Muirtown After School Klub
Day Care of Children

Muirtown Primary School
King Bride Road
Inverness
IV3 8LU

Telephone: 07986 488 831

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 January 2023

Service provided by:
Muirtown After School Club

Service provider number:
SP2003003254

Service no:
CS2003014017

About the service

Muirtown After School Klub is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 25 primary school children aged 5 to 12 years. During school holidays, the service can be provided to 16 children aged 5 to 12 years.

The service operates from a portacabin within the grounds of Muirtown Primary School in a quiet residential area of Inverness. The service consists of two playrooms that the service uses to provide a range of activities. Children also have direct access to a large secure playing field.

A voluntary group of parents who form the committee run the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 January 2032. Feedback was given to the manager on 25 January 2023. 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 and observed children using the service;
- spoke with 4 parents of children attending the service;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children were confident, happy and supported throughout their time at the setting.
Children were meaningfully involved and made choices about their play and had a sense of ownership.
Staff were kind, caring and very nurturing. They knew children very well and were committed to their care.
Personal planning should be more collaborative and provide children with a greater sense of ownership of their next steps for play and development.
Daily communication with families supported the service to meet the needs of all children in the service.
Management and staff should continue developing the indoor environment for children to help maximise their opportunities for curiosity, imagination and problem solving.
The manager and staff had a positive approach to improvement and welcomed any feedback.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - 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? 4 - Good

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We made an evaluation of good for this quality theme, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were happy, relaxed and settled within the service. Throughout the session, staff used lovely, warm and caring interactions to provide a good level of nurturing care. Staff praised and encouraged children to make them feel safe and secure. Children responded by being very settled and confident in their surroundings and in the care of staff. This supported children to feel safe and secure during their time at the service.

Staff spoke knowledgably and confidently about children's individual care needs and what they did to support them. As a result, individual children received care and support that was right for them. We discussed with management 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. Management 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. We also reminded the service to ensure that all personal plans are reviewed every six months or sooner with parents and carers.

The mealtime experience was calm and unhurried. Children enjoyed eating together in a relaxed atmosphere. The options for snack and breakfast took account of current nutritional guidance as well as any allergies or dietary needs children attending may have. During snack/breakfast time children served their own food which promoted opportunities for independence. Children benefitted from staff sitting with them at breakfast club, role modelling positive mealtime experiences. We reminded management to continue this experience further during the after school club session. This would create a more social experience and would enhance this experience further.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and protected from harm. They could confidently tell us how they would respond if they had any child protection concerns. This contributed to keeping children safe.

1.3 Play and learning

Children attending the out of school care had opportunities to lead and direct their own play. For example, they could choose from a variety of resources and play spaces that were age appropriate. Children were very confident and invited staff to join in play which allowed for valuable opportunities to develop relationships while making them feel respected and valued.

Children were engaged in their play throughout the session. We saw children smiling, chatting and laughing as they took part in a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, outdoor play, small world and role play. One parent commented on what they liked about the service, 'the staff team are like our extended family, they are so supportive and caring'. This contributed to parents feeling valued in the service.

We observed that children were actively leading their play. Staff used skilled interactions to support them to develop their imagination and enrich their play experiences based on current interests. For example, a group of children were participating in an arts and crafts activity, staff used effective questioning to extend their learning and widen their thinking. This experience contributed to support children to extend their imagination, and develop their literacy and fine motor skills.

Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play and provided children with good opportunities to be outside. Children told us that they enjoyed playing outside which promoted physical energetic play to keep them active and healthy. We saw some nice interactions between staff and children, with staff responsive to the individual needs of each child. For example, we saw evidence of children using loose parts and sledging down the hill in the snow. This experience provided opportunities for children to risk take and to develop their sensory and gross motor development.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

We made an evaluation of good for this quality theme, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The setting was secure, safe and well maintained. It was bright and clean. Some cosy spaces were available for children to rest and relax. Within all playrooms, children were able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments. They had the freedom to make choices about where to play throughout the day. Children's artwork was displayed on the playroom walls to support children to feel valued.

Children had the opportunity to rest and relax in comfortable spaces within the playrooms and outdoors. The older children spent time in cosy story areas which included soft furnishings. This ensured a nurturing approach and supported children to relax and rest when required.

Staff had begun to evaluate the environment and resources, looking at areas for improvement. We spoke to management and identified further scope to develop the indoor environment and the layout of each of the second playroom in the service. We suggested that resources need to be more organised and arranged and spaces reflect children's preferences and interests. This would support children to extend their creativity, curiosity and problem solving skills.

Staff recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on their wellbeing. Staffing levels and a risk benefit approach ensured children were safe. Children were learning to stay safe through conversations with staff including when involved in risky play experiences. Regular outdoor play supported children's health and wellbeing. We suggested that staff have a look at the loose parts toolkit to develop this further and enhance children's development and learning through loose parts play. This would support children to extend their imagination, learning and spark curiosity in their play experiences.

Risk assessments for specific activities had been carried out. Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks to children within the setting both indoors and outdoors, across the session. This ensured children were kept safe and secure at all times.

Appropriate infection prevention and control procedures were in place to support a safe environment for children and families. For example, good handwashing routines were in place for both staff and children and had been adapted in line with current guidance.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We made an evaluation of good for this quality theme, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The management team and committee were committed to providing a quality service. The manager worked collaboratively with the staff to use effective self- evaluation with a focus on improving outcomes for children. Staff told us they felt fully supported and valued by the manager of the service. The positive team relationships helped support children to feel nurtured and secured.

Regular communication took place with parents and carers, with some families describing the nursery like an extended family. The service used a variety of methods to communicate with families, including a closed social media page, email, newsletters, messages and verbal feedback to share children's learning and progress. They felt included in a service that understood the importance of good communication to support positive outcomes for children. This helped parents feel included in their children's experience.

The service had started to consider how they could introduce quality assurance systems, to monitor how well the service is doing. The out of school care improvement plan included achievable targets focussed on improving children's learning and experiences. The management was currently working on this and the one of the aims is to improve their indoor environments and focusing on the spaces while getting children involved on what they would like for their out of school club. This supports children's choice and helps families feel included and valued in the service.

The service had begun to use the Quality Framework for Daycare of Children to evaluate provision. We discussed with the management team how they could use their quality assurance calendar effectively to ensure self-evaluation remains focussed and on task.

The manager and staff should continue to embed systems in place to ensure they are robust and allow for a steady pace of change and sustained improvements, ensuring improved outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff deployment

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.

Staff worked well together as a team and their differing skills and knowledge complimented one another and resulted in quality interactions with children. They communicated well with each other and worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day.

Staff were appropriately deployed throughout the session which ensured they met all children's needs at the right time. Transitions were seamless and well planned with children being comfortable about what was happening next.

Staff felt well supported by the manager. They told us that they felt able to approach them with any concerns, and that they had been proactive in ensuring their well-being during the recovery from the pandemic. Staff worked well together and supported each other. This helped to contribute to a happy and welcoming atmosphere. Recently appointed staff told us that they had been made to feel welcome.

Staff were passionate about their roles and committed to the children and families in the service. This allowed for positive communication with families. Parents described staff as "lovely" and "so supportive". One parent told us, "The staff are very flexible and I would be lost without them".

Children's continuity of care and partnership working with parents was supported by staff ensuring time for discussions with parents. Parents told us that the communication is great and that the service always keeps them informed of their child's day.

The service had a dedicated staff team with a positive ethos of attendance resulting in good continuity of care and communication with families. Supervision provided an opportunity to reflect on their role and discuss plans for future learning. The management team planned to further develop the staff skills and knowledge through more training and focusing on their professional development to improve the outcomes for 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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