

Pathhead Out of School Club Day Care of Children

Pathhead School
Cairns Street West
Kirkcaldy
KY1 2JA

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 November 2024

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2004063097

About the service

Pathhead Out of School Club is a daycare of children service for school aged children provided by Fife council. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children from school age up to 14 years.

The service operates from Pathhead Primary School, Kirkcaldy, Fife. The service is in a residential area close to shops, parks, and other amenities. Children have access to a designated after school room, toilets, and can use other school facilities such as gym hall. Children have access to a school playground for outdoor play experiences.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 November 2024 between 14:45 and 17:00 and 12 November 2024 between 14:00 and 17:00. 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, 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
- spoke with children attending the service
- received feedback from six families
- spoke with the staff and management team
- observed practice
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, caring and nurturing approaches to support their well-being.
- Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning which was reviewed regularly with children and families.
- Children were happy and having fun, the majority of children were meaningfully engaged in their play.
- Floor books could be further developed to support the evaluation of children's play to inform future planning.
- Sofas and soft furnishings softened the environment to create a homely feel, fostering a welcoming atmosphere for the children.
- A welcoming ethos had been developed and maintained within the service, families shared they were happy with service.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were in the early stages and needed to be effectively implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for children.
- Staff were caring and nurturing and understood the importance of developing close attachments with children.

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind, caring and nurturing approaches to support their well-being. Staff were proactive in supporting children with comfort and reassurance when needed which contributed to children feeling secure in their experience.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning which was reviewed regularly with children and families. Staff knew children well and were aware of their individual needs. They spoke knowledgeably about the children describing their individual characteristics and any sensitivities they may have had. We saw staff responding throughout the day with kindness. This contributed positively to children's self-esteem and sense of well-being. One parent told us, 'Friendly staff who show empathy and compassion towards my child'.

Children participated in a positive learning experience at snack time. They were empowered to eat at a time that was right for them and at a relaxed pace. They helped staff prepare snack choices, filled jugs, and happily chatted to staff. As a result, children were independent and proudly took on jobs of responsibility.

The management team and staff all worked together to ensure a positive ethos within the service. They had formed trusting and respectful relationships with the families using the service. This was supported through effective communication. Families received a daily overview of their child's day and achievements which included photographs of children's play experiences. This provided them with a chance to share comments and feedback.

Children's health and wellbeing needs were met as the appropriate forms and permissions were in place for the safe administration of medication. Staff were knowledgeable on how to share initial concerns on children's welfare and were confident in child protection procedures. This contributed to keeping children safe from harm.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun. The majority of children were meaningfully engaged in their play. Children shared with us what they liked about the club, comments included 'I like doing art, I would like a bigger art space', 'my favourite thing is the piano, I can play different songs. I can help pick snack and help with the snack order', and, 'its fun most of the time, I like to play football'.

Children were engaged in various play experiences and activities. They were effectively supported by nurturing and responsive staff when appropriate. Children were having fun as they played independently and cooperatively with friends. This encouraged children to develop positive relationships as they played together, shared and took turns. We observed children independently choosing what activities to participate in, these included, drawing, board games, playing the piano and imaginative play. However, not all children were effectively challenged in their play experiences. We suggested the service further develop loose parts play using natural materials and open-ended resources. This will support children to be curious, problem solve and use their imagination.

Children had access to a school playground which provided them with opportunities for energetic and physical play. They had opportunities to explore risky play on the climbing wall and trees. This contributed to children's wellbeing and sense of adventure in their play.

Children contributed their ideas and suggestions throughout the session. They were included in creating the snack menu and ordering food online and were having discussions and creating wish lists of resources. Floor books had been used to record children's experiences. These could be further developed to support the evaluation of children's play to inform future planning (**See area for improvement one under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection'**).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment which was clean, comfortable, and well maintained with plenty of natural light and ventilation. They had ample space to play and moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor space. The addition of sofas and soft furnishings softened the environment to create a homely feel, fostering a welcoming atmosphere for the children.

Children had access to a selection of developmentally appropriate toys and resources which were easily accessible. This supported children's choice and independence. As a result, the majority of children were engaged in play and having fun.

Staff had developed effective systems to keep children safe. Daily checks of the environment were carried out by staff prior to children's arrival which supported them to identify and action any issues if required. Risk assessments were generic and did not always identify risks associated within the service. We discussed how risk assessments could be further developed to reflect the individual setting.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported well by effective infection prevention and control measures. Children were familiar with handwashing routines and if needed staff supported children's awareness through gentle reminders and discussion. This helped ensure that the potential for spread of infection was minimised.

How good is our leadership?**4 - Good**

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children benefitted from vision, values and aims that recognised their needs, and reflected the service. There was a focus on promoting an environment where children had fun and enjoyed their time. It acknowledged the need for school aged children to be able to participate in fun activities or take the time to rest and relax if needed.

Children had good opportunities to share their ideas and views about the club through daily discussions. For example, they suggested snack ideas and gave feedback on the activities and experiences. Staff were responsive to their suggestions.

A welcoming ethos had been developed and maintained within the service. Families were welcomed into the service daily at collection times. Families shared they were happy with service, comments included, 'Staff always share my child's experience with me and inform me of how he has enjoyed the day', 'They listen to the children and give them opportunities to explore their interests', and, 'I know the staff by name and they are always able to give me a detailed report on his time there'.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were in the early stages and needed to be effectively implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for children. A basic level of monitoring had been undertaken by the manager which was starting to identify improvement priorities. As this was in the early stages it was not consistently having a positive impact. The service should extend and develop processes to ensure a strong ethos of continuous improvement is implemented (**See area for improvement two under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection'**).

The management team and staff should continue to embed systems in place to ensure they are robust and allow for a steady pace of change and sustained improvements, ensuring improved outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff Deployment

Staff were caring and nurturing. They understood the importance of developing close attachments with children and responded to them with compassionate care. All staff were confident in supporting children to resolve issues and manage their emotions. Staff listened to children's views and helped them to develop their play. This created a positive, relaxed environment for children and families. Parents were very complimentary of the staff team, some comments included 'They are kind, open and honest and just overall lovely. They chat everyday, give me feedback', and 'Staff are always approachable and very friendly'.

The deployment and levels of staff within the service were effective. A good staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs. Staff were appropriately deployed throughout the day which ensured they met all children's needs at the right time.

Staff worked well together as a team. Their differing skills, knowledge and interests complimented one another and resulted in quality experiences for children. They communicated well with each other and worked together to ensure effective supervision and engagement with children across the day. As a result, children received consistency and continuity in care.

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 ensure children have access to a range of stimulating experiences that allow them to take risks, encourage creativity and promote positive outcomes, staff should review how they plan and evaluate activities so that children benefit from participating in a range of stimulating experiences, both indoors and outdoors.

This is to ensure that I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors' (HSCS 1.25) and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through the balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.25 and 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 5 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Children had access to some play experiences that allowed them to take risks, including the use of the climbing wall and climbing the trees in the playground. Children were offered a number of activities that supported their creativity, including arts and crafts, drawing and music. Planning approaches were not yet effective to inform future play and learning experiences.

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

Previous area for improvement 2

To support a culture of continuous improvement that addresses key areas for improvement, the provider should implement a robust and effective quality assurance system to monitor and sustain positive experiences for children across the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23) and '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 5 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes were in the early stages and needed to be consistently and effectively implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for children. A quality assurance calendar was in place to monitor and audit staff practice and aspects of provision. Clear actions, with timescales should be developed to support timely, ongoing improvements.

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

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	5 - Very 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?	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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