

# Cowdenbeath After School Club Day Care of Children

Maxwell Community Centre  
70 Stenhouse Street  
COWDENBEATH  
KY49DD

Telephone: 07933652775

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
30 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Cowdenbeath After School Club  
Management Committee

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001686

**Service no:**  
CS2003007735

## About the service

Cowdenbeath after school club provides a day care of children's service, to a maximum of 40 children of an age to attend primary school. Children who attend are picked up from four local primary schools. They also offer care during holidays and in-service days. The service is located in the Maxwell community centre in Cowdenbeath. The service has use of a large room and children have access to an enclosed outdoor space. The service can access the gym hall within the community centre. There are a number of local amenities close by such as parks, shops and library.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 June 2025 from 14:45 to 17:30 and 27 June 2025 from 13:15 to 15:45. Feedback was given in person on 30 June 2025 from 13:00 to 14:00. 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 four members of their families
- reviewed feedback from two families using MS forms
- reviewed feedback from staff members employed in the service using MS forms
- spoke with senior management and all staff
- 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.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

## Key messages

Children were confident, happy and having fun. They were able to make choices about how to spend their time there.

Children were able to lead their own play and learning.

Staff were kind, nurturing and committed to providing a positive experience for all children.

Improvements to personal plans and the information stored in these, meant that staff had up to date information to help support children. This supported the holistic care and wellbeing of children.

Quality assurance processes were now in place and had begun to support the service to make some improvements. These should continue to be embedded to ensure that improvements are made at a realistic pace.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Children were happy and settled in the club. They were comfortable and relaxed in the setting as they had built positive relationships with staff and friends. Staff knew children well and talked about how they supported their interests. This ensured children felt loved, valued and included. Children told us they felt safe and that the staff were friendly and kind. One child told us "I love coming to the club, I like playing with my friends and the staff, they keep us safe, and I like going in the minibus."

Children benefitted from a staff team who respected them as individuals. Staff provided clear and consistent expectations for children. This had a positive impact as children were respectful, confident and having fun with each other and with staff.

Personal plans were now in place for all children and this information supported staff to meet the individual needs of children. Personal planning was carried out in the service. Children completed their 'all about me' sheets and this was a collaborative approach. This supported children to have a sense of ownership of their personal information. We discussed with staff how personal plans had potential to include children's goals and targets. The manager and staff agreed that this would encourage children to regularly review, evaluate and achieve the goals they have set. It could enhance the existing approach to personal plans by giving children the opportunity to reach their own goals in a meaningful way.

Mealtimes were a strength of the service. Great importance was placed on this experience with children benefitting from a variety of snacks after school. Children experienced a homely, relaxed and unhurried meal. They had several opportunities which promoted independence, for example, setting the table, pouring their own drinks and self-serving. Staff encouraged all children to be involved in the preparation, serving and clearing away of their snack. Staff sat with children to eat and there were lots of rich conversations and laughter. This carefully considered approach to mealtimes ensured this experience was sociable and meaningful.

Children's safety and wellbeing was supported by confident staff, who understood their role in identifying, recording and reporting any safeguarding concerns. All staff had completed relevant child protection training, including updates and were clear about their roles and responsibilities. This meant children and their families were provided with the appropriate help and support.

At the time of the inspection no children required medication, we found that medication procedures followed best practice guidance.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children enjoyed their time in the club. They were having fun and were independently exploring the opportunities on offer, with their friends and staff. Children benefitted from a variety of play opportunities. Staff took time to speak with them about their interests and what they wanted to learn. As a result, children remained engaged in meaningful play, and their thoughts, views and opinions were valued.

Planning approaches had improved since the last inspection. It was child led and responsive to children's interests which supported them to feel involved and empowered. Children were given ownership of their play and encouraged to be independent. Floor books were now being used to document children's play and learning in the service. We discussed ways in which this could be further developed for example amplifying children's voice to encourage them to share their reflections and lead their own play.

Children had daily opportunities to be active which included free flow access to the outdoor space. Children benefitted from fresh air and exercise.

Literacy and numeracy development was promoted throughout the club with a variety of resources, such as books, mark making materials, puzzles, and tabletop games. Staff carefully considered their interactions with children to extend learning and encourage problem solving. As an ongoing area of improvement, the service was developing their open-ended resources, and this would further support children to be creative, problem solve and use their imagination.

Staff recognised children's interests and understood their individual needs well. This meant that if children needed one to one with a member of staff, this was well supported. To help ensure that a consistent approach was maintained, the manager was in the process of developing and implementing a programme to monitor staff interactions and daily practice. This would support high quality interactions to enhance children's play and learning.

## 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.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children benefitted from a spacious, well-ventilated environment with plenty of natural light. Consideration had been given to the layout of the play space, this included space for children to rest and relax, enjoy floor play with a variety of resources such as large blocks and spaces to be creative. We suggested that the service could further consider spaces by making them exciting and more inviting for example consider the storage of books. This would help to give a strong message to children that they matter.

Children had direct access to the outdoor area. It was spacious and enclosed, providing children with opportunities to engage in active and challenging play. This supported children to be active and healthy.

Children were kept safe by a range of procedures that created a safe environment for them. For example, risk assessments were in place, children and staff used these to identify and minimise potential risk. This meant that children were developing an understanding of how to be safe. Infection, prevention and control procedures were in place which further supported children's health, wellbeing and safety. For example, the play spaces were clean and well maintained and handwashing routines were embedded. This meant children were safe from the potential spread of infection.

Children's personal information was stored securely on the password protected computer to ensure families privacy and confidentiality.

## How good is our leadership?

**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact, key areas need to improve.

## **Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.**

The small staff team had strong values and promoted a positive nurturing experience for all children using the club. This created a sense of belonging for children and helped them feel safe and respected. We acknowledged that the manager and staff had worked well together to develop quality assurance systems and were committed to improving the quality of the service.

Quality assurance systems were now being implemented into practice. These processes were in the early stages and needed more time to fully embed, be consistent and to improve outcomes. The manager and staff had prioritised this since the last inspection and were beginning to see positive changes. For example, personal plans were now consistently reviewed with children. This ensured information was relevant and accurate to support staff in meeting children's needs.

Staff told us they valued the views of children and their families. Verbal discussion provided opportunities for responsive feedback from families. Children were informally encouraged to share feedback about the range of experiences and activities they were involved in. We observed staff consulting with children throughout their session and responding to their ideas. Some opportunities were used to gather formal feedback from children and families. This should be regularly gathered and evaluated as this will support self-evaluation and improvement. By using feedback in a meaningful way this will support the ongoing improvement of the service. This will encourage children and families to be fully involved in the life of the service.

A development plan was now in place, and the service had clear focus areas to support improvement. Self-evaluation processes were in the early stages of implementation; at this stage they had not had enough time to secure sustained improvements.

Most families told us communication was positive, and this ensured that they were kept up to date with what was happening within the service. Information was shared with families in a variety of ways such as daily conversations, emails and Facebook page. We asked the service to ensure communication was regular and consistent to ensure all families felt included.

Staff had opportunities to talk about their work through regular team meetings. They were encouraged to reflect on their practice and identify their strengths and areas for professional development. These opportunities enabled staff to develop as practitioners.

Staff told us that they felt well supported by the manager who was approachable, nurturing and supportive.

## **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.

## **Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.**

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them well and were focussed on providing quality care and support.

Effective use was made of staff experience, knowledge, and skills, to ensure children's experiences across their entire session were positive. All children were warmly greeted by staff as they arrived at the service. Staff communicated effectively to ensure children felt safe and secure.

Staff worked well together, and it was clear they had developed positive respectful relationships with each other. This resulted in staff flexibly supporting each other to meaningfully engage with children and meet their individual needs which enhanced children's overall experiences.

Children were encouraged to feel included, respected and valued as they understood the routines of the day. Staff understood their individual roles and responsibilities. Senior staff were positive role models to other staff. A keyworker system was in place that helped to ensure that every child felt confident and supported during their time at the service.

The small staff team were stable and consistent, which ensured families always knew which staff were supporting their children. The service valued the positive attachments that staff had developed with children and their families. Families valued the staff team and some of their comments included:

"They are very helpful, and my child is happy."

"My child loves coming and would come every day if they could."

"Staff know my child well and I know they have fun."

Annual appraisals supported staff to reflect on their strengths and areas they would like to develop. Staff attended training sessions and various online courses throughout the year. They were now beginning to identify the impact of training and how this positively influenced their practice. As a result, this supported continuous development which promoted positive outcomes for children.

## 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 further enhance outcomes for children, the manager and staff should develop planning approaches that broaden opportunities and add depth to all aspects of children's play and learning. These approaches should be developed with children to ensure they are supported to lead and plan their own play.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

**This area for improvement was made on 1 November 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Planning approached have been developed. This is child led and supports children's individual interests. A floor book is being used to showcase children's play and learning and this is supporting children to reflect on their learning and develop new skills.

## Previous area for improvement 2

To improve outcomes for children and their families, quality assurance systems should be developed further to assess and improve the quality of the provision in line with best practice.

This should include but not limited to personal plans, accidents and incidents. This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards, which state, '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 1 November 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes have been developed and implemented into practice, staff have been actively involved in the development and implementation of quality assurance procedures and self-evaluation approaches. Children and families have been involved in this process supporting positive and meaningful change.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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