Dalkeith After School Club
Day Care of Children

Woodburn Primary School
5 Cousland Road
Dalkeith
EH22 2PS

Telephone: 07950852098

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 July 2025

Service provided by:
Dalkeith After School Club Association Committee

Service provider number:
SP2003002863

Service no:
CS2003011924

About the service

Dalkeith After School Club is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 35 children of primary school age at any one time at Kings Park Primary School venue; and to provide a care service to a maximum of 45 children of primary school age and or first and second year high school pupils at the Woodburn Primary School venue.

Children using the service at Kings Park primary school have access to the dining hall, toilets and an outdoor play area. Children attending Woodburn Primary school have access to two playrooms, sports hall, enclosed outdoor play area, sports fields and small woodland area adjacent to the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 22 July 2025 between 09:45 and 17:45. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

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

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received 22 online questionnaires from families
- spoke with staff and received seven online questionnaires from staff
- observed practice and daily life
- 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 experienced warm familiar relationships, they felt important and valued by the positive relationships formed. Children were supported to lead their own play and have fun.

• Children's indoor and outdoor play spaces were developmentally appropriate and supported children's curiosity and wellbeing.

• Management had a clear vision for the development of the service and sustaining improvements.

• Staff were flexible and worked together as a team to benefit children.

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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children benefitted from warm, kind, nurturing interactions with staff. They had built up positive relationships and as a result, the children were happy and confident. Staff's sensitive interactions supported emotional wellbeing, this contributed to children feeling secure, included and resilient. Family feedback to our questionnaires were positive. One family commented, "The staff are very friendly and caring and get to know the children very well". Another family told us, "My child's relationship with staff is the most positive aspect of the club".

Overall children benefitted from calm and sociable mealtimes. Children could decide when to have their snack meaning their play was not interrupted. Children chose from a range of healthy snacks, for instance, watermelon, peppers, banana and apples. Children told us, "We are asked what snacks we would like and can suggest new items too". One family told us, "Snack is always healthy, I know there is alternatives for my child should they not like what is on offer". Staff were aware of children's allergies and dietary needs. During mealtimes staff mostly sat with children to facilitate conversations, encourage eating and offer praise. This contributed to a positive mealtime experience. Moving forward, the service could encourage more children's involvement in the preparation and serving of snack. This would help children develop important life skills and a sense of responsibility.

Effective personal planning and positive care supported children's overall wellbeing. Personal plans had considered the wellbeing indicators and contained a range of documentation including registration information. Children had their own section to complete which included their likes and dislikes. Plans had been reviewed and updated in line with best practice guidance. Most families either agreed or strongly agreed they were fully involved in their child's care, including reviewing their personal plan. One family commented, "I review my child's plan regularly and I know if there are any changes staff are quick to change this for me". As a result, children's individual needs and families' wishes and choices were met.

Children benefitted from a staff team who worked proactively with families and other professionals such as, school staff. Almost all families told us they were welcomed into the service and staff communicate very well with them. Staff updated children's chronologies following discussions with families and when needed. This supported staff to respond effectively to changes in children's lives and wellbeing. One family commented, "The staff are really kind and caring, they go out of their way to support my child as an individual". Strategies to support children where needed had been identified and staff were familiar with these approaches. As a result, children experienced consistent, child-centred care that was right for them.

Systems were in place for the safe storage of medication. Staff regularly reviewed children's information and monthly audits had been undertaken. We identified a minor error in information recorded to support staff administering medication. We were satisfied with the prompt action taken to review documentation with families to ensure accuracy. This approach contributed to children's healthcare needs being met.

Safeguarding procedures were in place and effective. Staff told us what they would do and who they would report to internally should a safeguarding concern arise. This demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Moving forward, the manager could continue to review safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure they have the most up to date contact information for external services and these are shared with all staff.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun, confident and deeply engaged in play. They had access to a wide range of open-ended natural materials. Den building was a clear favourite amongst the children. Different groups of children created dens both indoors and outdoors. Children told us, "This is our den, it's our space we made it, we like 'chill' in here". While younger group of children had spent most of the morning making their house using a range of resources and materials. They excitedly told staff, "Look we made decking and a patio for our house". Staff demonstrated a strong judgment in balancing support and observation, enabling children to explore, imagine and solve problems independently. This fostered creativity and enhanced their problem-solving skills through play.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play, choosing what and where to play, both indoors and outdoors. This empowered them to explore, experiment and seek out resources that captured their interest, imagination and natural curiosity. Some children had used a variety of small world and various construction resources to create their vision. One child proudly said, "Look at my village, this is the road, these are the houses, and this is the wall around!". Upon request from the child, staff made a sign to ensure no one tidied their 'village' away. As a result, children made informed choices about leading their play within an enabling, challenging and creative environment.

Children were motivated and engaged by a range of challenging, planned and spontaneous play experiences both indoors, outdoors and within the local community. Children's comments included, "It's fun, I like playing football outside and going to the park" and "My favourite things are drawing with my friends and making jewellery" and "I like playing with my friends and the library visits". One family commented, "I like children have the opportunity for free play as well as the planned activities which have been chosen by them". Planning approaches followed children's interests and were displayed on the weekly activity sheet. Children told us that they were asked what activities they wanted to do. They contributed to plans through monthly children's committee meetings, voting for local outings and trips. Staff told us, "Children are at the centre to any decisions that we make". As a result, experiences were planned around what children wanted.

Children's experiences, play and learning were documented in 'Floor books', on wall displays and shared with families through a digital platform. This meant families were kept updated and informed about their children's play and learning. Family feedback was positive about the range of fun experiences and activities their children had while attending the club.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment that was clean, bright and welcoming. There was plenty of natural light and good ventilation. A variety of spaces and soft furnishings were available for children to rest and relax. Some children relaxed on the bean bags indoors. Others spent time chatting together outdoors in cosy areas they had created themselves. One family commented, "There is aways a chill out zone available". Another told us, "There is a second room where children can go for a quiet play". Indoor and outdoor spaces for children were calm, well-structured and there was ample space for children to play and explore. This supported children's emotional wellbeing.

Children's sense of belonging was clearly valued by the service. Their successes and achievements were proudly displayed, sending a strong message that they mattered. One family commented, "Staff are keen to celebrate children's successes". As a result, children experienced an environment that fostered a strong sense of belonging.

Staff valued the importance of children having access to high quality resources to extend their play. Children and staff had worked collaboratively to create inviting spaces and enhance resources that directly reflected children's current interests, both indoors and outdoors. Children told us that staff asked them what they would like and they provided it. Resources and play spaces were inviting and well organised. As a result, children were empowered to actively experience play and learning challenges, centred on their needs and interests.

Children played in a safe and secure environment. The door entry system was monitored by staff. Risk assessments for indoor and outdoor spaces as well as for local outings and trips, were detailed. This contributed to keeping children safe. The service adopted a benefit-risk approach with children, this enabled children to engage in a broad range of experiences that challenged and extended their development. One family commented, "It is a really safe and fun environment for children". Another told us, "It makes us feel better that we have a safe and fun environment for our child to enjoy". Regular head counting, effective supervision and staff communication using walkie-talkies ensured children were accounted both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children were kept safe.

Staff promoted effective infection, prevention and control measures to ensure children's health and wellbeing. One family commented, "My child has even noticed the level of hygiene when preparing food". Hand hygiene routines were mainly embedded and cleaning of areas before children ate was robust. Effective practice minimised the spread of infection.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm and inclusive culture that truly valued them. The manager and staff team had developed a strong ethos of continuous improvement. Effective communication ensured a shared vision for the service that centred on providing a fun, safe, caring and nurturing environment for everyone. This contributed to the positive outcomes observed for children. One family commented, "The after-school club get the big things right like safety, nurturing environment, personalisation and choice but also the small things too". Another told us, "The manager, and team are dedicated to making the club a brilliant place for the kids to spend time when parents are working".

Children and families were meaningfully involved and actively influenced change and improvement within the service. The manager sought effective ways to ensure everyone was engaged in developing the service. Opportunities such as, a suggestion box, monthly children's committee meetings, daily dialogue and voting polls were provided for children to share their views, wishes and choices. Staff effectively used this input to inform service improvements. Additionally, regular newsletters, 'dates for your diary', digital platform posts and questionnaires were effective in sharing information and gathering the views of families. Almost all families either agreed or strongly agreed they are meaningfully involved in developing the service. One family commented, "Our opinion is sought very regularly and anything we put forward is taken straight into account". This approach contributed to the service understanding what was important to meet the needs of children and their families.

High quality experiences were supported and maintained through effective procedures for quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning. Improvement plans were used as working documents and were continuously reviewed and evaluated. As a result, priorities in the improvement plan were meaningful, practical and achievable.

The service was very well led by a passionate and committed manager, who effectively guided a dedicated staff team. As a result, children experienced high quality care, play and learning. Staff meetings were planned to ensure all aspects of the service were regularly discussed and evaluated. Staff reflected well together and used these reflections to bring about positive change to outcomes for children and families. This contributed to ensuring every child reached their full potential. Staff told us the manager is, "incredibly supportive and helpful, going above and beyond for staff and children".

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

There were enough staff to comfortably meet children's needs throughout the day. Staff deployed themselves effectively across the environment, moving around to ensure they were in the right place to support children. All families who responded to our questionnaire agreed there were always enough staff to meet children's needs. Consequently, children were well supervised and benefitted from quality engagement and their needs being met by appropriate staffing levels.

Staff had a range of skills and knowledge and worked well together to create a happy and caring atmosphere for all children. The long-standing team demonstrated very good working relationships and were committed and enthusiastic about getting it right for children in the service. One staff member told us, "We ensure that the setting is not only safe and welcoming but also nurturing, where every child can thrive". One family commented, "Staff are fantastic, caring and understanding". Another told us, "The staff are very approachable and always there if you have any concerns or questions". Consequently, children benefitted from a stable and consistent staff team, that provided continuity of care and support.

Recruitment procedures and staff induction processes were effective. Staff received regular support and supervision, providing them with opportunities to reflect on their personal development, identify strengths and areas for improvement. The manager supported this by signposting staff to current training and developing in-house training plans. Staff undertook training to ensure their skills continuously developed, directly enhancing outcomes for children. For instance, some staff had undertaken British Sign Language training, trauma informed practice and autism awareness, while others had attended forest school training. One member of staff told us, "My training and learning have had a positive impact on the experiences I provide for children. I have gained the knowledge and confidence to better support each child as an individual". Opportunities had been provided for the team to reflect together on training and evaluate how it could be used to positively impact outcomes for children. As a result, children benefitted from a staff team who were trained and confident, who used their newly acquired learning.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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