

# St Boswells Childcare Day Care of Children

St. Boswells Primary School  
Greenside Park  
St. Boswells  
Melrose  
TD6 0AH

Telephone: 07940552933

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
14 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
St Boswells Childcare CIC

**Service provider number:**  
SP2023000394

**Service no:**  
CS2023000397

## About the service

St Boswells Childcare provides an after school and holiday club. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 25 children aged from primary school until the end of S1 at high school at any one time within this number care can be provided for children who are registered to start school in the August of that year during the summer holiday period only.

During the operating times the service will have the exclusive use of the gym hall within the address. When the gym hall is not available a maximum of 20 children can only be cared for.

St Boswells Childcare is situated within St Boswells Primary School. The service operates from a designated classroom and gym hall. Children have access to outdoor play areas and toilets. The service is close to the town centre and other local amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 November 2025 between 15:30 and 17:00 and an announced visit on 12 November 2025 between 14:00 and 15:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 present of the day of our inspection
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed seven on line questionnaires received from families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Families have high praise for the nurturing ethos in the service.
- Induction processes are in place but would benefit from being more structured.
- Staff are motivated and committed to their role.
- Further strengthening of the quality assurance systems is needed.
- Interactions are nurturing and responsive, helping children feel settled, confident and ready to engage in play.
- Children approach staff comfortably to request resources or invite them into their play.
- Children have ownership of their play and are encouraged to follow their own interests.

## 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.**

The setting was well organised and ran reliably, with clear systems in place to support children's safety, wellbeing and development. Despite the manager/provider rarely being on site, leadership tasks were completed, including planning, communication with families and monitoring the environment. A small number of families reported that they were unclear about who the manager/provider was, highlighting a need for greater clarity in communication about leadership and accountability. We asked that a clear process was established for the manager's oversight, including defined responsibilities and contact arrangements for families to enhance clarity, accountability and shared understanding.

Staff maintained records, including, children's records, accident and risk assessments, which were reviewed regularly. Audits and reviews of accidents and incidents informed improvements to supervision and the physical environment, supporting safety and wellbeing. One staff member reflected, "We try to notice even small changes in the children so we can respond straight away," demonstrating a proactive approach to safeguarding and wellbeing.

Communication among staff was collaborative and child-centred. Decisions around attendance, snack, routines and resources were shared, promoting a team-based, reflective culture. Staff responded immediately to requests, adapting activities and supporting children's independence and problem-solving.

The service had a culture of reflective practice and self-evaluation. Staff contributed to identifying strengths, areas for improvement and future development priorities. Evidence from records and observations shows that improvements identified through self-evaluation were acted on promptly, including reviewing personal plans, updating risk assessments, and adapting the environment to support children's needs. Staff commented, "We are always looking for ways to make the club better for the children," highlighting a reflective ethos.

Recruitment and staffing pressures were noted, particularly due to short working hours, qualification requirements and upcoming maternity leave. Despite this, staff consistently ensured that children's needs were met. Families praised the reliability of the team, noting the leadership as "amazing and always goes above and beyond".

Induction processes were in place but would benefit from being more structured. We highlighted the Early learning and childcare: national induction resource (Scottish Government 2023) which would support leaders to ensure new staff understood the setting's vision, approach to safety and wellbeing and play ethos from the outset.

While we recognise some improvements, an outstanding area for improvement remained unmet from the last inspection. This was because there were gaps in recruitment documentation, a lack of formal support and supervision processes and inconsistencies in children's personal plans. Further strengthening to the quality assurance systems was needed to ensure reliable oversight, consistency and effective monitoring (see area for improvement one).

## Areas for improvement

1. 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 and staff files.

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).

## 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 were motivated and fully engaged in their play. They approached staff comfortably to request resources or invite them into their play, demonstrating confidence and positive attachments. They moved freely between activities and expressed their ideas with ease, showing they felt secure, respected and able to influence their experiences. The relaxed and nurturing atmosphere supported strong, trusting relationships and contributed positively to children's wellbeing after the school day.

Children participated in a wide variety of activities that reflected their interests and supported different types of play and learning. Small world sets, crafts, Hama beads, paper mache, den building and independent games were all used purposefully. Children spoke positively about their time at the club. They described a wide variety of play opportunities that supported their interests, such as diamond art, den building, baking, games, hide and seek in the dark and creative woodwork projects like bird boxes.

Conversations flowed naturally throughout play. Children spoke openly with their friends and staff about their school day and shared personal experiences, which reflected the emotional security they felt within the club. Staff interactions were warm, relaxed and supportive. They used gentle questioning and well-judged prompts that encouraged children to think, plan and make decisions without taking over their play.

Due to staffing levels, children needed to access the outdoor playground collectively, with the whole group either outdoors or indoors at the same time. This limitation had been noted by some families, who expressed that children would benefit from more flexible access. Staff recognised this constraint and worked hard to maintain predictable, positive and well supervised experiences for children despite the challenges.

Children felt their views shaped what happened in the club. They described being involved in choosing snack foods, contributing ideas for activities, taking part in votes and noting down suggestions for staff to consider. Snack time was described as enjoyable, relaxed and offering choice. Children also valued the strong sense of community, noting that "everyone is nice and kind" and speaking proudly about the donations made by families.

Staff described planning as responsive and child-led. They used approaches such as mind maps to gather ideas, test out plans and evaluate experiences. Staff felt they supported children's independence and resilience well and were thoughtful about offering the right level of challenge to promote a wide range of skills. Some staff identified resource limitations due to the club's small scale and appreciated family

donations that enhanced the play environment. However, we saw that when requested materials were not available, staff encouraged children to adapt their plans and problem solve, demonstrating flexibility and creativity when resources were unavailable, enabling children to continue learning through play and exploration.

Families shared that children enjoyed a rich variety of play, including arts, outdoor activities, games, gardening and holiday trips. They felt staff understood their children well and supported their emotional needs after school. A small number suggested further improvements, such as more outdoor time, support with homework, fairness over iPad time and encouraging responsibility for belongings. Leaders agreed to consider these comments.

## 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 consistently experienced warm, respectful and responsive interactions. Staff engaged with children in a calm, attuned manner that promoted emotional security and created a strong sense of belonging. One family described the staff as, "caring, kind and attentive," reflecting the positive relationships that supported safe and responsive care. Staff demonstrated knowledge of children and worked closely with families and school staff to understand children's routines and emotional needs, adapting experiences to support engagement and wellbeing.

Children told us they felt safe, valued and able to seek comfort when needed. Comments such as staff being, "really nice" and someone they could talk to them "if they had a rubbish day at school". Such comments showed that children experienced trusting relationships, enabling them to settle quickly, regulate their emotions and transition smoothly into play after the school day.

Personal plans were in place for children and reflected individual needs, interests and family circumstances. Plans were reviewed when changes occurred, ensuring staff held up-to-date information to support children effectively. Staff recognised the importance of recording significant events and observations more routinely to support accurate reporting and early identification of any additional support needs. As part of improvement planning, we highlighted the need to ensure all current strategies used to support children were written down to maintain consistency of practice across the team.

Records were held in both online and paper formats. While most information was well organised, in the children's records we sampled, there were some gaps in wellbeing information. For example, a few paper copies required filing to ensure they were consistently accessible and a child did not have an online wellbeing indicator form. Following the inspection, all plans were reviewed and where necessary, updated information was sought from families, demonstrating commitment to ensuring children were supported consistently.

Snack time contributed positively to children's wellbeing. The routine was calm, inclusive and well organised, with children confidently washing their hands, finding their seats and making choices about what they wanted to eat. This promoted independence and a sense of responsibility. Children sat together and chatted naturally, supporting social connection and communication. Staff were nurturing and attentive, ensuring individual dietary needs were understood and met. Appropriate alternatives were provided to accommodate

intolerances, reflecting good practice in inclusion. Although one staff member briefly supervised the group alone, children remained settled, relaxed and engaged, demonstrating the strength of relationships and the predictability of routines. Staff should continue to reflect on small enhancements to promote independence, such as placing spreads in individual tubs for children to serve themselves in a safe way.

Staff described building strong, positive relationships with children and families and felt that children were happy and enjoyed attending the club. They viewed themselves as caring, approachable and supportive, which was reflected in children's relaxed interactions and willingness to seek help, comfort or conversation.

A small number of families felt they were not meaningfully involved in developing the service. Staff recognised the challenges families faced at pick-up time, with many focused on collecting children quickly after work. Strengthening opportunities for informal engagement, such as inviting parents briefly into the club at pick-up time, could help families feel more connected and able to share ideas or observe their child's experiences. Even short interactions could enhance relationships, support shared understanding and encourage participation. Leaders agreed to consider this.

Families consistently praised the nurturing ethos in the service. They described staff as kind, understanding and supportive, highlighting that children felt safe, listened to and respected. Families valued the personalised attention children received, noting staff were skilled at recognising when children needed rest, comfort or connection with peers. They also appreciated the flexibility and warm communication offered by staff, even when newer staff appeared quieter during handovers.

Staff were confident in their child protection responsibilities and felt well supported through recent training, enabling them to recognise concerns and respond appropriately.

Overall, children experienced warm, respectful and nurturing care. Staff knew children well, supported their emotional wellbeing and fostered an inclusive environment where children felt safe, valued and able to relax after the school day.

## 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 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 and staff files.

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 19 November 2024.**

## Action taken since then

While we recognise some improvements, this area for improvement remained unmet from the last inspection. This was because there were gaps in recruitment documentation, a lack of formal support and supervision processes and inconsistencies in children's personal plans. Further strengthening to the quality assurance systems was needed to ensure reliable oversight, consistency and effective monitoring.

## 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

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|--|----------|
| 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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