

Stonehaven After School Club

Day Care of Children

Stonehaven Community Education Centre
Bath Street
Stonehaven
AB39 2DH

Telephone: 07710 515 640

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 December 2025

Service provided by:
Stonehaven After School Club

Service provider number:
SP2006008357

Service no:
CS2006123466

About the service

Stonehaven After School Club is situated within the Community Education Centre in Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 60 school-aged children at any one time. Children have exclusive use of the outdoor hall, red and blue rooms, community room, and an enclosed outdoor playground.

The service is close to parks, the beach, local primary schools, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 4 December 2025 between 14:30 and 17:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

The inspection focused on the outstanding requirement and areas for improvement made during the previous inspections on 16 June 2025 and 29 September 2025. We evaluated how the service had addressed these to improve outcomes for children.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In assessing progress with the requirement and areas for improvement, we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Sufficient progress had been made in addressing most of the concerns from the previous inspections.
- The remaining requirement and one area for improvement had been met. A new area for improvement was made.
- Three areas for improvement have been continued to allow the service further time to make the improvements needed.
- Children benefitted from a wider range of experiences, linked to their interests.
- The provider, management, and staff were committed to supporting the development of the service.
- Quality assurance systems were beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

Leadership

Progress had been made towards supporting children's health and wellbeing through effective quality assurance processes. The provider and management team had more clearly defined roles and had planned systems to carry out effective quality assurance. A revised quality assurance calendar had recently been created which clearly outlined responsibilities and timelines for key processes. This was reflective of the evolving needs of the service, in line with their improvement priorities. Quality assurance processes were linked to children's health and wellbeing and plans were in place to involve children, families, and staff in this process in the new term (see section 'What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report).

Overall, quality assurance processes were beginning to positively impact on outcomes for children. As a result, a new area for improvement has been made to allow the management team and staff to fully embed planned quality assurance processes and evaluate progress to measure the impact on children's experiences (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support improvement to the service and ensure good outcomes for children and families, the provider and manager should ensure:
 - a) Children and families are meaningfully involved and influence change within the setting.
 - b) Quality assurance systems, including self evaluation and the use of quality audit tools, are used to support reflection and inform improvement planning.

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, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 15 August 2025, the provider must ensure children's safety and wellbeing and that they experience high quality outcomes and experiences.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Develop effective quality assurance processes that promote children's health, safety, and wellbeing.
- b) Undertake meaningful engagement with children and families to identify and action the improvements that are required.
- c) Undertake a cycle of self evaluation based on the quality framework and implement an improvement plan.
- d) Ensure management and staff are aware of their responsibilities, using best practice guidance and national frameworks and implement this in their practice.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This requirement was made on 16 June 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

A revised quality assurance calendar had recently been created which clearly outlined responsibilities and timelines for key processes. This was reflective of the evolving needs of the service, in line with their improvement priorities. Quality assurance processes were linked to children's health and wellbeing, such as personal plans and medication audits. These specified the key information required within the documents, to ensure consistency of quality of information held.

Communication with families about changes was ongoing through newsletters and regular conversations. Team meetings were used for staff to discuss and evaluate progress, which was starting to positively impact on practice. Staff demonstrated their awareness of current improvement priorities and recognised the need to consistently evaluate progress to promote good outcomes for children. The management team shared plans to further involve children and families in evaluating the service, including questionnaires. We discussed how this will support the service in identifying strengths and areas for development to feed into the improvement priorities.

The management team demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities, including their commitment to developing the service. They shared how they recognised the importance of embedding

effective quality assurance to maintain improved outcomes for children. They were becoming familiar with best practice guidance and national framework, including 'Quality Improvement Framework for the early learning and childcare sectors'. They were in the early stages of supporting staff to become familiar with this and had plans to embed this further into practice in the new term. We highlighted the benefits of incorporating these planned processes, including formal self evaluation using challenge questions and monitoring of staff practice, into the quality assurance calendar. This would support staff to understand their roles, adhere to clear timescales, and consistently implement planned quality assurance to improve outcomes for children.

Overall, effective quality assurance processes had been introduced and were starting to positively impact on outcomes for children. As a result, a new area for improvement has been made to allow the management team and staff to fully embed planned quality assurance processes. The service should now also consider evaluating progress against the intended outcomes to measure the impact on children's experiences, as well as celebrate success and achievements.

Met - outwith timescales

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 support children's learning and development, the provider and manager should ensure children experience high quality play and learning which supports them to have fun and promote curiosity and challenge, relevant to their age and stage of development.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) Ensuring staff are knowledgeable in supporting children's learning.
- b) Ensuring the environment is well resourced and inviting for children.
- c) Ensuring staff plan for and evaluate activities and experiences to promote challenge and interest for the children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning, and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 16 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Following fundraising efforts, some new resources had been added to provide a wider range of experiences for children. Children were involved in selecting resources which interested them, such as board games, craft supplies, and outdoor sports equipment. The provider and management team were considering the priorities for further expanding on current resources, including materials to promote challenge particularly for older children.

Some resources were arranged more purposefully, acting as provocations for play. However, some resources were not set up in an inviting way and children did not engage with these. We discussed how this could be incorporated into environmental audits and be supported by the 'kids committee' roles, to support children in understanding their role to store items appropriately and promote engagement.

The 'weekly planner' provided an overview of daily planned activities and informed staff, children, and parents of the variety on offer. During the inspection, children spent time making 'snow globe' crafts with staff and playing parachute games. Staff demonstrated an awareness of planning activities in line with children's interests and being flexible and responsive to their ideas. It was evident that some staff were more confident in leading activities and supporting children to meaningfully engage in the planned experiences. The management team advised that staff monitoring was due to begin in the new term, once new staff had been recruited. They were confident that this would support staff in sharing practice, enhance skills, and promote consistency across the team.

Children's evaluation sheets for activities had been created but were not yet being used consistently due to time constraints. We discussed different ways that the management team should consider to gather children's views to support them in planning for children's interests. A floor book was in the early stages of development to support children to reflect on their experiences.

Overall, some progress had been made and children accessed a wider range of experiences. This was mainly through planned activities, including arts and crafts and team games. More time was needed to embed further plans to gather children's views more meaningfully to support in planning for their interests and enhance experiences to provide more challenge.

The area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

To promote a relaxed and sociable experience, the manager and staff should improve snack time experiences. This should include, but is not limited to, staff sitting with children to promote their social skills and consistently support children when eating.

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 29 September 2025.

Action taken since then

A new snack routine had been fully implemented and was familiar to both children and staff. Homely touches, such as tablecloths and sharing trays, were added to the blue room to promote a more homely and relaxed experience, aligned with the outdoor hall set up. Children demonstrated independence as they spread butter and collected fruit from the bowl.

When speaking to staff, they were confident in sharing the importance of their role in sitting with children to promote safe and sociable experiences for children. However, due to staff undertaking other tasks, at the time of inspection staff did not sit with children. This led to some identified missed opportunities where children would have benefitted from staff sitting with them, to support their engagement and wellbeing. The management team agreed to monitor this for moving forward.

Overall, mealtimes have improved and staff are confident and knowledgeable within their role to promote safe, sociable, and relaxed experiences for children. Further time was needed to enable new staff to be recruited and become familiar with their role. A new induction pack would support new staff to become knowledgeable in their role, including specific daily duties, including snack. This would promote consistent support and experiences for children during mealtimes.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To enable all children to be cared for in an environment that meets their needs and supports them to reach their full potential, the provider, manager, and staff should ensure children experience an environment that is welcoming, well maintained, comfortable, and homely.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy, well maintained premises, furnishings, and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 29 September 2025.

Action taken since then

Since the first inspection, some resources have been refreshed or replaced in the outdoor hall. We highlighted the benefits of ensuring the blue room offers more variety, such as a cosy corner and some books. We identified one instance where this would have supported children who required support to transition into the club on arrival. We signposted the provider and manager to the 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors' and encouraged them to consider how spaces could be adapted to support children's emotional wellbeing.

The manager advised a maintenance log book had not yet been created. We highlighted the importance of this to ensure that maintenance issues are recorded, addressed, and followed up in a timely manner to support children and staff's safety and comfort. The management team agreed to action this.

Overall, children, parents, and staff had identified improvements to the environment and the positive impact this was having on children's experiences. This included more meaningful engagement in activities and stronger connection between children and staff. More time was needed to action identified environment improvements and evaluate progress.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 4

To promote the safety and wellbeing of children, the provider and manager should ensure identified responsibilities are carried out.

This should include, but is not limited to:

a) Being familiar with and implementing best practice guidance, such as 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: School aged childcare, 2025' within the service to support high quality care.

b) Ensuring the Care Inspectorate are notified within required timescales of certain events or changes to the service in line with guidance.

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 29 September 2025.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, the manager submitted identified notifications to the Care Inspectorate retrospectively. Notifying the Care Inspectorate of significant incidents supports discussions with providers that promote children's safety and wellbeing. The manager demonstrated an understanding of their role in making notifications to the relevant professional bodies, as required.

The management team were becoming familiar with best practice guidance, including 'Quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors' to support high quality care. They had engaged in professional learning sessions and reading to support them in implementing this and had plans to further embed this in the new term. This would support in enhancing staff skills and knowledge within their role to deliver high quality care and support.

Overall, sufficient progress has been made and the provider and management team promoted children's safety and wellbeing by carrying out their key responsibilities in line with their roles accordingly.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

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

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