Cojac Centre Playscheme
Day Care of Children

146 Castlemilk Drive
Castlemilk
Glasgow
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Telephone: 01416 341 002

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 October 2022

Service provided by:
Caring Operations Joint Action Council an association

Service provider number:
SP2003001351

Service no:
CS2003006114

About the service

Caring Operations Joint Action Council (COJAC) provides a service for children/young people affected by disability. The service operates from purpose built premises in the Castlemilk area of Glasgow.

The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 98 children/young people aged between five and 18 years. The service operates Monday to Friday between 15:00 to 22:30, and Saturdays between 08:00 to 15:30 during term time.

During holiday times, the service operates Monday to Friday between 08:00 to 22:00. Children / young people attend on a part-time basis during term time, and full-time during school holidays. The stated aim of the service is to provide social, recreational and educational activities to those in the community who have a disability.

This inspection focussed on the after school care element of the service, which runs between 15:00 to 18:00 during school term. There were seven children in attendance that day.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 11 October 2022 and Wednesday 12 October 2022. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. We carried out this inspection following an incident where a child left the service unobserved by staff. As part of our inspection, we assessed the actions taken by the service which led to the incident, and what they have done since.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaint information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with three children using the service, and six of their family members;
- Spoke with eight staff and management;
- Observed practice and daily life; and
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children and young people benefit from the very effective use of personal planning that ensures they receive the support they need to reach their full potential.

- Staff were excellent at developing meaningful relationships with the children, young people and their families.

- The leaders were highly knowledgeable of the rights of the families who attended the service, and worked hard to ensure that these rights were acknowledged, supported, and not forgotten in their community.

- All staff contributed to the ethos of this service which was warm, caring, inclusive and nurturing.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

How good is our care, play and learning? 6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question, as we found the service performance to be sector leading and innovative for both quality indicators.

Child centred practice and play based approaches were embedded in the service ethos. Children consistently received outstanding care and support from compassionate staff who knew them extremely well. Staff intuitively stepped in to support children's play ideas when needed, or offered challenges to extend their learning. As a result, children experienced care that was nurturing and responsive to their individual needs.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

All staff were very kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children. They knew the individual needs of all children very well. A wealth of information was in place following effective discussions with families and professional agencies prior to children starting in the service. An induction meeting was held with parents where staff respected their views and provided reassurance as to how their child's needs would be met in the service. Staff practice during children's personal care reflected their families' preferences and promoted children's independence, privacy, and dignity which allowed children to feel secure.

Children were transported from school to the service each day, and there were seven children there on the day of inspection. Staff valued the information that was handed over by the escort of how the child's day had gone. This information allowed staff to meet that child's need in a meaningful way. Staff were very skilled at supporting children with any additional support they had, and were responsive to any changes in children's interests or wellbeing on a daily basis. They considered how play and fun for the children was appropriate, proportionate, and included specialist support. We noted that this was excellence practice by staff and ensured that children's holistic needs were always met.

Staff took time at the end of the day to share with parents how the child had been feeling that day, from the start of school through to the Out of School Care Provision. Each day, staff prepared written information on individual children's likes, dislikes and opportunities to extend their play for the following day. All staff met together for 20 minutes before the children arrived. This time was used to share with everyone, which experiences were being offered to the children, and how these met children's interests from the day before.

Various communication methods were used to meet the individual needs and preferences of children and their families. This included Makaton, (a language programme using signs and symbols), other visual and communication aids for children, phone calls, emails, regular conversations and meetings with families. This ensured children and their parents were included, their views sought and respected, and important information shared.

Children of all ages and abilities were welcomed warmly and were happy within the setting. Paying attention to everyone's emotional wellbeing was very well embedded in this service ethos and staff practice. Organised activities such as arts and crafts, sensory play, soft play, and large physical spaces where always available. Children determined their own level of participation, but were also supported by intuitive staff that supported their emotional wellbeing. We observed one staff member sensitively judging

when to step in and support a child to discover a new experience. This enabled the child to have full access to the musical experience that was available to him, and gave him a sense of achievement and pleasure.

Snack was pleasant, sociable and a relaxed experience for children. Staff sat alongside children providing support where required, interacting and engaging in conversation. All children's dietary needs and preferences were known to staff. On the day of inspection, the children had beans and toast along with a variety of fruits. Those children requiring help from a staff member received this, and others were supported to be independent. This contributed to children's health, wellbeing and safety. Children used visuals to communicate with staff as to their preference of snack, and staff were encouraging children to tell them their favourite fruit. Food options were underpinned by relevant guidance on healthy eating that met the needs of children. Staff told us that it can be difficult at times to get the children to drink water. We shared with them some suggestions that could encourage this activity. Staff quickly responded to this, and recognised the value of more opportunities to demonstrate to children the value of drinking more fluids, to help keep them hydrated.

Staff were respectful of parent's roles as key partners in their children's care and learning. Parents confirmed that staff regularly shared and exchanged information by using emails, telephone calls, and chats during children's handover times. We noted that displayed was a range of exciting visits and experiences the children had taken part in recently. Staff discussed these with us and children appeared excited and happy as we pointed to these, and children recognised being part of these times. One parent told us "The staff are very professional and make sure there is good communication with parents and feedback after each session. This is crucial as my child is non verbal and I wouldn't be able to know how his day was otherwise." Meaningful partnership with families enabled staff to get a clear understanding of strategies to support the holistic needs of each child and help them reach their full potential.

It was clear that staff had high aspirations to support children to access a wide range of experiences whilst attending. Staff had established strong links with a range of external agencies to help them better meet the children's needs. They had given us examples of when recent training had inspired them to interact with more compassion, and realised the challenges that may be impacting on the children day to day. This training included brain development, ACES, and trauma experiences along with attachment theories. Staff gave us examples of how this recent training had helped them to establish supports to build children's resilience where needed. Also they have gained a deeper insight to promoting strong mental health for children, especially those who may be experiencing challenges due to their disability and needs.

Detailed safeguarding and child protection practices were in place to keep children safe from harm. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding to the behaviours and signs that may indicate that a child was suffering any harm. Regular training, both within the organisation and advice from social work department, ensured that staff remained confident and vigilant in this practice.

Reviewing personal plans was a priority within the service and we agreed with this focus. In keeping with legal guidance, plans were in place for each child within 28 days of them joining the service, then reviewed with families at least six monthly. Staff used 'All about me' and care plan information to enhance children's individualised care. We sampled three personal plans as part of the inspection and they were consistently of an excellent standard. These were written in partnership with parents and children. Children were encouraged to record what they liked to do, either through art or mark making. Staff recorded in the child's voice how they liked to be comforted, supported, and crucial information about the key people in the child's life. This resulted in children feeling secure, nurtured, and benefited from warm interactions by staff.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play. They were learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned experiences that promoted children's choice and independence. Staff were playful in their interactions with children and there was lots of chatter and laughter. This meant children were empowered to express their ideas and to develop problem-solving skills, and feel a sense of achievement. It demonstrated that staff were valuing children's interests and supporting their play and learning, in a fun way. Children were settled, happy and engaged in play experiences, both indoors and outdoors. All children had access to the well planned outdoor play environment. There was a sensory garden, rich in opportunities to relax or be soothed by the various water features and well thought out lighting that was in this area. There were in plans, to pick the pears from the tree in this garden to taste. Children took care of the trees in the garden and watched the fruits grow along with noticing the changes throughout the seasons.

Staff shared with us recent training they attended called "New Play Cycle." This encouraged staff to look at the benefits of play as an opportunity to support self regulation and strong mental health for children. We discussed with the manager some toolkits to help challenge staffs' thinking of various pedagogies, based on current best practice. The manager demonstrated the link between these toolkits and embedding the rights of the child, ensuring that all children were included and supported to play and have fun in the service.

Staff knew children's interests and preferences very well and ensured there were resources and activities accessible to children. This assisted some children who had just started in the service to settle happily, and offered challenge and extended play to others. One parent told us "It's a great service with really good facilities and the staff are very helpful." Examples of the excellent fun environment included a wide range of sensory experiences such as a sensory room and relaxation room, with a range of books, puppets and musical instruments. The arts and crafts room was a favourite and some children extended the opportunity to draw in all areas of the service, which staff encouraged and praised the children for doing this.

Staff were pro-active in ensuring any required equipment, such as specialist chairs and wheelchairs, were in place prior to children starting in the service. This enabled children to participate more fully in play and learning activities while providing comfort and continuity from home.

Staff were very responsive to children's verbal and non-verbal cues for making choices in their play. We observed very good use of praise, encouragement, questioning, scaffolding, and challenging children's thinking, as appropriate for each individual child. As a result, children were engaged or letting off steam after a long day at school and we observed them to be happy, settled and confident.

How good is our setting? 6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question, as we found the service performance to be sector leading and innovative for both quality indicators. Child centred practice and play based approaches were embedded in the service ethos. Children consistently received outstanding care and support from compassionate staff who knew them extremely well. Staff intuitively stepped in to support children's play ideas when needed, or offered challenges to extend their learning. As a result, children experienced care that was nurturing and responsive to their individual needs.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Playrooms and outdoor play areas were safe and secure, welcoming and stimulating. Staff were aware of the importance of safety at entrances, exits and throughout the building to ensure children's safety. They were aware of the Care Inspectorate's safety awareness campaign, 'Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act' and shared safety information with families. More information can be found on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

Well-functioning arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of equipment was embedded. Staff were all trained in good hygiene practices and this was supported by quality assurance practice along with a robust cleaning schedule. Due to the nature of the service, there were many areas for children to be changed, as required. This was handled sensitively by staff who knew the children well, and this ensured children were treated with dignity, respect and kindness.

Children had full access to a soft play room, sensory room, arts and crafts room, and a large physical room with mats and balls. All areas were easily accessible by wheelchairs and the outdoor physical area was inviting and well planned to be accessible too. Additional areas, rooms, and spaces were creatively used to provide quiet times, sensory play, and snack area for children. A wide variety of resources were easily accessible to children. One parent told us "My child loves going to Cojac during the holidays also. At the end of the day he doesn't want to leave. The staff are brilliant and he always gets one to one."

Staff took time to research which experiences were best suited to the children's abilities and needs. Once a location was identified, then a robust risk assessment was put in place to ensure all risks were considered. Trips had included the zoo, queens park, local outdoor play-spaces, including block play opportunities and five sisters zoo. We recognised, that as the children came from all over Glasgow, that staff worked hard to ensure that as wide a range of visits took place, and not only in the local community of Castlemilk. This practice was seen as excellent, due to staff's commitment to ensuring these experiences allowed the children to fully participate in what's being offered, and that their disability did not impact on their play and fun.

One parent told us "I think the outings are really good and varied as the children could get bored if they were just in the centre all day. There's a good mix and I think they try and give the children the opportunity to try different places and experiences. That said, there was at least one day during this summer when it was very hot, that they decided to stay in the centre because of the heat and had lots of water play in the garden, and my daughter loved that too. I should also say that she loves the soft play in the centre. That's always a highlight for her."

The Centre manager was very active along with the Scottish Out of School Care Network, to raise issues directly to the Scottish Government of the challenges facing specialist needs school-age childcare services. She represents the needs and successes of the families that use this service, and was committed to ensure that services like this were effectively funded and also fully integrated to the local community.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children. The service's improvement plan reflected their key priorities and demonstrated their commitment to partnership with the local authority. The child centred and play based ethos was evident throughout the setting and staff practice.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The well-experienced manager and centre manager worked well together. They had been proactive in bringing the whole management and staff team together through increased meaningful meetings and consultations.

Positive working relationships between the management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing a fun played based after school experience for children. The management team had created conditions where everyone felt confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. For example, staff shared initiatives they had introduced and felt passionate about including Nurturing Approaches, Theraplay Sessions and Circle of Play. The manager agreed with us the importance of her assessing how these new approaches to play and learning were being offered during the session, to ensure that children were enjoying them.

Staff felt very supported by management both formally and informally through their open door approach. This had been particularly important during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic where people faced both personal and professional challenges. Regular staff meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect together and use these reflections to bring about positive change for children. Staff were excited about getting back to being involved in improvement planning and self evaluation, as this had been difficult to achieve during the pandemic.

The management team had a presence in the playrooms when needed, to cover staff and role model good practice. Regular playroom meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect together and use these reflections to bring about positive change for children. Prior to Covid-19, the manager was beginning to carry out formal one on one sessions, allowing them to direct their learning and together discuss how that staff member was using the skills to offer a well balanced experience to the children in their care. We agreed that this is a priority in her Improvement Plan, to ensure that staff are well supported and reflect on their practice. She understood the importance of parents being kept informed of what their child does on a daily basis. One parent told us" We get updated when we collect my child and there are photos and posts on Facebook about the activities that have taken place that day." As a result there was continuity in children's care, and trusting respectful relationships between staff and families.

The management team and staff should continue to consolidate quality assurance processes underpinned by best practice guidance. This will assist them in monitoring and maintaining their already very good standards of service delivery to children and families. We shared with the manager the bite size sessions available for quality calendar planning in the service on the Care Inspectorate Hub and how this would support her. During the inspection, the manager looked at the links that we had suggested and had already began to develop this calendar in line with the needs of the service. She knows her staff well and could identify their strengths and is in the process of identifying leadership roles for all staff in the service.

The service had successfully achieved an Investors in People Award and a Gold Star for exemplary practice award for Achievement of Quality in Scotland (a quality framework for Out of School Care Services). These awards will be reassessed for renewal over the next 12 months and the manager discussed with us the practices that she is currently assessing in order to ensure that they maintain these awards.

How good is our staff team? 6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question, as we found the service performance to be sector leading and innovative for both quality indicators. Child centred practice and play based approaches were embedded in the service ethos. Children consistently received outstanding care and support from compassionate staff who knew them extremely well. Staff intuitively stepped in to support children's play ideas when needed, or offered challenges to extend their learning. As a result, children experienced care that was nurturing and responsive to their individual needs.

4.3 Staff deployment

We observed and spoke with staff who were passionate, skilled, and experienced practitioners. One parent told us, "The staff were excellent and provided us with feedback when we collected our child. There were also photos shared on the Facebook page so we got to see what they had been doing on their outings." Staff were committed to their professional development and reflected together on how this could impact positively on outcomes for children. They engaged extremely well with the inspection process, taking on advice offered. Staff provided lots of warm and caring interactions, and were respectful towards children's ideas. They were proactive in sharing information with each other and with families to ensure continuity in children's care. This had helped create an inclusive staff ethos where children and families' contributions were valued and encouraged.

There were significant numbers of staff in place to meet the varied needs of children in attendance. The manager valued the importance of this approach to support children's wellbeing. Staff offered the children a one to one support at all times, and when required, two staff would support children at key transition times of the day. Consideration was given to the different experience, skills mix and knowledge of the staff team within playrooms. This ensured children's needs were met, children were supported and felt safe and secure. Staff were deployed effectively to meet children's needs, while also ensuring staff had time to rest and refresh. We recognised this care offered to the children was excellent practice, and it was evident that children benefited from this continuity of care as a positive experience and allowed them to feel safe.

Staff were deployed in a way that reflected the needs of children attending each day. Staff positioned themselves in the play spaces both outdoors and indoors to ensure they were aware of children's engagement and wellbeing. Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. There had been new staff recruited recently and we acknowledged that the Induction process for this was robust. The manager gave us examples of when some new staff did not have the skills to work in this service and resulted in those staff members not progressing to a permanent position here.

There were monitoring and buddying systems in place for new staff, although not always formally recorded. We shared with the manager the National Induction Resource as an opportunity to enhance existing Induction for staff. She welcomed this document and had begun to use it to shape future inductions for new staff. Staff worked well together and shared good practice gained through the various training opportunities they had attended in order to offer the children more challenge and fun into their play.

The increased opportunities for staff to feel confident in sharing their ideas, leading change and sharing responsibility for areas had a positive impact. Staff were enthusiastic as they shared examples of where they had led initiatives and implemented change to ensure positive outcomes for children. These included, more effective use of the arts and crafts to allow individual children to use the whole room alone, with a staff member. This allowed children to move freely around the tables and have easy access to all the art materials, regardless of their disability.

Staff told us, "We have strong working relationships and have also bonded on a more personal level. We can have our say. We feel more valued, respected and included within groups." This has led to staff to feel connected to the improvements in the service and a sense of commitment to offering high quality play, learning, and care to all the young people who use it.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of children.

In this instance the provider must ensure:

- All improvements made to the security to the premises are regularly reviewed, to ensure they are effective in preventing a child exiting the premises unobserved by staff.

To be completed by: 01 September 2022.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 5.17: 'My environment is secure and safe.'

This is in order 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 requirement was made on 6 July 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service had taken immediate response to improving the security of the whole building as a direct response to this incident. We evidenced during the inspection days that these were robust, carefully monitored, known by all staff, and also shared with parents.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

The provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of children.

In this instance the provider must ensure:

- Improvements are made to the information detailed in children's personal plans.

- If one to one support should be identified for a child, information must clearly identify the circumstances in which one to one support will be provided.

- Personal plans should be completed in consultation with parents, to ensure the care and support needs of their child are agreed.

To be completed by: 01 September 2022.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 1.14: 'My future care and support needs are anticipated as part of my assessment.'

This is in order 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 requirement was made on 6 July 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement

When reviewing Personal Plans as part of this inspection, it was evident that children's wellbeing was supported by very effective personal plans. These ensured that those children who required a one to one by staff, or at times two staff to one child, received this.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

The provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of children.

In this instance the provider must ensure:

- That parents are timeously informed of any significant event involving their child.

- The 'missing service user' policy and procedure must be updated to include guidance to staff on when, in the event of a child going missing from the service, parents and the police should be notified.

To be completed by: 01 September 2022.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 3.23: 'If I go missing, people take urgent action, including looking for me and liaising with the police, other agencies and people who are important to me.'

This is in order 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 requirement was made on 6 July 2022.

Action taken on previous requirement
This policy was updated as a direct response to this incident. Staff and parents knew about this procedure.

Met - within timescales

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent

How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent

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?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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