

Schools Out! Westhill Day Care of Children

Westhill Old School House
Westhill Road
Westhill
AB32 6FT

Telephone: 07732 108 824

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 February 2024

Service provided by:
Schools Out! Club (Westhill) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2017012937

Service no:
CS2017357528

About the service

Schools Out! Westhill is registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 32 school aged children. This day care of children service operates in the town of Westhill, on the outskirts of Aberdeen. The service operates between the times of 07:30 and 09:00 and 15:15 and 18:00 Monday to Friday during term time and 07:30 and 18:00 during school holidays and in-service days.

The setting consists of two large playrooms, soft play area, sensory room and a fully enclosed outdoor area. The service is within easy access to the local schools and amenities such as parks, woodland areas and shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 February 2024 between 07:30 and 17:45. Two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection.

To prepare for 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:

- observed children using the service
- received feedback from 15 families from our online questionnaire
- received feedback from seven staff from our online questionnaire
- spoke with the staff and management team
- observed practice
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured and supported by kind and caring staff who knew them as individuals.
- Children were having fun, were engaged in their play and enjoyed a happy, relaxed atmosphere.
- Children had access to a varied range of high-quality resources and were able to make independent choices about their play.
- Quality assurance measures needed to be further developed to ensure positive outcomes in all areas.
- Effective staff deployment ensured children were always well supervised and supported appropriately.

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?	5 - Very 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

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing Care and Support

Children were happy and having fun during our visit. They experienced nurturing care and support from staff who took time to listen and respond to their needs. Strong relationships had been developed and children were treated as individuals by a staff team who knew them and their families well. This gave children the clear message that they were valued and respected. A parent told us, "Very professional, friendly, approachable and always making sure they do the best for the children. Good communication with parents." Another commented, "I like that the staff are so welcoming and have clearly taken the time to get to know my child. They offer lots for my child to do. They offer a good handover of what my child has done."

Children were cared for by staff who knew them well and were able to talk through strategies of support for individual children. The service had worked with other professionals to offer consistent approaches and supports for children. Personal plans were in place and included information on any allergies, medical or additional support needs. The wellbeing indicators; Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI), were being used to support holistic personal planning approaches. Plans were being reviewed with parents at least every six months, in line with current guidance. A parent told us, "Staff know my child well and try to cater for their needs."

Mealtimes were a relaxed and social experience. We observed this routine to be a time for children and staff to connect and enjoy talking together. Snack options were healthy and plentiful. There were some opportunities for children to be independent, however, there was scope for this to be developed. This would further support children to develop confidence and life skills. Children were involved in the planning of snack, which encouraged them to make healthy choices supporting health and wellbeing. Most parents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'My child can choose from a healthy range of snacks and meals every day.'

Medication required by children was stored safely and easily accessible by staff in an emergency. There was a medication policy in place that was in line with current best practice and procedure to keep children safe. There were plans in place detailing the measures to take when medication was required. This offered assurance that the healthcare needs of all children were met.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children lead their own play and were mostly engaged in purposeful, fun 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. For example, a group of children had become restless in the story corner. A staff member recognised this and redirected their play to a suitable space. This supported children to be included and have fun. A parent told us, "My children have always loved the club. Great activities and options."

Planning for play and learning was child led and included children's voices and interests. Children benefitted

from responsive practitioners who acted on requests. For example, staff added or swapped resources when they noticed they weren't being used or children asked. This responsiveness supported children to be heard and allowed them to lead their play. This should be further developed by considering children's individual next steps and planning for appropriate resources to support.

Opportunities for development of language, literacy, and numeracy were woven into children's experiences and the environment. Children benefitted from a skilled staff team who used interactions and open-ended questioning to support play and learning. Staff had also considered the resources on offer to children to ensure there were opportunities for children to practice their skills through play, supporting children's language, literacy, numeracy and skills to develop critical thinking.

The wider community was well utilised, for example, local spaces such as parks and woods were used daily. Children's understanding of the wider community was supported by trips out and visitors to the setting, for example, trips to the library and therapy pets coming into the service. As a result, children were offered opportunities promoting physical activity, social interactions and literacy skills.

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.

Children benefitted from a setting that was bright, clean and welcoming. Some cosy spaces were available for children to rest and relax. For example, a few areas had cushions and soft seating. We suggested this be further developed to ensure that children have access to cosy, homely spaces to rest and relax. Children had ample space and freedom to move around most areas as they pleased. All children were happy and content in their environment. A parent commented, "I like that there's lots of different activities for the kids to do. The area is very spacious so there's opportunity for the children to find somewhere quiet to go to." Another commented, "Fun filled, friendly environment for my daughter to enjoy before and after school. My daughter enjoys spending time with the staff and making friends with the other children from her own school and the other local school."

Children had access to a varied range of resources and were able to make independent choices about their play. They moved freely indoors between play areas. Most resources were easily accessible and developmentally appropriate. These included some open-ended and real-life resources such as pinecones and pans, which promoted children's curiosity and creativity. We suggested this could be further developed and signposted the service to 'The Loose Parts Toolkit' on the Care Inspectorate Hub.

Children's health and wellbeing benefitted from access to the outdoor environment. On the walk back from school, children stopped at the park area where they played with the play equipment and climbed trees. After returning to the club, children had access to a play park at their request. Staff used walkie talkies to maintain communication which supported children to be safe and ensured free access to the outdoor environment.

Risk assessments were in place for the environment and resources. These identified risks or hazards and how to reduce the level of risk. We observed staff doing head counts and children were always accounted for. As a result, children were kept safe from harm.

Children's health was supported through staff understanding of their role in managing infection prevention

and control measures. These included regular handwashing and cleaning of surfaces before eating. This minimised the potential risk for the spread of infection.

Children and family's information was kept securely on computer systems or locked in cabinets. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. As a result, children's information was protected and onsite storage complied with relevant best practice.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The service vision, values and aims were positive, shared with the team and evident within the setting. We suggested when reviewing these in future, the service should consult with the children and families, supporting them to feel valued and included.

The service recognised the importance of children and families' involvement. Parental views were sought using surveys, questionnaires and opportunities at pick up for parents to come into the setting. Children's views were regularly sought through the use of mind maps and discussions. We discussed how the data gathered should be used to inform change. These should be considered, along with the views of children and staff, as a starting point for future improvements. This would further promote partnership working and ensure children and family's views were represented. When asked if there were any suggestions for improvement, parent comments included, "Nothing all runs exceptional," and "More activities for older children." A child suggested, "It would be better if we had more discos with popcorn!"

The manager had a good understanding of how the service was performing and areas for development. This information had been gathered through staff reflections and conversations. Although the staff team had completed some self-evaluation, this was in the early stages. They should now develop systems to ensure evaluations and reflections are recorded and how these are used to drive change, resulting in positive outcomes for children. This was a previous area for improvement which will be brought forward in this report. The management team were completing routine audits. The implementation of a quality assurance calendar would further support consistency and develop shared leadership within the team.

Areas for improvement

1. To fully support a culture of continuous improvement, the provider, manager and staff are to ensure consistent implementation of comprehensive quality assurance strategies, which regularly and effectively review, assess and improve all aspects of the service.

This review is to involve everyone with an interest in the service.

This is in order to ensure the service 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); and

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

During our inspection there were enough staff to support and meet the needs of children. The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed. Staff absence was managed well ensuring children were safe and well supported.

A recent staff turnover had resulted in a newly formed team. However, this did not impact the quality of experiences for children and it was clear the team worked well together. They were courteous and respectful to each other, providing a happy, safe and relaxed environment for children. Walkie talkies were utilised well and staff were seen to be communicating well throughout the day.

Staff knew children very well and secure relationships between them had been established. They were skilled at recognising where they were best utilised and we witnessed children being supported by staff in ways which were appropriate to meet their needs. For example, whilst at the park, most children wanted to climb trees, whilst one child decided to play on the equipment. The staff team ensured they were appropriately dispersed to allow for maximum supervision and support where required. This meant that children felt safe, secure, and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them. A parent told us, "Friendly supportive staff with a range of entertainment for the children."

The leadership team were passionate about the service and engaged well throughout the inspection process. Children benefitted from a committed staff team that knew the positive impact they could have on their experiences and outcomes. Staff told us they felt well supported by management and were happy to seek advice and guidance. This was evident in the interactions we saw on the day between staff and management.

All staff had accessed basic training and a range of other training opportunities. Staff were reflecting on their training and how this had impacted service delivery. We suggested these could be revisited after a six-month period to evaluate the long-term impact of training. Staff confidently discussed training opportunities accessed and further training plans. This meant that children benefitted from a staff team with a mix of skills, knowledge and were keen to develop their skills and 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

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This area for improvement was made on 26 November 2019.

Action taken since then

The staff team are self-evaluating on an informal basis and this is leading to the development of planned improvements. Improvements planned are relevant to the needs of the service and considering the outcomes for children. The service are in the early stages of developing a formal quality assurance program.

This area for improvement has not been met and will remain in place.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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