

Aberdour Out of School Club Day Care of Children

Aberdour Primary School
Hawkcraig Road
Aberdour
Burntisland
KY3 OUP

Telephone: 07850 950 509

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2008171304

About the service

Aberdour Out of School Club is registered to provide school aged childcare to 20 children at any one time. Children can be aged up to 14 years but no younger than primary school age. The service is located in the town of Aberdour, Fife, close to a beach, play parks, shops and other amenities. It is provided from Aberdour Primary School and all registered children attend the primary school.

Children have access to the gym hall and a disabled toilet. They can spend time in the school grounds which includes a large open paved and green play space. There is also a small, wooded area which has been developed to be child friendly, alongside a space for planting and growing in the playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 6 June 2024 between 14:45 and 17:45. We gave feedback to the manager and development officer on Friday 7 June 2024. 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:

- spent time with eight children
- received feedback from five of their family members
- spoke with four staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warmth, kindness and compassion from staff who treated them respectfully as individuals and understood how to meet their needs, rights and choices.
- Children enjoyed fun, meaningful and exciting play and learning that respected their ideas, interests and choices, including spending time in the local community.
- Children played in well-maintained and clean premises that kept them safe and healthy, with swift action being taken to fix any issues identified.
- Families were very happy with the quality of children's care, play and learning.
- We encouraged staff to continue improving the range of resources available for children's play so they can be creative, imaginative and develop skills for life.
- The manager had worked collaboratively with staff, children and families to implement strong and effective quality assurance and self-evaluation activities that were driving improvement.
- Staff worked very well as a team to meet children's needs, increase their choices and respect their right to play and their right to be heard.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

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**.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident and encouraged to be independent in their daily experiences. Staff treated them with warmth, kindness and compassion. We heard staff and children laughing together and a sense of fun was promoted during play. Children's unique personalities were respected and valued and staff encouraged them to be confident, praising their achievements and validating their feelings. Families told us they were happy with the care and support their children experienced. Children had created a shared set of expectations about how everyone should treat each other, creating a positive, trusting and respectful space that was inclusive. As a result, there were strong relationships between children, families and staff. We encouraged staff to consider using evidence based practice to continue building on children's emotional resilience. This will help children to develop skills for life.

Children's personal plans had been improved to ensure their needs, rights and choices were recorded in a way which supported staff to identify sensitive strategies of care and support. It was very clear how children's medical, dietary, health and wellbeing needs were being met with clear protocols in place for emergencies. As a result, we were confident that children would experience the right support at the right time to remain safe and healthy. When there were changes in children's lives, staff recorded this in children's personal plans so they could respond sensitively. Children's interests were also recorded in their plans and we saw some evidence that these ideas had been taken forward. We encouraged staff to continue finding fun and meaningful ways of including children in their own personal plans, including ensuring there are clear ways of following up on children's individual interests. Staff could also improve how they observe children's play, actions, emotions and words to recognise and plan to meet their needs, rights and choices. This will ensure they are consistently supported to achieve their potential.

Snack time was fun, social and relaxed, offering staff and children time to get to know each other. Children were mostly independent, serving themselves from family style platters, pouring their own drinks and clearing away their own dishes. Children were also included in other food experiences such as baking which helped them to develop positive relationships with food. Children would benefit from further opportunities to be independent when preparing snack so they develop skills for life. We also encouraged staff to revisit relevant nutritional guidance to ensure snacks are in line with best practice in promoting positive health outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children enjoyed very good play and learning experiences that respected their choices and interests. There was a very good balance between planned and spontaneous play experiences and children led on the types of play available to them each day. There was a positive routine in place which gave children choice over their own play while also keeping them safe and well supervised. Simple systems such as an outdoor play choice board helped children to feel included and valued when leading their own play. Children sometimes spent time in woodland spaces and this was something they were keen to do more often. Some very good links had been built with the local community to enhance children's play and learning.

For example, children had shown a particular interest in pets and animals and this led to an opportunity to spend time learning more about therapy pets who had visited the service. Children had enjoyed this experience and were keen to build on this over time. There were opportunities for children's experiences to be extended over a longer period of time such as fundraising and enterprise activities linked to the therapy pets. We encouraged staff to consider how children's interests could be extended into real, meaningful and sustained experiences that promote a sense of community, including spending more time in woodland areas.

Families were also very happy with the play and learning children experienced and praised staff for their creativity when finding new ideas for children's play. One parent told us, "Really organized, friendly and I feel my child benefits from this experience in a meaningful way. He also makes friends with different ages, which is a plus." Children shared their play and learning in floorbooks which were also used to plan their future experiences. The floorbooks showed a very good range of play and learning and children told us they had enjoyed being included in making the books. We discussed with staff how the floorbooks could be more inclusive, for example, using visual as well as written tools to complete mind maps. This will ensure everyone has opportunities to lead play and learning in an inclusive and empowering way.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We found important strengths that clearly outweighed areas for improvement in this key question. This contributed to positive outcomes for children and, therefore, we made an evaluation of **good**.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children played confidently both indoors and outdoors, leading their own play and choosing their own experiences. The play space was laid out and changed each day to meet children's needs and interests, respecting their ideas such as an active play space for football and an arts and crafts table for creativity. Children also had a small, comfortable area to rest and relax if they wanted to. There was ample space both indoors and outdoors for children to enjoy their experiences. Families were happy with the choice of resources on offer. One parent said, "good social environment with staff and other children, range of activities on offer and also possible for children to have their own space to relax." Children's play and achievements were shared on display boards that helped children to feel ownership over the space. Staff had been building on the open-ended, creative and imaginative resources available for play. They recognised this was still an area for improvement and had been working with families to achieve this. We agreed that the resources could still be improved and encouraged staff to consider this in their plans for improvement so children experience high quality play that helps them to be creative and imaginative.

The premises were safe and well-maintained and swift action was taken when any issues were identified. For example, a recent flood had damaged the flooring in the gym hall and this had been fixed quickly with plans for a new floor to be installed over the summer holiday period. Risk assessments had been developed to be specific to the setting, ensuring staff understood how to keep children safe and healthy. Children had been included in some discussions about risk and safety and this was helping them to understand how to keep themselves safe. We encouraged staff to explore the Care Inspectorate practice notes, 'Keeping children safe', to extend children's knowledge and understanding of risk and safety. This will offer them a fun and engaging way to help children assess risk and develop skills for life.

Children played in a clean environment and good measures were in place to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

Children and staff washed their hands regularly, at appropriate times, and children were involved in cleaning at snack time. We signposted staff to recently published guidance from Public Health Scotland so they could update their infection prevention and control procedures to be in line with best practice. For example, we encouraged staff to ensure linen and soft furnishings are washed at least once a week. Leaders had begun reviewing this across the provider's out of school care service and we were confident that measures would be put in place quickly to achieve this. This will ensure that the risk of the spread of infection is minimised as much as possible to keep children safe and healthy.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of **very good** for this key question. There was a culture of continuous improvement that did not require significant adjustment to ensure positive outcomes and experiences for children.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

There was a strong vision for children and families to enjoy a fun, nurturing and positive experience. Staff understood that they needed to respect children's needs, rights and choices to achieve this fully. Staff and leaders were aspirational about the improvements they had made and the changes they wanted to make in the future. There had been a clear commitment to building connections and improving practice to promote consistently positive outcomes for children. Leaders were dedicated and had made careful, considerate decisions that empowered staff to lead on change while respecting the views of children and families. As a result, children's care, play and learning experiences had improved. We made five areas for improvement at the last inspection and all of these had been met. This showed that there was a strong capacity for improvement in the service. We encouraged leaders to continue building on the successful strategies used to drive improvement since the last inspection and remain motivated in finding new ways to promote professional dialogue that empowers staff, children and families to influence and lead change.

There was a solution focussed approach from staff and leaders to plan for improvement using effective quality assurance and self-evaluation systems. Staff had their own way of recording their ideas and thoughts, which had helped them to bring relevant frameworks and best practice guidance from theory into practice. There was an improvement plan in place which had been informed by external feedback, self-evaluation and ideas from children and families. Families told us they felt included in the service. One parent said, "We always chat for a few minutes and I feel welcome with my child." The team were developing the range of ways they gathered feedback from children and families so that everyone had the opportunity to be involved. For example, families had been invited to share a Lego building play day with their children and there were plans to use this opportunity to also gather parents' ideas during this event. We encouraged staff and leaders to continue considering how to include children and families more fully in influencing change and improvement. This includes considering how children's experiences and outcomes are considered and presented in the service's improvement plan as the main aim of any changes. This will ensure that children experience a culture of continuous improvement that is consistently focussed on their needs, rights and choices.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as **very good**, where major strengths promoted positive outcomes for children and there were very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff worked flexibly as a team to meet children's needs and respect their rights and choices. As a result, children enjoyed fun and exciting play experiences which were in line with their interests and ideas. Staff had carefully considered how they could ensure children enjoyed outdoor play every day in ways that kept children safe. They had also increased the amount of time children spent in the local community. Throughout children's daily experiences, they enjoyed quality time with staff and this provided children with opportunities to build strong relationships with them based on trust and respect. Families were happy with the feedback they received each day and staff ensured someone was available to talk to them when they picked up their children. One parent told us, "The children are content and staff respond straight away when they're needed." Staff encouraged children to be independent which helped to free up their time so they could extend and enhance children's play and learning. We discussed how children could be even more independent in their play, for example, by considering safe and accessible ways for them to choose their own play resources. This will extend their opportunities to lead their own play and offer staff more time with children doing other, more enriching tasks.

The staff team were supportive and encouraging of each other, communicating in warm, kind and compassionate ways. The manager had introduced informal opportunities to meet with staff so that they could discuss their wellbeing, promoting a nurturing and inclusive environment for the team to work in. Staff absence and planned leave was well managed to ensure children were cared for by familiar people, offering consistency in their experiences. Staff used their time away from children to reflect on their practice, complete relevant training and meet professional registration requirements. The manager had been very supportive of staff through their professional development which kept everyone motivated and dedicated to their work. We encouraged staff and leaders to continue using their time effectively to develop their professional skills and abilities. This will ensure that the improvements made are maintained and sustained to offer consistently high quality care, play and learning experiences for children.

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 children's health, wellbeing and development, the provider should ensure staff offer high quality play and learning experiences for children every day. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a balance between planned and spontaneous play that is developmentally appropriate

- daily opportunities for outdoor play and learning
- opportunities for extended play and learning outdoors, for example, adventure days
- opportunities for extended play and learning in the community, for example, enterprise or charity projects.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

“As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling” (HSCS 1.30) and

“As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment” (HSCS 1.32).

This area for improvement was made on 3 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Children enjoyed fun play and learning experiences, indoors, outdoors and in the local community. They were included in planning these experiences and staff listened to their ideas. Longer term projects were beginning to be offered and we encouraged staff to continue building on their community links over time. This will ensure children's play and learning is rich, meaningful and supports children to develop skills for life. Sufficient progress had been made to improve children's experiences.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve their potential, the provider should ensure staff access training on high quality play and learning for school aged children and apply their training in practice. This should include, but is not limited to:

- supporting children's emotional resilience
- promoting risky play
- developing skills for life
- celebrating diversity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 is also to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate documents “My Active World” and “Out to Play: Section 10”.

This area for improvement was made on 3 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had completed a range of training and development opportunities and were using their learning in practice. Children's play and learning experiences had improved and we saw them enjoying risky play. The floorbook which recorded children's play and learning showed there was a good range of experiences available to them each day. Children and families were treated with warmth, kindness and compassion and there were shared expectations about how everyone treated each other with respect and dignity.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To provide developmentally appropriate spaces for children that promote their wellbeing, the provider should acquire appropriate resources and materials which reflect children's interests and curiosities. This should include, but is not limited to:

- adding more loose parts
- offering more open-ended resources
- providing more natural materials
- spending more time outdoors.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials" (HSCS 1.31).

This is also to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate documents "Delivering high quality play and learning environments outdoors: Practice note", "Keeping Children Safe" practice notes and Inspiring Scotland's document "Loose Parts Play".

This area for improvement was made on 3 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had built on the resources available for children's play with the support of families. Children now had access to more loose parts and open-ended resources which was offering them more creative and imaginative play. Staff training on loose parts had impacted positively on children's experiences and they played outdoors every day. We were confident that children's interests were respected when planning play and learning. Further resources would benefit children over time and we encouraged staff to continue building on this aspect of children's experiences. Sufficient progress had been made to offer children positive play and learning experiences.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To offer children consistently high quality care, play and learning experiences that continue to improve over time, the provider should improve the approaches staff and management take to quality assurance and self-evaluation. This should include, but is not limited to:

- staff frequently engaging in reflective discussions using relevant guidance and quality frameworks
- regularly consulting children and families on influencing change using relevant guidance and quality frameworks
- management offering constructive feedback to staff, based on relevant guidance and quality frameworks, which initiates well-informed change.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19), and;

"I am actively encouraged to be involved in improving the service I use, in a spirit of genuine partnership" (HSCS 4.7).

This is also to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate documents "A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare" and "Self-evaluation for improvement – Your guide."

This area for improvement was made on 3 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff were fully included in monitoring, evaluating and reflecting on their practice to improve outcomes for children. The manager had implemented good systems to gather the views of children, families and staff to plan for improvement. Staff were also offered constructive feedback regularly as well as opportunities to discuss their wellbeing. This created a positive atmosphere where everyone felt respected and included in a culture of continuous improvement. While there were further opportunities to extend professional dialogue between children, families, staff and leaders, sufficient progress had been made to promote positive outcomes for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To promote high quality outcomes for children, the provider should deploy staff to maximise children's choice and independence in their care, play and learning. This should include, but is not limited to:

- consistently offering children a choice between indoor and outdoor play
- offering children opportunities to experience extended and sustained play and learning experiences
- prioritising time for staff to have meaningful, reflective discussions that initiate well-informed change.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well" (HSCS 3.19) and

"My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event" (HSCS 4.15).

This area for improvement was made on 3 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff deployed themselves to meet children's needs, interests and choices. They managed their time effectively to learn and develop while spending quality time with children. Children were beginning to spend more time in the local community and staff had worked hard to build on community connections. This was improving children's experiences and promoting positive outcomes. We encouraged staff to continue prioritising their time to engage in professional dialogue and develop their skills, including their connections to the local community. Sufficient progress had been made to improve 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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