

Bellfield Before & After School Care Day Care of Children

c/o Whattrigg Primary School
Bellfield
Kilmarnock
KA1 3SZ

Telephone: 01563 572 238

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 May 2024

Service provided by:
Bellfield After School Care Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003000715

Service no:
CS2003003487

About the service

Bellfield Before & After School Care is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 32 primary or secondary school children at any one time. During the summer school holidays children who are due to start primary school in August but are not yet four and a half may attend the service.

The service is situated within Whattriggs Primary School which is close to shops, local amenities and public transport routes. Children are cared for in the community playroom, dining room and gym hall. Children also have access to an enclosed playground and football pitch.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 May 2024 and 8 May 2024 between the hours of 08:00 to 09:00 and 14:30 to 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 received questionnaires from 24 of their families
- spoke with two staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind and compassionate care from staff who knew them and their families well.
- Children confidently led their own play and learning. All children were laughing and engaged in play experiences throughout our visit.
- We suggested developing the environment to include more loose parts and open ended resources. This would promote more imaginative play and support children to develop their creativity and problem solving skills.
- The service should develop robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes to ensure that improvement planning is meaningful, and centred around improving outcomes for children and families.
- Staff cared for children with kindness and compassion. It was clear that children and families had built strong relationships with the whole staff team.

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?	3 - Adequate
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/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind and compassionate care from staff who knew them and their families well. Children were happy and comfortable with all staff, excitedly telling them about their day and inviting staff into their play. One parent stated, "I find the staff very approachable and understanding of my child's individual needs. They are flexible in their approach to my child's needs and our individual circumstances." As a result children felt secure and that they mattered.

Families felt that they had a strong connection with the staff caring for their children. Information and photographs were shared regularly with parents online and verbally during pick up times. One parent stated, "They take the time to remember your name and things happening outside of the school with you and your child." Another parent told us, "Staff are always friendly and helpful in answering any questions. They always have good communication about what the children have been up to while in after school." As a result, families felt valued and included in their children's day. Parents dropped off and collected children from the front door during our inspection. We discussed the additional benefits of parents coming back into playrooms daily. The service began to invite parents back into the service prior to the end of the inspection. This will further support positive outcomes for children and families.

Whilst all children had a personal plan in place that detailed how the service would meet their individual health and wellbeing needs, some plans had not been reviewed within the required timescales and did not include clear next steps. This meant that some personal plans did not reflect children's current needs or effectively monitor their progress. An area for improvement around personal planning was made at the last inspection, this was not met in full and will be carried forward. The service should ensure that personal plans including clear next steps are consistently reviewed and updated within the required timescales. This will support children to reach their full potential.

Children enjoyed pleasant and relaxed breakfast and snack experiences. Children's choice and independence was promoted - they chose and prepared their own breakfast and snack from a variety of healthy foods available on a self-service table. We observed children sitting together with staff, chatting and laughing about their day and home lives. As a result, children's health and wellbeing was supported through a sociable mealtime experience.

1.3 Play and learning

Children confidently led their own play and learning. All children were laughing and engaged throughout our visit, enjoying games such as chess, cards, football and tennis. Children told us they liked, "Playing with the toys, eating snacks and making friends" and "Being able to play football with friends, and the toast and crumpets." As a result, children were happy and content in the service.

We could see through photographs and wall displays that children had opportunities for messy play and arts and crafts. These were mostly pre-planned activities linked to themed events such as Easter, Burns Day and Mother's Day. Children would benefit from more frequent and spontaneous opportunities to engage in

creative and open ended play. This would support them to develop their imagination, creativity and problem solving skills.

Children enjoyed opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. We observed children happily reading books, playing card games, practising times tables and counting how fish during a fishing game. As a result, children were having fun whilst developing their skills through play.

Staff knew children well and we could see that staff had considered children's individual interests when setting up play spaces and planning day trips. Children were asked for their feedback and this had been used to plan for future school holidays. One child told us, "I get to hang out with friends after school and I get to visit good places." This helped children to build connections with their local and wider community. We suggested considering ways include children in the day-to-day planning. This would increase children's ownership of the service and their play and learning.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment that was welcoming, well ventilated with plenty of natural light. Children had access to a playroom, dining hall and a large gym hall. These were clean, tidy and clutter free. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of infection prevention and control procedures. As a result children were cared for in an environment that was comfortable and minimised any potential spread of infection.

Children had independent access to a variety of resources and games that were suited to their interests, ages and stage of development. Children told us that they particularly enjoyed, "Crafts, football, outdoor play and gym hall experiences." As a result, children were happy and confident the service. We suggested developing the environment to include more loose parts and open ended resources. This would promote more imaginative play and support children to develop their creativity and problem solving skills. Children would also benefit from a comfortable area to rest if required. The manager agreed and stated that they planned to develop a cosy space for children who would like to relax.

Outdoors, children enjoyed free flow access from the gym hall to a large fully enclosed playground and football pitch. A trolley was available outdoors where children could choose from a variety of sporting equipment and games, such as 'connect four' and 'hopscotch'. We observed children having fun playing football, basketball and doing gymnastics. Staff understood and promoted the benefits of outdoor and active play. This had a positive impact on children's health and wellbeing.

The environment was safe and well maintained. There was a secure door entry monitored by staff, and a system in place to report any repairs. Staff responsively assessed risks in the service and regularly reviewed written risk assessments to ensure that all potential hazards had been considered. As a result children could assess their own limits whilst being protected from harm.

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service did not have a clear vision - management and staff were unclear about their areas for development, and we saw several versions of their vision, values and aims recorded. This caused confusion and meant that there was not a clear direction to support improvement. We advised the manager to revisit these collaboratively with staff, children and families to create one version. This would ensure that their vision, values and aims were meaningful and reflective of the service provided.

We saw some examples of consultation with children. Children's likes about the service had been displayed on the wall. Children also told us that they had requested snacks and resources that had been provided. As a result children felt listened to. Some parents had completed questionnaires and suggested areas for development. It was not clear if these had been considered or responded to. Most parents agreed, and a few parents disagreed that they felt meaningfully involved in service development. We suggested developing more meaningful methods of consultation with children and families around various aspects of the service. We also advised the service to develop ways to respond children and families views, creating a feedback cycle. This would ensure that all children and families feel valued and included in service development.

While management and staff took some informal opportunities to reflect on their practice, they did not use this to identify areas for improvements. This meant there was no clear plans to support improvement and staff did not have regular opportunities for more robust self-evaluation. The manager had begun to address this by devising an improvement plan prior to the completion of inspection. We discussed using self-evaluation in collaboration with children, families and staff to further develop their plan and to inform their improvement priorities. We signposted the manager to the 'Care Inspectorate Hub' to access training videos and best practice links for guidance. The service should develop robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes to ensure that improvement planning is meaningful, and centred around improving outcomes for children and families. We also advised the manager to include actions, areas of responsibility and timescales in their plan. This would help to develop a working document that creates a cycle of continuous improvement.

The manager monitored written records informally but this did not lead to the identification of inconsistencies and gaps within records such as personal plans and medication records. We discussed the importance of developing effective auditing and monitoring systems. This would ensure that written records are reviewed regularly and any areas for improvement are quickly identified and rectified. Quality assurance and improvement planning was an area for improvement from the last inspection, this was not met in full and will be repeated.

Staff had regular opportunities to meet as a team and individually with the manager to discuss their successes, challenges and health and wellbeing. We observed respectful and supportive relationships between the manager and staff team. One staff member told us, "I strongly agree that my wellbeing needs are recognised and supported. We are a small but close team. The other staff are really approachable and I feel comfortable confiding in any issues I might face both personally and professionally. It was clear to us that the manager and staff team were keen to work together to make improvements.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good**

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

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff cared for children with kindness and compassion. It was clear that children and families had built strong relationships with the whole staff team. All parents spoke highly of the staff, one parent told us, "The staff are excellent with my child. They go above and beyond to make sure all the kids are well looked after while having fun at the same time." Another parent told us that a particular strength of the service was, "The genuine positive, individualised relationships the staff have built with my children over the years. My children and I are confident that these adults are safe people that we can trust and rely on." As a result, there was a warm and loving ethos in the service.

Staff worked well together communicating respectfully, and supporting each other when required. Staff moved between the playroom, outdoors and the gym hall in response to where children chose to play. This meant that children were always safely supervised. At times children had to wait for requested resources, or to move between areas. This was due to staff helping children get ready to go home while their parents waited outside. Plans to welcome parents back into the service when they pick up their children will help to minimise interruptions in children's play at drop off and pick up times.

The staff team was small and they worked closely together to share most areas of responsibility. As a result, staff were supported to develop their leadership skills and there was a strong collaborative ethos in the service. Staff had informal daily chats to discuss any updates and their plans for the day. We discussed the benefits of introducing regular team meetings with a clear structure and focus. This would support the staff team to identify, develop and embed changes and areas for improvement.

Whilst the service was appropriately staffed during our inspection, there was the potential for unplanned staff absences to impact negatively on experiences for children. We discussed this with the manager who told us they planned to employ an additional member of staff in the near future. This would ensure that children's needs are always met.

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**

Personal plans should to be more focused to accurately reflect how the service will meet individual children's needs. They should be fully completed including signatures and dates.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices" (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 31 August 2018.

Action taken since then

All children had a personal plan in place that detailed how the service would meet individual children's needs. These included signatures and dates.

Some plans had not been reviewed within the required timescales. Personal plans did not detail next steps or accurately record children's progress. We have continued this area for improvement within this inspection.

This area for improvement was not met

Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should update their knowledge of best practice guidance of hand hygiene and 'Infection Prevention and Control in Day Childcare Settings' available on the Care Inspectorate information 'Hub.'

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "5.22 I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.22) and "I am supported to make informed lifestyle choices affecting my health and wellbeing" (HSCS 1.28).

This area for improvement was made on 31 August 2018.

Action taken since then

Staff had completed training in Infection Prevention and Control.

The service was clean and clutter free. Staff demonstrated good hand hygiene practice and a good knowledge of best practice guidance, 'Infection Prevention and Control in Day Childcare Settings.'

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should develop a quality assurance process that includes a monitoring plan, staff appraisal and training plan involvement of children and parents/carers and an overall improvement plan for the service.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 31 August 2018.

Action taken since then

Whilst the manager had undertaken appraisals with staff, these had not been used to support and monitor staff development throughout the year. Staff training plans had not been developed.

There were not effective auditing or monitoring processes in place.

An improvement plan was created for the service during the inspection. The improvement plan required further development and implementation into practice. We have continued this area for improvement

within this inspection.

This area for improvement was not 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?	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?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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