

Balmullo Out of School Club Day Care of Children

Balmullo Primary School
Hayston Park
Balmullo
St. Andrews
KY16 0DH

Telephone: 07850 213 165

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 November 2025

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2004065649

About the service

Balmullo out of school club operates from a designated room in the local primary school. They are registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 24 children at any one time from primary school aged up to 14 years.

Children have access to a designated room. Large school playgrounds, multi-sports field and toilet facilities. The service is close to green spaces, local amenities and can be reached by public transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on the 12 & 13 November 2025 between 14:45 and 18:00. Feedback was shared following the inspection. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke/spent time with 16 children using the service.
- Spoke with five families during the visit and received feedback online from eight families.
- Spoke with three staff and the management team.
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

During this inspection we 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 leading play is at the heart of the service.
- Children and families are happy with the care, play and learning, promoting a positive ethos.
- High quality play and learning promotes children's engagement.
- Staff promote children's rights through respectful connections.
- Children are consulted to inform improvement planning
- Children and families benefit from a staff team that are welcoming, nurturing and kind.
- Personal plans should be reviewed and updated to reflect children's individual routines and arrangements.
- Systems need to be reviewed to ensure the management of medication is effective.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

Children and families benefitted from a team who were committed to promoting a high standard of care through play. The service aims and objectives were displayed, reflecting aspirations to provide a safe, stimulating environment where children can develop confidence and self-esteem. We encouraged the service to ensure these remain current, involving children in the creation of their club charter that reflects the work being done to promote their rights.

Staff had begun to implement the service improvement priorities. Children had been consulted and their ideas influenced ongoing developments. For example, children wanted to improve the outdoor area and loose parts play. This was documented in the floor book and staff had begun to evaluate the progress made. We encouraged them to continue this and suggested they display their improvement journey and engage all stakeholders in evaluating the progress.

Some gaps in quality assurance were identified. The service recognised this and had begun to take steps to improve consistency in recording and monitoring. The team had taken on leadership roles to support improving quality assurance, demonstrating they were committed to high quality care.

Recent staffing changes had some impact on continuity; however, the service had managed these changes well. Maintaining communication with children and families meant they were informed about change. Many children knew staff from attending the holiday provision and this supported a smoother transition. All families we spoke with and received feedback from strongly agreed they were happy with the care and support children received. Comments included "It's a great service", "grateful for the staff and the service they provide", "safe, fun environment and engaged staff who are really creative, thinking of ideas and activities to keep the kids busy." As a result, families had begun to develop positive relationships with the team.

The team were relatively new to the service. They spoke confidently about their induction experience, which included working through the service booklet, receiving mentoring support and training opportunities. This approach helped staff feel confident to meet children's individual needs.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children's right to play was at the heart of the service. Play was uninterrupted, promoting children to have ownership of their session. This contributed to high levels of engagement, enjoyment, and positive connections with staff and peers. Families commented "My child has built friendships in the school club and feels comfortable", "they are happy to attend and are happy when picked up", "staff make them welcome and feel safe and engage with them." As a result, families had confidence in the service to deliver high quality play experiences.

Children were able to make informed choices about their play and staff were responsive to support their ideas. For example, children led activities such as painting, gymnastics, board games, and outdoor play with bikes and scooters. Staff provided space and encouragement, enabling children to follow their interests.

There was a strong sense of fun and belonging, with lots of laughter evident across the setting. Families told us that children often do not want to leave the service as they are having fun with peers. They appreciated the opportunities their children had and recognised staff valued what is important to each child. One family shared an example where their child brought a toy from home, which inspired imaginative play and creativity. This demonstrated how staff respected and extended children's interests.

Staff have begun to link play theories to children's experiences in the floor book, including work on loose parts play and play types. This demonstrated staff valued the importance play had on children's development.

Children were developing skills for life through routines, such as the independent mealtimes. Snacks were offered when children came into the setting and fruit was available later. We encouraged the service to look at ways children could have more choice in when to eat. For example, if they were not ready to have the food choice at that time. The service agreed to review this to ensure children had choice in when to eat and food available was not limited to fruit later in the session.

Children and staff were developing positive, trusting relationships that supported quality interactions. During the inspection, we observed warm and caring connections, with staff engaging in play and conversations that promoted trust and belonging. For example, staff spent time reading stories with children, playing games and doing gymnastics. This created lots of laughter and enjoyable experiences. Children told us staff are "good at making food" and "keeping us safe," which reflected a caring approach.

Planning was informal and led by children's interests, which promoted independence and choice. Children influenced daily experiences, and staff responded promptly to ideas. For example, children brought bikes and scooters from home and wanted to use these outdoors, creating obstacles and challenge in their play. Staff responded and supported when needed. As a result, children were highly engaged for sustained periods of time.

Floor books evidenced some activities children had been involved in, and their thoughts were recorded. How the floor book was used to document children's experiences and recording consultation could be further developed, giving children more ownership of this. For example, the work that had been done on children's rights could be led by children and not staff. This would strengthen children's understanding of their rights and raise awareness of the wellbeing indicators in everyday experiences.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Nurturing Care and support

Children and families benefitted from a welcoming, warm and inclusive service. Staff took time to talk with each family at pick up, sharing how their child had spent their time. Families told us they liked this hand over and staff always took time to talk with them.

Staff, children and families were developing positive relationships as the team settled into a more permanent structure. Staff were warm, responsive, and attentive to children's requests. Children told us staff were good at keeping them safe and listening to them. Families' comments included "staff are always willing to listen and accommodate", "have been able to discuss anything at any point and we would often chat to staff at pick up time" and "the ladies are very welcoming and like to discuss what the kids have been up to during their session." As a result, communication between the service and families was positive.

The service promoted communication with the use of termly newsletters, emails, phone calls and the website. This meant families felt informed. There was a noticeboard in the service for sharing information. We encouraged staff to ensure information was current and easily accessible. For example, update posters for complaints procedures.

Mealtimes promoted independence and opportunities to develop skills for life. Children were involved in preparing foods, setting tables and using kitchen utensils. They were confident in this routine and we could see this was embedded in everyday practice. Children spoke about healthy choices and told us they were asked for their views on snack options. One family shared they would like if the breakfast portions could be reviewed. We shared this with the service who responded quickly.

The service had a format for personal plans. The details recorded and the reviewing of plans with children and families was inconsistent and lacked important details. For example, individual arrangements should be recorded clearly to support children's routines. Involving children in reviewing their all about me and choosing how the service could support them in their next steps lacked consistent detail. The service should ensure that all documentation related to personal plans are fully completed and reviewed in line with guidance. This should also include detailed risk assessments where there are arrangements in place for children to leave the setting (see area for improvement 1.)

The management of children's medication and completed consent forms required improvement to ensure a consistent and effective approach. Robust systems should be in place to ensure all staff have the correct information to meet children's healthcare needs. Staff had been working with families to complete medical forms, however, this process was taking longer than anticipated, resulting in delayed completion of medication consent (see area for improvement 2.)

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all children's needs and routines can be safely met and supported. The service should review personal plans regularly in line with guidance. This should include, but not limited to all about me information, registration documents, support plans and individual risk assessments.

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 is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am fully involved in developing and reviewing my personal plan, which is always available to me' (HSCS 2.17)

2. To ensure children's healthcare needs can be safely met, the service should ensure all relevant medication documentation is in place and reviewed with children and families. This should include, but not limited to, having clear protocols and systems in place where children self-administer medication. This would support staff in maintaining children's safety and wellbeing in line with best practice guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'If I need help with medication, I am able to have as much control as possible' (HSCS 2.23)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11)

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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