

Copper Pots Day Nursery Day Care of Children

Donview
431 Clifton Road
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 May 2025

Service provided by:
Copper Pots Montessori Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2022000257

Service no:
CS2022000389

About the service

Copper Pots Day Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. The service is provided in a residential area in Aberdeen and is accessible by public transport.

The nursery comprises of six small playrooms, four of which are located at ground level and two which are located on the first floor. One of the playrooms on the ground floor has direct access to the fully enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the property. There is on street parking available.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 13 May 2025 between 09:30 and 17:15 and Wednesday 14 May 2025 between 09:30 and 16:30. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children using the service.
- Received feedback from parents and carers.
- Spoke with staff, the manager and deputy manager.
- Observed practice and children's experiences.
- 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

- Children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs. The staff approach was very caring and nurturing which helped the children to feel loved, safe and secure.
- Children benefitted from a variety of positive play and learning opportunities supported by skilled staff and a rich, stimulating and challenging learning environment.
- Staff had worked hard to ensure children received consistently high quality learning opportunities which followed children's interests and deepened their knowledge.
- Strong leadership and a whole team commitment to improvement had led to the continued development of the service which impacted very positively on children's wellbeing, play and learning.
- Children benefitted from a motivated and committed staff team who demonstrated high quality engagement with children at all times.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefited from staff who were consistently nurturing and caring in their approach. Praise was regularly given to recognise children's achievements and encouragement provided to build children's confidence. The staff team were attentive to individual needs, for example providing hugs and reassurance when children were unsettled, wiping noses and changing clothes when needed. Parents and carers consistently described staff as attentive, approachable, friendly, warm and welcoming. One parent told us that staff "have a great bond with the kids" and another that "they know our children so well." A further parent spoke about the nursery being an extension of their family.

Personal plans were in place and contained quality information about each child. These were based around the wellbeing indicators and incorporated children's rights. Staff spoke about developing these in collaboration with parents and carers and this was confirmed through feedback from families. All personal plans were regularly reviewed with any updated information also being added as needed. Discussions with staff indicated that they knew the children and their needs very well. Some personal plans could be developed to provide further detail about how best to support individual needs identified. For example, where it had been identified that a child would benefit from staff promoting them to interact with peers rather than adults to highlight how this would best be supported. Key information sheets were in place for each child. These provided important information to new or relief staff about how to care for each child based on their individual needs.

Clear and detailed information about children's health needs were recorded in health care plans. These were reviewed every three months with parents and carers to ensure that key information was kept up to date. Medication was stored well and in line with best practice.

Meal and snack times for children were very positive and sociable experiences. Children had a choice of where to sit and did not have to wait long until the food arrived. There were opportunities for independence with children self serving, pouring their drinks, and tidying away their cups and plates. Staff sat with children, provided support where required and interacted positively with them. Parents and carers expressed that they were very happy with the quality of food provided to their children. The service was looking at developing a pictorial menu to enhance further engagement with the children.

Children were supported to maintain hydration with fresh water being available throughout the day and staff regularly prompting children to drink. Very young children had developed the skills to access water independently indoors and outdoors.

Sleep routines were supportive and nurturing with staff creating a calming environment through dimming the lights and playing soothing music. Individual preferences, for example pacifiers, comfort blankets and back rubs were respected.

1.3 Play and learning

The children had fun and experienced joy at the nursery with much smiling and laughter evident throughout the inspection. The staff team were very much focused on children's right to play and provided many high quality opportunities to engage in meaningful and fun activities.

The indoor environment had been improved significantly to support high quality play and learning experiences. Areas were clearly defined and loose parts had been increased to allow much more imaginative play and problem solving.

Staff had given careful thought to how different areas could be enhanced, for example, they had recently added measuring tapes, calculators, notepads and pens. This had enabled children's play and learning to be extended, for example building with wooden blocks and then measuring the tower. Role play areas had been developed to provide a very good range of real life resources, including pots and pans, real fruit, vegetables, fresh herbs and dried pasta. This provided really positive opportunities for children to develop their imagination through their play.

Much more literacy and numeracy had been introduced into the different play areas, including recipe books in role play area and instructions for how to make play doh in the play doh station. Books were attractively displayed in inviting story corners and a dedicated story room on the ground floor provided a calm and quiet space. QR codes were displayed on the wall with stories in different languages so that children could listen to stories in their first language. Attractive and interesting song spoons were accessible for children to make choices about songs to sing. Singing was also woven in throughout the day and really engaged the children. All of this helped to support children's language development and their learning.

The outdoor environment had also improved significantly with lots of inviting and attractive resources which encouraged children to be imaginative and curious. Children were keen to be outdoors in the stimulating environment for extended periods of time and were well supported to do this by the staff team. One parent told us, "my son is outdoor a minimum of 3 times a day and another that "they are always outdoors, come rain or shine!"

Children enjoyed a range of interesting and stimulating activities during the inspection. We saw children really engaged in some planned activities, including a science experiment and an outdoor baking activity. Both of these were facilitated very well by staff to provide quality learning experiences.

Staff had developed their skills in relation to interacting with children in a way that supported and extended their learning. Lot of natural opportunities to do this were observed. For example, children created a person with wooden blocks and staff supported this with mathematical language. Discussion took place around size, shapes, counting and measuring.

A very well resourced mud kitchen with pots and pans, utensils, mud, fruit, vegetables and herbs provided plentiful exciting opportunities for making potions and mud pies and other delights. Again this was very well supported by staff supporting children's literacy, numeracy and imagination through their play.

The staff team had been working hard on improving the planning, teaching and assessment for the children. A new planning format had been introduced, which had been informed by training, guidance and visiting other settings. Meaningful examples of where staff had created interesting and stimulating activities based on children's interests were shared with us. Children's achievements and relevant next steps were included and children's progression highlighted. The team were continuing to review and further develop observations in line with their improvement plan.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment which was well furnished and homely. Careful thought had gone into softening the environment with, for example, the addition of lamps and fairy lights, more cushions and rugs. Photos of family members were displayed at child height and children enjoyed looking at these regularly and sharing this experience with staff. The introduction of adult sized seating throughout the rooms added to the homely feel and provided nice opportunities to support reading, feeding and provide comfort. Increased sensory items helped to support a calming environment and new soft seating for children supported relaxation. A story room provided a nurturing, peaceful space to enjoy some calm. One parent told us, "the setting looks very homely" whilst another said, "it's a nice building with lots of rooms to explore. Rooms are not so big as to feel intimidating and smaller rooms offer quiet spaces when needed."

Indoor and outdoor environments had been very thoughtfully developed to encourage children to be curious, to problem solve, to use their imagination and to have fun. This led to children being fully engaged throughout the inspection as there was always a resource or an activity that captured their interest. There had been a clear commitment from the provider and the staff to continually improve the environment to support a more stimulating and inviting space. This had resulted in positive outcomes for the children who were consistently very engaged. Parents recognised and appreciated the work that had been undertaken to improve the environment and were aware of future identified work.

The building and the outdoor space were very secure, supported by appropriate risk assessments being undertaken. Clear and effective arrangements for staff to greet families coming in to and out of the building helped to keep children safe. One parent told us, "the door policy is very secure and the staff are always spread out watching and playing with the children."

Children were involved in completing a child friendly pictorial risk assessment as they ventured out into the garden. This supported them to assess and learn about risk and keep themselves and others safe. Discussions also took place as opportunities arose throughout the day to support children to keep safe and healthy. For example, whilst undertaking a baking activity there was discussion about not eating the cake mixture as it contained raw egg which could cause a sore tummy.

Infection prevention and control practice was found to be very good. Children were supervised when handwashing to ensure they followed safe procedures. Handwashing by both staff and children took place regularly throughout the day at key times. An outdoor handwashing station had been set up and was used regularly.

Children were well supported whilst having their nappy changed with positive interactions and gentleness. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the procedure used by staff consistently reflects best practice. The service was in the process of making improvements to their nappy changing areas to ensure all areas were easy to clean and therefore further reduce the risk of infection (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support high levels of infection prevention and control the provider should progress with their plans to ensure that children's personal care environments are consistent with the Care Inspectorate document 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders).'

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11); and

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, value and aims for the reflected the aspirations of children and their families, the staff and the management team.

Parents and carers advised that they were provided with opportunities to help develop the service. One parent told us, "if I make a suggestion, it's implemented. For example, I suggested a cubby by the door for shoes and bags and there was one made the following day." Informal discussions at drop off and pick up times and stay and play sessions allowed opportunities for parents and carers to highlight what was working well and what could be improved. A regular newsletter was made available to families and included regular information about improvements the service had made or were planning. This supported parents and carers to appreciate the nursery's strong commitment to improvement and encouraged them to contribute their feedback. We discussed further ways of capturing feedback from families during the inspection visit.

An e-book completed by the local authority who provide support and monitoring to the nursery captured the journey of improvement the service has been on. It recognised the hard work undertaken to create stimulating and challenging spaces for children to access and increased opportunities to support literacy and numeracy. The e-book also acknowledged the ongoing development of planning for children's learning. Areas were identified for improvement and it was clear that these had been actioned by the provider and team.

The team were using the resource 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare' to self-evaluate the nursery and support them to continually develop. All the team and parents and carers were encouraged to participate in this process through a variety of different methods. Observations of staff practice carried out by the manager also helped to inform this assessment. With all information collated and analysed the service then identified what they were doing well and what needed to improve. The self-evaluation was completed to a high standard, reflecting that care was taken to consider each quality indicator in depth using a variety of sources to evidence this. Very positive plans were then put in place to develop the service further.

A very clear and easy to read improvement plan was in place with four priorities for the year which kept it focused and manageable. These included upskilling staff to support children's learning, promoting the benefits of rich free flow outdoor play, developing effective quality assurance systems and improving the indoor and outdoor environments. We could see that all areas had been progressed and led to very positive outcomes for the children.

Regular staff meetings provided opportunities for staff to discuss ongoing improvements and complete training as a team and feed back on individual training opportunities and their learning. This promoted communication, staff understanding and a whole team approach to improvement. Leadership was encouraged at all levels with staff using their individual skills, knowledge and experience to support developments within the nursery.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good where there were significant strengths which supported positive outcomes for children.

4.3 Staff deployment

A highly skilled and motivated staff team was in place which supported very good outcomes for the children. Newer staff were well supported by the team. Extensive training and discussions had taken place to upskill staff. This had helped lead to improved practice and confident staff and therefore enhanced children's play and learning experiences. Staff were encouraged to develop their leadership skills, for example undertaking training and using the learning to support other team members development and develop the environment. High levels of interaction were seen throughout the day which helped build positive and meaningful relationships between staff and children. Staff were enthusiastic, happy and engaged which helped to foster a very positive atmosphere.

The nursery was always well staffed. There was very effective communication between all staff to ensure that children were well supervised, supported and kept safe. Staff positioned themselves well in the rooms to ensure that they were meeting all children's needs and providing a range of quality activities. Children were able to access support as and when they needed it.

Opportunities for children to access outdoor play has significantly improved through the effective deployment of staff, working together as a team and a much better understanding and commitment to the benefits of high quality outdoor play. Free flow play downstairs was working very well due to clear and robust routines in place to keep children safe and accounted for.

The team had welcomed the improvements that had been made, the training and development opportunities available to them and the support from the management team, provider and local authority. They were able to see how much impact this had had on outcomes for the children. This had all helped to support a positive ethos of attendance amongst the staff team who were committed to their role in supporting very good outcomes for the children. Clear and effective arrangements were in place to cover both planned and unplanned leave. A very low turnover of staff impacted positively on building strong and supportive relationships with children and families and ensuring continuity of care. The team worked cohesively, with all staff spoken with feeding back that team working was strong and valued.

Key times of the day which are particularly busy, including mealtimes, were planned for to ensure that there was sufficient staffing to support children. This contributed to children being well supported to develop their independence skills, kept safe and enjoying a sociable and relaxed meal experience.

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 children's health needs are supported, the manager should improve health support plans. This should include ensuring health support plans are fully detailed and up to date.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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); and
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Clear and detailed information about children's health needs were recorded in health care plans. These were reviewed every three months with parents and carers to ensure that key information was kept up to date.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To enable children to receive high quality care, play, learning and development opportunities, the provider, manager, and staff should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to:

- Provide more challenge to children in their learning; and
- Extend and deepen children's learning further.

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

'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).

This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff had developed their skills in relation to interacting with children in a way that supported and extended their learning. This was supported by rich and challenging environments both indoors and outdoors. Children enjoyed a range of interesting and stimulating activities during the inspection.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support high levels of infection prevention and control the provider should develop a plan, complete with timescales to ensure that children's personal care practices are consistent with the Care Inspectorate document 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders).'

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11); and

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 25 April 2024.

Action taken since then

The service was in the process of making improvements to their nappy changing areas to ensure all areas were easy to clean and therefore further reduce the risk of infection.

The area for improvement has been reworded to reflect that - see quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

This area for improvement has not been fully met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support positive and improved outcomes for children and families, the provider should develop quality assurance systems, including self-evaluation and improvement plans and ensure that they lead to continuous improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the 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 25 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance systems had been further developed since the last inspection and were now of a high quality. A clear commitment to continuous improvement from all staff had led to children receiving consistent high quality care, support and learning.

This area for improvement was found to have 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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