

Clarkston After School Service (St. Clare's) Day Care of Children

St. Clare's Primary
Waterfoot Road
Newton Mearns
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 February 2025

Service provided by:
Clarkston After School Service Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012263

Service no:
CS2017354277

About the service

Clarkston After School Service St Clare's is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 100 school aged children.

The service is located in St Clare's primary school, Newton Mearns, East Renfrewshire. The children are cared for in a large atrium with access to a gym hall and enclosed outdoor garden. The service is close to local parks, schools and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 3rd and 4th February 2025. The inspection was carried out by three 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:

- Spoke with children using the service and one of their family
- Gathered feedback from twenty families through online questionnaires
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents

Key messages

- Children were confident, settled and having fun at the after school service.
- Children were empowered to make choices about their play, learning and development at the after school service.
- Children benefited from regular access to an enclosed outdoor space.
- Staff in the service were nurturing and responsive to children's individual needs, wishes and preferences.
- Management were very visible and engaged well with staff, children and their families.
- The team should continue to develop the cosy, quiet spaces for children to relax during their time at the service.
- The team should continue with plans to review their drop off and pick up procedures for children and families.

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, patient, and nurturing care from staff which supported their health and wellbeing. Staff supported children with kindness and compassion, which fostered strong relationships. Children were empowered to express their views and opinions, confident they would be respected and listened to. One parent told us "Staff are friendly and kind." Another parent told us "Staff are very caring."

Children experienced snack times that were unhurried and sociable. They enjoyed spending time together eating and talking, we would encourage staff to sit with children during mealtimes to further enrich the experience and provide constant supervision. An area within the atrium had been developed to provide snack on a rolling basis. Children were able to self-serve their own meals and drinks which promoted independence and developed their life skills. Water was available throughout the day to ensure children remained hydrated.

Children's individual needs and family preferences were supported through effective use of personal planning. Personal plans were in place for each child attending the setting. Children were completing the new 'all about me' templates which highlighted their likes, interests, and goals. We would encourage the team to continue to develop recording how they will help children to achieve their goals in the service. Staff knew children and young people very well and were responsive to their needs and wishes throughout the session. One parent told us "I have a great relationship with all members of staff and feel they know my children really well and cater to their needs excellently."

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by clear administration of medication policy and procedures. The service was storing and administering medication appropriately. We sampled medication consent forms and found these reflected current best practice guidance. Staff understood their role in promoting children's health and wellbeing needs. Several staff were trained in first aid should children require medical assistance.

Children's wellbeing was protected by a clear and concise safeguarding policy. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They had recently attended child protection training and knew how to address any concerns appropriately. The manager of the service had good links with the school which supported effective communication should children and families required additional supports.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy, having fun and engaged in play experiences on offer on the days of inspection. Children had a wide range of play and learning opportunities to choose from which reflected their current interests. Children told us "I love playing king ball." Another child told us "The activities are fun, and I like playing with my friends."

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences that promoted children's choice and independence.

Children confidently moved around the atrium and outdoors to engage in a variety of opportunities from edible slime, hamma beads, board games and den building. Creative and innovative activities such as Pilates, meditation, dance, and murder mystery games further enriched children's play whilst developing their balance, coordination, thinking and problem-solving skills. Parents told us there is always a good variety of activities.

Children benefited from a variety of play-based learning opportunities, as staff were committed to providing high quality experiences suitable to their age of development. Outcomes and positive experiences for children were the focus of team meetings and planning calendars. Activity books had been created to allow children to see pictures of previous activities, instructions on how to do it again. This helped spark their interest and imaginations.

We discussed the planning cycle with the senior leadership team and made some suggestions on how to continue to thread children's voices, goals and preferences through the planning process to further strengthen the child centred approach already established. This would help celebrate children's achievements and continue to extend their play and learning opportunities in the setting.

Children could make informed choices about leading their play and learning within a stimulating, challenging and creative setting. The team valued children's suggestions of new ideas and equally involved them in evaluating activities after they had tried them. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that promoted self-esteem, encouraged them to feel valued as well as responsible for their play choices. One parent told us the team "proactively and regularly create a calendar of activities which is shared for the week which gives the children varied activities and the children help to create this which is wonderful."

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Children used the large atrium within St Clare's Primary School which provided a bright, clean, and well-ventilated space for children to engage in a variety of play experiences. The space flowed well, with dedicated play areas that promoted children's independence. Children explored various resources, including arts and crafts, construction, drawing, puzzles, den building, science, and role play. Staff encouraged children to provide feedback on the toys and resource set out each week. Children and staff created an "our toys" calendar each week which showed children the range of options available each day in the different areas set out.

Children had free-flow access to the playground, where staff implemented a robust entry and exit monitoring system. This approach actively involved the children, fostered their sense of responsibility while ensuring safety through appropriate supervision. Outdoors, children engaged in active play, including football, drawing obstacle courses with chalk, and exploring the nature trail. We encouraged the team to evaluate the outdoor activities in partnership with parents and children to ensure all children feel inspired to enjoy fresh air and exercise, supporting their physical well-being. One child told us "I like being outside but do not like football." Another child told us "Maybe we could go outside more, and do more outside activities so people would want to go out more"

The stage area provided opportunities for den building and adult-led activities such as murder mystery games, meditation, and dance. Children used blankets and pillows to create cozy spaces, however frequent disruptions affected their experience. We encouraged staff to review the play spaces to ensure children have access to a dedicated quiet area for rest during every session, meeting their emotional needs.

The environment remained secure and well-maintained. Staff conducted comprehensive daily safety checks, and clear risk assessments which ensured a safe setting for children. A structured cleaning schedule, along with delegated staff duties, maintained hygiene standards. Staff meeting minutes documented regular discussions and evaluations on infection prevention and control. To further enhance hygiene practices, we would recommend that children washed their hands upon returning indoors from outdoor activities to minimise the risk of infection.

Parents collected their children from the secure entrance, where staff used a walkie-talkie system to coordinate pick-ups. Some parents told us that this process could be lengthy, and they waited for long periods of time. The service advised parents were unable to access the building due to enhanced safety and security processes established by the senior leadership team within the school. However, the service agreed to review the process to ensure they were supporting a smoother pick up for families.

We encouraged the staff team to evaluate the opportunities parents had to make meaningful connections to the service and consider the benefits of allowing parents to access the setting to see where their children played. The senior leadership team confirmed this was an area already highlighted in their development plan, with actions they were currently progressing.

Staff told us they felt disconnected from parents, and increasing parent access would strengthen trust, improve face-to-face communication, and provide opportunities for children to share details about their achievements, promoting their self-confidence.

How good is our leadership?

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.

We found that the team and manager engaged very well with the inspection process. They were motivated and committed to providing a high-quality service for children, and their families. The service had created a vision, values, and aims that underpinned their daily practice. However, we asked the team to consider reviewing these to ensure they were still relevant and linked to current staff, children and families accessing the service.

High aspirations for the service were shared by all staff and promoted by the manager which showed us the service had a very good capacity for change. They had created conditions where everyone connected to the service felt comfortable to share ideas and lead changes to support positive outcomes for children and their families. One parent told us "Communication is always very open, and I feel if I ever want to discuss anything at all, the manager and team would be very responsive."

Staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which supported the positive ethos and the continuous improvement of the service. There was a well-established collaborative approach to self-evaluation and improvements with staff setting objectives and leading some of the actions on the development plan.

Staff told us that they were fully involved in self-evaluation and took part in team meetings where they discussed ideas and set actions linked to the development plan. One parent told us "The service is well-organised, and we know our children are being well cared for."

The manager of the service was friendly, visible, and approachable to children, their families, and staff. This created a positive ethos in the service which focused on fostering strong relationships and effective communication. The manager was organised, accessible and positively influenced the delivery of the service. One parent told us "The manager, in particular has been fantastic." Another parent told us "The manager is very caring and approachable."

Children and families' views were actively sought to inform the development of the service. Children were empowered to make suggestions through conversations with the team, planning sessions, suggestions boxes and evaluation forms. All feedback was then incorporated into the service's development plan. The team also responded to children's ideas and requests through a you said, we did board in the playroom. This ensured children's individual needs and choices were at the heart of any changes and improvements to the service.

How good is our staff team?

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.

Children were supported in a service that was well staffed to meet their individual health, welfare, and care needs. The effective deployment of staff enabled the team to be fully engaged and present in children's care, play and learning. We observed staff maintaining good supervision across the session, as they were flexible in their deployment and moved with the children. This enabled staff to respond to individual children's needs and interests without compromising other children's experiences. One parent told us "The team are fantastic, and both my children adore coming to CASS"

Continuity of care and effective communication with children and families was promoted by the manager and team. One parent told us "Staff have strong relationships with parents and carers. They are very approachable and have positive relationships with the children". Staff communicated very well with each other when moving around areas of the atrium, to maintain ratios and ensure children's safety. Staff shared key messages about children's needs, which helped ensure continuity of care that children received. The service also had the use of walkie-talkies to aid communication when staff were in different areas and outdoors. This ensured children's wellbeing and safety in the setting.

Staff engaged in regular team meetings which supported self-reflection and group evaluations of the service provisions. Opportunities to meet as a team supported the service to continue to grow and evolve. Ensuring positive outcomes for children attending the service remained at the heart of any changes.

Staff engaged in regular supervisions and annual appraisals which were completed by the manager or provider. Strengths and objectives were openly discussed with appropriate training and support offered to individual team members. Staff were all registered with the appropriate regulatory body, the Scottish Social Service Council. The manager had established a robust system to monitor any core training that should be completed by staff members across the year. This ensured staffs knowledge and practice remained relevant and up to date.

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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