

Forehill After School Club Ltd

Day Care of Children

C/o Forehill Primary School
Cessnock Place
Ayr
KA7 3JU

Telephone: 07838 131 353

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 October 2024

Service provided by:
Forehill After School Club Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2007009320

Service no:
CS2007161090

About the service

Forehill After School Club Ltd is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 32 children during term time, and a maximum of 48 children during holidays.

The service is situated within Forehill Primary School which is close to shops, local amenities and public transport routes. Children are cared for in the gym hall and general purpose room. Children also have outdoor access to a fully enclosed playground.

There were 125 children registered with the service at the time of our inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the 9 and 10 October 2024 between the hours of 15:00 and 18:00. Feedback was given on 11 October 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:

- Spoke with children using the service
- Received electronic questionnaires from 33 of their families
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced compassionate and responsive care from staff who knew them and their families well.
- Children were confident and happy at play throughout most of our inspection.
- The service had recently made improvements to their outdoor area, adding outdoor furniture, an outdoor play cabin and a good variety of loose parts.
- Free flow access to outdoors and the development of exciting play experiences would enhance positive outcomes for children.
- The manager was approachable and visible in the playroom to provide support for staff, children and families.
- The service should develop processes for collaborative reflective practice and meaningful consultation with children and families that influence improvements.

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?	3 - Adequate
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?

3 - Adequate

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

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

Children experienced supportive and responsive care from staff who knew them and their families well. They experienced kind and caring interactions, this ensured children felt secure. One parent told us, "The staff know my child really well and my child knows that they are safe adults to go to should they need to. The staff are also supportive of the parents." As a result, children were happy and settled.

All children had a personal plan in place. These had been developed with children and their families and clearly detailed how staff would meet their individual health and wellbeing needs. The service had recently adapted the format of children's plans to include next steps. These were in the process of being developed for all children. We advised the service to consider how they plan to support children achieve their next steps and monitor their progress. This would support children to reach their full potential.

Children experienced a sociable snack time. They sat together with staff and enjoyed snacks brought from home. We suggested providing a healthy option for breakfast and snack, including children in the planning and preparation. This would support children's independence, health and wellbeing. Staff sat with children and chatted meaningfully with them whilst they ate. At times, noise from the other half of the gym hall made it difficult for staff to hear what some children were saying. We advised the service to consider ways to reduce the noise level during snack time, this would create a more calm and pleasurable experience.

Children and families had developed positive relationships with all staff. One parent told us that a strength of the service was, "Friendly, trustworthy and great communication from all staff who know my child so well." This ensured children and families felt well supported and knew that they mattered. We observed some parents coming into the playroom to pick up their children and having informal chats, whilst others waited in the foyer. We suggested encouraging all families to come into the playroom informally during drop off and collection times. This would strengthen the positive outcomes for children and families.

1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Children were confident and told us they enjoyed coming to the service. Whilst they were happy and busy at play throughout most of our inspection, there were no resources or play opportunities available until all children had finished their snacks. Children then participated in a daily group discussion before being able to play. Whilst this was an opportunity for staff to have meaningful conversations and most children enjoyed sharing their thoughts, some children appeared restless. A few children told us they got bored and did not like to wait until it was time to play. Almost all resources were cleared out of the playroom when the majority of children had gone home. This meant that some children were left with very little to play towards the end of the day. We asked the service to consider the structure of their day (see area for improvement 1). Children would benefit from more opportunities to make their own choices, and more natural

opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings.

Children could independently access resources in boxes on the floor such as trains, animals, and various toy figures. These resources chosen by staff and were not laid out in an inviting manner to capture children's curiosity and interest. Whilst we observed children requesting additional resources and staff facilitating this, children would benefit from a greater variety of resources independently accessible to them. We asked the service to consider how their play spaces and resources could be presented in a way that would excite children and encourage them to become engaged in more meaningful play experiences. Staff interactions were positive and encouraging. They would benefit from further support and training in extending children's play and using effective questioning. These are open questions that promote deeper thought. This would add depth to children's play and support them to develop their problem solving skills.

Systems of planning for play did not clearly include children's voices. These were focussed on a list of resources and a daily arts and crafts activity, linked to a theme chosen by staff. Whilst children enjoyed making rockets and spaceships during our visit, it was mainly adult-led and included pre-prepared craft materials. We discussed providing more opportunities for children to develop their imagination and creativity. We asked the service to develop their planning approaches to clearly reflect children's voices, individual interests and next steps (see area for improvement 2). Children would also benefit from a balance of spontaneous and planned play experiences across a variety of different play types. This would enhance positive outcomes and support children to reach their full potential.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's needs are met through stimulating play and learning experiences, the manager and staff should consider their daily routine. This should support children's choice to freely access and play with a variety of resources and a range of play experiences across their day.

This is to ensure children's care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "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).

2. To ensure that children benefit from play experiences that are exciting and challenging, the manager and staff should develop their approaches for planning and evaluating children's play and learning experiences for a variety of play types. These systems should clearly include children's interests and their voices.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "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).

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 warm, bright and had plenty of space to meet their needs. During our visit, children were cared for in a large gym hall that was 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 safe and minimised any potential spread of infection.

Staff set up the gym hall daily for children, selecting resources from a large storage cupboard which was easily accessible. All resources were clean and in good condition. We suggested developing play spaces that were more defined and including children in the setting up process. This would increase children's opportunities to self-select a larger variety of resources to enrich their play. Children told us they had recently been consulted in the purchase of new resources. This helped children to develop ownership of their environment and feel included.

Outdoors, children had access to a large fully enclosed playground and smaller outdoor area which had recently been developed. The service had made improvements to their outdoor area by adding new outdoor furniture, an outdoor play cabin and a good variety of loose parts. These are natural materials with no specific purpose. Children did not have access to outdoors on the first day of our inspection. We observed children using the outdoor space for a short period of time on the second day, building an imaginative campfire and creating structures with logs and planks to practice their balance. We discussed the benefits of supporting daily free flow access to outdoors, as well as providing loose parts and natural resources in the indoor environment. This would increase opportunities for children to develop their, imagination, creativity and problem solving skills.

The environment was safe and well-maintained. There was a secure door entry 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 were 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 manager had a positive outlook on change and improvement. They engaged well with the inspection process and were open to our suggestions. The manager was approachable and visible in the playroom at all times to provide support for staff, children and families. It was clear to us that the manager knew them all well. As a result there was a positive and compassionate ethos in the service.

The service had sought some feedback from children and their families around service development. It was not clear where these suggestions had influenced plans for improvement or if their views had been responded to. We discussed this with the manager and advised them to consider more meaningful ways to engage with children and families to gather their views. The service should also develop ways to respond to these, creating a feedback cycle. This would support all children and families to feel valued and well supported to influence change.

A service improvement plan was in place and we could see some evidence of the impact on practice, such as the adaption to children's personal plans to include next steps. However, some improvement priorities were focussed on managerial tasks and it was not clear where they would influence positive change. The manager was in the early stages of developing quality assurance and self-evaluation processes to inform

their plans for improvement. They had completed a questionnaire based on the Care Inspectorate evaluative guidance document, 'A quality framework for early learning and childcare, school-aged childcare and childminding services' and highlighted where they felt the service was doing well. We discussed the importance of including staff and best practice guidance in self-evaluation and monitoring processes. This would help them to identify how they know they are doing well, and identify what they can do next to enhance positive outcomes for children and families.

Some auditing and monitoring processes were in place. These were not always effective as we found some inconsistencies in medication records and personal plans. The manager began to rectify these during the inspection. It was clear to us that the manager and staff team were keen to work together to make improvements. Further work was required to develop improvement systems informed by robust, collaborative self-evaluation and quality assurance processes (see area for improvement 1). This would help develop a continuous cycle of improvement and ensure that children's health and care needs were met.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's health, safety and care needs are met, and to support a culture of collaborative, reflective practice which identifies and actions areas for improvement, the manager should ensure effective quality assurance processes are in place. This should include but is not limited to robust monitoring of medication processes, children's personal plans and service delivery.

This is to ensure that care and support 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)

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 developed strong caring relationships with the whole staff team. All parents spoke highly of the staff team, one parent stated, "The service have the children as their central focus. They are a genuinely warm and welcoming team." Another parent told us, "Nothing is ever too much trouble. They are very quick to respond to any queries I have as a parent. All staff know my children very well and it's a peace of mind knowing that supportive, caring and enthusiastic individuals are looking after my children as I work." As a result, there was a warm and family ethos in the service.

Staff communicated respectfully and worked well together, supporting each other when required. Staff had regular informal opportunities to chat about their practice and the service day-to-day. Staff would benefit from more formal opportunities to meet as a team out-with times they are caring for children. This would support staff to focus their discussions and include standing items such as self-evaluation. This would help create a collaborative approach to service development with clear actions and areas of responsibility.

Staff had annual appraisals and all completed core training relevant to their role. Staff would benefit further from more opportunities to meet individually with the manager to discuss their progress, successes and challenges throughout the year. This would support the development of reflective practice to identify their

individual training and development needs. This would empower staff to develop leadership roles and use each other's strengths to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

We observed respectful and caring relationships between the manager and staff team, all staff told us they felt well supported. The service was appropriately staffed throughout our inspection to meet the needs of all children. Staff absences were covered by familiar staff who knew the children well. As a result, children felt safe and secure.

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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
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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