MACS St Cadoc's Day Care of Children

St. Cadoc's Primary School
Crookfur Road
Newton Mearns
Glasgow
G77 6TT

Telephone: 07860865418

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2024

Service provided by:
Mearns After School Care Service Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003000772

Service no:
CS2003003979

About the service

MACS St Cadoc's provides an out of school care service to a maximum of 72 children attending primary and secondary school up to the age of 16 years from 15:00 - 18:00, of those 72 no more than 16 attending primary and secondary school can attend the outdoor satellite setting based at St Cadoc's wood and no more than 56 children can attend the breakfast club from 07:45 - 09:00. During operating times, the service has the use of a large gym hall, dining hall and secure playground areas within St. Cadoc's Primary School, Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire. The service is close to transport routes and other amenities.

During school holidays a service is run from St. Cadoc's Primary School to a maximum of 104 children. The holiday service runs from 07:45 until 18:.00. If St. Cadoc's Primary School is not available then Kirkhill Primary School can run service. Other venues which may operate a holiday service include Broom Church, Mearns Road, Glasgow G77 5HN to a maximum of 48 children, and Fairweather Hall, Barrhead Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow to a maximum of 32 children attending primary and secondary school. If all venues are unavailable the service may care for a maximum of 104 children at MACS Eastwood, Crookfur Primary School, Capelrig Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6LF.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place between 12 and 16 January 2024. One inspector from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:
- spoke with nine children using the service and received survey responses from 19 parents or carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were cared for by staff who displayed warm and responsive caregiving approaches, which made children feel valued.
- Staff regularly engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice.
- We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's rights to play.
- Planning approaches focused on capturing and responding to the play interest of a child or group of children.
- Personal planning should be more collaborative and provide children with a greater sense of ownership of their next steps for play and development.
- Newly recruited staff benefit from an robust induction training process.
- We highlighted and the provider agreed on the value of implementing professional development plans for less experienced staff to undertake nationally recognised play work qualifications.
- The accommodation was bright and airy, with considered organisation and layouts of play spaces that reflected children's interests.

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?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children. Performance evaluated as very good does not require significant adjustment.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Throughout the various play sessions we observed it was clear that children experienced warm and supportive caregiving. We observed staff adapting daily planned activities and being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that promoted self esteem, encouraged them to feel valued as well as responsible for their play choices. One parent told us: "The children feel safe and comfortable. The leaders are very approachable and kind to the kids. They resolve conflict well and seem genuinely interested in the children's well-being." Another parent commented: "A family friendly approach. The staff are very caring and attentive to the needs of the children." A third parent stated: "The team know my children well, including their specific personality traits, strengths and weaknesses. They use strategies to deal with occasional aggressive outbursts my children display, and keep me informed with what they are doing so we can be consistent at home."

The manager told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's play interests. We discussed with staff approaches that may make a gathering of personal planning information more collaborative and provide children with a greater sense of ownership of their next steps for play and development. Staff agreed that this would provide time and space for children to regularly review, evaluate and adapt their plans. It can enhance the existing approach to personal plans by ensuring they become a meaningful forward-looking planning tool that supports children's ownership of developmentally challenging play opportunities.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting children's right to play through a wide range of creative and physical play experiences. One parent commented: "Within the school it is very stimulating for the kids as they get to play physical games as well as creative activities." Another parent told us: "The activities are so varied that each day my child is always doing something different including baking, role play on road safety, drawing or free play activities." A third parent commented; "My boys say they like playing in the MUGA, they like the Lego, drawing and snacks." A fourth parent stated: "Lots of toys at MACS stimulate cognitive thinking and plenty of opportunities to play outside". Staff told us how they placed the interests of children at the centre of their planning approaches for play and learning. We found children had opportunities to participate in a variety of creative and active play experiences including: mask making, clay modelling, dancing, construction, moon sand, kite making, tye dying, basketball and den building. The balance of organised and freely chosen extended play opportunities provided opportunities for children to develop social and physical skills, confidence and self-esteem.

We found that staff regularly reflected on within individual children's settling in diaries on observed play experiences to support planning approaches that focused on capturing and responding to the particular interests of a child or group of children. Staff told us that this responsive approach helped them to build on existing approaches for recognising children's play interests as well as extend opportunities for child-initiated play. It supported children's progress by positively impacting on the quality of planned play experiences.

We discussed with the management team the value of widening training options to ensure a greater focus on play based training for staff. Staff had the opportunity to participate professional development in improving play practice, interventions and schemas. The manager agreed to consider future development opportunities for staff including topics such as inclusive play, loose parts play, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) learning through playful resources. Improvement initiatives like this have the potential to enhance the variety and level of challenge children experience through the play opportunities on offer.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children. Performance evaluated as very good does not require significant adjustment.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We found the accommodation to be bright and airy, with considered organisation and layouts of play spaces that reflected children's interests. We found the environment and resources within it were effectively managed to support positive outcomes for children. We were able to see systems were in place for maintaining and monitoring children's accidents. Staff told us that accident records were shared with the child's parents to provide reassurance that their child had been cared for by staff and to make sure there was continuity in their child's care. One parent commented: "The set up is ideal. They have a very safe system for tracking which kids are inside or outside."

The indoor environment was clean and well maintained by school janitorial staff. Children were kept safe and healthy through the good infection prevention and control measures implemented by staff. For example, we heard children being reminded to wash hands thoroughly before eating healthy snacks. Staff worked well together to identify and remove hazards in the way of children's safety. Risk assessments were completed for inside and outside the setting.

We found that the service supported children's physical activity through access to the secure outdoor play area. The service had sole use of the school playground out with school times. Children's access to the school playground was considered a strength by parents. The playground provided plenty of space for children to run and develop gross motor skills on the varied climbing apparatus and trim trail. Children could play a variety of ball games and experiment with the loose parts materials which stimulated their team building, imagination and problem-solving skills. Children understood the boundaries and how to use different spaces and equipment. Team meeting minute records showed that the management team were committed to widening the range of materials available to support children's play both indoors and outdoors. This can extend the opportunities for children to learn actively through play, be creative and think critically.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

All parents and carers who completed our survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I am confident the setting is well managed". We found that the management team had a clear vision of how they wanted to take forward quality improvements within the service. The inspection team were impressed by their commitment to leading positive changes that will contribute to future improvements to the quality of children's outcomes and experiences. One parent commented: "The manager is excellent and she goes above and beyond to support the children in her care. She has great leadership skills with her staff." Another parent commented: "The communication with the manager and the team is so easy and straightforward. There's evidence of kids being involved all the time in activities planning, making up house rules etc. All the staff seem happy and are always friendly and kind with the kids and parents." A third parent told us: "The manager is particularly good at handling difficult behavioural situations, making sure the parents don't feel judged, but rather informed and armed with a proactive solution."

Regular team meetings with staff were used to discuss overall planning and progress of the service. Staff told us how they benefitted from participating in focussed discussions on the outcomes and experiences of children using the service. This helped staff to consider what if any action is needed for improvement to enable children to have the best possible experiences whilst in the service.

The manager told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parent's contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages, themes or ideas put forward. We highlighted how "A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare" (Care Inspectorate, 2022) tool could be used to increase parental involvement and engagement in the development of the service improvement plan. This tool was already being used as part of a general quality assurance approach. The manager agreed that the strategies we suggested for widening consultation with children and parents would increase all stakeholders sense of ownership of any future development priorities for the service.

The manager carried out formal one to one support meetings with staff. This provided an opportunity to recognise staff skills and offer a planned approach to staff professional development.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question as we found performance demonstrated a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. The strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff felt very well supported by the manager both formally and informally through their open door approach. They told us that they felt able to approach them with any concerns. Staff worked well together and supported each other. This helped to contribute to a happy and welcoming atmosphere. One parent told us: "I have only good things to say about the MACS team. It speaks volumes that my daughter considers the MACS team to be among her best friends." All parents and carers responding to our survey strongly agreed or agreed that the setting had enough staff with the appropriate skills to support their children. One parent told us: "There are always plenty staff available and keen for kids to engage with." Another parent commented: "The team is great. I always see members of staff proactively caring for the kids and playing with them as well as allowing them to do things independently."

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. The management team told us that as a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited centre they provided staff with various professional development opportunities. This included an SQA Forest Kindergarten Award credited at Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 7. In addition, stand alone continuous professional development units in Child Protection at (SCQF) Level 6 and 7 were offered to staff. Playwork training was also offered to staff at an introductory level based on National Occupational Standards (NOS). Other recent staff development topics had included: chronology training, sensory awareness, allergen awareness, duty of candour, infection control, food labelling, autism awareness, the play cycle, and play observations. These learning experiences helped to provide assurance to children and parents that staff were well equipped to fulfil their play practitioner roles.

We discussed with the management team how the current national staff recruitment and retention crisis affecting the childcare sector in Scotland had directly impacted on the number of experienced fully qualified staff available for recruitment. The provider told us how they planned to build on the current skills and qualification mix within the staff team. This included building a consistent staff team that included opportunities for newly recruited and less experienced staff to fulfil roles as qualified support workers and play work practitioners. These plans have the potential to enhance the capacity of the team to support children to experience the highest level of challenge and positive outcomes through play.

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

The manager should seek current child protection training for all staff to ensure robust systems are in place to safeguard and protect children from harm.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards My support, my life, which state that as a child: 3.20 I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

This area for improvement was made on 11 December 2019.

Action taken since then

All staff had received regular professional learning in safeguarding and understood the indicators that may suggest a child is at risk of suffering harm. Annual refresher training for staff served to enhance the robust systems already in place for monitoring and maintaining child protection records and supported the continued safeguarding of children.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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