

Robert Gordon's College After School Club Day Care of Children

Robert Gordon's College
Schoolhill
Aberdeen
AB10 1FE

Telephone: 01224646346

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 May 2026

Service provided by:
Robert Gordon's College

Service provider number:
SP2003003559

Service no:
CS2009216635

About the service

Robert Gordon's College After School Club is located within Robert Gordon's College in the city of Aberdeen. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children at any one time, with no more than 40 attending breakfast club. The service operates between 07:00 and 08:15 and 15:05 and 18:00 Monday to Friday during term time.

Children are cared for within the school dining hall and children have direct access to an outdoor playground. For specific events, the service can operate from the following areas within the site at Countesswells with exclusive use of the rooms in the pavilion sports hall and the enclosed courts at the grounds.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 6 May 2026 between 14:30 and 18:00 and 7 May 2026 between 14:30 and 17:40. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with six of their parents/carers
- received 35 responses to our request for feedback from parents/carers and staff through our online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind and caring interactions from staff who knew them well.
- Embedded routines supported predictability and smooth transitions.
- Children and families benefitted from a service committed to continuous improvement.
- A wide variety of play experiences promoted children's life skills and interests.
- Daily opportunities to spend time outdoors supported children's health and wellbeing.
- Children and families were meaningfully involved in decision making and influencing experiences within the setting.

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

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|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Leadership | 5 - Very 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 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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**.

The service had clear and appropriate vision, values, and aims, and objectives aligned with the wider school. These were well embedded in practice, creating a positive and welcoming ethos. Parents commented they particularly valued the strong sense of community within the setting. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the vision and consistently promoted this through their practice.

Effective leadership across the service contributed to a positive morale. Staff felt well supported and leaders demonstrated confidence, supported by ongoing professional learning that positively influenced practice. This motivated staff to drive forward and sustain improvements. As a result, children experienced encouraging and consistently positive interactions.

Since the last inspection, consideration had been given to opportunities for children and families to be involved in the development of the service. Embedded approaches meant that children's thoughts and ideas were actively used to influence their experiences. Staff had recently implemented different floor books to help gather children and families' views and evidenced how their feedback was being used. For example, children helped choose the snack menu, outdoor experiences, and resources. Ongoing conversations, as well as questionnaires, supported children and their families to feel listened to and meaningfully involved.

Positive experiences for children were promoted through quality assurance practices. The management team were keen to include staff in developments and were supporting this using formal self evaluation during team meetings, training opportunities, monitoring of practice, and support and supervision meetings. For example, observations from leadership walk-throughs identified strengths and development areas which were acted upon. This approach built on existing strengths and supported all staff to further develop their practice and skills. This helped maintain and support the delivery of high quality care for children.

Staff were passionate about providing children with high quality experiences and were motivated to continue on their improvement journey. A clear and relevant improvement plan reflected the current needs of the service, including developing personal planning and enhancing play experiences outdoors. Evaluations were ongoing to measure the impact of developments on outcomes for children.

Safe recruitment and induction helped staff feel confident in their role and supported children's safety. Newly recruited staff spoke positively about their induction, which was tailored to individuals, and how this had supported them in understanding their responsibilities. Staff valued opportunities to spend time getting to know children and become familiar with the different routines. Staff were committed to ongoing professional learning, relevant to the needs of the service as it continues to evolve. They were knowledgeable about some best practice guidance and used this to guide their practice. Other development opportunities, such as peer observations and coaching conversations, strengthened skills and practice. This meant that staff skills and knowledge were enhanced to support children's wellbeing.

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 were busy and having fun as they played. Staff supported children's choice and were responsive to their interests. Children had freedom to choose what they wanted to do and staff were flexible in their approach to follow children's interests. This supported meaningful engagement within their play. Many parents shared that they felt a strength of the service was the range of experiences available. They commented, "Wide variety of activities on offer every day" and "Stimulating and fun place to be." Children shared, "I like playing with my friends and doing fun activities like games and arts and crafts" and "There are lots of things to play with, outdoor toys and indoor toys."

Children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous play opportunities. They could freely choose from a variety of resources and were confident in asking staff for other resources, which were quickly provided. A range of activities, including role play, construction, arts and crafts, and board games helped children engage in play that interested them. Staff were responsive to children's ideas, supporting them to lead their own play and learning. For example, children had recently shown an interest in growing and planting and had brought some seeds to the club. Staff had facilitated opportunities for children to take ownership of growing and looking after their plants, with staff showing a genuine interest in children's achievements. This approach helped children stay engaged, build confidence, and develop their independence.

Children's experiences promoted the development of their life skills. Staff interactions enhanced learning for children through the use of role modelling. Some staff also used open-ended questioning, which encouraged further conversation and promoted opportunities for children to expand on their ideas. Parents shared that they valued that children had opportunities to take part in new experiences and develop different skills. They commented, "My child particularly enjoys arts and crafts and frequently comes home with new creations" and "My child has recently had the opportunity to learn to play chess."

A child-centred approach to planning promoted children's individual interests. Experiences were shared through photographs and floor books, which shared the wide variety of children's experiences. Observations of children's experiences recognised their individual achievements and reflected their current interests. Staff used these observations and feedback from children to allow children to reflect on past experiences and plan further opportunities for children to enjoy.

Regular access to outdoors supported different types of play. Free-flow access to outdoors meant that children could move freely between areas and could take part in energetic play. Many children chose to play outside, taking part in group games, tennis, den building, and football. Children used large open-ended materials, such as guttering and pipes to build tracks. This promoted the use of problem-solving skills. Parents advised the outdoor play opportunities were a highlight for their children, with many choosing to spend large periods of time outside. The service had identified through their own improvement priorities that further developing resources in the outdoor area would continue to promote children's creativity and enhance experiences.

Quality indicator: 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 experienced warm and kind interactions from staff. They were welcomed enthusiastically by staff on collection from school and given time to share their thoughts and ideas. Interactions were consistently respectful and supportive, with staff demonstrating a knowledge of individual children's interests and needs. Children described staff as "really kind," "fun," and "funny," reflecting the positive relationships that had been formed.

Children were supported by caring staff who knew them well. Staff confidently described how they tailored their daily practice to support each child's needs. Personal plans were in place for all children which were reviewed regularly with families and, where suitable, children. Plans were individual to each child and captured their development needs and progress. Information relating to children's wellbeing was currently held across different systems. Bringing this together within each child's personal plan would provide a clearer, more holistic overview of their needs and agreed strategies. This would further strengthen a consistent approach in meeting children's individual needs.

Children's health was promoted through appropriate storage and systems for medication being administered to meet children's needs. Staff were knowledgeable about children's medical needs and effective systems were in place to support children in receiving their medication, when required. Overall, medication forms contained relevant information and we advised of some improvements to the recording of information to support clarity and consistency. The manager had identified this through self evaluation processes and had plans in place to action.

Consistent routines and approaches supported children's safety. Daily routines were embedded which promoted children's understanding of what to expect and provided a sense of security. This included children being collected from school by familiar staff, such as their key worker. This allowed children to feel comfortable and engage in meaningful conversation, as well as support a smooth transition to the club. The consideration of calm, cosy spaces also provided opportunities for children to rest and relax. Parents shared they valued this, particularly for younger children after a busy day.

Children benefitted from mealtimes which were relaxed, sociable, and unhurried. Children were actively involved in decision-making, including what was available and when they had snack. They commented, "Excellent variety," "Different every week," and "I got to make the snack [menu]." Children were able to choose from a variety of nutritious snacks and sat alongside staff. This supported nurturing conversations and positive eating habits.

Positive relationships between staff, children, and families were evident throughout the setting, contributing to a warm and inclusive ethos. Families were welcomed into the setting and staff made time to speak with them individually. Parents/carers were also able to join their child in completing activities together and were not rushed to leave. Staff valued contributions and ideas from families to support children's experiences. Parents commented, "Lovely, kind, caring staff who genuinely care about [my child]... have found their flexibility and support very helpful," "Always made to feel welcome by staff," and "I have seen [staff] handle issues professionally and with care, so I know I can trust them with my child."

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 promote and extend children's play and development, the provider should ensure that all staff have confidence, knowledge, and skills to facilitate a wide variety of experiences and play opportunities.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring staff interactions support and extend children's learning and development
- b) ensuring children are supported to use their curiosity and be challenged
- c) ensuring observations and assessment supports and enhances good quality play opportunities and experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking and investigation, and problem-solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

This area for improvement was made on 17 April 2025.

Action taken since then

Children benefitted from staff consistently supporting their play and learning experiences. Staff supported meaningful play and demonstrated an awareness of when to involve and enhance play, as well as when to stand back and encourage children to lead their own play. Interactions, such as modelling and effective questioning, promoted children's curiosity and extended their ideas. Staff used observations of children's experiences to plan further play and learning opportunities linked to their individual interests and needs.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children have regular experiences which supports their curiosity and creativity, the provider should ensure that resources reflect children's current interests and stages of development.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) children have opportunities to engage in a range of interesting and stimulating play experiences
- b) play spaces are organised and well equipped with a wide range of toys, resources, and materials
- c) children can access a range of open-ended, real-life materials within their play to enhance learning opportunities.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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 17 April 2025.

Action taken since then

A wide range of toys and resources supported children's choice and allowed them to engage in interesting play experiences. The addition of some open-ended materials supported children's imagination and enhanced experiences. The team were motivated to continue to expand this to continue to develop play experiences for children across indoors and outdoors. Resources were set up in an inviting way to act as provocations for play.

This area from improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure there is a strong ethos of continuous improvement which enhances the delivery of high quality practice the provider, manager, and staff should:

- a) ensure children and families are meaningfully involved and influence changes within the setting
- b) ensure quality assurance, including self evaluation and improvement plans, lead to high quality care and support
- c) ensure children, families, and staff are meaningfully involved and influence change within the setting.

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 systems' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 17 April 2025.

Action taken since then

Overall, the staff team were committed to the development of the club and were passionate about delivering high quality care and support. Since the last inspection, different approaches had been introduced to gather meaningful input from children and their families and it was evident that this feedback had been used to influence experiences.

Robust quality assurance and self evaluation processes were embedded which positively impacted on outcomes for children. This fed into a relevant and achievable improvement plan which reflected the needs of the service.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure staff have the skills to meet the wellbeing and learning needs of children, the provider, manager, and staff should ensure that an effective induction and monitoring system is in place that effectively supports staff to meet the standards expected of their role and responsibilities.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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 17 April 2025.

Action taken since then

A robust induction process had been introduced which supported new staff to become familiar with their role and build confidence. This promoted reflection and was tailored to individual staff members, which meant that training and development was relevant to their needs. This supported the development of staff skills and knowledge to support children's wellbeing.

Staff monitoring systems had been implemented and feedback was used to tailor this for staff, to ensure supervision and monitoring process was meaningful and supported staff skills. This identified strengths and areas for development which had been actioned to positively impact children's experiences.

This area for improvement has 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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| 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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