

Meldrum After School Klub (mask) Day Care of Children

Meldrum Primary School
Meadowbank
Oldmeldrum
Inverurie
AB51 0BF

Telephone: 01651871100

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 April 2025

Service provided by:
Meldrum After School Klub (mask)

Service provider number:
SP2003000516

Service no:
CS2003002654

About the service

Meldrum After School Club (MASK) is situated within Meldrum Primary School in the village of Oldmeldrum.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 school age children at any one time up to 16 years of age. The service operates term time after school, and 08:00 to 18:00 during holidays and inservice days.

27 children were present during the inspection.

The service is provided in the dining hall of the school, and children have access to the school toilets and playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on between 15:15 and 18:00 on 12 March 2025. Feedback was provided between 14:00 and 15:15 on 13 March 2025. Two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

This inspection was part of a pilot to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors' developed jointly with Education Scotland. Because this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

During the inspection we:

- spent time with children using the service and spoke to one of their parents/carers
- reviewed 16 responses to our request for feedback from parents and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and relaxed.
- Children were cared for in a well-maintained, welcoming environment.
- Children were able to choose toys and games and where to play.
- Children were kept safe and were supported very well to develop an understanding of how to manage risk.
- Children experienced fun, challenging and varied activities.
- Children's play was supported well by knowledgeable staff.
- Staff worked well with parents to plan for meeting children's needs.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

Children experience high quality spaces

Children were cared for in the dining hall of the school. Staff had taken steps to reflect the club in the space available. Children were involved in developing notice boards displaying their work and information. This included a display where children were helping to record how their wellbeing was supported under the GIRFEC well-being indicators. One child told us "The club puts nice tablecloths and flowers on the tables for us." This helped create an environment where children felt valued, welcome and included.

Children benefitted from an inclusive, well-maintained environment. They could make choices about how they used the space. For example, blankets and cushions were available for them to create cosy spaces and build dens. This helped meet individual needs and meant children had space to play together, or alone if they preferred.

Children could choose and swap resources as they pleased. These included a range of multi-sensory opportunities such as music, den building, learning to crochet, arts and crafts and games on the Wii. Children told us they knew where to find resources, and these were well organised in labelled boxes to support this. Children told us, "There is a big cupboard full of toys that we can help ourselves to" and "I'd give MASK a 10 out of 10, lots of toys to play with." This promoted children's independence and choice and contributed to them being motivated and engrossed in their play.

Children spent time outside regularly and enjoyed the opportunity for physical play. Children were supported to choose from a range of outdoor play equipment, including balls, skipping ropes and frisbees. Staff recognised outdoor play as being important to promoting children's development and wellbeing. They encouraged children to play outdoors and joined in their games, helping them to agree on rules. This resulted in sustained interest in play for children. Parents spoke of this being a strength of the setting.

Children were kept safe by knowledgeable staff and effective procedures. They were involved in conversations about safety and in risk assessing their environment. Staff had developed risk assessment cards which supported children to be involved in daily checks of the outdoor play area. Children were familiar with agreed boundaries and took part in deciding rules to help keep them safe. Staff carried out regular headcounts and communicated well to ensure all children were accounted for. Risk assessments for the setting were being updated to fully reflect the balance of risk and benefits of activities available. These measures resulted in high levels of safety, while children learned to manage and mitigate risks for themselves.

Children's health and well-being was promoted through staff knowledge and practice. Staff kept all areas clean and tidy, and encouraged children to wash their hands at key times throughout the session. They undertook training in infection prevention and control, and management supported them to understand any changes to relevant guidance. This helped ensure up to date knowledge and practice in protecting children's health and wellbeing.

Children's personal information was well protected. Efficient and effective record keeping systems were in place. The manager told us that they are currently introducing an online platform, which will further support secure information sharing with families.

Children play and learn

QI: Play, learning and development

Children had fun as they played. They chose where and how they wanted to play, both indoors and out. They were happy and confident, and proud to tell us about their club.

Staff interacted well with children to help them learn new skills. They demonstrated a good understanding of how children learn and develop through play, which was supported by regular training and an effective induction. Children were supported to crochet, designing comic books, to use stilts and play football. When one child struggled to choose what they wanted to do, staff made suggestions and helped them find resources. This resulted in children enjoying rich, challenging play opportunities where they learned skills, socialised and developed interests. Parents told us they were happy with their children's experiences, with one commenting "I am happy with the service. Lots of outside play. He never comes home bored. There is nothing I would like to see improved."

Children experienced a balance of planned and spontaneous activities. Staff were flexible and pro-active in their approach, adapting activities to suit individuals. Programmes of activities for during school holidays were interesting and varied, including outings within the local and wider community. Some of these, such as a scavenger hunt were shared with the local community through social media. Parents commented their children had fun and some children asked to attend the sessions to access specific activities. Staff had developed links with the local nursery and businesses. These measures promoted rich and varied experiences for children.

Children were encouraged to be independent and responsible. They carried out activities such as sweeping the floor, preparing and self-serving snack. Children told us they were involved in fundraising activities and helped decide how the money raised should be spent on new resources. These measures helped children develop important skills for life and supported them to be motivated and engaged in the life of their club.

Children benefitted from positive relationships with staff. Staff knew them well, and all communication was nurturing and respectful. They listened to children and respected their views. A collaborative approach where parents were invited into the setting and staff took time to chat to them helped promote a holistic approach to supporting children's wellbeing. Parents were happy with the relationships they had with staff, describing them as "approachable," "kind," "friendly," and "helpful."

Children's achievements were celebrated and shared. Children's work was displayed for parents to see, giving the message that children matter. Staff offered frequent praise and encouragement, and children were excited to show their parents what they had been doing. This resulted in resilient, confident and happy children who enjoyed their successes.

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 support ongoing professional development, the provider should ensure that staff monitoring, and supervision is carried out. This should include, but is not limited to, regular monitoring of staff practice and interactions with children with feedback being shared to support individual training needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 2 May 2023.

Action taken since then

Managers had developed an annual appraisal system, which was being rolled out to include 3-monthly support and supervision sessions. The manager discussed ideas for further developing appraisals to include input from children and families. Observations to monitor staff practice had started, and had identified strengths in practice as well as areas for improvement.

Staff were supported to identify learning and development needs. This included communication and learning style questionnaires which were used to support staff in understanding the best way for them to develop skills and knowledge.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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