Clarkston After School Services
Day Care of Children

Newford Grove
Clarkston
G76 8QZ

Telephone: 07710618891

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 January 2025

Service provided by:
Clarkston After School Service Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012263

Service no:
CS2014324238

About the service

Clarkston After School Service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 33 primary school and first year secondary school aged children at any one time. Of those 33 children no more than 10 are aged 4 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located in Busby, East Renfrewshire. The service is close to local parks, schools and other amenities. Children are cared for in a self contained building with two playrooms, small kitchen and toilets. Children can also access an enclosed outdoor garden and local forest area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the 13th and 14th of January 2025. 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.
- Gathered feedback from fourteen families through online questionnaires.
- Spoke with staff, the manager and provider.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident, and having fun on the days of inspection with their friends and staff.
- Staff were kind, warm and caring in their interactions which ensured children felt valued in the setting.
- Children would benefit from more involvement in planning, preparing, and serving snacks to develop their life skills and independence.
- Children were actively involved in leading their play and learning experiences at the setting.
- The team should continue to review and develop the environment and resources, with a focus on the outdoors.
- The team were developing their culture of self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Parents felt welcomed into 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

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 key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were happy, confident, and having fun on the days of inspection with their friends and staff. Staff were kind, warm and caring in their interactions which ensured children felt welcomed in the setting. Staff were respectful in their engagement, taking time to listen to children. This helped children to feel valued and empowered them to express their views and opinions. One parent told us "children are treated with warmth and respect."

Children experienced snack times that were sociable, relaxed, and unhurried. They enjoyed sitting with friends to eat and discuss their day. Snack choices on offer were nutritious and reflected current guidance. Children would benefit from more involvement in planning, preparing, and serving snacks to develop their life skills and independence. We would encourage staff to sit with children during mealtimes to further enrich the experience and provide constant supervision. Water was available throughout the session to ensure children remained hydrated. One child told us "

Staff knew children well and told us about their individual needs, personalities, and interests. Personal plans were in place for each child attending which were reviewed regularly with families. Children completed 'All about me' booklets highlighting current likes, dislikes, and hobbies. This approach ensured children's voices and preferences were central to any plans made by the team. We suggested personal plans could be further developed by reflecting children's goals and how the team would support them to be achieved. The provider confirmed they had updated the "All About Me" booklet to capture this information and new templates were being introduced to the setting.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by a clear administration of medication policy and procedures. The service was storing and administering medication appropriately. We sampled medication consent forms and found these reflected current best practice guidance. Staff understood their role in promoting children's health and wellbeing needs. Several staff were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance.

All staff understood their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children in their care and had previously accessed child protection training. During inspection we found that some staff's knowledge and understanding required to be updated. We highlighted this to the manager who actioned it immediately. Staff completed relevant refresher training, and we are satisfied the whole team are now clear on procedures to follow should any concerns arise. One parent told us "The staff are nurturing. I trust my child is safe."

We observed children having fun and leading their play and learning during the after-school sessions. One child told us "I love the activities". Staff skilfully interacted with children to promote their participation, creativity, and imaginations during play. We asked the team to review their welcome time at the beginning of the session to ensure it remained a meaningful experience for all children attending. The team agreed to review this with children and look at alternative options for group time.

Children were actively involved in leading their play and learning experiences which meant the pace of the day was child led. There was a good balance between planned and spontaneous play experiences.

Staff planned activities to reflect children's requests and wishes each week. They were also responsive to children's requests for new resources or activities they would like to do on the days of inspection. We observed children having lots of fun together creating a Lego world which stimulated their imagination, creativity, and problem-solving skills. One parent told us "They arrange fun activities that keep my child engaged".

Opportunities to engage in literacy and numeracy were woven across experiences in the playrooms. On the days of inspection, we observed children reading together in a cosy space. Children enjoyed a group game of Uno which helped develop their numeracy and problem-solving skills.

The team had introduced floor books to support planning activities in the service. However, this was still at an early stage of development. We made suggestions on how the team could expand floor books to support the full planning cycle with the addition of children's feedback and reviews, the team's evaluations, and ideas to improve activities and links to the Playwork Principles and SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. This would help celebrate children's achievements while continuing to extend their play and learning opportunities in the setting.

Children enjoyed spending time in their local community. They enjoyed walking back from school at the start of the session, visiting the local park, forest, and fields. The team were progressing access to the local football pitches in response to children's requests to play more football at the after-school service. This encouraged children to develop their connection with the local community.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The service had moved premises since the previous inspection, which had impacted positively on children's experiences. They now have sole use of the building which provided more ownership and freedom to create spaces that meet the needs of the children. For example children's artwork and achievements were displayed giving them a sense of being valued and included. Parents told us they like the new premises and the space the children now had to play in.

Children were confident moving around the indoor space and were encouraged to make their own choice and decisions about what they wanted to play with. Inside, children were busy and able to choose from a range of toys and materials that were suitable to their stage of development. This included a cosy space with soft furnishings and twinkling lights giving them a space to relax. However, at times the playroom became noisy due to children playing nearby. We have asked them to consider the layout of the room to minimise possible interruptions.

Outdoors children were developing their wellbeing through fresh air and exercise. Children told us they would like to see more equipment outdoors and suggested a slide and an area to play football. There was limited resources available to support their play. To further enhance children's outdoor learning, more open-ended resources are needed to develop natural curiosity and creativity. Some parents noted the lack of lighting in the car park during the darker morning and nights. We highlighted this with the service who agreed to look at options available.

Good infection control measures were in place. These included cleaning of toys and regular handwashing. During the inspection we identified some issues in relation to cleanliness within the toilets.

We raised these with the manager and they took action to address these. The service need to ensure effective systems are in place and maintained to prevent any potential spread of infection.

Appropriate safety measures were in place to keep children safe inside the building and in the local community. Staff were good at implementing these. They supervised children appropriately and promoted road safety when walking back from school. Children were involved in risk assessing activities and the environment. The service should continue to follow these appropriate safety measures and children's awareness of how to keep safe.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The team engaged well in the inspection process. They were motivated to provide a quality service for children, young people, and their families. Staff told us they wanted to make sure the children were happy and having fun at the setting. This showed us the service had a good capacity for change.

We suggested the service would benefit from identifying visions, values, and aims that reflect the current aspirations of children, their families, and the wider community. This would enable the newly formed team to set the principles that will underpin their roles and responsibilities when supporting the service to grow and evolve.

Children were at the heart of any changes and improvements made in the after-school service. The team met monthly to discuss what was working well and share new ideas. We encouraged the team to use the care inspectorate's self-evaluation toolkit and quality framework to consider the key questions; what we are doing, how do we know and what can we improve on. This will support the team to further embed a culture of self-reflection and support them on their improvement journey.

Children's views were actively sought and helped inform improvements in the setting. We saw examples of children's ideas incorporated into the development of the outdoor space. This ensured children's choices were respected and empowered children to have ownership of their play, learning and environment at the after-school service.

Parents were welcomed into the setting by the team. Parents dropped off and collected children directly from the playroom which helped build strong relationships with the team. Parents were kept informed about the service through calls, group messages and face to face discussions. One parent told us "we get regular communication in person and by text". Families told us they felt comfortable and confident to approach the team to discuss any issues, ideas, and suggestions. One parent told us "the staff are extremely friendly and welcoming".

The manager was visible, friendly, and approachable which helped create conditions where people felt confident to give their views, initiate change and share the responsibility for this process. One parent told us "I like the manager. They're very approachable and friendly".

A yearly calendar was in place which helped highlight tasks for the manager such as monthly medication audits. We discussed why establishing a robust quality assurance process would help to improve the quality of provision, including monitoring staff training, embedding floor books and observations of the environment. The manager should continue to embed these processes as this will support positive outcomes for children and young people who access the service.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Staff present on the days of inspection were welcoming, open, and participated well in the inspection process. Staff understood the importance of consistent care for children, and they communicated well with each other when tasks meant they had to move away from play areas. As a result, children received consistent care and support from staff who knew them. One parent told us "the staff are friendly and great with kids."

The service was appropriately staffed on the days of inspection. Staff worked flexibly as a team to meet children's needs and support participation in play. Staff positioned themselves across the playroom and outside, to help ensure children were safe and supervised but their play was not interrupted. This meant that children received the right care at the right time.

We found systems were in place to carry out regular supervision meetings with staff. This helped staff to reflect on their practice, set targets and identify their training needs to further assist them in their role. Staff accessed training inhouse and through online courses. They had opportunities to undertake professional qualifications relevant to their role which, was supported by the provider. We would encourage the team to continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and practice by using best practice guidance and frameworks to support positive outcomes for children. Including but not limited to, the Care inspectorate HUB and Play work Scotland.

Children were kept safe and protected as staff were appropriately registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. We highlighted the National Induction resource to the manager and provider to support a planned and consistent approach to induction for new staff members. The provider confirmed they are currently reviewing their induction workbooks. We asked the manager to establish a system to monitor any core training that should be completed by new staff members as part of the induction process. The agreed to progress this.

We could see that children had very positive relationships with staff. Staff knew children very well and responded considerately and patiently to their needs, conversations, and questions. Staff and children had lots of fun together during our visit. This meant that attachments and relationships were strong resulting in children being happy, safe, and settled in the service. One parent told us "staff have built a really strong relationship with and taken time to get know my child, working in partnership with us to support them to settle in".

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

As a matter of best practice the provider should give children further opportunities for outdoor play experiences.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2018.

Action taken since then
The service have moved to a new premise since the last inspection. The outdoor space in the new premise is fenced in with locked gates. Children are given the option to play outdoors daily. The service continues to develop the outdoor space with children and families.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

As a matter of best practice the provider should ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children by securing the wider areas of the premises they are accommodated within.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 19 March 2018.

Action taken since then
The service have moved to a new premise since the last inspection. Therefor this area for improvement is no longer relevant. The new building has locked doors and security cameras to ensure the safety of children. The outdoor space is used solely by the service and is fully fenced.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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