

# Crown Corner Club Day Care of Children

Crown Corner Club  
Crown Church  
2 Midmills Road  
INVERNESS  
IV2 3NX

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
16 August 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Crown Corner Club

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001775

**Service no:**  
CS2003008585

## About the service

Crown Corner Club is situated within the centre of Inverness in an area with a mix of residential and commercial properties. The service provides an after school club during term time and a holiday club during school holiday periods. The club operates from a hall in the upper floor level of Crown Church which is in close proximity to Crown Primary School. The premises includes the use of a hall space, kitchen and toilet facilities. Children also have indirect outdoor access to the primary school playing area.

Crown Corner Club is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children of primary school age at any one time. The service is provided by the management committee of Crown Corner Club.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 August 2023 between 14:15 and 18:30 and 16 August 2023 between 15:15 and 17:45. 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;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from 16 families;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from three staff members; and
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing care and support from staff who took time to listen and respond to their needs and wishes.
- Staff had a good knowledge of children's current interests which supported them to extend some of their play experiences.
- The manager and staff team had taken steps to review and improve some aspects of the indoor learning environment to ensure spaces and resources were more reflective of children's curiosities and interests.
- All families commented positively on the care and learning experiences provided for their children.
- Quality assurance processes were in the very early stages and needed to be consistently and effectively implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for children.
- At times when the service is close to capacity, there are challenges in meeting children's requests to play outdoors and staffing both the indoor and outdoor spaces effectively.

## 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?              | 3 - Adequate |

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, relaxed and having fun during our inspection. They experienced nurturing care and support from staff who took time to listen and respond to their needs and wishes. This supported children to feel valued and respected.

Children were treated as individuals by a staff team who knew them well. Most parents who responded to our survey strongly agreed that staff know their child well, including what they like and what is important for their care. Comments from parents included; "They are warm and responsive and know the children well.", " My child loves going, he has fun, and he really likes the staff. If I have any concerns or requests the staff are very approachable and responsive." and "My daughter enjoys attending corner club and I feel safe in the knowledge she is in very good hands." This supported the development of positive relationships within the service and families to feel confident their children were nurtured and supported.

Staff worked closely with families to gather a range of information which supported children's health and safety needs. This included medical requirements, allergy information and emergency contact details. Since the last inspection, personal plans had been developed for each child and systems were in place to ensure plans were regularly reviewed at least every six months. This contributed to ensuring that information held by the service reflected the current needs and interests of children.

Snack times were relaxed, calm and sociable experiences. Since the last inspection children had been given some opportunities to get involved in the preparation and delivery of snack. For example, we observed children spreading their own toppings on crackers, chopping vegetables and pouring their own drinks. We spoke with the manager about how opportunities to develop children's independence and skills for life could be developed further. The organisation of snack did not always meet the needs of all the children. For example, all children sat down together at the same time to eat snack each day. Children had not been consulted about when they would like to have snack, and some indicated they would like choice around snack timings. Water and milk were available to drink, however this was not always located at the children's tables, which impacted their ability to access drinks easily. There was an area for improvement to develop mealtime experiences stated during the last inspection which will continue.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had opportunities to lead their own play and could choose whether to play indoors or outdoors. Staff had a good knowledge of children's current interests which supported them to extend some of their play experiences. For example, one child had an interest in fiction books of a specific author and staff provided a range of relevant texts which the child was able to borrow and take home. Another child wanted to play a physical game outdoors and staff supported them to set this area up accordingly. One parent commented: "The carers welcome feedback and my child had requested a reading area which has been put in. It has been great for her literacy. She also wanted to allow children to take books home with them and the carers have initiated this with a letter to parents. She is delighted with her role as librarian and with

carers supporting her initiative to start this. She is listened to." This demonstrated children's needs and interests were valued and respected.

A range of resources were available for children and staff to access to support children's play and interests. The indoor space had resources set out prior to the children arriving, and these were added to and changed, dependent on children's interests and wishes. Resources included a large dolls house, a selection of Lego, a variety of board games, table tennis, construction blocks, small world resources, reading books and materials to paint and draw. Comments from parents included "Fiona has supported my child's integration into the club and ensures there is a wide variety of activities to support her learning and development." and "My daughter has lots of fun in and outside and learns something every time she is there." Consequently, children were positively engaged and enjoying the play and learning experiences available.

The outdoor area provided an opportunity for children to take part in active play experiences. Staff shared that children used the large loose parts including pallets and tyres to build structures and dens. Children had access to areas where they could climb and run as well as play ball games and explore the natural environment. As a result, children were supported to be active and healthy.

Over the summer holidays, children benefited from play and learning opportunities which supported them to learn new skills and have fun. For example, the children took part in drumming and Zumba workshops, learned how to tie-dye clothes and took part in large loose part junk modelling activities outdoors. We spoke with the manager about including these kinds of creative and interesting play experiences more frequently throughout the year and planning more opportunities for the children to develop stronger links with the local community.

Planning and learning opportunities had been developed to take more account of children's needs and interests. Children's learning and experiences were shared with families through a closed social media group and more informally at drop off and pick up times. The club were in the process of implementing a new software system to support the management of the service and improve the ability to share children's achievements and learning. To further support the ongoing development of play and learning opportunities within the service, we spoke with the manager about ensuring responsive planning approaches continue to be developed and evaluations and next steps used to inform practice.

## 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

The indoor play space was clean and provided plenty of light and natural ventilation. Staff set up the indoor area each day and worked to ensure the environment was a welcoming space for children and their families. Since the last inspection, an initial survey to address the noisy acoustics within the hall had taken place. The provider and manager were continuing to liaise with the church to reach a suitable solution to this matter. Staff had developed more areas for children to rest and relax and enjoy reading books. This addition of these spaces supported the development of a more relaxing and engaging environment for children.

During the inspection, staff responded positively to children's requests to access outdoor play, where they could explore a range of physical and sports resources. This provided opportunities for children to be active and healthy and have fun. The arrangements with the neighbouring ELC service to access the outdoor space had the potential to limit children's access to outdoor play. The provider was in the early stages of liaising with the ELC service manager to address this challenge.

The manager and staff team had taken steps to review and improve some aspects of the indoor learning environment to ensure spaces and resources were more reflective of children's curiosities and interests. For example, children had been consulted about the review of resources which resulted in the purchase of a football table which was a popular area for children to play. Children also had access to a range of resources including painting and crafting materials, objects for construction, small world play, board games and a library area to read books. As a result, children took part in activities which engaged their interests and many commented positively on the choices and experiences available. "There are lots of toys I can play with.", "They have fun craft activities. They're all really kind." and "I really like reading the books.". We spoke with the manager about the importance of continuing to review and develop the indoor play space to ensure it provides challenging, stimulating and creative play opportunities for children at appropriate stages. We signposted best practice guidance 'School-age Care Environment Rating Scale' to support the ongoing development and review of the indoor environment.

Staff conducted visual checks of the environment daily and risk assessed all areas of play to ensure they were safe for children. Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, for example children were confident in their hand washing routines at necessary times. During food preparation and serving, staff followed best practice guidance and carried out effective cleaning of tables before and after snack. This contributed to a safe environment for children and staff.

## 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 led well

Children and families have had opportunities to be meaningfully involved in influencing change within the service. Children's views were gathered and included in the recent update of the service mission statement. The parent led committee supported the introduction of new digital software to improve the administration and record keeping processes within the service. Most parents who responded to our survey strongly agreed that they felt confident that the manager had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their child and support their learning. Some parents commented: "I feel staff are very approachable and open to ideas" and "I frequently chat with the staff and the leadership in the setting; have always been left confident that they're highly engaged in the service and care deeply about the children who use it." As a result, the views of children and families were valued, respected and used to inform the development of the service.

Quality assurance processes for monitoring key aspects of the service were in the early stages. Since their last inspection, the manager had started to review and improve quality assurance processes. For example, a monitoring calendar to identify actions to be carried out by the manager and staff had started to be developed which included dates for staff but it did not include important aspects of quality assurance such as monitoring of children's experiences or staff practice. There was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report to develop quality assurance processes which will be continued.

Self-evaluation processes had begun to be implemented within the service. Time had been allocated during staff meetings for staff to reflect on practice and consider aspects of the service which needed to improve. As a result, an audit of the learning environment had taken place where staff identified potential areas for improvement and made some positive changes including developing a reading and cosy area. However, the manager recognised the need to improve staff knowledge and skills around developing self-evaluation processes more fully. This included using relevant best practice guidance to ensure planned changes consistently lead to improved outcomes for children and families.

### How good is our staff team?

### 3 - Adequate

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

#### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The staff team worked well together and were courteous and respectful to each other. This provided a happy and relaxed environment for children. During the inspection, children benefited from a staff team where ratios were maintained, and the deployment of staff allowed children to access the indoor and outdoor play areas available to them. The previous inspection highlighted times where children may not be able to access outdoor play as the out of school provision was delivered within the upper floor of a church with no free-flow access to the outdoor space. This arrangement has not changed and as a result, children's choice of access to the outdoor space and opportunities for high quality outdoor play experiences could be potentially limited by insufficient availability of staff to support their requests for outdoor play. There was an area for improvement to improve children's access to outdoor play in the previous inspection report which will be continued.

Staff had a good understanding of how to support children's varied developmental stages and were enthusiastic in their approaches when joining play experiences. Children told us that they enjoyed taking part in learning events such as drumming and Zumba workshops as well as jewellery making, and they spoke enthusiastically about the new reading and cosy space within the service. Children were confident staff would support them to access resources for play and be available if they needed support. One child commented that best part of being in Crown Corner Club was the sense of community. This supported children to feel included and respected.

Staff were experienced in working with school age children. Through discussion they demonstrated a commitment to support children and families by promoting positive interactions and building relationships. We observed staff interacting kindly and respectfully with children and as a result, they felt valued.

A process for staff appraisals provided opportunities for staff to celebrate their successes, identify areas for improvement and training opportunities. Core training had been completed, however, we found that some training evaluations lacked reflection and did not identify how training or professional learning would improve staff skills or experiences and outcomes for children. The manager recognised that further support for staff to reflect on learning opportunities was needed to ensure children were supported by staff who consistently implemented learning from training within their practice.

## 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 ensure each child receives appropriate care and support to meet their developmental, health and wellbeing needs, the provider and manager should ensure personal plans are in place for all children. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) personal plans set out children's current needs and how they will be met;
- b) staff are aware of and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to effectively meet each child's needs; and
- c) personal plans are regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents, to reflect children's current and changing needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Personal planning information is now in place which sets out children's current needs and interests and how they will be met. We spoke with the manager to ensure that personal planning information included any significant changes a child may experience in their life or areas they may need support and how these will be met.

Staff were aware of and understood the information within the personal plans and used this effectively to meet each child's needs. Staff had been allocated key groups of children and given responsibility to ensure their personal planning information is up to date. Staff have had some professional learning opportunities to understand the purpose of personal planning information and how this should be used. All staff have read the Care Inspectorate best practice guidance on personal planning and time has been allocated during staff meetings to support the implementation of new personal planning documentation. We recommended the manager signpost the Care Inspectorate bitesize session on personal planning to all staff to support the development of their knowledge and understanding of this process further.

The service is developing new systems to ensure personal planning information is regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with families. New digital software is being introduced to the service to capture personal planning information as well as recording children's experiences, learning and progress. This aims to ensure all personal planning information is easily accessible for families and staff and can be updated at appropriate times.

This area for improvement has been met.



## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children experience homely and nurturing mealtimes, the provider and manager should review and improve the snack time experience. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) promoting and developing opportunities for children to develop their self-help and independence skills;
- b) involving children in the preparation and delivery of snack; and
- c) reviewing staff deployment during the snack time experience to ensure there are more opportunities to promote social interactions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.' (HSCS 1.35).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

### Action taken since then

Children have had some opportunities to develop their self-help and independence skills. For example, they had opportunities to spread their own butter, clear their own plates and pour their own drinks. However, we spoke with the manager about how this could be extended to give children more choice and responsibility during the snack time experience.

Children reported that they did not regularly get involved in the preparation or delivery of snack. We did observe some children passing out plates at their table, however staff were responsible for most of the snack preparation and delivery during the inspection.

Snack times were a relaxed and sociable experience for the children who enjoyed sitting and chatting with their friends and at some times with the staff. However, staff deployment during snack time was mostly focused on preparation and delivery rather than extending opportunities to promote social interactions with the children. We signposted the Care Inspectorate best practice note: 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' to support the service with their review of the snack and mealtime experiences and to build on the skills and expectations recommended in early learning and childcare services.

This area for improvement has not been met.

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children have access to a range of developmentally appropriate resources which reflect their interests, encourage creativity and allow them to develop lifelong skills, the provider and manager should review and improve opportunities for play and learning indoors and outdoors. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) providing suitable resources and materials to effectively engage and challenge children's play, learning and interests.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors' (HSCS 1.25); and  
'As a child, my social skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through the 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 27 March 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The manager and staff team have taken some positive steps forward to develop more suitable resources and materials to effectively engage and challenge children's play, learning and interests. The manager and staff team had undertaken a review of the indoor learning environment and identified areas to improve. This has resulted in the development of a reading area and cosy corner which children were accessing to rest, relax and read books during the inspection.

Children have also been consulted in the development of the indoor space. For example, children resourced, priced and ordered a new football table which gave them an opportunity to take responsibility, learn key life skills and contribute to the development of the indoor play space.

This area for improvement has been met. We signposted best practice guidance 'School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale' to support the manager and staff team with the ongoing review and development of the play and learning opportunities provided.

## Previous area for improvement 4

To support the effective running of the service, the provider should ensure that the manager allocates time each week to effectively manage and lead the care service provided.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HSCS, 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The manager has been allocated further time to support quality assurance and improvement work within the service. The manager has reported this has had a positive impact on arranging and carrying out management tasks such as support and supervision for staff. It is essential that this time is continued to ensure that the service is effectively managed, leading to improved outcomes for children.

The provider has re-allocated the responsibility for some administration tasks. For example, finance and payment tasks are now carried out by the committee giving the manager more time to lead and manage the service.

This area for improvement has been met.

### Previous area for improvement 5

To support the effective development of the service and improve children's experiences, the provider should ensure effective quality assurance processes are developed. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) developing clear and effective plans to maintain and improve the service; and
- b) ensuring effective systems are in place to monitor and improve staff practice, quality of children's play and learning experiences and the service as a whole.

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, the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes were in the very early stages and needed to be consistently and effectively implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for children. An improvement plan had been developed which identified key areas for improvement and some progress had been made in meeting the actions within this. For example, some improvements had been made to the quality of the learning environment which improved children's experiences.

Self-evaluation processes had started to be implemented, to support staff in their understanding around engaging in meaningful, reflective practice. However, processes were still in the very early days of implementation, therefore it was too early to assess how meaningful they were in ensuring high quality care, play and learning for children and families. We signposted the manager to 'A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school-aged children,' and quality assurance bitesize resources available from the Care Inspectorate Hub for support and guidance.

Some progress had been made against this area for improvement, however we recognised the manager needed more time to fully implement and embed this. As a result, this area for improvement will be continued.

### Previous area for improvement 6

To support the effective development of the service, the provider should ensure the manager and staff have the skills, knowledge and expertise required to carry out their role. This should include, but is not limited to ensuring:

- a) training and support are put in place to address the identified professional developmental needs of the manager in relation to child protection and safeguarding processes;
- b) regular and effective support and supervision for all staff is implemented; and
- c) staff are supported to engage in professional learning opportunities and implement their learning into practice to support improved outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The manager and staff within the service were clear on their roles and responsibilities relating to keeping children safe and protected. The manager had undertaken professional learning to extend their skills and knowledge around safeguarding children. This ensured children were safe and protected from harm.

Opportunities for staff to meet with management on a one-to-one formal basis had been carried out through support and supervision sessions. These provided opportunities for staff to meet with the manager to discuss their practice, strengths and areas for development through engaging with training. We spoke with the manager about ensuring actions taken forward from these sessions include specific and relevant actions related to staff professional learning needs and are linked to the service development priorities.

Staff have been supported to engage in professional learning opportunities and implement their learning into practice. For example, staff have developed their knowledge and skills around the importance of developing effective personal planning processes. Staff have commented that taking part in this professional learning had helped them to understand the needs of the children more fully and strengthen the quality of their relationships with them. As a result, children are cared for by a staff team who understand their needs, interests and areas for development.

This area for improvement has been met.

## Previous area for improvement 7

To ensure children have opportunities to access regular high quality outdoor play experiences, the provider and manager should review and improve arrangements for staff deployment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 March 2023.**

## Action taken since then

The provider and manager have reviewed staffing levels and deployment arrangements to try and improve the accessibility of regular outdoor play for children. At times when the service is close to capacity, there are challenges in meeting children's requests to play outdoors and staffing both the indoor and outdoor spaces effectively. The provider has investigated the possibility of recruiting an additional staff member, however, this is not a financially viable option. We acknowledge the consideration which has been given to this matter by the provider and manager and we have discussed alternative arrangements for ensuring a system is in place to maximise outdoor play opportunities for every child. However, it is too early to assess the impact of alternative arrangements therefore the area for improvement will be continued.

## 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?                        | 3 - Adequate |
| 4.3 Staff deployment                               | 3 - Adequate |

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