

Killearn Kids Hub Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 April 2025

Service provided by:
Killearn Kids Hub Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2023000220

Service no:
CS2023000338

About the service

Killearn Kids Hub provides a daycare of children service in the village of Killearn, Stirling. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 primary school children at any one time. The service operates Monday to Friday before and after school and school holidays.

Children are cared for within a large playroom. They have access to toilet facilities and an outdoor space. There is a kitchen, office space and staff room and toilet. The service is close to local shops, parks, a wooded area and other amenities. The service is provided by a private provider.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 07 and 08 April 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 registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with six children using the service
- received and reviewed ten completed questionnaires - nine from children's relatives and carers and one from a staff member.
- spoke with two staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met.
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting

Key messages

- Children's needs were met as they were listened to and loved by staff which nurtured their sense of security and confidence.
- Staff worked very well together they were compassionate, friendly, and motivated. It was evident they had children's best interests and wellbeing at the heart of their work.
- Effective use of personal planning and partnership working with families meant that children's current needs were identified and supported well.
- We encouraged the management team to embed systems in practice to ensure their self-evaluation and quality assurance was robust, effective and provides a steady pace of change.
- To keep children safe and protected the provider should ensure that effective recruitment systems are in place.
- The Management and staff team were enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes.
- To keep children safe and secure, risk assessments should be implemented for aspects of the service and the boundary fence of the garden area should be repaired.
- Families highly valued the service and the relationships they had formed with staff.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
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 quality indicator as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1- Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled, confident, and enjoying their time at the hub. They enthusiastically chatted to staff, and we saw they had fun together. It was evident that attachments and positive bonds had been made. Staff interactions with children were consistently nurturing, and kind throughout the inspection. The hub provided care for children within a small community and staff knew children and families very well. Children attending the club for the first time settled quickly, with appropriate support from staff. For example, a staff member noticed that a child was not engaged in play, offered them a cuddle, and helped them to find an activity of interest. We observed warmth and love for the children which created a positive ethos. Families told us, 'Killearn kids hub is a fantastic establishment. We are hugely grateful for the care they provide to our children and ourselves', 'I feel happy that I can go to work knowing that my children are safe and well cared for' and 'The service that kids hub provides is tailored to suit the needs of each individual child that they care for'.

Effective personal planning created in partnership with families reflected the holistic needs of each child which supported their wellbeing. Children who experienced challenges were cared for by staff who demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with other professionals to meet their individual needs. We asked staff to consider asking children to identify a new skill they would like to learn while attending the hub as part of their personal plan. Staff should monitor their progress and regularly share achievements with families. This would help support children further to reach their full potential.

Children experienced relaxed and unhurried snack and mealtimes. Staff sat with children engaging them in conversation which helped build attachments and created a happy and positive experience. Children were provided with opportunities to develop lifelong skills. For example, they prepared their own fruit kebabs to have at lunchtime and they poured their own drinks and cleared away their plates. Food was homecooked and nutritious. One child told us, 'I loved my lunch, my pasta sauce was so delicious.' There were some missed opportunities for independence and responsibility. For example, we highlighted children could use real crockery and self-serve their main meal from dishes in the centre of the table. Allergies were well managed which contributed to keeping children safe.

Staff understood their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. They confidently told us how and with who they would share initial concerns on children's wellbeing and welfare. Staff were confident in their child protection procedures which helped keep children safe from harm.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children's thoughts and interests influenced long term planning which resulted in staff providing some experiences that supported children to develop and progress. We found there was scope to further develop planning in collaboration with children. We suggested ways in which they could gather ideas and topics of interests from children. Additionally, we asked the manager to consider using a floor book to evidence what children know and what they would like to learn. This would further support staff to empower children to lead their own play and learning.

Children were engaged in their experiences and played cooperatively and happily together throughout our visit. Staff waited until children invited them to join in their play and interactions were positive, supportive, and fun. Most staff were skilled at using effective questioning which widened children's thinking skills and deepened their interests.

Positive affirmations placed around the playroom supported children to be confident. For example, older children showed us a poster and told us, 'This one says, we can do hard things' and 'Look this one says, you don't have to be perfect to be fabulous.' We observed a warm and reciprocal respect amongst the children and staff. This approach contributed to children feeling valued, and respected.

Children enjoyed regular activities within their local area. For example, at Christmas time, they made cards and delivered them to residents around the village that lived alone. They helped staff at the hub create an advent window for local residents to enjoy. The hub purchased fruit for an annual local running event and children enjoyed handing the fruit out to participants on the day of the race. Additionally, they visited the local park and woodland areas. These experiences helped children develop and deepen connections with their local and wider communities.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a large open plan playroom which was comfortable, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Staff had considered different areas of play and children were provided with ample space and moved confidently around the different spaces. Resources were well maintained and presented in a way that gave children choice which enabled them to make decisions. Children had access to some real life, loose parts, and open-ended materials in both their indoor and outdoor environments. This provision of high-quality resources could be enhanced to promote their curiosity, creativity, and imagination further.

Older children had requested their own area in which to play and relax in. Staff had been responsive to this and provided them with a small section within the main playroom. Children had ownership of their space and told us, 'We like this den the best, we can have what we like in here and we can get some time on our own in here.'

The indoor and outdoor environments took account of children's stages of development and interests. Children spent most of their day outdoors in the hub garden. They told us, 'It's fun out here, there's lots to do' and 'We like jumping on the trampoline it's huge, and the monkey bars are fun.' Some children were planting seeds and told us, 'We've planted these, I watered them to help them grow.' There was a good range of experiences offered to children which developed their social, physical and life skills.

Children were supported to be healthy through some good infection prevention and control procedures. For example, handwashing routines were embedded into practice and children changed into indoor shoes after playing outside. We found some areas of the building, were very dusty and paintwork on some walls was deteriorating. We were confident this would be addressed as the service had identified this as part of their ongoing improvement work.

Children's privacy was respected as screens placed on the large windows of the hub playroom meant passers-by could not see in.

An entry system and self-locking front door provided further security to keep children safe. A tall fence surrounded most of the outdoor play area, however we had some concerns around the security at one end of the garden. The fence was low and the boundary fence at the edge of the property was down and in need of repair. The provider should now secure the fence to ensure children are kept safe (see area for improvement 1). To support staff, we signposted our 'Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign' (SIMOA).

Staff sensitively reminded children prior to a trip to the park, 'If you can't see us, we can't see you' and an 'on the day considerations' form was completed. This meant control measures were in place to keep children safe when out in the community. We found staff did visual checks of the main playroom and garden prior to children attending the hub. The manager should now review the indoor and outdoor environments and implement risk assessments to ensure regular checks are done to identify and remove any hazards or risks to children (See area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are kept safe and secure when playing in the outdoor garden area, the provider should ensure the boundary fence is secured and in good repair.

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).

2. To keep children safe, and identify and remove any risks to children, the manager should develop and implement risk assessments for specific areas of the setting. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) for the main playroom
- b) for the kitchen and toilets
- c) for the outdoor area.

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).

How good is our leadership?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are lead well

The provider and manager were visible leaders, dedicated, and enthusiastic about improving outcomes. They engaged well in the inspection process and were open to feedback to improve experiences for children. This demonstrated an ethos of continuous improvement.

The management team confidently told us of their plans to further improve the building and outcomes for children and families. Improvement plans were ambitious and contained a lot of information. There was scope to further develop where improvements were needed and how these would be actioned.

We asked the manager to consider streamlining the information within the improvement plan, so priorities were clear and therefore monitored effectively. This would help support the pace of change and when priorities were achieved, new improvements could be identified (see area for improvement 1).

Children had opportunities to share their views and opinions about the hub. Through daily discussions and suggestion books, staff responded to their ideas for activities and experiences. Feedback from families was welcomed through questionnaires and verbal discussion and most families strongly agreed they were meaningfully involved in the service. They told us, 'The hub communicates very well with children and their carers,' and 'My children feel that their opinions are valued and are comfortable voicing this to staff, and this incites change.'

The manager's monitoring was undertaken informally, and self-evaluation systems were in the early stages. To ensure aspects of quality care and support is not overlooked, the manager should now implement a robust system of quality assurance and further develop self-evaluation processes. This would help them identify priorities and support staff to consistently and effectively make positive changes to improve outcomes (see area for improvement 1). We directed the manager to best practice guidance 'Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide' to assist them with this.

Policies and procedures which underpinned the service and supported staff practice were in place. We found some needed to be reviewed and updated to align with current guidance. For example, the Child protection policy, Complaints and Mobile phone policy. We asked the manager to develop a Missing child policy and procedure. This would ensure clear procedures are in place to contact the relevant people and enable the appropriate action to be taken if needed to keep children safe.

Areas for improvement

1. To improve outcomes for children, the manager should develop an effective system of quality assurance, including self-evaluation. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) supporting staff to develop their knowledge and understanding around self-evaluation processes and use these reflections to improve practice
- b) develop a clear and effective plan to maintain and improve the service
- c) routinely monitor areas of practice and provide staff with effective feedback to help improve outcomes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were warm, friendly, and calm in their approach towards the children. It was evident they respected children's views and encouraged them to voice their opinions throughout our visit. This demonstrated to us children were valued, and their views were important to staff.

Effective staff deployment ensured children were always well supervised and supported appropriately. Staff communicated well throughout the session. For example, when leaving the main playroom for daily tasks or moving to the outdoor area. This meant children were always accounted for. Staff were respectful and supportive of each other which created a positive atmosphere for children and families.

Staff were committed to providing high quality outcomes and confidently shared their knowledge and learning with us. One staff member undertook training and did their own research to ensure all children's needs were met, which supported the inclusive ethos within the service. We encouraged the provider to continue to pursue further professional training for all staff that is relevant to the priorities of the service and age and stage of children attending. For example, staff undertaking practice qualifications and researching play work practice and principles. This would support staff further to improve experiences for children.

Staff had established very trusting relationships with children and families. This meant children were supported to flourish and feel loved when in the service. Families that responded to our questionnaire placed high value on the service and their relationships with the staff team. Their comments included: 'My child loves the close bond that has been developed with the staff at Killearn Kids Hub', 'Kids hub is an invaluable service and we would be completely lost without them', 'Excellent service, the staff are fabulous', 'I cannot speak any higher of the Killearn Kids Hub. They truly make a huge difference to the day to day running of our family life,' and 'The staff are so accommodating, kind and flexible. All the children love it.'

We sampled recruitment files and found some staff had not been recruited safely. For example, references and relevant checks had not been received before staff were employed. We acknowledged the provider had known staff for a long time prior to them working with children at the hub. However, we highlighted the importance of safe and effective recruitment being in place to ensure children's safety (see area for improvement 1).

Newer staff were complimentary of the management team and other staff members whom they found approachable and supportive. They were provided with an induction and mentored by the manager whom they worked with daily. We encouraged the manager to consider using the national induction resource to extend and build on the current induction process. This would provide staff with a more robust and reflective induction to support them in their role.

Areas for improvement

1. To keep children safe the provider should ensure that staff are recruited safely with references and the relevant checks being received before staff work with children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited' (HSCS 4.24).

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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