

Laurencekirk Out Of School Club (loosc) Day Care of Children

148 High Street
Laurencekirk
AB30 1BL

Telephone: 07902 381 368

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 January 2025

Service provided by:
Laurencekirk Out Of School Club
(loosc)

Service provider number:
SP2003000386

Service no:
CS2003002506

About the service

Laurencekirk Out Of School Club provides a daycare of children service within the residential area of Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 44 school aged children at any one time.

The service is provided in the local community centre within the town and is close to the local school, shops and other amenities. Children have access to two playrooms, a youth room and an outdoor space at the front of the building. Toilets are easily accessible and a kitchen area allows for fresh snacks to be prepared.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2025 between 15:00 and 18:00 and 21 January 2025 between 14:45 and 18:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 children using the service and spoke to four of their parents/carers;
- received 23 completed questionnaires;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and engaged.
- Children received care and support from staff who knew them well.
- Children had access to a range of experiences both indoors and outdoors to support their interests.
- The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles.
- Quality assurance and evaluation should be further developed to support continued improvement.

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were comfortable and relaxed around staff and together had formed positive relationships. This supported children to feel safe and secure. Staff were respectful and engaged with children at their height level. They were involved in children's play where suitable such as when crafting, playing board games or chatting at tables, which children welcomed. Children were greeted warmly and enthusiastically by staff when coming out of school. Many children responded to this by having stories to tell staff about their day or what they were looking forward to doing that afternoon. Children were comfortable with staff and told us they felt supported and would approach staff with any worries they may have. Parents told us "My child enjoys attending and has been made to feel very welcomed".

The transition from the previous premises to new hall was made easy and smooth for children and families. Children had been well supported in this change and were familiar with the new routines. They participated in risk assessing key times such as the new walk from school which involved crossing roads. Parents told us they felt confident leaving their children, however, a few told us that they would prefer to get into the building at departure times. The leadership team should now look at safe ways in supporting this as this would further support stronger connections and meaningful relationships with families. We directed the leadership team to our guidance document 'Me, my family and my childcare setting'.

Children were supported by staff who knew them very well and understood when some children required extra support. Personal plans were in place for all children which focused on their health and wellbeing. A few parents told us they were not aware of their child's personal plan. We highlighted the importance of updating these regularly with parents and children to ensure their individual needs continue to be met. Where children had specific support needs, these were identified and staff followed effective strategies to provide consistent support. This helped support all children in their health and wellbeing.

Snack time was unhurried and children enjoyed the time gathering and talking to each other while enjoying their meal. Children had some opportunities to be independent and develop social skills and to make small choices about what they wanted to eat. Children's snack time experiences were overall positive, however, we raised some examples on day one where children could have more opportunities for independence and learn life skills. We also highlighted times where children had to queue for an extended period of time. Staff made changes to the routine on day two and were dedicated to continue further development of this time for children to maximise their experiences.

Children could access comfortable areas to rest such as the story corner with soft furnishings and nurture room for older children. Children valued the opportunity to have a quieter space they could use if they wanted and staff encouraged this. This helped children feel rested and supported their wellbeing.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children had fun and were engaged in their play. They could be involved in shaping their play by choosing between a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences each day. Children told us they enjoyed activities such as crafting, baking, drawing, playing outdoors and hanging out with friends. Staff spoke with children and listened to their ideas for activities, however, these were not always followed up in a timely

way. This meant that on some occasions children had to wait for the opportunity to extend on their ideas and suggestions. We asked staff to consider reviewing this to provide more immediate opportunities for children to follow their interests.

Some play experiences allowed children to use and develop their imaginative and problem-solving skills. Children used resources well and enjoyed opportunities to use their imagination, and welcoming staff into their play. They used some open-ended materials to support their play, including making up dance routines and role playing. This supported children to develop key skills through meaningful play and having fun.

Children had some opportunities to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills. Writing and mark making resources were easily available to everyone. Board games supported children's development of numeracy skills and staff used these times to role model mathematical language. Children enjoyed a selection of books in the story corner and made good use of this area. This supported children to develop skills for life long learning.

Children were supported well by staff who demonstrated positive interactions during play. They encouraged turn taking and ensured children were included and listened to during games. Staff were consistent in supporting children through difficult play situations fairly and calmly. This helped children feel included and respected and supported their wellbeing.

Planning for children's future learning and achievements could be developed further. Staff were beginning to use approaches to support long term learning such as involving children in evaluating activities. We discussed the value of carrying out ongoing observations and using these to set goals with the children. These could be used to plan next steps and inform the planning processes, further supporting children to develop life skills and reach their potential.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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

Children were cared for in a well furnished and comfortable setting. Areas prepared for children were bright, spacious, warm and well ventilated. This helped children feel respected and gave them a sense of belonging. Staff told us how beneficial the new space had been in supporting children's engagement and wellbeing.

A variety of spaces were available for children which allowed them to choose where they would like to play and spend time. This allowed a variety of activities such as arts and craft, physical exercise areas, board games and outdoor play. Children could easily spend time with others with many forming good friendships. Older children had a dedicated youth room available to them which provided a cosy welcoming space. Children spoke to us about how good it was to have this space and how much they liked to spend time there. Staff were working with children to develop this area further as children had expressed interests in taking more ownership and having a wider variety of things to do in the space.

Most spaces were set up for children in a way that met their interests and needs. During our visit children particularly enjoyed crafting and board games. Some activities such as construction would benefit from a wider selection of resources available in the moment. Although staff explained a wider selection is stored and children can ask for these freely, having them set out would have benefited some children we observed during the session.

Children had opportunities for outdoor play and fresh air daily. This helped keep them active and healthy. Children enjoyed playing outdoors and many enjoyed various chase and ball games during our visit. Outdoor play was a key area of future development that had been identified by staff. The outdoor space had limited resources and the setting was not yet able to make full use of the space available to the back of the building due to safety of the area. The setting should continue with their plans to develop outdoor areas for children.

We raised a few areas that required action to maintain a safe environment for children. Sharp knives within the kitchen were stored in an unlocked cupboard. We spoke with the manager who took immediate action to resolve this. A clear system was in place to ensure their ongoing safe storage. We confirmed with the manager an expectation that to meet the needs of the children, sanitary bins should be available within the service. The entrance gate which led from the children's play area to the local main road was secured using a rope tie. We asked the manager and provider to consider a more secure way of doing this that would prevent any children from exiting unnoticed. We directed the management team to our SIMOA campaign and resources which is aimed to support settings to keep children safe. The service provider should continue to work with the hall provider to ensure that the setting meets the needs of everyone using the space.

How good is our leadership?

4 – Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children were cared for in a service with a clear vision, values and aims which were relevant to them. These were shared with families through newsletters, along with other important information. One parent told us "We are informed of club updates by the manager regularly". This helped families to understand what to expect from the service and feel included.

There was some potential for children and families to become more involved in the service and influence change. Parent feedback was encouraged through questionnaires and newsletters, and children had opportunities to evaluate some play experiences. We discussed approaches the setting could put in place to involve parents more and how to communicate what action has been taken from the feedback received.

Staff told us they felt confident in the leadership team and were well supported. Staff were aware of the shared responsibility they had for developing the service, including their role in the 'buddy system' which was used to share practice and learn from each other. A new rota system for shared responsibilities had recently been implemented. Staff felt this was helpful in supporting their skills and development. This meant that staff were motivated and confident in their role which supported them in how they cared for children.

Staff were encouraged to be reflective, times such as team meetings and staff supervisions supported this well. Auditing systems were in place which supported staff to evaluate the quality of the setting and identify areas for improvement. The service now needs to develop an action plan which clearly communicates their improvement priorities. This should include how they plan to evaluate improvements and reflect on the impact these have had on the outcomes for children. This will help sustain the development of the setting.

Children benefitted from clear and familiar routines which were embedded into practice. Key policies and procedures were in place and reviewed regularly, allowing staff to be familiar and confident within their roles. Policies took into account children's rights in relation to changes in the service. This supports children and families to receive care and support that is specific and relevant to them.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

Recent changes to staff meant that there was a new leadership team in place. Whilst they were very new in post they were keen and motivated to continue the delivery of a quality service whilst implementing further improvements. They were keen to find increased ways to work in partnership with children and parents.

Leaders recognised the importance of staff within the delivery of the service for children. The service was staffed over and above the minimum ratio guidelines. This helped ensure that children experienced a wide range of activities and opportunities for play and were well supported. Staffing levels meant that there was minimal impact on children's experiences where there were staff absences. Having a regular relief staff member also supported children's continuity of care.

Children were cared for by a staff team who had an effective variety of skills, experiences and qualifications. Clear mentorship promoted all staff to upskill and build confidence. New staff and those not yet qualified in childcare were mentored and supported well to learn new skills and routines needed to care for children. Staff were dedicated to achieve qualifications and further learning to support their work in caring for children. All staff had achieved core learning such as first aid and safeguarding for children. One parent commented "they follow strict child protection policy which is excellent". The leadership team were seeking more opportunities for continued professional development of staff. This will further support the care and wellbeing of children.

New staff were introduced to children who then had the opportunity to ask questions and get to know each member before their first session. Parents were introduced to new staff in person and kept up to date on recent staff changes through newsletters. This collaborative approach helped children feel respected and cared for.

Staff communicated with each other between rooms with walkie talkies which helped ensure smooth transitions for children throughout the sessions as well as to ensure children's safety. Staff worked well together and had thoroughly risk assessed the walk from school which safely support children in this new routine. Staff regularly communicated the number of children in each room and play area which meant all children were accounted for. There were a few occasions where staff could have been deployed to allow more flexibility to children, such as when outdoors. We raised this with the leadership team who agreed to monitor this.

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?	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.