

St. John's Kids Club Day Care of Children

St. John's Academy
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003038890

About the service

St John's Kids Club operates from a large room within St Johns Academy and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time. The age range of the children will be from four and half years if attending primary school to 14 years.

Children are cared for in a large open plan space that has direct access to an outdoor area. Children have access to the school toilets and other school facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 and 19 March 2024 between 14:30 and 18:00. 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 children using the service and eight of their family members.
- Spoke with three staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Calm, warm, and positive interactions by staff contributed to children feeling happy, safe and secure.
- Staff were knowledgeable on how to share initial concerns on children's welfare and wellbeing; however, they were not confident with keeping accurate safeguarding paperwork.
- Children experienced welcoming and inviting spaces that captured their interest's and curiosities very well.
- Children were empowered to plan their own experiences which supported them to reach their full potential.
- To support improvements to be effectively and consistently made, quality assurance processes should be regularly undertaken and include all aspects of service delivery.
- Staff worked very well together and valued the positive working relationships they had formed.
- Staff were not always confident in their roles and responsibilities within the club.
- Effective staff deployment ensured children were always well supervised and supported appropriately.
- Celebrating cultural environments was a real strength of the service.

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?	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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced caring and nurturing interactions. They were warmly greeted by staff who were enthusiastic and interested to hear how their day at school had been. It was evident children and staff had formed positive relationships as they chatted and laughed together. This approach supported children to feel safe, valued and loved. We saw children settled into their routines quickly and were excited to see their friends who were not in their class in school. They told us they liked coming to the club, and the staff made them feel safe. Their comments included: 'We have lots of fun here, I like playing with Kapla best', 'It's always good the toys are fun' and 'The ladies are kind'.

Staff were very knowledgeable on children's individual needs, likes and preferences. Children contributed to their care plans and effective information sharing with parents and the school meant all children had personal plans in place, which enabled staff to support them in a consistent and meaningful way. Children benefitted from their families being warmly welcomed back into the service which helped develop positive and trusting relationships. Staff and children were respectful of one another and we observed older children care and support younger children. For example, during an outdoor game a younger child became upset and was comforted by an older peer. Children's needs were met as they were listened to and loved by both staff and each other. This nurtured their sense of security and as a result, children were achieving and flourishing within the service.

Children experienced a relaxed and unhurried mealtime. Children were encouraged to be responsible as they helped plan menus and prepared food for snack time. Children were able to choose when to have their snack and who to sit beside. There was a wealth of opportunities for choice and independence, for example, pouring their own drinks, self-serving and tidying away their plates and glasses. Staff sat and ate with the children and encouraged them to chat about their day at school. This contributed to children feeling valued, safe, and secure and experiencing a positive mealtime.

Staff were knowledgeable on how to share initial concerns they had on children's welfare and wellbeing. However, they were not confident on keeping clear and accurate records once a concern had been raised and shared. The provider should ensure staff are confident in dealing with safeguarding issues and are knowledgeable of the procedure to follow, to keep children safe and protected if a concern is raised. We signposted the staff to best practice guidance 'Guide to Chronologies' to support effective practice and if needed, help children receive the right support at the right time (see area for improvement 1).

1.3 Play and learning

Children benefitted from a good range of spontaneous and planned high quality learning experiences which engaged them very well in their play. Planning approaches were responsive and reflected children's interests as staff valued children's opinions and views. Floor books and monthly planning sheets clearly evidenced that staff listened to children. Children were empowered to plan their own experiences, and their approach to responsive planning was a real strength of the service. As a result, play and learning experiences engaged all children in interesting, fun and exciting activities. This told us children really mattered and were fully respected.

Staff displayed nurture and warmth when interacting with the children and were responsive to children's requests. We found most staff successfully used effective questioning to promote children's thinking and problem-solving skills which enriched their play and learning.

Children's learning and achievements were linked to wellbeing indicators and captured and shared with families on an attractive display outside the club called 'Our path of achievement'. We found, observations were individual to children and focused on learning. Tracking of children's learning and achievements was managed very well, which contributed to the inclusive ethos and children being very well supported to reach their full potential.

Children had developed positive connections to their local and wider communities. For example, families provided traditional recipes for children to experience unfamiliar cultural foods. The children had visited the Letham4All - community fridge and purchased apples and made apple strudel together. A visit to the club from a member of the Royal Airforce taught children leadership skills and introduced them to the world of work. Pictures of the children celebrating other countries and their traditions were displayed on 'Our Cultural Environments' board. This approach was a real strength of the club and we found children were very well supported, to feel included and connected to their cultural environments and communities while developing lifelong learning skills.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe and protected, the provider should ensure staff are confident in dealing with safeguarding issues and are knowledgeable of the procedure to follow, if a concern is raised.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice'. (HSCS 4.11)

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.

2.2. Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced an environment which was comfortable, inviting, and clean, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. They had ample space to play, and we found they moved confidently between the playroom and outdoor space. Children played contently independently or very well and cooperatively in small groups. This helped them to build positive relationships with their peers and develop their social skills. A child told us, 'I have lots of friends here you know, it's so much fun'.

Children experienced indoor play areas that had been organised in a way and thoughtfully resourced to take account of individual interests and hobbies. This gave them a sense of belonging, ownership and told us that children really mattered. A good provision of natural materials and loose parts provided them with opportunities to be curious and imaginative in their play. Their environments were laid out in a way which helped develop children's independence. Resources were easily accessible and well organised which enabled them to self-select and make their own choices. Children would benefit from additional, real-life experiences in some indoor play areas.

Children benefitted from free flow access to an outdoor space which enabled them to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. We found they would benefit from additional loose parts in this area, to enrich their play further. Children had regular opportunities to visit other parts of the school. We saw they enjoyed playing hockey and football on the school pitch and climbing on the school trim trail. These opportunities enabled children to experience risky play. For example, we heard staff effectively use questioning with children to access safety when using a very long skipping rope and how high they could climb on a climbing wall to keep themselves safe. This resulted in children confidently managing positive risks in their play.

Children benefitted from a safe environment as staff worked well together to remove potential risks to children. We observed staff carry out regular head counts to ensure children were always accounted for. Staff communicated through radios when children were entering or leaving the building which meant staff always knew where children were. These approaches resulted in children being very well supervised and kept them safe.

Children were supported to be healthy through effective infection prevention and control procedures. For example, the playroom and resources were clean and handwashing routines were embedded into practice which helped to minimise the spread of infection.

Staff were vigilant around sharing sensitive information and aware that this information should only be shared when meeting children's wellbeing needs. Children and their family's personal information was kept safe and secure on a computer and in a locked cupboard.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Children benefitted from a staff team who placed value on the opinions of children and their families. Children and their families had been fully involved in creating a shared vision, values and aims for the service. These were reflective of the service, with a focus on creating fun, high quality experiences, built on strong and positive relationships.

The staff team were committed and enthusiastic about improving experiences for children in the club. They spoke confidently about their strengths and improvement priorities. A clear, robust improvement plan was effectively used to support and monitor progress with improvements and developments.

Children and families had opportunities to influence change within the setting. Families provided feedback through questionnaires and contributed to monthly questions regarding aspects of the service provided. Children's views were collated through mind maps and group discussions. Views and opinions were gathered and then actions to improve care, play and learning was evidenced in floor books. This demonstrated children and families were meaningfully involved in making decisions about service development and contributed to positive change. We asked staff to consider how they present questions to families, to ensure that the feedback they receive can always be meaningfully used, to inform future improvements.

Quality assurance processes were in the initial stages and was starting to have a positive impact on improving outcomes. To ensure aspects of quality care and support is not overlooked, as identified within this report, the manager should undertake regular monitoring which covers all aspects of service delivery. This would help support them further, to identify improvements and support them to be effectively and consistently made (see area for improvement 1).

Leaders were organised, and engaged well with us throughout the inspection and were responsive to our feedback. We found they were well placed to achieve their ongoing improvement priorities, to ensure children and families experience high quality care, play and learning.

Areas for improvement

1. To support a culture of continuous improvement, the manager, should further develop quality assurance processes, to review all aspects of the service regularly and effectively.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state '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 key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

4.3. Staff deployment

Staffing levels and deployment took account of children's individual needs, routines, and activities throughout the session. Families told us, they felt there were always enough staff in the setting to meet their child's needs. Children were very well supported by the right number of staff to meet their needs.

The small staff team were motivated, enthusiastic, and complemented each other well which resulted in a happy workforce. They had established mostly strong working relationships and a positive ethos, which promoted a supportive environment for children and their families. Effective communication and teamwork between staff meant children had meaningful play experiences and children were enjoying their time at the club. Families held the staff team in high regard, their comments included: 'The fact my child says after school club is fun and it's their favourite part of the day is enough for me', 'The children are well cared for in a fun stimulating environment, they are listened to; their opinions are taken into account' and 'Reliable staff who are friendly and kind, my child is happy'.

Staff were unclear at times of their job remits and who had responsibility for certain roles within the club. This meant that improvements were not always identified, for example, safeguarding paperwork or who was responsible for monitoring staff's registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff were committed and conscientious and tried hard to answer our questions but were not always confident in their roles. As a result, some issues were not being identified and addressed. We suggested the provider reviews all staff's understanding of their job role and responsibilities following their induction process (see area for improvement 1).

Staff had a good mix of skills, and experience to meet children's needs. They told us of training they had attended and how they used this to provide quality play and learning. For example, staff were knowledgeable on the 'Play work Principles' and incorporated them into their practice. This meant they demonstrated a confidence in providing an enabling environment for children of this age and stage. Additionally, they knew when to facilitate and support children's play experiences and when to step back and give children time and space to engage independently. As a result, children were empowered, confident and happy.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the club runs efficiently, support children's overall wellbeing and support staff within their roles, the provider should develop a process, following staff induction to access that staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the club.

This is to ensure that practice is consistent with the Scottish Social Services Council, Codes of Practice for social service workers and employers (2016). Code of practice for social service workers, Section 6 – As a social service worker, I am accountable for the quality of my work and will take responsibility for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.

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	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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