



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Childcare Inspection Report on Howells Junior School Out of School Care Clubs

Howells School  
Cardiff Road  
Llandaff  
Cardiff  
CF5 2YD



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## **Description of the service**

CSSIW registered the Girls Day School Trust to provide care for up to 70 children at Howells Junior School Out of School Care Clubs. The service has operated at Howells School, Llandaff since 2006 but a new registration with CSSIW was completed in December 2016 in order to change the legally registered body to the Girls Day School Trust. This is therefore the first inspection of the service since registration. The service offers care before and after the school day to girls who attend Howells School. They also provide care during the school holidays for girls who attend Howells School and their siblings. The service is provided primarily through the English language, but with consistent use of incidental Welsh throughout the day. Barbara Ludlam has been appointed as Responsible Individual on behalf of the Girls Day School Trust.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

We found that the children who attend this service enjoy attending, they have a strong voice in the service, and are able to engage in a good variety of play over which they have lots of choice. Warm relationships with staff are evident and strong friendships have developed between children. Staff are motivated, skilled, and clearly want to provide the best experiences for children. Children benefit from access to a large and varied outdoor play space, as well as an indoor play space which has been developed to create a welcoming and friendly environment. Although parents and children benefit from a culture of high standards within the club, we found that management is not sufficiently effective and there are areas where the service does not meet its legal requirements which must be addressed.

### **2. Improvements**

This was the first inspection of the service.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We found that the service is not meeting its legal responsibilities in respect of ensuring staff are suitably qualified. This is a serious matter and a Non-Compliance Notice has been issued.

We made recommendations in relation to supervision of children, the resource provision, pre-employment checks, children's record forms and permissions, and the confidential storage of records.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children benefit from a good play, leisure and care environment in which they have formed secure relationships with staff and positive friendships with other children, and this contributes to their well-being. All children in this service are able to engage in activities of their choosing and are free to develop that play in collaboration with their peers. They are listened to and their views are taken into account.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children are well able to make choices in this service, and are encouraged to speak and express themselves, with all attempts at communication are valued by staff. We observed the staff to be considerate of the children's views and conscious to give the children options and choices and to allow them to express themselves. Of the activities available to the children, a small selection are planned by staff each day based on children's interests and how they enjoyed an activity the previous day. Beyond that, children have a free choice of the activities they can choose on a day to day basis. We saw that there are lots of opportunities for children to chat and express themselves. The atmosphere in the service is calm and this allows children time to make their wishes clear and engage in meaningful communication with staff and peers. Staff and children told us that the children sit with staff when they are ordering new resources so they can help to choose resources. In the holiday club, the selection of activities made available indoors was available all day. This meant that during times of transition, such as the short time between retuning from swimming and lunch being ready, children were able to return to activities of their choosing, rather than waiting without being occupied. The ideas for the weekly themes in the holidays are chosen by children during the preceding holiday, and a child we spoke to who told us she had not attended when the themes were chosen, said she enjoyed that the themes had been a surprise for her and had enjoyed her time at the service.

Children have a voice in this service and this is valued.

### **1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?**

Children are secure, comfortable, happy and relaxed in a service where they have developed warm relationships with staff and peers. Children have clearly developed bonds of affection with the staff. They are happy and confident to approach them, are affectionate towards them and are often keen for them to engage in their play or to admire the products of their play (such as drawings or dances). The children are happy and they smile and laugh a lot whilst they are playing. One parent told us that

her young daughter had only started at the service four days previously but that she had enjoyed each day. Many of the children have formed strong, positive friendships with their peers. Some children had only started school in the few weeks prior to the holidays, and yet they were all very confident moving around the service, developing their own play, and negotiating play with newly acquired friends. Children were confident to engage in play of their choosing in the knowledge that their choices would be respected. Some of the girls had been practicing gymnastics in the garden and they asked staff if they could put on a show. Staff told them they would encourage all the children to watch before tea time, which they did.

Children in this service are well settled, happy and confident. They have formed strong friendships and feel valued.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children co-operate, take turns and share, and their behaviour is becoming guided by their sensitivity to the emotions of others. All children demonstrated a good understanding of what is expected on them whilst they are at the service. All children are generally well behaved and play co-operatively with their peers. Their interactions with staff also showed that they respect the staff and they respond well to their requests and any guidance on their behaviour. We observed no significant instances of unwanted behaviour. The atmosphere in the club is friendly, welcoming and calm.

Children have developed a strong sense of right and wrong and are, in the main, self disciplined.

### **1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?**

Children are interested and excited in the play based activities in which they engage. We saw that children were active and curious throughout the inspection, and all children were engaged in play for almost all of the day. They were happy and confident to move between activities freely, but also held a sustained interest in activities of their choosing as well. We saw children choosing between free-access activities, resources they could use to develop their own play, and on to adult supported activities. All children were able to persevere for an appropriate time at the activities they chose. We saw them making Chinese drums and bracelets and they enjoyed this and were proud of their finished items.

Children at this service really enjoy their play and leisure time, are able to sustain interest in their play and gain a real sense of achievement from it.

## **1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?**

Children have a good variety of experiences, including freely-chosen, unstructured and self-directed play that enable them to practice a good range of skills, be independent, participate and follow their interests. We found that staff had a good understanding of the children's individual needs and were able to plan activities to meet their interests and preferences. They told us that they ensure the children can be outside as much as possible because that is one of their favourite things to do, and we saw this to be the case, even when it began to rain. We saw that children are able to be very independent in the service. Toilets are adjacent to the rooms the service uses so children can access these independently and when they wish. The children are encouraged to help serve snack and drinks and to tidy away again afterwards. For much of the day, children can move freely between indoor and outdoor play as they wish and are able to access a selection of the stored resources so they can extend and develop their play themselves. We saw that when children were happy playing independently of staff, they allowed them the space to explore and progress their own play, rather than always seeking to join in with the play themselves.

Children in this service are confident and independent.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Children and parents benefit from skilled practitioners who have a good understanding of child development and want to make a positive difference to the children in their care. Staff are responsive and respect the children in their care and the decisions they make. Children remain safe and healthy because staff understand their responsibilities and are aware of the policies and procedures in place to support them in their roles. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and this helps to ensure that those needs are well met.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

Staff ensure that the service's policies and procedures are well implemented to support the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in their care. The service's Child Protection policy is thorough and staff we spoke to were able to speak knowledgeably about how they would respond to child protection concerns and their individual roles in implementing good safeguarding practice to keep children safe.

Good hygiene is promoted at the service. All children were encouraged to wash their hands before meal times and tables were cleaned with antibacterial spray before snack was served. The service is registered with Environmental Health as a food business and has been awarded a 5-star food hygiene rating. The service promotes healthy lifestyles by providing a balanced menu for the children, in line with Welsh Government guidance. During the inspection, children were offered a choice of fruits for snack, and homemade fish and chips with salad for lunch. One child didn't like the dessert so the Person in Charge asked if she would like an apple, which she said yes to. At lunch time, all the children sat together on one long table. Staff sat with the children to support them where necessary, such as cutting food for younger children who needed assistance. Lunch was a very pleasant and social occasion. Children are also encouraged to be active at the service. Swimming lessons are scheduled each week and there is a focus on playing actively outdoors as much as possible during the course of the day, which we saw children enjoy.

Records showed that fire drills are practiced with the children at least once each week during the holidays, and also regularly during term time provision. We examined accident records and found they did not request a parent's signature to acknowledge the entry. We fed this back to the Responsible Individual and she ensured the form had been amended by the next visit we made to the service. There were no forms

available to record the administering of medication should staff be required to do so and the Responsible Individual also ensured this was addressed by our next visit.

Staff have a sound understanding of the policies and procedures to follow to keep children safe and healthy.

## **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff set realistic boundaries, are good role models and use a consistent approach to managing behaviour, taking into account children's age and understanding. They take a positive approach to the guiding of behaviour. They were proactive in praising the children when they had behaved well, thereby reinforcing this good behaviour. They were also very encouraging when the children made a good effort and praised this, and it was evident from our observations that the children responded well to this praise and encouragement. Staff have a very calm manner when managing behaviour. No significant issues of behaviour management occurred during the inspection, largely thanks to the positive approach taken. Staff managed small behaviour issues, such as using an unkind word, with gentle verbal reminders and this was sufficient. The children were seen to be polite, courteous and kind to each other.

Staff manage interactions well and this has a positive impact on children's experiences at the service.

## **2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?**

Staff provide a nurturing and caring environment in which children's play and well-being is well promoted. All staff have a relaxed, happy and caring nature when interacting with the children. They spoke with the children in a consistently calm and reassuring manner, and this helped to ensure that the service remained a calm and pleasant play environment. We often saw staff listening carefully to what the children were saying, which helped to make the children feel valued. On one occasion, a child told the Person in Charge that she was hungry. The Person in Charge told her that her tummy was rumbling too and that lunch was only five minutes away. She then asked the child if she could remember what was for lunch. When the child could not, she suggested it might be snails on toast, to which the child shouted "No!" and both of them fell into fits of giggles. We saw that the children were very comfortable to interact with staff whilst playing together and that they were often keen to include them in their play.



The staff group are keen to ensure they are good play facilitators. The Person in Charge of the holiday provision (who is also the Responsible Individual) has undertaken a 'transition to playwork' leaders' qualification specifically for her role as Person in Charge of this service. She told us that she learnt a lot about the concepts of facilitating play which she has applied to her work in the club. When we spoke to the other staff, it was also clear that they have embraced the role of play facilitators and are very conscious that this is different from the roles they also each hold as teaching assistants. We saw that staff plan a small selection of activities for each day based on upcoming events and children's interests. Children are able to access these as they wish and any other activity is then child led. This approach helps to ensure that there are always sufficient planned activities for children to choose from as well as being reactive to the children's developing interests. Children initiated many activities themselves across the two days we observed them.

Some Welsh language was included in the service, such as during times of transition between activities, and please and thank you. Some members of staff are competent or very competent Welsh speakers and we saw them take the opportunity to include Welsh where possible. We also saw that the service explores different cultures through the activities provided. For example, the theme of the week during one of our visits was 'Slow Boat to China'. During the week, made Chinese lanterns, eaten Chinese food with chopsticks, and made fortune cookies. They had also made a large Chinese dragon out of junk modelling materials that had been entirely the idea of the children.

Staff promote children's development and well-being through the play and care provided.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children have access to an outdoor play space that has been well developed and benefit from an adequate range of resources which are appropriately maintained. The indoor environment is welcoming and supports a sense of belonging in the service for the children. However, some of the resourcing should be reconsidered to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes and give the girls a strong variety of resources to play with.

#### **Our findings**

##### **3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?**

Parents can be confident that the play environment is well maintained by staff. The service is operated mostly from the junior school hall, with use of other areas of the school as needed. Security at the service is adequate and is achieved either by restricted access on to the school site or by staff supervision of the play space, particularly when outdoors. Cleaning routines at the service reflect good hygiene practices and effective infection control procedures. Valid insurance cover for Public Liability was in place, and we saw certificates which demonstrated the gas and electrical systems within the premises had been checked for safety within the last 12 months. We also examined risk assessments for the service and found that they were sufficiently detailed. We observed no additional risks which had not been accounted for. The systems in place for managing risk when taking children off site for trips was also very comprehensive. However whilst children were playing outside, we noted that it is not possible for one member of staff to view the whole of the outdoor play space due to its shape. Staff did not appear conscious of this, often staying together at one end of the garden, meaning that a section of the garden where children were playing went unobserved for extended periods. Staff should ensure they are always aware of the play space as a whole to ensure supervision of children is adequate.

Children are cared for in a clean and appropriate play environment.

##### **3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?**

Children benefit from an environment that is welcoming and friendly, and which supports a sense of belonging in the service. We found the indoor environment to be well decorated, warm and welcoming.

Both rooms that the term-time club uses have boards displaying photos of the children engaged in activities and examples of their work, which helps to develop a sense of belonging in the service for the children. During the holiday club, we found that the school all had been made to feel welcoming and comfortable, with smaller play areas

partitioned to give the space a sense of distinctness and purpose. Children were well able to move between these spaces and direct their own play in the environment that had been created. Outside, children are able to access a varied play environment: there is a garden area with planting in the nursery garden; an area of large play equipment; a netball court on which they can play with wheeled, ride-one toys; a smaller covered decked area; and they can also access the school field for organised games and other large activities. We saw the children choose to play outside for much of our visits, and even when it was raining at times, they played in the covered decked area or were happy to play out in appropriate clothing. Staff told us they children love to be outside after their day in school, as well as in the holidays, and they get out as much as possible.

Children benefit from a good quality environment which is well suited to the needs of the children and which helps to give them a sense of belonging in the service.

### **3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?**

Children have access to an adequate range of toys and equipment that promote play opportunities. However, too large a proportion of toys conform to, and reinforce, gender stereotypes. Suitable child-sized tables and chairs were available, as well as an area of soft furnishings, mats and bean bags where children could relax. The outdoor areas have a climbing frame and slide in a safety-floored area, swings, a covered outdoor classroom area in which staff had set out a good selection of loose parts and construction materials, and bikes on the adjoining netball court. We found all resources to be in a good condition, and the Responsible Individual confirmed that cleaning rotas were in place to ensure good hygiene is maintained. However, we noted that many resources available to children were heavily gendered, with the rationale from management that it was because this is a girls-only service. Many toys were 'pink', and there were several princess castles and other gendered small world toys. Even where resources weren't inherently gendered, such as crafting materials and Lego, these items were often pink. We discussed this with the Person in Charge and she told us that it was what the girls asked for. Girls attending this service do not have the opportunity to play with a strong range of gender neutral or 'traditional male toys' in the same way they would if they attended a co-ed provision.

Children benefit from an adequate range of toys and equipment that meet their needs and promote their play opportunities. However, the gender balance of the resource provision should be reconsidered, to avoid gender stereotyping..

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Parents and children benefit from a reliable service provided by committed staff and management group who want to provide the best experiences for children. However, there are areas where the service has not been run with due regard to the regulations and National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care and the service has failed to fully meet its legal responsibilities in these areas.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Children and parents benefit from a reliable service but not all aspects of the service are well planned. The service has a Statement of Purpose in place which contains the information required by regulations so that parents can make an informed choice about using the service. We examined the service's policies and found them to be generally appropriate. We found that registers of children's attendance did not record children's actual times of attendance, as required by the regulations. We discussed this with the Responsible Individual and on our next visit to the service, we saw that the registers had been amended to include this information immediately. We have therefore not issued a Non Compliance Notice in respect of this matter. We also found that the management of documentation was not sufficiently thorough. In our examination of the service's records, we found that some personal records for children, such as permissions records, were held in generic folders, such as the policy folder, which would be shared freely. Also within the policy folder were highly personal staff records such as DBS certificates and qualifications. Children's accidents records were also kept within a generic folder and incident records were kept on a weekly log for the service. The confidential storage of records must be improved. All records should be audited to ensure they are stored confidentially and in a suitably accessible manner. This inspection has raised that there are a number of areas in which the service is either not meeting their legal obligations under the regulations, or not meeting the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. These include having insufficient suitably qualified staff during some parts of the service's operation, a lack of clarity in some of the documentation used, such as parental permissions and medication recording, and a lack of robust systems to recruit suitable staff to work in the setting.

Parents cannot be fully confident that the provision is always well run through sound leadership and management because there are elements of the service where insufficient care and attention has been paid to the requirements of the regulations and National Minimum Standards.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

The service consults with parents and children to get their feedback about her service. However, this information is not used effectively to inform improvements to the service. The Responsible Individual told us that the service consults formally with parents and children each summer and would address any issue they raised. However, we found that the Quality of Care report for the service only contained the findings of the consultation. The information gained was not used to consider improvements needed to the service. An effective quality assurance process is important to be able to improve the service provided to children and parents. We discussed this with the Responsible Individual and she later provided confirmation to us that all necessary considerations would be included on the next occasion the report is due.

The service consults with parents and children, but the formal system to review the quality of care the service provides should use this feedback effectively to inform improvements to the service.

#### **4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?**

Staff are effective in managing their own time and prioritising activities responsively to ensure that children's needs are always met in a timely manner. The calm and relaxed care environment has a positive impact on children's experience. However, management do not have effective systems in place to ensure staff are managed safely by the service. All of the staff working in the service also work in Howells School and are employed through the school. However, the Responsible Individual does not have a system in place for her to have sight of all pre-employment checks for the staff working in the service and she cannot verify that all necessary checks required by the regulations have been completed and are satisfactory. Such a system should be developed. The system for staff supervision and appraisal is also integrated with their roles within the school. All staff receive an annual appraisal and a mid-year review of this appraisal. We recommend that the Responsible Individual uses the Social Care Wales guidance document 'Supervising and Appraising Well' to support her in ensuring that supervision arrangements in place are appropriate for a regulated child care setting.

We found that the service is not meeting its legal responsibility to ensure that a sufficient proportion of staff working at any one time and suitably qualified. On the days we inspected the after school care and holiday care, a sufficient proportion of the staff working were suitably qualified. However, an examination of staff records and discussion with the Responsible Individual showed that no member of staff who was available to work in the breakfast element of the service held a relevant child care

qualification. This is a serious matter and a Non-Compliance Notice has been issued in respect of it.

Throughout the daily running of the service, staff manage their time well. However, the management of staff must be improved to meet the requirements of the regulations and National Minimum Standards.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Parents and children's expectations about the service are matched by their experience. Parents we spoke to, and those who responded to CSSIW questionnaires, all confirmed they were satisfied with the communication in place between the service and themselves. They confirmed they were made aware of the service's policies when their children started, and that they receive sufficient information about their children on a daily basis. The service sends parents a newsletter prior to the operation of each holiday club letting parents know what the themes will be each week and which days trips and activities will be, so they are prepared to supply any necessary clothing, such as swimming costumes and towels. In examining records, we noted that parents' addresses should be included on children's records if they are different from the child's. We also found that on some occasions, staff had signed permissions forms to take children off-site for trips in lieu of parents. The Responsible Individual told us that this would only have happened in instances where no form had been returned by the parent on the day of a trip and verbal permission had been given over the telephone. However, there was no indication on the records that this was the case. We asked the Responsible Individual to consider how their systems could be amended to alleviate the problem of parents failing to return permissions slips, and she assured us she would.

The service is clear about its role and responsibilities to establish trust and clear communication with partners. However, systems for record keeping must be improved.

## **Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Areas of non compliance identified at this inspection**

The service is not compliant with Regulation 27 (a) and (b) – Staffing. The Responsible Individual has not ensured that at all times, there are enough suitably qualified staff to look after children. This is a serious matter and we have issued a Non-Compliance Notice.

### **5.3 Recommendations for improvement**

The following recommendations are made:

- staff must ensure they are always aware of the play space as a whole to ensure supervision of children is adequate;
- the balance of the resource provision should be reconsidered to give better balance and range, taking into account gender stereotyping;
- a system should be implemented to ensure the Responsible Individual has sight of all pre-employment checks for the staff working in the service, and a record made that they were satisfactory prior to staff starting at the service;
- the Social Care Wales guidance document 'Supervising and Appraising Well' should be used to help ensure that supervision arrangements in place are appropriate for a regulated child care setting;
- children's record forms should include the address of parents if different from the child's;
- staff must not sign permission forms for children in lieu of parents, and;
- the confidential storage of records must be improved. All records should be audited to ensure they are stored confidentially and in a suitably accessible manner.

## **5. How we undertook this inspection**

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

- One inspector undertook an unannounced visit to the after school service. We later visited the holiday club unannounced for one day and a third visit was made to finish inspecting documentation and provide feedback to the Responsible Individual;
- we observed children and the care they received. Observations were carried out both indoors and outdoors;
- we reviewed information held by CSSIW;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we spoke to a number of children throughout the day. We also spoke to most staff members who were present and a number of parents;
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the Statement of Purpose, staff files, health and safety records, children's files, and activity planning.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)



## 6. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Out of School Care
Responsible Individual	Barbara Ludlam
Person in charge	Barbara Ludlam Emma Williams
Registered maximum number of places	70
Age range of children	3 to 11 years for term time provision 3 to 9 years for holiday provision
Opening hours	Term time breakfast provision – 07:45 to 08:45 Term time after school provision – 15:15 to 18:00 Holiday provision – 08:00 to 18:00
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	This was the first inspection since registration
Dates of this inspection visit	17/07/2017, 11/08/17 and 18/08/17
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	<p>This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'</i>.</p> <p>The service is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh language service.</p>



**Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**  
**Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010**  
**Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010**  
**Non Compliance Notice**

**Childrens Day Care**

This notice sets out where your service is not compliant with the regulations. You, as the registered person, are required to take action to ensure compliance is achieved in the timescales specified.

**The issuing of this notice is a serious matter. Failure to achieve compliance will result in CSSIW taking action in line with its enforcement policy.**

Further advice and information is available on CSSIW's website  
[www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

**Howells Junior School Out of School Care Clubs**

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<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Our Ref: NONCO-00004765-BCSD</b>
<b>Non-compliance identified at this inspection</b>	
<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>01/02/18</b>
<b>Evidence</b>	
<p>The service is not compliant with Regulation 27(a) and (b) - Staffing.</p> <p>This is because The Registered Person has not ensured that at all times, there are enough suitably qualified staff to look after children.</p> <p>The evidence for this is that records seen during the inspection showed that staff working in the breakfast club did not hold suitable qualifications to work with the children as required by NMS 13.7(DC). In addition to this no member of staff working in the breakfast club held a level 3 child care qualification so that they could act as the person in charge and manage the service.</p> <p>The impact on people using the service is that children are not being provided with suitably qualified staff to meet their needs and effectively lead the service, which could lead to poor outcomes for children.</p>	
<b>Description of non-compliance/Action to be taken</b>	<b>Regulation number</b>
The Registered Person has not ensured that at all times, there are enough suitably qualified staff to look after children.	27 (a) 27 (b)