

First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis Day Care of Children

St. Francis RC Primary School
Merchiston Avenue
Falkirk
FK2 7JS

Telephone: 01324 473 325

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 August 2021

Service provided by:
First 4 Kids a Scottish Charitable
Incorporated Organisation

Service provider number:
SP2018013072

Service no:
CS2018364505

About the service

First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis registered with the Care Inspectorate on 15 May 2018. First 4 Kids is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The service is registered as follows:

1. To provide a care service to a maximum of 40 primary school age children at any one time.

2. Adult: child ratios will be a minimum of:

- 3 years and over -1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or
- 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day
- If all children are over 8 years old and over 1:10

3. During the operating times the service will have the exclusive use of areas within the premises as designated by the Headteacher.

4. The manager is also the manager of the following services:

- First 4 Kids Ladeside CS2018364511
- First 4 Kids St Bernadettes CS2018364506
- First 4 Kids Stenhousemuir CS2018364504

First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis is a small day care of children service. It is based in St. Francis RC Primary School. The children use the gym hall, toilets and have access to the outdoor area. A kitchen with a fridge used by the service was available enabling healthy snack options to offered to children.

The stated ethos of the provider organisation included:

'Play and the Playwork Principles will be the focus in all of First 4 Kids clubs. Staff will be trained to develop appropriate activities in partnership with children. This will be informed by best practice and current playwork theories. Children will be encouraged to stretch themselves, participate in challenging activities with an element of supported and managed risk.'

We carried out an unannounced inspection of First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis. We visited the site on Tuesday 22 June 2021 and continued the inspection using virtual methodology. We provided feedback to the Manager on 25 August 2021. As part of the inspection process, we undertook the following:

- Observed children as they arrived at the service after school.
- Observed snack time and children having fun in the service outdoors and indoors.
- Spoke with children attending the service.
- Observed a parents collecting their children.
- Video and telephone call contact with the manager and staff.
- Email contact with parents and staff.
- Review of written evidence such as personal plans, policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- Review of communication evidence for families including emails and social media posts.
- Visited the holiday club that children from First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis could attend.

This was a focussed inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic. This inspection was carried out by an inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

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), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

We spoke with three children who told us they were making soup in the sand pit. They said they enjoyed playing with their friends and told us about the mitigations that kept them safe during Covid-19. They said it was important to hand wash, to physically distance from staff and that families and staff wore face coverings and physically distanced when children were collected. Children freely talked about their Covid-19 experiences including being in close contact with friends who tested positive and the class having to self-isolate. They talked about their concern for family members who were shielding but who were now safer because they had received both vaccines.

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 and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 5.1: Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19

Key areas we assessed include the extent to which:

- children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting
- effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

We observed kind and caring relationships between children and staff. A variety of planned experiences had supported children to explore their feelings and emotions. For instance, a feelings board had enabled children to choose an emotion and discuss with staff or their friends why they felt that way. The children had made message envelopes so they could post positive messages to their friends. Nurturing approaches by staff supported children to feel safe and secure. Children were happy, confident, and relaxed choosing from a range of experiences. They spent most of the session outdoors exploring and using loose parts creatively in their play, building a den and climbing in the trees.

Personal plans (All about me) were in place and contained information about children's individual needs. This ensured that the information was up to date and that staff were able to meet children's individual health and wellbeing needs and interests. Extended care plans were developed to ensure a consistent approach in the care of children with additional support needs. The staff team knew children well and were responsive to their needs. Children were happy to be back at the service where they were able to see their friends. Their views were sought when deciding on games, planning the snack menu, and deciding on an outdoor shelter. Children were valued and listened to.

Sensitive transition arrangements supported children as they returned to the service after the National lockdown. Regular communication using digital platforms was used to share information about the service and changes being made. Families had appreciated this as they felt well informed and kept up to date about plans being made in response to Covid-19. A new app had been introduced to record children's attendance and let staff know when children would be collected. Effective communication meant relationships were maintained, families were reassured and children felt safe and secure on their return to the service.

Snack time supported children to have a choice of food and drink. Staff acknowledged that there was less opportunity for children to develop skills through for example, making their own snack. We would encourage the service to reflect on the snack experience to ensure it provides a sociable aspect and to explore how children can continue to have opportunities to develop skills through for example, preparing food in a COVID safe way.

Staff were aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding children and had a good knowledge of child protection, through undertaking training and having regular refreshers. They confidently explained the steps they would take should they have concerns about a child and had a good understanding of concerns that may arise due to Covid-19.

Quality Indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.

Key areas we assessed include the extent to which:

- children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread

of infection.

Precautions were being taken to minimise the spread of infection through the implementation of Scottish Government COVID-19 guidance. For example, families were not routinely permitted into the building, wore face coverings, and physically distanced when collecting children and enhanced cleaning was in place. A risk assessment and policies and procedures were in place to ensure staff working practices in relation to Covid-19 were followed. These were reviewed and updated as needed. Staff participated in lateral flow testing and taking temperatures of adults in the service. There was a clear process for anyone who presented with Covid-19 symptoms.

The organisation had bought portable sinks to add to the current facilities to enable frequent hand washing. Children used them on arrival from school, when coming in from playing outdoors and before eating. We advised staff of some aspects of infection prevention and control that could be improved. Paper towels need to be in a dispenser and children should be encouraged to wash their hands for 20 seconds.

The gym hall that was available for use by First 4 Kids had high windows that staff were unable to open and access to the outdoor space was not directly off the indoor space. Staff were mindful of this and in line with current guidance, maximised the use of the outdoor space. To support this, staff provided a variety of games and resources outside which meant children benefitted from a range of fun experiences. Children used the trim trail, the wooded area and the sand pit to play imaginatively. The organisation has been awarded a grant to be used to develop the outdoors.

Quality Indicator 5.3: Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19

Key areas we assessed include the extent to which:

- staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families
- staff are well supported and confident.

A dedicated staff team followed Scottish Government guidance to maintain a safe environment and reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19. They spoke highly of the support they received both professionally and personally from the senior management team. Staff said they felt able to share ideas and worries as a team and felt supported by each other. Staff new to the First 4 Kids SCIO St. Francis site, told us that they felt supported and were developing confidence in their new roles. Relationships between staff and children and families had quickly developed encouraging trust and provided reassurance.

The staff team had undertaken Covid-19 training that helped them to understand the measures to be implemented to promote a safe environment. This supported them to be competent and confident in supporting children at this time. For instance, they physically distanced, wore face coverings as required and carried out enhanced cleaning. We advised that face coverings should be stored in a washable, sealed bag when not in use. This was quickly responded to by the organisation. Staff had familiarised themselves with the procedures outlined in the risk assessment which supported safe practice at their site.

Covid-19 has had an impact on development work in the service. The focus has been on children's wellbeing, increasing the use of the outdoors and ensuring staff and children and families understood the changes because of Covid-19. As restrictions ease, and the service starts to operate full time, the manager and staff will review the improvement plan and will agree the priorities for development.

The area manager was in regular contact with the service offering support and guidance. Staff were given opportunities to provide their views about the quality of the service. This meant they felt included and listened to. For example, surveys enabled staff to give their views on the effectiveness of systems and the

impact of training on practice. By gathering staff views, the management team was able to identify areas for improvement that will be taken forward to develop the service being offered.

During the school holidays the organisation offered a holiday club to families. The service operated from the St. Francis site. To ensure continuity of care, staff from each of the sites were present to support children they were familiar with.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	4 - Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	4 - Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	4 - Good

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