

Venchie Children And Young People's Project Day Care of Children

Niddrie Adventure Playground
61 Niddrie Mains Terrace
Edinburgh
EH16 4NX

Telephone: 01316 299 546

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 January 2026

Service provided by:
Venchie Children and Young People's
Project

Service provider number:
SP2003003109

Service no:
CS2003013332

About the service

Venchie Children and Young People's Project is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children and young people of primary and secondary school age at any one time during term time. During school holidays a maximum of 70 children and young people of primary and secondary school age may be cared for at any one time.

Some children attend the daily breakfast club. After school sessions are provided daily to children within specific age groups. The service also provides holiday clubs during school holidays.

The service is based in a residential area of Craigmillar, South Edinburgh. The building is a single-story unit with a variety of rooms including two large play spaces, a kitchen area, a sensory room, toilets and an office space. The service has a large outdoor space which consists of a football pitch, play park, nature garden and some areas of open space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2026 between 14:30 and 18:00, on 21 January 2026 between 07:30 and 09:30 and on 22 January 2026 between 14:30 and 18:00. 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 using the service and five of their families
- reviewed completed questionnaires which were return to us from parents and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- 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.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have 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

- Staff have meaningful relationships with children and families.
- Children experience a nurturing, safe and fun environment.
- Children have choice about where and what they play with.
- Staff and volunteer recruitment required improvement.
- The computer policy needs to be updated and followed to ensure the safety of children.
- The self-evaluation and quality assurance requires improvement to ensure it is having a positive impact.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The service had clear aims and objectives which reflected the needs of children and young people in the local community. These aims focused on providing informal learning opportunities, promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting the development of social skills and ensuring children experienced a safe and enjoyable environment. We suggested to the manager that the aims and objectives should be effectively communicated, so that staff, children and families are aware of them.

Relationships with parents were strong, as reflected in the very positive feedback they provided to us about the club, the quality of care, their child's experiences and the staff team. Parents had daily opportunities to speak with staff during collection times and regular communication through the online app further supported continuity of care and strengthened partnerships. Parents told us, "The staff are very approachable and I have always felt I am able to speak to them," "The staff keep us up to date and having the app is really useful," and "Staff are always there at the start or end if I wanted to speak to them, the staff are very welcoming and friendly." Leaders should now consider developing more formal methods for gathering, recording, and evaluating parental feedback to clearly demonstrate how this informs ongoing service development.

Self-evaluation processes were still at an early stage and were not yet driving sustained improvement. Although an improvement plan was in place, it lacked clarity, resulting in gaps in both implementation and impact. Further development of the plan was needed to ensure it supports continuous improvement in line with the quality improvement framework and leads to better outcomes for children. The plan should also incorporate all areas for improvement identified within this report. An area for improvement identified at the the last inspection has not been met and is carried forward. (See area for improvement 1 under Outstanding areas for improvement.)

There were gaps in the management of staffing and safeguarding arrangements. On a number of occasions, a domestic member of staff worked within the club as an additional staff member. Whilst they had previously worked at the club as a support worker, they were no longer registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). While this was due to staffing pressures, leaders recognised that this practice should not occur. Sampling of one volunteer file revealed that references had not been taken prior to their start date. We signposted the manager to 'Safer recruitment through better recruitment' (SSSC & Care Inspectorate 2023). An area for improvement was made at the last inspection and is carried into this report. (See area for improvement 2 under Outstanding areas for improvement.)

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 setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of each child and took time to engage with them about their day, responding sensitively to their individual needs. They consistently encouraged positive interactions between children and the overall atmosphere of the club was warm, welcoming and caring.

Children experienced a range of engaging play opportunities that supported their wellbeing, interests and development. Children had regular opportunities to self-direct their play. On arrival at the club, they chose where and how they wished to play, including accessing smaller group spaces such as the sensory area or larger spaces such as the hall. The large outdoor area provided children with a wide range of opportunities outside. A child said, "the outside area is great, I love the flying fox, the big swing and the sand pit". Parents told us, "It's an amazing club. My child has the opportunity to help in the kitchen preparing food etc, it's a good life skill they also involve the children in outdoor activities searching for different kind of insects etc just think they are amazing". Children told us that they enjoyed making pancakes. This promoted independence, confidence and choice.

A sensory room and book area had been introduced and continued to be developed. This provided children with a calm space to relax and self-regulate and also allowed staff to spend quality time supporting individual children. This has had a positive impact on children's emotional wellbeing.

Staff were responsive to children during play. While free play was the main feature of the sessions, staff offered ideas and suggestions to extend play and encourage participation where appropriate. Children were confident in asking staff for equipment or support and knew where resources were stored. The environment would benefit from being more organised. This would allow children more choice and enable staff to respond to their interests in a more timely manner. We discussed with staff that the home corner and dressing up area could be more organised to make it more inviting and accessible to children. A staff member offered to lead this work, which would contribute to creating a richer and more engaging play environment for children.

The staff team had been revisiting 'The Playwork Principles' (these are the framework for supporting children's self-directed play) at team meetings. We discussed with staff and the manager that having 'The Playwork Principles' displayed in the club would remind staff of them and allow children to be involved in the implementation of them. This would contribute to ensuring that the play environment was shaped by the children and fostered independence, wellbeing and a sense of ownership.

Evaluation sheets were completed daily by staff and recorded activities offered, children's engagement and children's ideas for future sessions. This demonstrated reflective practice by staff and a focus on improving experiences for children. Children were involved in decision-making on a daily basis and completed an "All About Me" sheet twice a year, which asked what they would like to do at the club. This supported children to share their interests and preferences. While this was a positive feature of the service, staff acknowledged the need to improve how children's views were used consistently. Staff and the manager should strengthen how children's ideas are collated and used to plan experiences that clearly reflect their interests and learning goals.

An area for improvement relating to online safety had been identified at the previous inspection, specifically regarding children's use of personal mobile phones. Children handed their phones to staff on arrival at the club, which supported the safety of all children. However, during this inspection we found that a laptop used by children did not have parental controls in place. The service took immediate action to address this. The computer policy now needs to be reviewed to ensure it prioritises children's safety, including robust internet filtering and clear, age appropriate expectations for children's use of digital devices. This area for improvement is carried forward. (See area for improvement 3 under Outstanding Areas for Improvement.)

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 setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children experienced warm, gentle, and nurturing interactions that promoted confidence and wellbeing. Staff valued children as individuals and consistently offered reassurance, praise, and encouragement. Children told us "Staff are really nice, kind and funny". This supported children to effectively regulate their emotions and feel happy, confident and settled.

Staff knew children and families well, creating positive and secure relationships. Wellbeing was central to the work of the staff team which resulted in children and families feeling listened to and respected.

Children benefitted from being collected by minibus for the breakfast club, where they were welcomed with a hot breakfast. One child told us that breakfast club had been the best part of their day, reflecting the positive experience it offered. The morning routine was calm, unhurried, and sociable, helping children to settle positively into their day. Staff provided nurturing support, including toothbrushing, assistance with washing their face, and access to clean school uniforms when needed, before walking children to school. This consistent and caring start ensured children arrived feeling prepared, calm and ready to learn, promoting positive outcomes for their wellbeing and engagement.

Personal plans were in place for all children and had been developed with input from parents. To further strengthen practice, plans now need to be reviewed to ensure information gathered is consistently used to support positive outcomes. Although each plan included a strategy of support template, this was not completed in cases where additional support was identified. While team meeting minutes showed that individual children were discussed, this information was not reflected in their plans. Recording agreed strategies within each child's personal plan will ensure all staff can provide consistent support, enabling children to be supported to achieve.

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 consistently positive outcomes for children, the provider should develop and embed robust quality assurance processes and practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: '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 30 January 2025.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes were still at an early stage and not yet driving sustained improvement. The improvement plan lacked clarity, resulting in gaps in implementation and impact. We discussed actions the manager should take to ensure planned improvements are carried out and their impact is evident. The improvement plan requires further detail and development to support continuous improvement in line with the quality improvement framework.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the provider should ensure the service develop their approach to managing volunteer recruitment, including student placements.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited' (HSCS, 4.24).

This area for improvement was made on 30 January 2025.

Action taken since then

Volunteer recruitment did not comply with current guidelines, as references were not sought and taken up for a volunteer prior to them being at the service.

A domestic member of staff was used to cover for staff absences. Although the domestic member of staff held a current PVG, appropriate recruitment processes were not followed. This does not comply with current guidelines.

We signposted the manager to 'Safer recruitment for better recruitment' (SSSC and Care Inspectorate 2023).

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children's online safety, the service should implement robust and safe procedures relating to the use of digital technology. This would include but not be limited to developing policies and procedures related to children's use of technology in partnership with children and families.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS, 3.20) and 'I am helped to feel safe and secure in my local community' (HSCS, 3.25).

This area for improvement was made on 30 January 2025.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, children now handed their phones to staff on arrival; this supported all children's safety. However, the laptop used by children had no parental controls, meaning children could access inappropriate content. When we alerted the service to this, they took immediate action to rectify this.

The computer policy must now be updated to ensure that it reflects the opportunities offered to children. It is the responsibility of the manager and all staff to ensure that children are safe when accessing computers in the service and the computer policy should reflect this.

This area for improvement has not 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

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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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