Liberton After School Club
Day Care of Children

c/o Liberton Primary School
229 Gilmerton Road
Edinburgh
EH16 5UD

Telephone: 07939 602 880

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 June 2026

Service provided by:
Liberton After School Club

Service provider number:
SP2003002846

Service no:
CS2003011880

About the service

Liberton After School Club (LASC) is a day care of children service. The service was registered on 1 April 2011 and operates from two buildings situated on the grounds of Liberton Primary School - Treetops and The Hub. Registration conditions are to provide a care service to a maximum of 94 primary school aged children up to entry to S2 at any one time. Children may be cared for in the Treetops building and The Hub. No more than 46 children may be cared for in the Treetops building and no more than 55 children in The Hub.

The Hub building for P1-P3 children had the use of two rooms and toilet facilities. Some of the toilet facilities were located within Liberton Primary School. The children in this building had direct access to an outdoor playground and small enclosed planting area. The Treetops building for P4-P7 contained one room and toilet facilities. Local amenities were close by, including parks and transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 27 May 2026 between 14:30 and 18:20. We returned to the service on Thursday 28 May 2026 between 14:00 and 18:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included, previous inspection findings, registration information, complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.
In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and eight parents onsite
- received written feedback from 20 parents via an online questionnaire
- received written feedback from six staff via an online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained and that a service is operating legally. Areas for improvements identified through assessing the core assurances are detailed under the relevant quality indicators in the report.

Key messages

- A focus on an engaging environment for children supported a move of buildings for children in P4 - P7, from a building in Inch park to the Treetops building in the grounds of Liberton Primary school.
- Reflective practice by the staff team contributed to improvements, with leaders taking a collaborative approach with staff.
- Younger children were empowered to lead their own play and make choices, because staff supported them well and responded to their interests.
- Older children had opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility through collaborative and problem-solving approaches.
- A respectful, listening approach used by staff helped children feel heard and valued. We found staff were confident discussing individual children's needs and used a consistent approach.
- Snack arrangements could be improved when older children join the session, to ensure snack runs smoothly and meets children's needs.
- Formal and informal consultation with children gave value to their voices and supported the design of experiences in the club.

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	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator- Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The service mission statement was to promote social, emotional and physical wellbeing and encourage the children to develop life skills, a sense of fairness, fun and respect. We saw the staff team's commitment to providing a fun and varied environment for children. A positive team culture valued staff contributions and recognised their strengths and previous experiences. A move to the Treetops building for the P4 - P7 children from a previous base in Inch Park, was well managed due to the focus on developing an engaging environment for children. A parent commented on this change in environment: "As much as the big kids are sorry to lose their base in Inch Park, the new setup in Treetops does avoid a lot of the challenges... I'm happier with the whole club on one site."

Children benefited from responsive support, as staff used team meetings and daily huddles to reflect on their practice and improvement planning. A staff member told us: "We are able to take responsibility and develop our skills; we are encouraged to try new things." The use of improvement planning and a developing approach to self-evaluation was beginning to have an impact. For example, older children had choice and challenge in their activities in the Treetops room as staff reflected on meeting their interests. Staff reported feeling increasingly involved as the improvement plan supported developments in a well-paced, sustainable way ensuring change was meaningful for the club.

A positive induction process allowed new staff to build relationships with children. New staff members could approach colleagues with any questions as they learned about the club. Assigning mentors for new staff members could give further structure to the induction process. Some records related to staff recruitment would benefit from a more consistent approach. For example, while all relevant checks had taken place for one new staff member, a cover sheet summarising key information from these checks was incomplete. Enhancing quality assurance activities to review completion of such tasks could strengthen safer staffing recruitment processes. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Quality assurance processes were in place. Further development of some aspects could improve children's care. For example, making sure older children were registered promptly upon arrival could strengthen children's safety. Leaders recognised that quality assurance of some aspects could bring about consistency in the progress of high-quality practice in the club. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, the provider should develop quality assurance systems which will improve the quality of the provision in line with best practice. These should include, but not be limited to, monitoring of staff recruitment processes, prompt registration of children on arrival and the review of key policies and risk assessments.

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).

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

Quality Indicator - Children experience high quality spaces

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children had safe and welcoming spaces as they were clean, spacious and well-lit. This contributed to children's health and wellbeing. Staff reported that they were proactive with maintenance issues, and a close working relationship with the school supported safe spaces for children.

Consultation with children gave value to their voices and ensured their involvement in planning activities in the club. A floor book was used at the end of each play session as a reflective tool for children to share their enjoyment, achievement and wishes. An Ambassador's committee of children and two staff members met weekly to discuss what children would like at the service and what they do not want. We were told: "My child is an LASC Ambassador and loves to give ideas. The staff are always happy to find resources and upskill to achieve my child's vision."

The club's commitment to quality outdoor play was valued by the children. Children could choose from a range of outdoor play equipment from the outdoor playbox storage, such as loose parts crates and guttering, and natural items such as shells. One child shared: "I miss the park but there are lots of activities, there is a main activity but you don't have to take part. We get the equipment out from the Playbox every day, that's fun." This reflected that children were provided with choice and flexibility in their play, supporting engagement, creativity and independence. A parent highlighted: "The outdoor space is excellent. The outdoor play shelter is a great addition for bad weather outdoor play."

Children were safe when playing outdoors, as staff followed clear safety procedures. Photos and conversations with staff helped children understand which outdoor areas were available that day. While children could sign up for an activity outdoors, staff were able to keep an overview of children in various spaces using the online app. Outdoor safety was strengthened by the use of children wearing high-vis vests and staff communication over walkie-talkies.

Children were valued as the club had made improvements to the physical environment. The main Hub playroom was well organised and met the play and learning needs of Primary 1 - 3 children. Primary 4 - 7 children were now cared for within the Treetops building and in the school playground alongside the Hub. We saw this change had created a more joined up service. It allowed staff in both buildings to work collaboratively, share resources and provide mutual support.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator - Playing, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children's independence and choice was promoted as they had opportunity to engage with their interests at their own pace. We saw staff listening respectfully to children regarding their needs and choices, and responding either in the moment or with a plan agreed with the child.

Strong, nurturing relationships between children and staff were supported by the environment. Staff knew children well and used this knowledge to tailor experiences to individual interests and needs. This helped create a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere where children felt valued and were supported to express themselves. Strategies were used to support some children to feel included and have play and learning needs met, such as being a snack helper.

Children had opportunities to lead their own play, with staff skilled at stepping in when needed. Children were encouraged to share their ideas and staff made efforts to respond to these within a short time to allow children to see their ideas come to life. With younger children, play and exploration was well supported by the staff team. In outdoor play we observed experiences with children cracking rocks safely with hammers. This exploration evolved to the use of water and mulch to paint in the outdoor space. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of play-based learning and responsive approaches for children leading their own play.

Older children's development was planned for through life-long learning in everyday interactions, encouraging collaboration, problem-solving and shared responsibility. We observed staff respond to children who initially engaged in physical wrestling, working together to develop a safer, alternative activity. Through discussion and planning, children created a "balloon pillow fight." They were actively involved in all stages of the process, including planning, setting rules, identifying resources, and completing risk assessments. One child explained: "It was me and my friends' idea... it's balloon pillow fighting... you put the balloons in a pillowcase so no one can get hurt. It's to keep us safe." The experience was well-managed, inclusive and filled with enjoyment.

A wide range of creative and challenging experiences engaged children, supported by calm and patient guidance from staff. A staff member told us: "Our children know how to light a fire safely, build a den, forage for wild garlic to cook with and elderflower to make cordial. They also have the opportunity to grow fruit and vegetables, learn how to crochet, knit and needle felt." This reflected the staff commitment to building children's skills through engaging experiences.

The well-resourced outdoor space contributed to children's active play and wellbeing. One parent commented: "The outdoor space is excellent. The outdoor play shelter is a great addition for bad weather outdoor play." Structured experiences such as football were available. A range of resources such as large, loose parts crates and guttering supported creativity. Children had contributed to the outdoor environment by creating a mosaic path and maintaining the outdoor area, giving them a sense of ownership.

Children are supported to achieve — 4 - Good

Quality Indictor - Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children's wellbeing was prioritised as staff noticed their moods and checked in on their wellbeing. A respectful, listening approach used by staff helped children feel heard and valued. We found staff were confident discussing individual children's needs and used a consistent approach. Parents reported that staff were approachable, with one saying: "Staff are kind... and really know my child as an individual."

Younger children were kept safe through engagement with developmentally appropriate resources that support safety.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) campaign 'Let's talk PANTS' (2014) empowered children with knowledge and vocabulary related to personal safety. Staff used the guidance, 'Keeping children safe: Look, Think, Act campaign' (Care Inspectorate, 2021) to raise children's awareness of their physical safety and boundaries in the club.

Younger children in Primary 1 and 2 benefited from a structured snack time with opportunities for developing independence. Children could eat together, connect with friendship groups and staff, and hear about experiences on offer throughout the session. While we reminded the service about the consistency of handwashing before and after snack to promote infection control, we saw young children well supervised and socially supported at this initial snack time.

The snack time for older children gave them further choice and independence in the routine. However, we alerted the club to potential safety risks due to unsupervised eating. While children could eat in the snack room, a number of children took the option to take snack on kitchen paper to eat in the outdoor space between the Hub and Treetops buildings. While staff were in this space to supervise outdoor play, they were not close enough to supervise safe eating or be alert to any choking incidents. In discussion with leaders, it was recognised that the structure of snack time could be designed with children to incorporate supervision to keep them safe while eating. (See Area for Improvement 1).

An online app to manage children's personal planning was strengthening communication between families and the club. The club were in the process of transferring children's information to the app. Review of personal planning with families at least every six months was required more consistently to fulfil legislative duties in relation to personal planning. We also discussed inconsistencies in the management of medication information with leaders. An area for improvement was made during the last inspection regarding personal planning and will continue. (See Area for Improvement 2).

Staff commitment to partnership work with families meant families felt well informed and could approach the staff team. Communication with parents was varied and effective, including daily interactions, newsletters, email, and via the online app. A parent said: 'We feel well informed and appreciate using the new app to communicate.' Entries on the online app showed that some parents engaged with observations and had used these to continue children's learning at home.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing and develop life skills, the provider should ensure mealtime routines are improved so children have a safe and engaging experience.
This should include but not be limited to;

a) improving the routine to embed handwashing both before and after eating.
b) ensuring all children are seated to eat with adequate staff supervision to support the social experience and reduce risks to children i.e. choking risk.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I take part in daily routines, such as setting up activities and mealtimes, if this is what I want' (HSCS 2.21); and 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35)

2. To support children's wellbeing the provider should ensure that the service continue to develop children's personal plans. This should include, but is not limited to, a clear stepped approach to the administration of medication and the recording of strategies of support for individual children and the impact of them.

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).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 26 September 2025, the provider must improve the safety procedures within the settings and in the outdoor areas, including the local park.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum, introduce and embed robust safety procedures to ensure that staff know where children are at all times. These procedures must be fully embedded in daily practice to reduce the risk of children being unaccounted for, to support their safety, wellbeing and protection from harm.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services Regulations 2011 (SS1 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 5.17).

This requirement was made on 20 June 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service has taken steps to communicate safety and boundaries to the children. These included photos of the boundaries of play areas, and discussions of areas of the outdoor space open each day. Children were able to sign up to outdoor spaces for activities and children were monitored in spaces using the online app. The variety of experiences in spaces gave children challenge and variety. Staff communicated with each other via walkie talkie when children went from outdoors to indoors.

Other actions included consistent use of hi-vis vests by children in outdoor spaces, and risk assessments of the outdoor space discussed at team meetings. There was clarity on procedures such as gates locked by staff team/designated member of staff at certain times, and the reporting of any maintenance issues.

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 support children's wellbeing the provider should ensure that the service continue to develop children's personal plans. This should include, but is not limited to, a clear stepped approach to the administration of medication and the recording of strategies of support for individual children and the impact of them.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 20 June 2025.

Action taken since then

The transition of personal planning information to the online app was ongoing with inconsistencies in completion for most children. This process had been led by one staff member with support from the manager. A key worker system was being introduced to share responsibility across the team to complete information for children on the app, and ensure regular review with families. Some paper copies detailing individual strategies for some children had recently been reviewed with families. Staff were knowledgeable about individual strategies of support for some children.

The service manager reviewed medication information every three months as part of quality assurance activities. Medication information held digitally on the app should also be available in paper copy with stored medication. Stepped approaches for some medication administrations were not consistent.

This Area of Improvement has Not 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

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Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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