

# The Squirrel Club

## Day Care of Children

Balgreen Primary School  
Balgreen Road  
Edinburgh  
EH11 3AT

Telephone: 07415 739 261

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 8 September 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Balgreen Out of School Care Club (The  
Squirrel Club) An Association

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002904

**Care service number:**  
CS2003012001

## About the service

The Squirrel club is an after school club based at Balgreen Primary School. The service runs from a pre-fabricated building in the grounds of the school. The accommodation comprises of a large room, an office, toilets, cloakroom and a kitchen. The club also has access to an enclosed area of the school playground.

The service is run by a voluntary committee. This committee is made up of parents whose children attend the service. The committee has overall responsibility for the service. A manager has responsibility for the day to day running of the service.

The Squirrel Club is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 36 primary school age children at any one time.

The aims of the service included "We aim to offer after school care and holiday care to children of school age up to 12 years. We aim to offer play and education opportunities that are both fun and challenging. We will promote dignity, privacy, choice, safety, potential and diversity of all users and staff of the club".

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives. We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

## What people told us

Children who used the service told us:

Primary 1 - "I like having fun and my friend comes too".

Primary 3 - "Some days I like it. I play with the dolls and draw".

Primary 4 - "I often play outside, staff could bring the bag of toys out more, they don't do that".

Primary 4 - "Most of the toys are for younger children. They could do more sport for older children".

Primary 4 - "Playing outside is good. There is an age limit on the board games, so you can't always play with your friends".

Parents who used the service told us:

- "My primary 1 child loves it. She is particularly fond of Stephanie".

- "I sometimes feel that my child is told no with no reason given, which is frustrating for them".

All parents who returned the Care Standards questionnaires said that they were happy with the overall quality of care their child received in the service. Additional comments included:

- "My child loves the squirrel club. The staff are amazing and the environment is lovely".

- "My children have enjoyed meeting different people and there is lots to do".

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We found that opportunities for children to lead their own play was limited as there were a lack of resources on offer to the children. Activities were very limited and this impacted on the older children in particular. This was because many of the toys were resources were more suitable for a younger age group. This resulted in children being bored and not fully engaged.

Personal plans were completed for all children before they began to use the service. These contained basic information about children, for example, parent contact details and if the child had a medical condition. These were updated every six months to ensure that information was correct. The service did not hold information on children with additional support needs, despite there being children in the service who required additional support. We discussed at feedback the importance of holding this information to ensure that staff could meet the needs of the children. See requirement 1.

On the day of the inspection it was a hot day and the children did not have access to the outdoors. The acting manager said that they usually went out after snack, but as this was a Friday children would not be having snack until 3.30. We suggested that staff offer children the opportunity to go outside, which they did and all bar one of children choose to go outside. This demonstrated that the children did want to play outside, so should be given the choice. See recommendation 1.

The acting manager told us that they had begun to take the older children out to the wooded area, behind the club. This area was also used by the school so children were familiar with it. She told us that they planned to do this on a regular basis. We supported this improvement as it offered children an opportunity to explore the natural environment, assess and manage risk and build confidence.

Snack was served to children at the same time. This meant that children's play was interrupted, as activities were tidied away to ensure there was space for all of the children. Also if children chose not to have snack at that time, they had nothing to eat throughout the session. We had discussed with the manager at the last inspection that snack should be offered on a rolling basis to offer choice to children.

The medication policy was not clear. We signposted the acting manager to the best practice document "The management of medication in daycare and childminding services" available on the Care Inspectorate website. This had been raised at the last inspection.

The Child Protection Policy needs to be updated to clearly state who the Child Protection officer is and the procedure staff should follow if they have a concern about a child. The telephone number for Social Care Direct should be added to the policy. This had been raised at the last inspection.

## Requirements

### Number of requirements: 1

1. To ensure that staff are able to meet the needs of children with additional support needs, care plans must to be written. Information should be gathered from parents. This should include what their additional needs are and how staff can meet these needs. This information must be shared with all staff. Care plans must be updated every 6 months or sooner if there is a change to the child needs.

This is in order to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210 Regulation 4 (1)(a) - Regulation 4 (1)(a) - Welfare of service users

Timescale: within 1 month.

## Recommendations

### Number of recommendations: 1

1. It is recommended that children are offered freedom of choice between the indoor and outdoor environments. This would promote their freedom of choice and contribute to their overall well being.

National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 3 - Health and well being.

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The service runs from a pre-fabricated building in the grounds of Balgreen Primary School which is used by other services. We appreciated the difficulties this posed as staff had to set up the club before the children arrived each day.

On the day of the inspection, the room was set up with very limited activities and toys. We were told that Playdough and drawing were the activities on offer that day, we discussed with the acting manager that playdough was not an activity. Activities should be planned around the interests of the children attending. In addition there was a box of dolls and kitchen food and a small world dolls house. This was not adequate for the age, stage of development and interests of the 19 children using the service. See recommendation 1.

Staff told us that children could ask for toys or resources that they wanted and we asked how children would know what was on offer in order to choose. By the day of feedback, staff had sorted out the toy

cupboards so that children could see what was on offer and choose. Staff had also made a list of resources to purchase.

As a result of feedback from children some new resources had already been purchased. For example an archery set and a games console was in the process of being sourced, as well as a television set to play it on. The acting manager told us that there had been a discussion with children and staff about how this would be monitored.

At the last inspection we discussed with staff and the manager that from our observations it appeared that some younger children and children with additional support needs would benefit from small spaces to play in. The manager had said that she would look into purchasing dividers to divide the room up. At this inspection this still had not been carried out although it was apparent from speaking with staff that this would benefit children attending the service.

See recommendation 2.

We saw that all of the board games were labelled with the age that a child had to be to play them. A child had told us about this. We asked the acting manager and she said that if a board game was for age eight plus then the club rule was that children had to be eight to play. We discussed that this did not take into account the age and stage of the individual child's development and also limited their choice. On the day of feedback the acting manager showed us that they had removed all of the labels and we asked her to ensure that children were aware of this. See recommendation 3.

Although children's views were sought, children and parents said that children were often told no to requests without any reason given. This was frustrating for children and did not demonstrate that staff had respect for their views.

The playwork principles which all staff were aware of state "Children's and young people's capacity for positive development will be enhanced if given access to the broadest range of environments and play opportunities". Staff need to consider this statement when setting up the environment and consider the opportunities for play and risk taking, music, art, drama, baking, gardening, citizenship projects as well as areas to rest and relax and areas to be in groups or alone.

The school had recently introduced 'loose parts' to their playground. 'Loose parts' are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. This contributes to empowering children's imagination and creativity and allowed them to explore and manage risk.

The medication policy was not clear. We signposted the manager to the best practice document "The management of medication in daycare and childminding services" available on the Care Inspectorate website. (See recommendation 1, in theme 4, statement 4).

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 3

1. In order to support children's development, staff should consider if activities on offer are suitable for the age and stage of development of the individual children attending the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years.  
Standard 5 - Quality of experience.

2. It is recommended that the environment is assessed to ascertain if the needs of all children are being met.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 6 - Support and development.

3. It is recommended that staff provide a range of resources for children to choose from and support children to choose and use resources.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 6 - Support and development. Standard 11 - Access to resources.

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

Staff had a range of qualification and experience in working with children. Staff had identified training which they felt would help them meet the needs of the children using the service. We discussed how this should be recorded and action taken to access training. See recommendation 1.

Staff were aware of many of the issues raised by us during the inspection and knew how they could be improved. Although they did not have the confidence to change them, as that is how the ASC had always done it. We discussed at feedback that staff were motivated but needed to be supported by the manager and management committee. They need to be confident in their roles and take the initiative with the knowledge that they will be supported.

Staff should take account of the Scottish Social Services code of practice which they have signed up to and refer to the Playwork principles to support them in making the changes required to improve outcomes for children.

We saw that staff were kind and caring towards children. They were responsive and encouraging. Children told us that "staff are funny" and "staff join in the play and make us laugh". Although children also told us that some staff members "are a bit shouty".

At the last inspection, we discussed with the manager that team meetings should be recorded in such a way that it was clear what had been discussed, any action to be taken, who was responsible. At this inspection the acting manager was unable to locate the minutes of team meetings. These minutes should be available for all staff to refer to.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

### Number of recommendations: 1

1. Training identified by staff should be sourced by the manager and/or committee to ensure staff can meet the needs of children using the service.

National care standards for early education and childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 12 – Confidence in staff.

**Grade:** 4 – good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

The service did not have an improvement plan. As a result there was no monitoring of the quality of the provision within the service. See recommendation 1.

Views of children and parents were asked for through questionnaires and feedback to them at the AGM. We discussed how feeding back in a more detailed way would make participation more meaningful. One staff member had started a mind map with children, asking them what they would like to do. This was a positive piece of work, we discussed how this needed to be further developed and ideas developed with children to incorporate their suggestions into the planning. See recommendation 2.

At the last inspection a recommendation had been made about policies been updated. At this inspection three of the four policies were incorrect. The medication policy as described in theme one, quality of care and support.

The complaints policy should be updated to state that parents can contact the Care Inspectorate at any time to make a complaint if they should wish to. The contact details of the care inspectorate should also be added. The contact details of the chairperson should also be added, as parents may not want to go through the playleader.

The child protection policy should be updated to make it clear to staff what they would do if they had a concern about a child and whom they should contact. The current policy had the named person who was an ex committee member. See recommendation 3.

Areas for improvement and recommendations from the last inspection had not been actioned. This raised cause for concern and we questioned the service's capacity to improve.

The manager had been off for some time due to illness. Care Inspectorate should be informed if manager is absent for more than 28 days. We gave the acting manager and committee members a copy of "notifications that services must make". See requirement 1.

## Requirements

### Number of requirements: 1

1. It is a legal requirement for services to notify the Care Inspectorate of the matters listed in the document, 'Notifications that all registered care services (except childminding) must keep'.

This is in order to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210

## Recommendations

### Number of recommendations: 3

1. The manager should ensure that the service provided is evaluated, areas for improvement identified and an action plan written.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 13 - Improving the service.

2. The service should offer opportunities for parents to assess and evaluate the service. A response should be given to parents and children so that they are aware that their views had been taken on board.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 13 - Improving the service.

3. Policies should be updated to reflect legislation and best guidance and should reflect the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 14 - Well managed service.

**Grade:** 3 - adequate

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

## Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.



## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

The service should offer opportunities for parents to assess and evaluate the service.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 13 - Improving the service.

**This recommendation was made on 11 May 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

This has been amended and carried forward into this report.

#### Recommendation 2

Policies should be updated to reflect legislation and guidance.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 years. Standard 14 - Well managed service.

**This recommendation was made on 11 May 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

This has been carried forward into this report.

### 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).

### Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
10 Dec 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
1 Dec 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
17 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
31 Mar 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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