

# Little Flyers @ Ratho Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
We Care for Children Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2010011353

**Service no:**  
CS2010279584

## About the service

Little Flyers @ Ratho is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children currently attending primary school. Within this maximum number, care may be provided to one young person aged 12 to 14 years. The manager is also the manager of Little Flyers After School Club @ Winchburgh.

The service is located in the village of Ratho, near Edinburgh and is close to local amenities. It is based in the community centre attached to the primary school. Facilities used by the club include the community room with kitchen area, gym hall and toilets. The service also has use of the school grounds.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 10 March 2026 between 14:30 and 17:30. We returned on Wednesday 11 March 2026 between 14:30 and 16:40 to complete the inspection. 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- spoke with one parent and reviewed questionnaires returned by three families
- spoke with staff and the leadership team and reviewed questionnaires returned by three staff
- observed interactions, routines, practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a visiting professional
- 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. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

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.

**Key messages**

- The service demonstrated a strong commitment to continuously enhance the quality of care and learning provided. As a result, the requirement and five areas for improvement made at the last inspection were met.
- Leaders had taken prompt action to review security measures of the physical environment. These measures meant the setting now operated as a safe and secure service.
- Staff had improved the organisation and presentation of play spaces, making them more inviting for children to engage in play.
- Positive relationships were evident and children appeared relaxed and happy throughout the sessions.
- Staff should develop their understanding of supporting play through planning, resourcing and quality interactions. This would help to ensure that play opportunities are provided for all ages and stages of development to challenge and extend children's thinking.
- Strengthening recording of the impact of planned experiences, and using observations to identify next steps, would support richer, more targeted play opportunities both indoors and outdoors.

**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 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 4 - Good

We evaluated these quality indicators as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

Leaders were in the process of reviewing the service vision, values and aims with children, families and staff. This should help to create conditions where everyone is included in the development of a shared vision which is reflected in practice to improve care and learning.

Self-evaluation processes supported improvement across the setting. The quality assurance calendar guided monitoring and helped identify what could be better. Leaders had responded well to the previous inspection findings. This had led to improvements in several areas, including safer play spaces and stronger value-based practice to support children's emotional wellbeing.

Leaders used the self-evaluation framework; A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: school age children (Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland, 2025) to evaluate aspects the service. Moving forward, plans were in place to support the staff team to use the framework to reflect on the work of the service. This would strengthen reflective practice and support ongoing improvements. The service should embed systems to measure the impact of these changes to ensure that they continue to improve outcomes for children.

The improvement plan was clear and measurable and aligned with service priorities. Leaders had a strong understanding of what needed to change to enhance outcomes. For example, they recognised that older children needed more age-appropriate experiences to challenge and motivate them. Older children that we spoke to confirmed this and told us that they would like to have more interesting activities to keep them occupied.

Staff actively sought feedback from children and families, creating an inclusive culture where everyone felt able to influence change. For example, consultation with families to refresh the service values helped to ensure they would reflect children's needs and interests.

Leaders recognised the importance of recruiting and keeping a skilled, stable team to support children's wellbeing. Safe recruitment practices ensured that all staff were appropriately vetted and suitable to work with children. The service planned to develop a values-based recruitment approach. This should clearly communicate the values that matter most to the service. It would also help to assess whether candidate's values align to support high quality outcomes for children.

The induction programme equipped new staff with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute positively to children's experiences. A staff member said, "Induction and mentoring help new staff understand their roles so they can work confidently with children." Leaders were considering how to streamline the process for staff transferring from within the organisation to avoid repeating information they already knew. For example, the company standards and expectations.

Regular review meetings and a strong training programme supported staff to reflect on their practice and identify development needs. Staff felt encouraged to take on leadership roles. For example, one staff member planned to introduce a children's committee to give children more influence in decision making.

#### **Quality indicator: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment**

Leaders provided a range of learning opportunities that strengthened staff knowledge and confidence which was carefully aligned to improve outcomes for children. For example, recent training improved staff understanding of how children's personal experiences affected their wellbeing. This helped staff recognise how feelings influenced behaviour and how to support children to feel secure and valued. As a result, staff built positive relationships with children, who approached them for comfort and reassurance. One parent said, "There are regular familiar staff who all know who I am and are open to sharing updates on my children. I value what they do for this club."

Staff felt supported and valued. One staff member told us, "Training and learning has helped me create a safer, more engaging after-school environment where children feel supported and confident." Staff now need further support to deepen their understanding of how children play and develop. This would help them to offer more challenge and raise expectations for children's achievements.

Leaders provided a wide range of opportunities for staff to engage in work-based discussions to build individual and team knowledge. For example, regular team meetings which focussed on self-reflection to inform practice. Moving forward, staff could be supported to develop leadership skills. This should help to develop their confidence to lead routines and experiences when leaders are not present in play spaces.

Positive teamwork meant staff communicated well and remained flexible to ensure effective deployment and continuity of care. For example, a clear system for collecting children from school ensured everyone understood their role and kept children safe.

### **Children thrive and develop in quality spaces** 4 - Good

#### **Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces**

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

Leaders had taken prompt action to review security measures of the physical environment. As a result, the main door into the service was now locked at times when the children were using the service. This meant that the public did not have unsupervised access to the play spaces. It also reduced the risk of children leaving the service without staff awareness. A clear system for parents to notify staff on arrival ensured smooth and safe handovers. These measures meant the setting operated as a safe and secure environment. A parent told us, "Recently a locking system has been installed on the main door which has improved safety."

Staff understood their responsibility to keep children safe and carried out safety checks of all play spaces before children arrived. Agreed communication tools were used consistently, allowing staff to remain informed when children moved between areas.

Systems for monitoring, maintaining and repairing the environment and equipment were implemented. Damaged toys and resources were replaced promptly. Improved organisation of play spaces, along with additional resources, enabled children to engage in more purposeful and meaningful play.

Children were offered daily outdoor experiences. They were supported to take a balanced approach to risk during outdoor play, while staff reinforced safe behaviour.

Effective infection prevention and control approaches contributed to reducing the risk of any potential spread of infection. Staff cleaned surfaces before snack preparation and toilets were sufficiently clean for children arriving. Effective handwashing was consistently embedded at key times, promoting children's health and wellbeing.

Staff informed children about the areas and activities available each session. Children were offered choice through consultation on snack options for the following week. Staff valued children's ideas and interests and were committed to building on this further. Play spaces were organised to provide children with access to a range of activities. Play areas included the playroom, outdoor areas and the gym hall, enabling children to choose where they wanted to play. While improvements had been made, staff recognised the need to continue reviewing provision and available use of space. For example, the playroom sometimes became busy, limiting space for children to develop their play fully.

Effective record keeping and secure storage procedures protected children's personal information. Staff demonstrated strong understanding of their responsibilities, ensuring consistent and safe information management.

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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

Children were settled and remained engaged in their play throughout the session. Staff had improved the organisation and presentation of play spaces, making them more inviting. As a result, children were motivated to engage in play and received a strong message that they were valued and respected. The enhanced play spaces provided a wider range of resources, enabling children to be curious, explore, and develop new skills. A parent told us, "My kids enjoy playing with Lego, Minecraft blocks, the gym equipment and playing outside in better weather. They also enjoy hanging out in the tent. There are always crafts and experiments available too."

Further development of play spaces would create more meaningful play opportunities and allow children to lead their own play. For example, children would have benefited from more active play opportunities at times when the gym hall was unavailable (**see area for improvement 1**).

The home-link toy bear created a positive connection between home and the service. By sharing the bear's adventures, children experienced continuity between their home lives and the setting. To strengthen this partnership approach, staff could incorporate children's home experiences more regularly into the planning of new opportunities and experiences.

Children were supported to make informed choices about their care and learning and encouraged to share ideas for future play. Staff acknowledged that this was an area with potential for further development. Plans were in place to introduce a children's committee so that children could have a more active role in planning play experiences.

Staff interacted positively with children, listening and responding to their ideas. Children invited staff into their play and warm, engaging interactions were observed, for example, staff participating in hairdressing role play. Although staff engaged well with children, there were variations in skill and approach. Some staff effectively used questioning to extend children's thinking. However, all staff would benefit from further support to deepen children's curiosity and challenge their learning. Approaches such as wondering aloud, exploring ideas together, and asking 'what if' questions would help spark a stronger sense of wonder (**see area for improvement 1**). Leaders could also be mindful that during busier periods, such as school collections, staff were less able to sit with children.

Children's interests shaped planned experiences, with staff taking turns to lead activities. Leaders intended to introduce a more formal intentional planning approach. This would help to ensure continuity in supporting children's developing skills and stages of learning. To complement this, evaluation of planning and evidence recorded in the floor book could be strengthened. This would support staff to reflect on children's developing skills and inform future planning. It would also encourage children to reflect on their learning and achievements (**see area for improvement 1**).

### Areas for improvement

1. For all children have high quality play opportunities which support them to have fun, learn and develop, the provider should ensure that the play opportunities offered inspires curiosity and challenge for all of the children. This should include, but is not limited to:

- developing staff understanding of supporting play through planning, resourcing and quality interactions
- ensuring that all children have access to high quality outdoor play opportunities
- developing the planning approach to recognise and respond to children's individual interests and stages of development
- ensuring that play opportunities provided challenge and extend children's skills at all ages.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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 to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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

Children were warmly welcomed by staff on arrival, helping them feel secure, valued and ready to engage in play. Positive relationships were evident and children appeared relaxed and happy throughout the session. A parent said, "Staff are all incredibly friendly and kind."

Staff knew children well and offered appropriate support. The emotional check in at arrival encouraged children to share their feelings, enabling staff to provide comfort and reassurance when required. A parent told us, "I like that there is no pressure to participate in the activities if my kids are feeling tired. There is space to relax and also to play on their own if they would prefer."

Snack was nutritious with children voting weekly on menu choices. A parent said, "The snacks are varied and tasty." Snack time had improved since the previous inspection and was now a calm, organised and sociable experience. Children self-selected from a buffet, with water available at all times. Staff could further enhance this experience by sitting with children to promote conversation and connection.

Medication was stored and administered in line with best practice guidance and staff prioritised children's safety. However, healthcare plans could be more detailed to show what steps to take if a child's condition deteriorates.

All children had a personal plan and were actively involved in sharing their interests and what mattered to them. Wellbeing indicators supported assessment and planning, and reviews were completed within required timescales. To make plans more meaningful, children's interests and learning goals could be more clearly reflected in planned experiences. Support strategies were well understood by keyworkers, and more consistent recording of progress would help ensure strategies remain relevant as needs change.

Families were kept informed about children's experiences through a digital platform and invited to review personal plans regularly. Staff could use these opportunities to explore children's hobbies and family activities in more depth to further enhance care, support and play experiences.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 1 May 2025, to keep children safe, the provider must demonstrate how they will keep children safe in the setting, which is open to the public. To do this, the provider must, as a minimum:

- a) develop risk assessments and practice which will ensure that members of the public do not have unsupervised access to the children
- b) develop risk assessments and practice to ensure that children cannot leave the service unsupervised
- c) review security measures to ensure that staff are alerted to members of the public accessing the areas of the building which they use.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19) and, 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

**This requirement was made on 25 March 2026.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

The main door into the service was now locked at times when the children were using the service. This meant that the public did not have unsupervised access to the play spaces. It also reduced the risk of children leaving the service without staff awareness. These measures meant the setting operated as a safe and secure environment.

**Met - within timescales**

## 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 promote children's overall wellbeing, the provider should develop practice to ensure that children consistently have their needs met and experience care which support them to build a positive view of themselves.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I feel valued, loved and secure' (HSCS 3.10).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

#### Action taken since then

Training and guidance had resulted in improved value-based practice. As a result, children's needs were consistently considered, and they experienced care which supported them to build a positive view of themselves.

**This area for improvement is met.**

## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children have a positive and safe eating experience, the provider should review and improve the mealtime experiences. This should include but not be limited to:

- ensuring snacks are always nutritious
- staff interactions that promote a calm and social experience
- promoting effective handwashing at key times
- cleaning systems which prevent the spread of infection.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS, 1.35) and 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).'

**This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

### Action taken since then

Leaders had reviewed the menu in line with best practice guidance and consultation with children. Snack time had improved since the previous inspection and was now a calm, organised and sociable experience. Staff could further enhance this experience by sitting with children to promote conversation and connection.

Cleaning procedures and food safety measures had improved to prevent the spread of infection. Effective handwashing was in place before and after eating and when preparing food.

**This area for improvement is met.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure that all children have high quality play opportunities which support them to have fun, learn and develop, the provider should ensure that the play opportunities offered inspires curiosity and challenge for all of the children. This should include, but is not limited to:

- ensuring that all children have access to high quality outdoor play opportunities
- indoor experiences give children a rich variety of experiences throughout their day
- consideration is given to the opportunities provided when access to areas are limited, for example the large gym hall
- core provision is routinely provided.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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 to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

The provider had improved the organisation and presentation of play spaces, making them more inviting. A wider range of resources, enabled children to be curious, explore, and develop new skills and core provision is routinely provided.

Further development of play spaces was needed to create more meaningful play opportunities and allow children to lead their own play. Consideration still needed to be given to the opportunities provided when access to areas are limited, for example the large gym hall.

While we noted progress in this area for improvement is not met and has been reworded (see area for improvement 1 under the heading, 'Children play and learn').

**Previous area for improvement 4**

The service environment should be maintained to ensure that it provides a respectful environment for children. This should include, but is not limited to:

- repairing and repainting chipped and damaged paintwork
- cleaning the playrooms and toilets effectively
- repairing or replacing damaged equipment.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24)

**This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

Systems for monitoring, maintaining and repairing the environment and equipment were implemented consistently. Damaged toys and resources were replaced promptly.

The setting was decorated to a satisfactory standard and toilets were sufficiently clean for children arriving.

**This area for improvement is met.**

**Previous area for improvement 5**

To further develop the quality of the service and enhance outcomes for children, the provider should ensure that quality assurance processes, improvement planning and self-evaluation are further developed and embedded. This should include, but is not limited to developing:

- quality assurance processes to ensure that they identify risks and develop actions to keep children safe
- improvement planning to include measurable outcomes, monitoring progress and impact to support positive outcomes for children and families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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 area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

Quality assurance processes, improvement planning and self-evaluation had improved. Leaders had responded well to the previous inspection findings. This had led to improvements in several areas, including identifying risks and developing actions to keep children safe.

The quality assurance calendar guided ongoing monitoring and helped to identify other aspects for development. The improvement plan was clear and measurable and aligned with service priorities. The service should now embed systems to measure the impact of these changes to ensure that they continue to improve outcomes for children.

**This area for improvement is met.**

## Previous area for improvement 6

To ensure that children have consistently high-quality experiences, the service should develop staff understanding of supporting play through planning, resourcing and quality interactions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14) and, 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.**

### Action taken since then

While staff engaged well with children, there were variations in skill and approach. Some staff effectively used questioning to extend children's thinking. However, all staff would benefit from further support to deepen children's curiosity and challenge their learning.

Staff would benefit from developing their understanding of how to support play through planning, resourcing and quality interactions. The planning approach could be developed to recognise and respond to children's individual interests and stages of development. This would help to provide play opportunities to challenge and extend children's skills at all ages.

**While we noted progress in this area for improvement is not met and has been reworded (see area for improvement 1 under the heading, 'Children play and learn').**

## Previous area for improvement 7

To ensure that children have consistently high-quality experiences, throughout their time in the provider should review the effectiveness of staff deployment across the service. This should include, but is not limited to:

- ensuring that all staff including those in leadership roles have the right skills and experience
- busier times of the day are planned for
- children's needs are central to decision making
- physical aspects of the service are considered in deployment decisions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that as a child: 'People have time to support and care for me and speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2025.

#### Action taken since then

The provider had improved the effectiveness of staff deployment across the service. Positive teamwork meant that staff communicated well and were flexible to ensure that staff deployment was effective to ensure continuity of care. Good communication between staff meant that they informed each other when children moved areas using communication aids. This helped to ensure that children did not leave the premises unattended.

Staff were appropriately skilled and thoughtfully deployed to reflect children's individual needs and to provide extra support when needed.

This area for improvement is met.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
<b>Children thrive and develop in quality spaces</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good
<b>Children play and learn</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
<b>Children are supported to achieve</b>	<b>4 - Good</b>
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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