

Kids Academy Day Care of Children

Ellon Academy
Kellie Pearl Way
Community Campus
Ellon
AB41 8LF

Telephone: 01358 720 715

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 August 2025

Service provided by:
Grant, Shona

Service provider number:
SP2015987565

Service no:
CS2015342699

About the service

Kids Academy is registered to provide out of school care to a maximum of 40 children who attend primary school or academy. At the time of inspection, 20 children were present. The provider is Shona Taylor, who also manages the service.

The service may operate from 07:00 to 09:00 and 15:15 to 18:00 Monday to Friday during term times and from 07:30 to 18:00 during in-service days and certain school holidays.

Kids Academy is accommodated within Ellon academy community campus and has exclusive use of community rooms four and five during the times of operation. Children have access to a small outdoor play area and also, under supervision, are able to use the wider campus area and local woodland. The service is located close to the rural town of Ellon, Aberdeenshire giving access to local facilities. The service use mini buses to pick children up from school and to go on outings.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 August 2025 between 09:30 and 15:00 and 13 August 2025 between 09:00 and 13:00. 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.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and one parent/carer
- received 21 completed questionnaires (this includes all types)
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily experiences
- 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 were cared for by kind and friendly staff.
- Children were well cared for by staff who knew them well.
- Children had fun and enjoyed being at the setting.
- Children enjoyed a variety of trips and outings.
- Self evaluation and quality assurance systems led to improved experiences for children.
- The manager and staff were committed in providing a good service to fully meet the needs of the children and family attending.

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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for young people and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children enjoyed attending the service and described staff as nice. The positive relationships children had built with staff contributed to them feeling confident to share stories and ask for help. Children had formed strong friendship groups and played well together. This promoted a positive ethos where children were very settled and happy.

Children were cared for by kind staff who were very respectful in their interactions. First aid was administered with kindness, helping children to feel better quickly.

Staff were skilled in communicating with children. They listened to their views and opinions and helped them process their feelings and express their needs. They were responsive to non-verbal cues for support, such as a child looking a little lost. As a result, children were provided with the help and care they needed to feel included, safe, and nurtured.

Children's care, health, and wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal planning. Most personal plans contained up-to-date information and reflected children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. This meant children were provided with consistent care from staff who knew them well.

Children enjoyed relaxed and unhurried snacks and mealtimes. They brought a packed lunch from home and were provided with a range of healthy snacks. Water was available throughout the day to help keep children hydrated and well. Tables looked inviting and were set with tablecloths and flowers, encouraging children to sit, chat, and socialise. For most of the time, staff sat with the children to supervise and keep children safe. Children's independence and responsibility was promoted when helping to prepare vegetables and wash the dishes.

Children's safety and emotional security was supported through opportunities to relax, rest, and sleep. Comfortable spaces with cushions and rugs were enjoyed by children throughout the session. Children sleeping and resting were kept safe by staff who encouraged children playing nearby to be respectful and careful.

Children were kept safe by knowledgeable staff in safeguarding and child protection. Most staff were confident in recognising any significant concerns and in taking the appropriate action to provide the child and their family with the support needed.

1.3 Play and learning

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

Children had fun and enjoyed being at the setting. They were able to choose from a range of resources and activities supportive of their interests and preferences. They told us they liked playing with their friends, playing football, and making Hama Bead pictures. Most parents felt their child was involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development. However, a few parents commented that play experiences could be improved.

Staff interactions helped children to play together, form friendships, and be inclusive. For example, by organising children into football teams, less confident children were able to join in and play. However, there were a few missed opportunities when staff interactions may have improved the play experience. This meant on a few occasions children were not always engaged in sustained play. To help promote consistent play experiences, the manager should ensure staff support children with meaningful interactions.

Play experiences and outings were planned to meet children's interests and preferences. Resources were age-appropriate and included toys and games suitable for both younger and older children. This meant children had fun and took part in activities they enjoyed. Children told us there was lots to do and there was always an activity in which they were interested.

Children were able to access outdoor play at all times. This supported their emotional health and helped keep them fit. However, at times when football or running games were not planned, better use could be made of the outdoor area. For example, water and sand play with a range of fun resources could be provided.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through their connection to the local community. During holiday club they visited various parks and beaches. This included climbing trees and playing in the nearby woods.

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 were cared for in a fresh and bright environment. Children played in one main playroom with direct access to outdoors. The door was open throughout, ensuring the space was well ventilated. Furnishings and fittings were of good quality and were well maintained. However, children told us some chairs were too small and uncomfortable. We discussed this with the manager who agreed to ensure children were provided with chairs suitable for their age.

Children were kept safe during outings by knowledgeable staff and effective systems and procedures. Robust procedures had been introduced to count children on and off the buses and children wore reflective clothing to help identify them when playing in public spaces. Risk assessments for outings had been fully updated to help identify any potential hazards and prevent any accidents. This meant children were able to play safely and make choices around risky play. However, a few risk assessments for the indoor environment had not been updated recently, raising the potential for some hazards to be missed. The manager agreed to review and assess the risks in the indoor environment.

Children were kept safe and well by effective infection prevention and control practices. Handwashing was embedded in practice and children played in a clean environment.

Children were offered a range of play resources they enjoyed. For example, they had fun playing football, building dens, dressing up, and playing board games. They enjoyed using technology, such as watching a film or playing on tablets. However, they were offered limited arts and craft materials or creative play experiences, including using technology in different ways. To fully engage children and provide them with interesting and exciting play opportunities, more of these types of resources should be introduced. Children commented they would like more arts and crafts materials.

Children's records were kept safe to ensure their confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

The service was well led by a manager committed in providing a service which fully met the needs of the children and families attending. Staff, parents, and children told us the manager was very approachable and helpful. To allow the current manager time to embed quality assurance systems and support ongoing development of the service, plans were in place for a new named manager.

The service's vision, values, and aims were embedded in the ethos of the group. They had been updated during the recent registration of the sister settings at Balmedie and Auchterellon to help ensure they reflected current practice and provision. This meant children and families knew what to expect from the service.

The manager recognised the importance of involving children and families in the development of the service. Children's views were listened to and play experiences were planned to reflect their interests. Some children had been part of a children's committee to encourage children to share their opinions and make suggestions. However, recent meetings had not taken place. We discussed re-introducing this in the new term and the manager agreed to action on this. Most parents and families were happy with the service provision and felt included in the development of the service. They were confident any suggestions or ideas would be listened to. However, ways to capture their comments and feedback were limited and should be further developed.

Self evaluation involving staff contributed to improved outcomes for children. This included changes to the snack routine to make it a more enjoyable and sociable experience for children. Staff told us they felt valued for their suggestions and were motivated to make further changes.

Quality assurance procedures were effective in ensuring good outcomes for children. Audits of children's personal plans, medication, and accidents and incidents helped keep children safe and well. Formal ways to monitor and support staff in their practice were included in the service improvement plan.

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.

Children were kept safe and protected through the safe recruitment of staff. Staff completed an induction programme which they felt was supportive of their needs. They told us they felt very welcomed and included as part of the team. This led to a positive and friendly ethos.

Children were cared for by staff with a range of skills and experience. They worked well together and used good communication skills to meet the needs of the children. Staff told us they enjoyed working at the service and had fun with the children. This was evident in some of the activities they shared and took part in.

The service was appropriately staffed to support children's care, health, and wellbeing. Children benefitted by a mainly consistent staff team who knew them well. Staff breaks did not impact on children's experiences and staff ratios were always followed. However, in the morning fewer staff meant children were not always provided with the interaction needed to promote high quality play experiences. Most parents felt there was always enough staff. However, a few parents commented that the club sometimes appeared low staffed during the holiday club. We discussed this with the manager who advised they were recruiting additional staff.

All staff demonstrated a commitment to improving outcomes for children. They were well supported in their training and development and more established staff were undertaking qualifications to further develop their skills in areas such as promoting effective leadership. Staff were motivated and enthusiastic in their professional development and discussed research and training they had undertaken. This included developing an understanding of supporting children with additional support needs and communicating with children to help develop their understanding.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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

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