

Towerbank After School Club

Day Care of Children

Towerbank Primary School
Figgate Bank
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Telephone: 07796 597 976

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Towerbank After School Club Limited

Service provider number:
SP2011011392

Service no:
CS2011280480

About the service

Towerbank After School Club is provided by Towerbank After School Club Limited. The service operates from Towerbank Primary School in Portobello. The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 80 children at any one time of primary school age.

The service is located within Towerbank Primary school in the Portobello area of Edinburgh where they have access to office/kitchen space, a music room, downstairs hall, gym hall, toilet facilities and use of the school playground. There are also local amenities, transport links and spaces to access outdoor experiences nearby.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 March, 24 March and 27 March 2025. 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.

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 this inspection we:

- spoke with children using the service and gathered feedback from eight of their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were enjoying play opportunities in and outdoors in the service.
- Children felt comfortable in the service as staff knew them well and interacted with them positively.
- Snack experiences had been developed to ensure that these were sociable and healthy, helping them to develop a positive relationship with nutritious food.
- The service had started to develop their quality assurance systems to drive improvement in the service.
- The service must review their practice and the security in the service to help to keep children safe.
- The service should continue to work on the areas of improvement identified in this and previous inspections.

Leadership

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The aims of the service were shared in a policy for families to view helping them to know what they should expect from the service. The parent led committee were involved in developing the service supporting it to improve. The regular newsletters helped other families to know what is happening in the service and encouraged them to share their feedback. The staff team and leaders valued children's contributions to the club sharing in the floor book how they had used children's feedback to further develop the service. The service should continue to enhance how they meaningfully involve all children and families in improving the service.

Quality assurance processes were at an early stage of securing improvement. Consideration should be given to how to use best practice guidance to identify improvements for the service. For example, areas like providing high quality play and developing personal planning. Systems should also be developed to ensure that the improvements identified can be measured to evaluate progress. The area for improvement made at a previous inspection around quality assurance has been continued in this report (see area for improvement 4 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Staff told us that team meetings took place regularly and they found these helpful. Consideration should be given to developing these to support how improvement is progressed. For example, detailing clear actions linked to the improvement plan or best practice guidance and reviewing progress at the next meeting could support continued improvement.

Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Most children were relaxed and confident in the space as staff were kind and caring in their interactions. Some staff were engaged in play with children and supporting them to build skills and confidence.

Staff had attended a range of training opportunities since their last inspection. Some staff could tell us how they had developed their practice as a result of their training. For example, giving children more time to talk

to them during their time at the service. Staff should continue to reflect on training opportunities, to evaluate how this has impacted on their practice, to drive improvement in the service. The provider should continue to develop the training plan to ensure that this is targeted to improve specific areas of practice. For example, developing knowledge of best practice guidance, would support the service to know where efforts should be placed for further improvement. The area for improvement around staff training made at a previous inspection is continued in this report (see area for improvement 6 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Recruitment files showed that processes were in place to recruit staff safely. Further consideration should be given to explore gaps in employment history and ensure that references are always appropriate and verified to further enhance this.

Staff told us they were supported to feel confident in their roles by their colleagues and manager, helping them to feel ready to care for the children effectively. Processes could be further developed to share how skills have been assessed as part of the induction process and ongoing practice development. This would help to ensure that staff always had the skills and knowledge they need as they develop in the service. It would also support planning for training opportunities to enhance practice across the service.

There were enough staff available to meet children's needs in the service. However, practice could be further developed to support more quality interactions during play and choice around where children could play. The systems for tracking where children were playing were not yet effective. This should be further developed to ensure that all children are accounted for at all times and cannot leave the setting unsupervised. The area for improvement around staff deployment made at a previous inspection is continued (see area for improvement 5 under 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Children are supported to achieve

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Staff knew children by name and knew about their individual needs for example if they had allergies. This helped to keep children safe.

Personal plans had been developed for each child containing statutory information and information to keep children safe like medical and allergy information. Staff reviewed the 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators with children helping them to be involved in developing their plan.

For a few children, strategies of support had been developed to support staff to provide consistent care. However, these were not in place for all children and were not reviewed to ensure that the strategies were effective. Families were not reviewing children's personal plan information with the service which meant they were not meaningfully consulted about their child's individual plan. Systems should be developed to ensure that personal plans are developed and reviewed in line with legislative guidance for all children (see area for improvement 1).

Children's medication was stored safely in the service with permission from parents to administer it. Staff knew which children had medication and emergency procedures were displayed confidentially helping to keep children safe. The service should review medication information in line with best practice guidance and ensure that details like medication names and doses are recorded accurately to keep children safe (see area for improvement 1).

Children told us they enjoyed the variety of snacks, these included fruit, vegetables, tortillas, hummus and breadsticks. One child commented: "You get really nice snacks, pancakes, hot bagels with jam, biscuits and fruit, sometimes we can actually get crackers and wraps with choose your own ingredients!" At times staff sat at tables with children building positive social experiences and supervising the children effectively. The service should continue to build on this practice so that it happens consistently helping to keep children safe. Children's allergies were shared with staff for example on the snack register and in the kitchen to ensure their safety at snack. Menus had been developed in consultation with children to help them enjoy the healthy options provided. Staff followed good hygiene practice while preparing and serving snack. Children washed their hands before snack and should now be encouraged to wash their hands after eating to prevent the spread of infection.

Registers were kept sharing who had arrived and the staff present. When children did not arrive as expected systems were in place to check with families to help ensure children's safety. A copy of the register was kept in and outdoors for staff to record which children had been collected. Children told us they had to let staff know when they were going to the toilet. However, no-one was tracking how many children were inside, at the hall, outside or at the toilet. The service should further develop their practice around this to ensure that they always know where all children are to reduce the risk of children leaving the service unaccompanied (see requirement 1).

Most families told us they had positive relationships with the service. One commented: "Staff seem to know all the children - their interests and wee quirks, always make time for a chat if needed." Some families were members of the services committee and were involved in leading and developing the service. The team should continue to develop how they connect with families to support them to be involved in the service in a meaningful way. Consideration should be given to tracking engagement to ensure that all families have opportunities to be involved. For example, those who do not regularly collect their child from the service.

Safeguarding and child protection

The staff team were confident about their responsibilities in helping to keep children safe. Most staff had attended child protection training recently and newer staff accessed this as part of their induction. We discussed potential scenarios with some staff who responded appropriately to the concerns. However, procedures were not being followed consistently for wellbeing concerns which we discussed during the inspection. The service should reflect on timescales for recording and sharing information and the benefit of reviewing concerns regularly to ensure progress. This will help to ensure that records are kept, tracked and shared with relevant agencies, where they have any concerns, in line with national best practice guidance to keep children safe (see area for improvement 2).

During the inspection visits members of the public could access the indoor play spaces unannounced and unchallenged as the service does not have a secure entrance. This means that members of the public can access the setting while children are in. There was no risk assessment or consistent practice in place to show how this was being managed to keep children safe. The service must review this to ensure that children are safe (see requirement 1).

Requirements

1. By 30 May 2025, to keep children safe, the provider must demonstrate how they will keep children safe in the setting, which is open to the public. To do this, the provider must, as a minimum:

- a) develop risk assessments and practice which will ensure that members of the public do not have unsupervised access to the children
- b) develop risk assessments, security measures and practice to ensure that children cannot leave the service unsupervised
- c) review security measures to ensure that staff are alerted to members of the public accessing the areas of the building which they use.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19) and 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

Areas for improvement

1.

To promote children's overall wellbeing, personal planning should be further developed to ensure that all children are supported to achieve their full potential. This should include, but is not limited to:

- developing strategies used to support all children
- reviewing personal plans in line with families in line with current legislation
- reviewing medication and healthcare plans with families in line with current best practice guidance.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as my care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.14).

2.

To promote children's safety and overall wellbeing processes should be further developed to keep children safe. This should include, but is not limited to:

- ensuring all concerns are recorded and acted on in line with national and local child protection guidance
- reviewing timescales to ensure that all concerns are recorded and shared promptly
- developing systems to ensure that concerns are tracked to ensure actions are taken and progress is made in protecting children from harm.

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

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bully and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

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 children's wellbeing and choice, the provider should improve the snack experience. This should include supporting children's independence to serve themselves and also a choice of when to have snack.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences' (HSCS 1.37).

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2022.

Action taken since then

Children were able to choose when they wanted to eat snack Monday to Thursday. Children were always encouraged to be independent in serving their own snack. Snack was a relaxed sociable experience supported by staff. The service should continue to develop this to ensure that children have more choice about when to eat on Fridays and that staff are always supervising effectively to keep children safe.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to be meaningfully engaged and involved in leading their play, the service should continue to review the areas used by the children to ensure they are well presented and attractively set up. This would mean children experience exciting and stimulating play spaces that reflected their interests. Staff should provide children with opportunities to help identify, plan and support their interests and curiosities.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'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).

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2022.

Action taken since then

Children were consulted about what they wanted to do at the club and we saw that staff had recorded when this had happened. This could be further developed, to ensure that it happens regularly to ensure that children are able to shape the play. The service should continue to develop the experiences so that they are consistent across the week and across the day. The service would benefit from developing their understanding of the different play types and ensuring that they provide activities which are interesting, help children feel curious and provide challenge for all ages.

This area for improvement is continued in this report.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children are cared for in a clean and tidy environment the service should ensure the snack preparation areas are clean, tidy and free from clutter. The provider must ensure that daily check lists are effective and used appropriately by staff and the procedure for snack preparation and food storage must be reviewed and staff should adhere to food safety standards.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishing and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2022.

Action taken since then

The snack preparation and serving areas were clean and free of clutter helping to prevent the spread of infection. Staff were using daily checklists to help to keep children safe and healthy, for example monitoring and recording fridge temperatures.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure that children and parents experience a service which promotes high quality care, play and learning experiences, the provider should ensure that there is a culture of continuous improvement. To support this, quality assurance processes should be developed to help assess and highlight areas for improvement in line with best practice and national guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11) 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 October 2022.

Action taken since then

Some feedback is gathered from children for example to plan snacks and activities. Some feedback gathered from families, however this is limited and could be developed to share how it is used to develop the service. Some families are on the committee and help to shape the service. The service should focus on reaching families who are less engaged and ensure that there are no barriers to participation. The service should also now focus on developing their benchmarking, using best practice guidance to evaluate and shape the service. We shared some resources which would support them to develop this. Consideration should also be given to how they will measure progress on improvements identified.

This area for improvement is continued in this report.

Previous area for improvement 5

The provider should support children's safety, needs, interests and choices by ensuring there are appropriate staffing levels at all times. Staff should be suitably trained, qualified and deployed effectively to secure positive outcomes for all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15) and 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2022.

Action taken since then

There were enough staff to meet minimum ratios at all times. However, at times play was limited due to current practice and deployment. This should be further developed to ensure that it is consistently improved across each day and week. The systems to ensure that staff knew where children were at all times needed to be improved to ensure children's safety in the service.

This area for improvement is continued in this report.

Previous area for improvement 6

To support professional development and improve play experiences and outcomes for children. The provider should implement a targeted training plan which includes current best practice documents and supports staff to evaluate the impact of their training.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state 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 25 March 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff had attended a variety of training since the last inspection this was supporting them to keep children healthy and supporting their emotional wellbeing. The service should now continue to develop their training plan. For example, giving opportunities to ensure that staff are skilled at planning and providing quality play opportunities and are aware of current best practice guidance.

This area for improvement is continued in this report.

Previous area for improvement 7

To support children's interests and choices, the provider should ensure that both indoor and outdoor play options are provided. Children's play experiences and resources should also be well presented throughout the session and offer cosy, comfortable areas for children to enjoy a quiet space.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.21).

This area for improvement was made on 5 October 2022.

Action taken since then

Children had opportunities to play in and outdoors every day. On Monday to Thursdays this was free flow access which supported children's independence. Further consideration should be given to ensuring that this is consistent across the week. The service had developed a cosy, quiet room to give children an alternative play space if they preferred it, which supported self-regulation. Further consideration should be given to providing play experiences which are well presented, for example resetting areas to ensure they remain inviting for children.

This area for improvement is 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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