

Ferryhill Out of School Care Day Care of Children

Walker Road School
Walker Road
Aberdeen
AB11 8DL

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 January 2026

Service provided by:
Aberdeen City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000349

Service no:
CS2003001781

About the service

Ferryhill Out of School Care is registered as a daycare of children service. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 school aged children. The service is provided during term time, however can provide a service during in-service days and school holidays.

The service is currently being provided from Walker Road School in the Torry area of Aberdeen. This is due to renovation work taking place at the usual base within Ferryhill Primary. The service has dedicated use of the dining hall and regular use of the gym hall and has full access to the large, enclosed outdoor spaces. The service is accessible via public transport and there is on street parking available.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13, 14 and 15 January 2026 between 14:00 and 18:15. 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
- Spoke with parents and carers
- Reviewed five completed questionnaires from parents and carers
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- Reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

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

- Self evaluation and improvement planning were in the early stages and should be developed further to drive forward continuous improvement.
- Children benefited from a range of play experiences and resources which supported children's interests.
- Daily opportunities for fresh air and energetic play supported children physical and mental wellbeing.
- Children felt safe, valued, and respected due to the warm, nurturing, and responsive approaches of staff.
- Infection prevention and control practice should be further improved to reduce the risk of infection and keep children healthy.

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

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

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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

Parents were highly engaged and provided very positive feedback about the quality of the service and the effectiveness of communication. Parents and carers talked positively about the manager's strong visibility and approachability, describing her as knowledgeable about children's needs. This contributed to families feeling confident that their children were safe, well cared for, and meaningfully supported. Staff confirmed these views and told us they felt well supported by the manager and did not need to wait for formal supervision to seek guidance.

Aims and objectives for the service were in place and clearly displayed. While they accurately reflected the good quality practice observed, they had not been recently reviewed or developed in partnership with children and families. Children had created a meaningful vision that reflected their experiences and aspirations for the service. However, opportunities remained for the service to refresh its vision, values, and aims in collaboration with children and their families. This will ensure that these continue to represent the shared ethos of the setting.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in shaping the service. A children's committee played an active role in suggesting new resources and influencing decisions around snack. Their ideas led to positive changes, including the purchase of additional play resources and the development of a quiet space. Families also contributed to this work, for example through fundraising to provide new materials and furnishings. An electronic survey issued by the provider in spring/summer 2025 gathered further feedback from parents, which confirmed high levels of satisfaction and supported small improvement actions. Children told us they would like more play resources outside and for everyone to take more care of the toys.

Self evaluation processes required strengthening. Discussion took place about the quality improvement framework during team meetings to increase staff awareness and the team were encouraged to reflect on their practice. Using recognised self evaluation tools such as the 'Quality Improvement Framework' to support continuous self evaluation would help ensure improvement actions are purposeful and lead to better outcomes for children. Staff did provide examples of improvements made in response to their suggestions, demonstrating a culture open to reflection and change.

An improvement plan was in place but did not reflect the significant work undertaken since the service relocated to its current space in August 2025. Identified priorities lacked clear actions, progress updates, or evidence of impact. Staff also demonstrated limited understanding of the improvement plan and their improvement priorities. A more meaningful improvement plan, developed collaboratively with children, families and staff, would support shared ownership and ensure progress is well monitored and recorded.

Quality assurance processes were in place. For example, audits around accidents helped staff identify patterns and consider children's safety and wellbeing. Audits could be further developed to further support improvements in relation to children's experiences.

Recruitment and induction procedures supported staff to feel confident in their roles. New staff described feeling well supported and had access to helpful information about children's needs. All staff had completed core training, however, they would benefit from strengthening their ongoing reflective practice to support their professional development.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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

Children benefited from a range of play experiences and resources, and the club made good use of the space. This all helped to support children's interests. For example, there was a quieter area with playdough, pens and paper at one end of the room and access to tabletop games, building and small world resources at the other end. One child told us there is "a variety of things to do, not like we have to do one thing" and another child said, "The space is really big, able to do everything in the same room." Children told us about their favourite activities, including baking, listening to music and playing dodgeball in the gym hall. Children were able to transport resources to different areas of the setting. This enabled them to be creative, use their imagination, and gave them the freedom and choice throughout their play. Parents and carers also expressed satisfaction with the range of play experiences on offer. One parent told us, "There are many experiences available at the setting and my daughter enjoyed them all. She thoroughly enjoys arts and crafts and I'm impressed with the work she brings home."

Meaningful interactions between the children were encouraged by staff, including the use of a buddy system so that children could support each other's learning. Staff told us the buddy system helps children learn new skills, such as learning to play chess. The club has a committee in place where children could make decisions and voice their opinions. One child told us, "We plan (using mind maps) baking, sports and make suggestions for snack, and ask what people want." This helped children feel that their ideas were listened to and valued.

Opportunities for children to extend their literacy and numeracy skills were in place, and supported by positive staff engagement. For example, they used open questions in their communication with children who were writing their own story or building using bricks.

Staff recognised the importance of access to fresh air and physical play. Regular opportunities were available for children to use the gym hall and safe enclosed outside areas of the playground. Children were encouraged to make choices and the games they would like to do. During the inspection they chose to play dodgeball, football and tennis. Staff provided encouragement through positive and nurturing interactions. The children were very engaged in these activities and had a lot of fun.

Staff were encouraged to review how they organised groups during transitions and team activities to promote greater diversity, equality, and inclusion. Taking more inclusive approaches would help reduce gender imbalance and ensure all children experience equitable opportunities to participate and feel valued.

Children were supported to have choices throughout their play, for example, changing the rules of some games. This encouraged children to negotiate and work together as a team. One child told us, "I have lots of friends in the club" and another child added "We're all friends" which demonstrated that a supportive ethos

had been created at the club.

Activity planning was responsive to the children's interests and children engaged in putting forward their ideas of what they wanted to do using mind maps to record this. The club shared ideas and plans with families who also contributed to the club's resources. This gave children and families a sense of ownership and belonging at the club.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

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

Staff consistently demonstrated warm, nurturing, and responsive approaches that supported children to feel safe, valued, and respected. Children approached staff confidently, which showed that secure and trusting relationships had been established. One child told us, "We have the reading corner, we can tell staff if we're worried and go and sit in the quiet area." Other children confirmed this and told us that staff were "kind," "respectful" and "comforting."

Staff managed small disagreements calmly and skilfully, encouraging children to reflect on their actions and consider the feelings of others. This supported children to develop empathy and problem solving skills, contributing to positive outcomes in their social and emotional development. Parents confirmed that staff interactions were consistently positive, further evidencing that relationships across the setting were strong. One parent told us that staff were "very caring, approachable and invested in my child." Another parent described staff as "lovely, supportive and approachable."

Families were welcomed warmly into the room, and interactions with staff were unhurried and meaningful. Parents spoke positively about the approachability of the manager and staff team, reporting that communication was effective and that they felt well informed about their child's experiences. This strengthened partnerships with families and helped ensure consistent support for children.

Personal plans were in place for all children and were reviewed regularly to ensure information remained current. Staff had a clear understanding of children's individual needs and were able to describe the strategies used to support them. This contributed to children receiving care that was tailored and responsive. However, improvements were needed to ensure that children's information was stored in an organised and easily accessible system. This would support staff to respond promptly when key information was required and further enhance the quality and continuity of care. Continued development of personal plans for children with higher levels of need would support children's wellbeing needs. Undertaking this in partnership with parents and relevant external agencies, where appropriate, would strengthen the effectiveness of planned support. Medication systems were aligned with best practice, with key information stored clearly to support staff understanding.

Snack time was relaxed and sociable, with staff sitting alongside children and engaging them in positive conversation. Older children supported younger peers, promoting leadership skills and building trusting relationships. While staff were attentive and supportive, further work was required to ensure children always remained seated until they had finished eating to further reduce the risk of choking. Increasing opportunities for children to be involved in snack preparation would help build their independence and life

skills. Parents reported that children were becoming more responsible at home, such as tidying up after themselves, demonstrating the positive impact of the setting's routines.

Infection prevention and control measures were generally well implemented. Children and staff washed their hands before snack, and resources were cleaned appropriately. However, some inconsistencies were noted, including staff not always washing hands after blowing their nose and children not consistently washing hands after eating their snacks. Strengthening these routines would further reduce the risk of infection. Staff should also review how handwashing routines are organised to avoid unnecessary gender separation and ensure inclusive practice.

Children were warmly welcomed into the club and were confident in the established routines. The system for meeting parents at the door and accompanying them into the club was well managed and contributed to children's safety.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and had completed annual child protection training. Staff communicated effectively and deployed themselves well, ensuring children's safety throughout the session. The team were clear about actions to take if a child was missing, and reviewing the missing child policy to emphasise prompt police contact would strengthen safeguarding procedures further.

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 allow children greater independence and support a more sociable experience, the service should continue to review and develop the snack experience.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16. Standard 5: Quality of Experience.

This area for improvement was made on 21 September 2017.

Action taken since then

Snack was a sociable and enjoyable experience for children. Quality engagement took place with staff. Children were able to enjoy snack at their own pace and re-join others for play when they were finished.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To help keep children healthy the service should further develop practice in relation to controlling infection.

National Care Standards, Early Education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 2: A Safe Environment.

This area for improvement was made on 21 September 2017.

Action taken since then

Infection prevention and control practice was generally positive. Some improvements were still needed and these are highlighted within the report, under the quality indicator 'Nurturing care and support.'

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

In order to help keep children safe the provider should ensure that risk assessments are reviewed and updated on a regular basis and are adhered to at all times.

National Care Standards, Early Education and childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 21 September 2017.

Action taken since then

Risk assessments were in place, were comprehensive and reviewed on a regular basis. What we saw and what staff and children told us was consistent with the risk assessments.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

In order to keep children stimulated and challenged, the staff should undertake further training in relation to working with school aged children.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 12: Confidence in Staff.

This area for improvement was made on 21 September 2017.

Action taken since then

The current team had all successfully completed formal qualifications related to their role. Children experienced positive, stimulating and challenging play experiences both indoors and outdoors.

This area for improvement was found to have 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.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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