# Aboyne After School Club
# Day Care of Children

Deeside Community Education Centre
Bridgeview Road
Aboyne
AB34 5JN

Telephone: 07703 174 932

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
21 November 2023

**Service provided by:**
Aboyne After School Club

**Service provider number:**
SP2004005229

**Service no:**
CS2004080631

## About the service

Aboyne After School Club is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged from three years to 16 years.

The service is accommodated within Deeside Community Education Centre located in the town of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire. The children have access to an outdoor area at the school and are close to shops, parks and other amenities.

## About the inspection

This was a unannounced inspection which took place on 20 November 2023 between 1500 and 1800 and 21 November 2023 between 0730 and 0900. 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, 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
- made contact with four parents of children who attended
- spoke with the staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and settled.
- Children lead their own play and learning and access resources to meet their interests.
- The staff team worked well together to meet children's needs.
- The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles and were keen to take on training to develop their practice.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were developing and should now be embedded into practice.

## 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? | 4 - 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

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support**

Children were confident, happy and appeared to be relaxed within the setting. They were keen to tell us about their experiences. They said that they had fun and felt safe and enjoyed being at the club with their friends. It was clear that positive relationships had been established between staff and children, who had fun together and were relaxed in each other's company. This contributed to children's wellbeing and supported them feel valued and secure.

Our discussions with staff highlighted that they knew children well and were able to discuss preferences, personalities and any strategies in place to support children's needs. This supported the team to offer individualised care to children. Parents strongly agree that staff knew their children well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. One parent said, "staff are brilliant; know their stuff and the children well, no concerns at all."

Personal plans were in place for all children. The plans gathered detailed information needed to support staff to care for the children. These documents ensured that staff had a clear understanding of children's individual needs and how to support them to reach their full potential. As a result, children were respected and valued as individuals. We saw that personal plans were reviewed and updated with parents at least every six months to ensure the information remained current. All parents strongly agreed that they were fully involved in their child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan.

Children benefitted from unhurried snack times. Since our last inspection, we saw that the setting had considered encouraging the children's independence. This was now supported with opportunities to set up, self-serve food/drinks and spread food. Children were relaxed, as they chatted with staff and friends, whilst enjoying their food and developing lifeskills. Children benefitted from healthy and plentiful snack options and fresh drinks. This supported them to be healthy and nourished. Most parents strongly agreed that their children could choose from a healthy range of snacks everyday.

Appropriate systems were in place for the storage and administration of medication within the service. Medication forms allowed staff to gather the correct information. To further improve this system we advised management to ensure that all information was completed by parents to support the safety and wellbeing of the children.

**Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Children chose where to play during the session which supported them to lead their play experiences. They could choose from a variety of resources on offer. Some play spaces were set up with activities prior to children arriving. These had been identified and selected after evaluating the children's interests and preferences. Children could access further resources independently or by asking staff, who were responsive to requests. This contributed to a child led approach.

Planning processes were child led and followed children's likes and interests. A range of resources supported children's development and we saw children use these well. For example, children had set up a café in the tent and were using mark making materials to make signs and menus. They used real resources such as old laptops and phones to take orders. Staff interactions supported children to develop their play further by asking for foods and encouraging them to think about how they might take the order. All parents strongly agreed that their children had opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences. One child said, "It's fun, I can play with my friends and meet different people; everyone is really nice."

Adults sat alongside children during play. They were observed to be taking a genuine interest in the children's play and chatted about what they were doing. Staff were beginning to use open ended questioning during their interactions. For example, a child wanted to make a Christmas present for a family member and the staff member asked, "what could you use?" when the child replied junk, they both went to the junk box to look for appropriate resources. This approach encouraged the child to extend their thinking and select appropriate resources.

Since our last inspection, the club had introduced a large flipchart to plan and record children's experiences, allowing them to revisit their learning. We could see children had been involved in the process and their voice was evident in their drawings and mark making. The club had started to use the wellbeing indicators which are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included in their observations. We discussed the value in using these to set goals with the children. These could be used to plan next steps and inform the planning processes, further supporting children to reach their full potential. Staff told us they felt they would benefit from training on undertaking purposeful observations to achieve this **(see reinstated area for improvement 1).**

### Areas for improvement

1. The manager should provide support and training to further develop staff knowledge and skills in planning, observation and recording. Developing these skills will lead to positive outcomes and learning for the children in the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27) and

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

## How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.**

The setting was generally well maintained and provided a comfortable, welcoming environment for children to play and learn. Children's artwork was displayed and this supported them to feel included and respected.

The club operates within the local community centre and had sole use of the area during club operating times. Staff escorted children to the toilet and to meet their parents downstairs at pick up time. This ensured the children were safe and secure.

Operating in a shared environment meant there were limitations around the furnishings that could be used. However, since our last inspection some soft furnishings had been added to the environment such as large cushions, materials and blankets. This provided a more comfortable and homely feel. We saw the children use these well to relax on, to kneel on when playing with the small world resources on the floor and for den building. Children were clearly feeling at home, as they took their shoes off to play in the den. One parent said, "the club make the best of their setting. I am aware they want to make changes but as they use a shared space this can be difficult; but location is great for school connection."

We saw that resources were chosen taking account of the children's interests, age and stage. These were of a good quality and included small world, construction, games, arts and crafts. Since our last inspection, the club were making better use of their very good range of resources. These were being rotated and evaluations reflected that staff were gauging the children's level of interest and took this into account when extending or changing resources.

The setting had access to an outdoor area at the school, however, free flow access was not possible. This was a large concrete space and children told us they took resources such as skipping ropes, balls and loose parts outside with them. This offered the children the opportunity to be outside and enjoy active play in the fresh air.

We heard and saw from photographs that the club had made some good connections within the community such as the church. Children had recently been asked to create a 'bug hotel' for the churchyard. This supported children to feel involved and included within the community. One child said, "I like playing with craft materials and going out on excursions to church, a walk etc."

Children were safe because there were effective systems and processes in place. Risk assessments were recently reviewed to ensure they were current and up to date. Accidents and incidents were appropriately recorded and shared with parents. Regular reflection and auditing of accidents and incidents with the staff team identified and raised awareness of potential risks, supporting children to be safe. One parent said, "my child is in a safe setting and has access to lots of play resources as well as learning resources with staff who are attentive and caring/approachable."

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by the implementation of effective infection prevention and control routines. These included hand washing at appropriate times and regular cleaning regimes. Staff protected children by ensuring the environment was clean and personal protective equipment (PPE) was used effectively when appropriate. Children's information was organised and stored securely in a locked cabinet.

## How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurances and improvements are well led**

Since our last inspection the club's values, vision and aims had been developed in consultation with staff, children and families. We could see that being happy and safe, having fun and making friends was central to this and these values came across during our inspection. The values, visions and aims now captured what was important to all using and working at the club.

An approachable staff team had established positive relationships with children and their families. Information was shared with parents through daily conversations at drop off/pick up times, by the use of a Facebook page and through newsletters. One parent said, "I am always informed of the activities planned for the day and at the end of the day always given a brief of how my child got on during the day, good or bad."

We saw that children's and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the service. Children used a suggestion box to share their ideas and parents' feedback their views within questionnaires. Feedback was very positive and no suggestions were made, however, the children had made some suggestions. We discussed creating a: 'You said, we did' display beside the suggestion box, to highlight that their views had been considered. This would ensure that everyone felt listened to and included in the service. Parents strongly agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop this setting and their ideas and suggestions are used to influence change.

Since our last inspection the setting was using a RAG (red, amber, green) document to support self evaluation and improvement within the service. We discussed using an action plan to highlight identified improvements from the RAG document in order to make this more focused and manageable. Staff were now involved in self evaluation and we saw that the service was now using recognised audit tools like the 'Quality Framework' to support the service to highlight good practice and identify improvements to act upon. Management should now ensure this is fully embedded into the service quality assurance system **(see reinstated area for improvement 1).**

Policies and procedures which underpinned the service and supported staff practice were in place. These were reviewed regularly to ensure they remained relevant to the service and continued to follow best practice. Policies were dated when reviewed or updated, to show they were current.

### Areas for improvement

1. To support improvement to the service and ensure positive outcomes for children, the manager should ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools and improvement plans are fully embedded into practice.

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).

## How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment**

Children benefitted from being cared for by an established staff team. They communicated effectively and worked well together being courteous and respectful of each other. This promoted positive working relationships and provided a happy, safe, and relaxed environment for children. One parent said, "the team work very well together and coordinate with each other looking after the children."

Staff recognised the importance of nurturing, warm, responsive attachments and interactions. We saw staff spend time with children in small groups and on a one-to-one basis, recognising children's needs and giving them the support and attention they needed. As a result, children responded well and felt valued, loved, and secure. One parent said, "the setting are inclusive and attentive to my child's needs."

Staff shared that they felt well supported by management. Yearly support and supervision meetings and peer monitoring supported staff to identify strengths and consider what could be done better to support improvement within the service. This encouraged staff to reflect on their practice to bring about improved outcomes for children and families.

Staff had accessed a range of core training such as first aid, food hygiene and child protection and a record was kept of training. We discussed the benefits of encouraging staff to undertake ongoing reflection, taking time to consider how training had supported their practice and improved outcomes for children. All parents strongly agreed that staff had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their child and support their learning.

## 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

The manager should provide support and training to further develop staff knowledge and skills in planning, observation and recording. Developing these skills will lead to positive outcomes and learning for the children in the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27) and
'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 March 2023.**

Action taken since then
Staff told us they felt they would benefit from training on undertaking purposeful observations, this would lead to positive outcomes and learning for the children in the service.

**Area for improvement reinstated.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should review the learning environment for all children. They need to ensure that spaces are inviting and areas are provided for children to explore, play and relax. Resources and activities should be of interest to children and offer challenge and stimulation.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:
'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.21) and
'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 March 2023.**

Action taken since then
Staff had reviewed the learning environment for the children and spaces were now more inviting with areas to explore, play and relax. The club were making better use of their very good range of resources. These were being rotated and evaluations reflected that staff were gauging the children's level of interest and took this into account when extending or changing resources.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 3

To support improvement to the service and ensure positive outcomes for children, the manager should ensure quality assurance systems, including the use of quality audit tools and improvement plans are fully embedded into practice.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 March 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

The setting was using a document to support self evaluation and improvement within the service. Staff were now involved in self evaluation and we saw that the service was now using recognised audit tools like the 'Quality Framework' to support the service to highlight good practice and identify improvements to act upon. Management should now ensure this is fully embedded into the service quality assurance system.

**Area for improvement reinstated.**

## 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? | 4 - Good |
|---|---|
| 4.3 Staff deployment | 4 - Good |

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