Countess After School Club
Day Care of Children

Countess After School Club
Bleachingfield Centre
Countess Crescent
Dunbar
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Telephone: 01368 865 933

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 April 2023

Service provided by:
Committee of Countess After School Club

Service provider number:
SP2003003094

Service no:
CS2003013316

About the service

Countess After School Club, is registered to provide out of school care to a maximum of 74 children of school age.

The service is situated in the local community centre in Dunbar, East Lothian and is close to the local primary school, transport links and local amenities. Children have access to playrooms, gym hall, toilets and cloakroom. There is also direct access into a garden area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 17 April 2023 between the hours of 14:15 and 18:15 and a return visit on 19 April 2023 between 14:00 and 18:00. 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 six people using the service and twenty two of their family/carers
- spoke with five staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals

Key messages

- The service was a welcoming, inclusive, nurturing, safe and caring environment for children.
- The manager and staff were committed to delivering positive outcomes for children.
- Children were at the heart of the service, with a child led approach.
- High quality facilities allowed children to play, relax and have fun.
- Quality assurance and self evaluation processes was in place and improvements were being embedded in to the service, ensuring outcomes for children remained positive.

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.

1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children were very relaxed and confident in the service and they chatted easily with the staff team. Children commented positively on the service, telling us that they enjoyed the activities and that the staff were nice.

Staff knew children well and spoke confidently about their individual likes, dislikes, needs and how these were being met. Interactions were warm and supportive, and staff took time to listen and respond to children's requests and concerns. This helped children feel secure and valued. Children also enjoyed the company of their friends, they had fun playing together throughout the session and also spent time engaging in activities with staff.

Children enjoyed a healthy snack which was available for them throughout the session. The service reviewed snack time after our first visit. Children were now encouraged to eat at the snack table and were reminded about staying hydrated. Fruit and water were available to children throughout the session.

Children received individualised support because staff worked together to ensure that strategies were in place to support children to feel included. Staff had very good links with other professionals and outside agencies. They were very knowledgeable about children's wider circumstances and the impact these could have on them. Personal plans clearly showed the support in place and this information was regularly reviewed. Children had individual risk assessments if needed to keep them safe.

Children were kept safe because staff understood the procedure if they had a concern about a child in their care. The administration of medication was reviewed, accidents and incidents were recorded and the manager audited these on a regular basis. We have asked the service to ensure the medication is stored individually and to include a copy of the care plan in each container.

1.3 - Play and Learning

Staff were positive role models to children during play. They listened, encouraged conversations and joined children in activities showing a genuine interest in them and knowing when to intervene to guide them in positive play. This helped to create a respectful ethos within the service.

Children were free to choose how they spent their time in the service. Some children chose to take part in planned craft activities or from the range of resources provided. Others preferred to sit with their friends or go outside. They also had the opportunity to engage in physical play either outside or in the gym hall. This meant they were having fun and happy to be at the club.

Children were mostly engaged in purposeful activities. They confidently explored the spaces and resources available to them. Staff were skilled at recognising when children were not engaged and reacted to this appropriately. For example, staff offered additional craft resources and opened the hall to allow further physical activity in response to children's cues. This supported children to be included and have fun.

Staff evaluated the play areas to ensure children were provided with resources and activities that helped to keep them happy and content. The service has agreed to continue to review the setting to ensure children are offered further opportunities to engage in challenging play suited to their interests and stages of development.

Children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous activities, and a floor book was used to record the evaluation of these play activities. Staff were developing planning procedures to ensure they captured children's interests and recorded spontaneous or planned experiences. This will lead to them recording and identifying new skills learned and next steps for individual children. This will ensure all children are fully supported to reach their potential.

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.

2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The service was provided from a range of rooms all within the local community centre. This gave children lots of space to play on their own, with friends or in bigger groups. They also had continual access to an outdoor area supported by a member of staff.

The service had access to storage cupboards, this meant children and staff could view the resources on offer and staff were able to access them throughout the session. Toys and activities were displayed in preparation for the children arriving and most children were interested and engaged in their play. They told us that they enjoyed coming and had fun at the club. To provide some further challenge and greater interest for all children, the manager has agreed to review the planning process. This would ensure children's views, ideas and suggestions are captured and provide them with a greater variety of interesting activities and resources. Some staff commented that more loose parts were needed.

Children were familiar with their local community and often played at the park and playing field attached to the community centre. Day trips took place during the school holidays. This offered children the opportunity to develop their understanding of the wider community and make sense of the world around them.

Minority of parents stated that they disagree that the service was clean and well maintained or that the setting was well furnished, comfortable or homely. This was not the case when we visited. The premises, toys and resources were clean and well maintained.

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.

3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are well lead

An improvement plan with realistic targets had been developed and was used consistently to inform improvements in the quality of the service. The manager and staff met regularly to review progress. We asked the manager to limit the number of improvements so that the service can focus on evaluating the impact changes had on improving experiences and outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems were in place and included a process for monitoring accidents/incident, medication and ensuring risk assessments were up-to-date. This should now include evaluating children's experiences.

Parents views were regularly sought and the service had identified that engagement with parents and other stakeholders was an improvement priority, especially since Covid restrictions had eased. The service were keen to continue to involve parents in social and fundraising events. Children's ideas and suggestions were followed through by caring and skilled staff. This should now be more formally recorded to ensure children are aware that their views are important to the service. Some parents disagreed or didn't know if their ideas helped develop the setting or influenced change. The service agreed to continue involving children and their families in the service, ensuring they can influence change and support improvements. A parent commented "Great place for children, they are well looked after".

Staff should continue to use best practice guidance such as 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged children', to self-evaluate the service. This supported them to provide high quality experiences for children. As a result, children and their families benefitted from improved outcomes.

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.

4.3 - Staff deployment

The staff team worked well together and were courteous and respectful to each other. This provided a happy and relaxed environment for children. Staff had undertaken additional professional development, this meant that children received high quality care and support from staff who were skilled and well trained. Parents commented positively about staff and stated that "the staff are extremely caring and friendly", "staff are friendly" and "kind and caring staff that really look after my child".

Staff retention was very good this meant that children benefitted from a stable staff team. Ratios were upheld and the deployment of staff allowed children to access all play areas available to them. Staff communicated clearly when they were leaving an area and shared the responsibility for tasks, which supported the positive ethos within the staff team. This ensured effective supervision of children meaning children benefitted from high quality experiences throughout the day.

A process for staff appraisals and regular one-to-one meetings allowed staff to celebrate their successes, identify areas for improvement and training opportunities. Training had been completed, and some evaluations showed how this learning would improve staff skills or experiences and outcomes for children. The manager should now record these reflective discussions by staff on their learning opportunities and how this could be implemented within their practice across the setting. Regular team development sessions were in place, and this created a space for staff to continue to build on their knowledge and skills.

Staff were happy and all felt supported in their roles. The manager had worked hard to create a team that were enthusiastic about their roles and enjoyed providing very good experiences for children. Regular wellbeing meetings took place, and this was a chance for staff to discuss any concerns or issues they had. Staff were appreciative of this time, and all stated they felt supported in their roles.

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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