feedback, there is an open door policy and the parent forum." Children's views were also valued and the service was developing age-appropriate questionnaires to gather children's opinions on play resources and interests. This supported more meaningful planning and ensured experiences continued to reflect children's preferences.

Quality assurance processes led to high quality care and learning experiences for children. These included observations of practice, staff appraisals, peer support, and audits of observations, personal plans, and accidents and incidents. Ongoing improvement work focused on literacy, numeracy, health, and wellbeing, alongside developing leadership for sustained change.

Staff were safely recruited and registered with the appropriate professional bodies. Parents were offered opportunities to contribute interview questions and, where candidates spent time in playrooms during interviews, children were asked for feedback. This led to inclusive recruitment decisions and promoted positive outcomes for children and families.

The service had a well structured induction programme, based on the 'National Induction Resource' and adapted to meet the needs of the setting. Induction arrangements were tailored to individual roles, including promoted posts, supporting staff confidence and readiness for their roles.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Playing, learning, and developing

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.

Children were happy, confident, and fully engaged in their learning. They led their own play, making clear choices about where and how they wanted to play. Most children chose to play outdoors for extended periods and were observed enjoying their experiences. This helped children develop independence and confidence. Parents commented, "My child loves climbing, hiding, running around. Building dens, 'camping', resting in hammocks, woodwork, collecting rocks, obstacle courses, growing and planting veggies/plants. There's an outdoor classroom kind of area where [my child] draws, builds, eats snack. The fire pit snacks are a favourite too" and "My child has been out to the forest numerous times, they play games outside, have water/messy play often, and has been to the park on numerous occasions."

Playrooms were welcoming, well organised, and effectively supported children's interests. Resources were stored to allow children to access them independently, supporting choice and sustained engagement. Role play areas were well resourced with everyday items, such as pots and pans, which children identified as a favourite area. Natural materials and loose parts supported imagination, problem solving, and creative expression.

The outdoor play environment was a strength of the setting. Areas were thoughtfully planned to support independent exploration and sustained play. Older children confidently accessed and used the tool shed, demonstrating a clear understanding of how to use tools safely. Their involvement in identifying risks supported safe choices and responsibility. Water play was particularly popular, with children enjoying transporting water and mixing colours. This supported creativity, cooperation, and early problem solving skills.

The environment supported children's learning in literacy and numeracy. Children's writing was displayed, helping them feel valued and proud of their achievements. A range of measuring and construction resources enabled children to confidently explore early mathematical concepts, such as measuring, weighing, and shape. Children also had opportunities to explore digital technologies, supporting curiosity and investigation.

Children experienced positive interactions from staff who positioned themselves effectively to support play and ensure safety. Staff knew when to step back and when to intervene, helping children feel secure and confident. Achievements were consistently recognised and celebrated, supporting children's confidence and self esteem.

Staff used meaningful questioning and discussion to extend children's thinking and support them to explore ideas in depth. For example, a child was supported to explore how light reflected from their torch and another was helped to choose the size of stick needed to stir coloured water. These interactions helped children stay deeply involved and explore their ideas fully.

Staff were animated and engaging when reading stories and interacting with the children. Staff made the most of everyday routines to support early numeracy, counting with children and helping them recognise numbers during snack and lunchtime. This contributed to happy children who were progressing well.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of planning approaches, using a well balanced mix of intentional and responsive planning to meet children's individual needs. As a result, children experienced a wide range of high quality play and learning opportunities that reflected their interests and stages of development. High quality observations were used effectively to identify next steps in learning, which were clearly evident in practice and supported the development of kindness, early number skills, and, in the baby room, colour, shape, and sensory exploration. Children's learning was shared regularly with families through floor books and the family app, supporting positive parental engagement in children's progress.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

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 were cared for by kind, nurturing, and respectful staff who interacted sensitively at children's level and listened attentively to their needs. Children were comforted promptly when upset, with babies supported sensitively through reassurance and cuddles to promote emotional wellbeing. Children were also well supported following minor injuries, with staff responding calmly and effectively to help them feel reassured.

Personal care routines were well managed. Handwashing was thoroughly embedded in daily practice, supporting children's health and wellbeing. Staff were discreet and respectful when supporting children with nappy changes, and nappy changing areas were clean, organised, and well maintained. Transitions and daily routines were well planned and supported children's sense of security. Positive routines were in place to help children move smoothly between rooms and staff described individualised settling in arrangements planned over several sessions, which helped children feel secure and supported parents to feel confident.

Children's wellbeing was supported through sensitive arrangements for rest and relaxation. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's individual sleep needs and were responsive to children who required comforters. Older babies rested on mats within the playroom, supporting their transition into the two-three room, while younger babies slept in cots within a comfortable sleep room. Staff monitored sleeping children regularly to help keep them safe.

Snack routines were well managed and enjoyed by the children. Children's independence and responsibility was promoted through opportunities to prepare fruit, collect seeds for planting, and serve themselves food and drinks. Older children enjoyed eating snack outdoors and were well supported by staff who sat with and chatted with children. This contributed to building friendships and confident, happy children.

Children were offered nutritious and appetising lunches and, once routines were established, mealtimes were calm and sociable. Dietary needs and allergies were well managed and children who did not like the meal on offer were provided with an alternative. Babies were well supported with positive interactions that promoted self help skills. However, some babies experienced delays between being seated and food being served. Further consideration should be given to reducing waiting times for babies to help promote their comfort and wellbeing.

All children had a personal plan in place which included information about medical needs, preferences, and individual characteristics. These were reviewed regularly with parents to ensure information remained current, helping staff know children well and provide appropriate care and support. A parent commented, "We always update the child plan when required and attend any parent visits or evenings." However, some children would benefit from additional support plans with clear strategies to promote greater consistency of care, particularly for short-term or specific challenges. In addition, a small number of chronology entries did not include clear guidance or planned strategies where further support was required, increasing the potential risk of missed information or inconsistent care. The manager agreed to improve practice by further developing children's personal plans and clearly linking agreed strategies to children's chronologies.

Information to support the safe administration of medication was available but recorded across multiple systems, making it less accessible. We discussed this with the manager who began making immediate improvements to streamline records and support safe practice.

Some families had attended the setting for a number of years and had developed positive, trusting relationships with staff and the manager. This supported effective communication and continuity of care. Parents commented, "The staff are all amazing, really professional, my little ones love it when they see them both in and out of nursery. They really cater to the children's wants/needs" and "Friendly and approachable staff. They care about you and your family, always willing to support you and give you the best advice." Opportunities, such as play and stay sessions, helped parents feel involved and connected. Parents received daily feedback at collection times, however they were not routinely encouraged into the playroom, which limited opportunities to observe their child's play. We signposted the guidance 'Me, My Family, and My Childcare Setting' and discussed developing different approaches at drop-off and pick-up to further strengthen partnerships with families.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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