

Stow Kids Club Day Care of Children

Stow Primary School
Station Road
Stow
Galashiels
TD1 2SQ

Telephone: 07709234413

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 March 2026

Service provided by:
Stow Kids Club a Scottish Charitable
Incorporated Organisation

Service provider number:
SP2016012658

Service no:
CS2016344719

About the service

Stow Kids Club is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children, of whom no more than 24 are aged four years to those attending primary school and no more than five are aged four years to those not yet attending primary school.

They provide care to children before and after school and over selected holiday periods.

The service operates from Stow Primary School within the Scottish Borders.

Children have access to a dedicated playroom, gym hall and toilets. There is an enclosed outdoor space available directly off the playroom, with access to further outdoor spaces on the school grounds. Stow Kids Club is near local amenities such as shops, parks and the train station.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 16 February 2026 between 12:15 and 17:30.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. A team manager was also present as part of the Care Inspectorate's quality assurance processes.

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:

- reviewed online questionnaires from 11 families and three staff
- spoke with the management and staff
- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with the chairperson of the management committee
- 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. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

During 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.

Key messages

- Improvement was evident in all identified areas made during the previous inspection. As a result, children's needs were being met.
- Children were confident, happy, having fun and most were engaged in the experiences available.
- Personal plans and communication were inconsistent, limiting clarity and continuity.
- The manager and staff were committed to supporting the development of the service.
- Families consistently said they were happy with the service and talked about it being a vital aspect of their community.

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 manager and staff team promoted a clear set of values focused on positive relationships, child centred practice and strong community links. These values were visible within the environment and reflected in warm, respectful staff interactions. Staff spoke confidently about ensuring children felt a strong sense of belonging, demonstrating a shared commitment to positive outcomes. While the vision and values were meaningful, they had not recently been reviewed with children and families. Involving them in this process would help ensure the service's aims fully reflect the wishes of all users.

The manager had begun applying the updated Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare Sectors: School Age Childcare. Staff were recording reflections using challenge questions, showing an understanding of self-evaluation, indicating that their quality assurance practice was developing. Staff demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the key areas of development during our discussions, showing that this was a shared plan. Moving forward the manager should now embed recording of identified improvements from the team reflections to support clearer planning and prioritisation of areas for development.

Quality assurance tasks were organised into a helpful schedule making it clear when tasks had been or were due to be carried out. The manager agreed that introducing audits or similar recording tools would strengthen current systems. Clear records of findings and actions would also help the whole staff team understand priorities and share responsibility. This approach will support more robust safety checks and ensure areas such as personal plans and chronologies remained accurate and up to date. As a result, children would benefit from safer, more consistent, and well coordinated care.

Staff demonstrated reflective practice, and the manager and management committee supported in the moment improvements. This included enhancing emotional literacy resources, improving safety equipment and responding to children's interests. This showed a positive culture of continuous improvement. Children were encouraged to share ideas through their own committee. However, when we asked, they could not describe the meetings or how their views led to change, indicating the process was not yet embedded. The manager should ensure children's contributions were recorded, revisited and used to influence decisions. This will help children experience genuine participation and see that their ideas make a difference.

Leadership of recruitment and induction needed strengthening, as responsibilities between the committee, manager and employer were not yet clearly defined. Staff described feeling supported by the employer through induction, appraisals and follow up meetings, demonstrating a helpful foundation. However, further discussion was now needed to establish clear shared responsibilities, agreed protocols and updated policies that set out the role of the employer alongside the provider. Strengthening these arrangements will help ensure safer, more consistent and well-coordinated staffing practice. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Families expressed high confidence in the leadership team, consistently praising communication, nurturing staff practice and strong support for all children. Feedback demonstrated a culture of trust and positive relationships, with families valuing the committee's responsiveness and community focused approach.

Overall, the service demonstrated committed leadership with emerging strengths in self-evaluation. By embedding consistency in quality assurance, strengthening child participation and clarifying recruitment responsibilities, the service is well placed to drive sustained improvement.

Areas for improvement

1. To promote high quality outcomes for children, the provider should strengthen leadership and management processes by embedding consistent systems for safer staffing practice by developing clarity around responsibilities between the employer and the provider.

This is to ensure children experience care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states:

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

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 mostly meaningfully engaged throughout the session, demonstrating interest, enjoyment and sustained involvement in their chosen activities. Staff interactions were warm, calm and attuned. They demonstrated a clear understanding of individual needs and used strategies to support children effectively. This promoted inclusion and emotional security. Staff were observant and responsive, noticing when children required support and offered timely guidance to help them reengage in play. This contributed to a calm and purposeful environment where children felt confident to explore a range of options.

A variety of creative materials, drawing resources and crafts were available, with many children choosing to participate for extended periods. These experiences supported fine motor skills, creativity and focused play. To enhance opportunities for richer imaginative play, further development of the resources would be beneficial. For example, increasing the availability of open-ended and challenging resources would offer further opportunities for high quality interactions that extend learning, increase curiosity and help deepen children's imaginative thinking.

Digital games were used safely and fairly, with staff managing turn taking effectively to maintain balance and support social skills. A group game in the hall was well facilitated, enabling children to participate at their own level and promoting physical development, sustained interest and social connection.

Although outdoor play was not accessed on the day of inspection, staff described regular plans and opportunities for outdoor experiences. Increasing flexibility to allow more spontaneous or free flow outdoor play would further enhance children's play experiences and align well with current good practice. Planned holiday outings and the developing link with the community garden offered valuable opportunities for exploration, responsibility and wider experiences.

Families spoke highly of the wide range of creative, physical and imaginative experiences the service provided. They also described children trying new activities, enjoying regular outdoor play and participating

in community trips. They valued the variety, fun and opportunities for confidence building and the promotion of inclusion in the club.

Planning processes were beginning to develop, with some experiences recorded in the Floorbook and day to day communication occurring through online messages within the team. Increasing consistency in recorded planning and ensuring that children's voices were clearly captured would strengthen ownership and ensure experiences reflected their interests. The recently introduced children's committee showed strong potential. Embedding this process and ensuring children understood how their views lead to change, will support meaningful participation and help them see the impact of their contributions.

Overall, the children were generally having fun and further enhancements would enhance this.

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.

Staff consistently demonstrated warm, sensitive and attuned interactions, responding effectively to children's differing needs. Their calm and predictable approach enabled children to feel secure, valued and confident to seek help when needed. Children benefitted from access to quiet spaces, which they used independently to regulate and take time away. This promoted emotional literacy and supported children to manage their own wellbeing.

Transition procedures were used flexibly to meet individual needs. Families told us that staff's understanding and adaptable approaches had made transitions easier for their children, helping to provide continuity of care and reassuring families that children's needs were recognised. Children were treated with dignity and respect. Children had created posters that promoted safety, respect and rights, which contributed to a positive and inclusive environment. This strengthened children's sense of ownership and helped them understand expectations within the club.

Staff demonstrated knowledge of children's rights and wellbeing. Effective use of emotional supports helped children to express their emotions and identify what support they needed. As a result, staff used skilled de-escalation, which reduced conflict and enabled children to re-join play smoothly.

An improvement since the previous inspection was the increased involvement and independence of children during snack routines. This meant that they were now supported to spread crackers, pour drinks and make choices. Meals and snacks were calm and children sat together, creating a good base for a social interaction. Children were consulted on items they would like for snack and the service responded to this, ensuring a balance of healthy food was provided. This ensured children remained well-nourished.

The manager and provider responded promptly when we identified areas within their medication records that needed further details. This demonstrated capacity to improve and supported the wellbeing of the children further. Strengthening these practices ensured staff could respond confidently and safely in a medical situation, reducing potential risk.

The recently introduced online registration system captured key information and sent automatic review reminders to families. However, for some children the text sections were not being used to their full

potential. The limited personalised detail reduced the depth of children's personal plans and meant staff did not always have the context required for fully individualised care. The manager was receptive to our discussions about enhancing the depth and quality of information gathered from families and recognised how this will support more tailored and responsive planning. This will also support the reviews of enhanced care plans and chronologies, ensuring they are current and up to date. The manager agreed that more effective use of chronologies would strengthen safeguarding and support staff with early identification of concerns or areas requiring support.

Staff welcomed families warmly each day, and positive, respectful communication helped build strong relationships. Feedback was gathered through surveys, committee communication and daily discussions, helping the service respond to community needs.

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

The provider should continue to build on children's personal plans to include achievements and next steps. These should be reviewed and updated every six months with parents and children.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing, Standard 6 - Support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service had begun to capture children's voices through individual paper journals, which included All About Me sheets detailing children's interests, likes, and dislikes.

Some families and children had added achievements from home and their own drawings. This demonstrated a positive intention to build personalised knowledge of each child.

The manager recognised that journals were a new addition but were not yet consistently recording all children's achievements or next steps. Embedding these journals more effectively into daily practice will strengthen personalised approaches and ensure planning responds to children's current interests and developing needs.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should provide opportunities for children to be more involved and independent at snack time.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing, Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service had made clear progress in promoting children's independence during snack routines. The breakfast club operated as a self-service station, allowing children to choose from a varied selection of cereals and fruit.

During our visit, children enjoyed lunch alongside staff who modelled relaxed, nurturing interactions, creating a calm and sociable atmosphere. Children were supported to make choices, spread crackers, and pour drinks.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should ensure that there is a suitable variety of outdoor toys and equipment for children, so they have access to a sufficient range of resources and a variety of outdoor play experiences.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 5 - Quality of experience.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service has taken positive steps to improve its outdoor provision through planned community partnerships and a clear focus on enriching children's play experiences. The enclosed outdoor space offered a good variety of resources, including scooters, sports equipment, and large outdoor games that supported active, energetic play.

Staff also made effective use of wider school grounds and local community spaces to broaden children's experiences. Children spoke confidently about an upcoming train trip to museums, and family feedback highlighted the service's strong commitment to keeping children active and engaged.

The manager and staff team had identified outdoor experiences as a development priority and were forming links with the local community garden to further enhance exploration, creativity, and real-world learning opportunities.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

Staff should arrange to access training on infection control, keeping them up to date with best practice guidance.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service had taken positive steps to strengthen staff knowledge of infection prevention and control. Training was accessed through the employer's online learning portal and supported by additional national training opportunities.

We reviewed staff training records, which outlined completed courses and identified future training needs. Staff were able to describe when outstanding training was scheduled and demonstrated good awareness of their ongoing responsibilities.

The service has made good progress in addressing this area for improvement, with training processes that support continuous learning and adherence to best practice.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The provider should consider further ways to involve parents and children in having opportunities to give suggestions and ideas for developing the club.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 7 - A caring environment, Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The service had a range of structures to promote children's participation, including a children's committee, an ideas book, and suggestion jars. These approaches showed a clear commitment to involving children in shaping their club. Children had also helped create club rules and emotion themed displays, which contributed to a welcoming environment and promoted shared expectations. With further consolidation, these participation methods have strong potential to increase children's influence on decision making.

Daily use of emotional strategies supported children with their self-regulation. As part of self-registration as children arrived in the club, they used colour coded props to indicate how they were feeling. This supported staff to identify those who may have needed additional time to settle after they arrived. This demonstrated a nurturing and attuned practice that positively supported wellbeing. The developing Floorbook provided a helpful starting point for shared reflection and increasing child led entries will strengthen its value as a meaningful learning tool.

The family run committee played an active role in improvement, securing breakfast funding and trialling extended holiday provision.

Moving forward, strengthening consistency in participation and embedding reflective, child led approaches will help the service build on its positive foundations and achieve sustained improvement.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

The provider should review and update the complaints procedure to include details of the Care Inspectorate.

National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14 - A well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 28 July 2017.

Action taken since then

During our visit, we reviewed the services policies and within this we could see that the complaints policy included a stepped process for raising concerns. The policy provided contacts for both the committee and the Care Inspectorate. This ensured that all families were informed of who to contact in each stage, supporting transparency and promoting confidence in the service's approach to managing grievances.

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.

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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