



Childcare Inspection Report on

Castle Kids Childcare

**Gaer Community Centre
Gaer Road
Newport
NP20 3GY**



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Description of the service

Castle Kids Childcare operates from Gaer Community Centre on the outskirts of Newport. It has been registered since July 2017 to provide care for a maximum of 30 children up to the age of 12 years. The Responsible Individual (RI) is Lynda Goodwin, on behalf of Newport City Council. The service operates a playgroup for children from two years to four years, Monday to Friday, 9.15am to 11.30am and 1.00pm to 3.00pm. It also offers 12 Flying start places Monday to Friday 12.30pm to 3.00pm. Wraparound sessions are provided for children attending local nurseries Monday to Friday, 11.30am to 1.00pm and 1.00pm to 3.00pm. An after school club provides out of school care for children up to the age of 12, Monday to Friday, 3.15pm to 5.45pm. A Person in Charge (PiC) is employed to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of the service. An additional PiC is employed to take responsibility for the after school club. This is predominantly an English speaking service with good use of incidental Welsh.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Castle Kids Childcare is a very well run service. Children are happy, settled and benefit from a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. The premises are secure, clean and well maintained. Resources in the playgroup are plentiful and suitable for the age range of the children attending although some improvement is needed to the range of resources in the after school club. Staff are well qualified, enthusiastic and have very good relationships with the children they care for. Leadership is strong and ensures that the service complies with the Childminding and Day Care Regulations (Wales) 2010 and National Minimum Standards (NMS). Paperwork is of a good standard and well organised.

2. Improvements

This was the first inspection since registration in July 2017.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no areas of non-compliance identified during this inspection. Recommendations in relation to the after school club are discussed in the body of the report and summarised at the end.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are happy and settled at the service and have formed positive relationships with staff and their peers. Children in the playgroup have access to a very good range of planned activities to suit the wide range of interests although older children attending the after school club have less variety. Children have a strong voice and are regularly consulted about their opinions. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop independence and their holistic development is promoted by staff.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children at the service have a strong voice. We saw that they were confident to approach staff because they knew they would be listened to. Children attending the after school club had told staff that they didn't like the menu and they were given the opportunity to offer suggestions for an alternative menu which was consequently provided. We saw that younger children had plenty of opportunities to make choices and follow their interests. We noted that they were made aware of the activities that were available to them at the beginning of each session and this allowed them to make appropriate choices. Children with English as an additional language are given high priority. Staff told us that they regularly consult with parents in order to learn key phrases that allow them to understand children's needs and improve communication.

Children are consulted on their opinions and their views are respected.

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

Children are happy and settled at the service. Routines are well established and children know what to expect when they arrive. We noted that all children have a key worker which ensures that all children have a familiar adult to care for them. This provides consistency for the children and develops a sense of security. We saw that children's work was displayed and celebrated, giving them a sense of belonging. We saw a 'Parent Pride' display in the playroom that included photographs, provided by parents, of their children's achievements at home. This provides a lovely link between home and the playgroup and helps to create a sense of belonging for the children. We noted that children generally settled quickly but when one child was unsettled coming in, they were given lots of attention by their key worker and they were quickly happy and engaged in activities. Staff showed us 'talking point' books that had been produced for children. These contained photographs of family and information about their likes and dislikes. We were told that these books are used to engage children in conversation if they find it difficult to settle or are unhappy during a session.

There are very good procedures in place to ensure that children feel valued and gain a sense of security and belonging.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children at the service interact well. They have formed positive relationships with staff and peers. We saw that older children attending the after school club had formed friendships and we observed them playing group games such as football and den building or sitting around tables completing art activities and chatting happily. Younger children were seen to have formed good bonds with key workers and confidently approached staff for help or to chat. They played happily together or alongside each other depending on their age and developmental stages. Children responded well to requests from staff and to reminders such as *'nice hands please'*. Children shared resources and took turns to use the equipment. We observed a small group of children playing with the pet mice. They chatted about how to hold them and understood that they needed to be gentle.

Children interact well and are beginning to develop an understanding of how to manage their own behaviour.

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

Children enjoy a very good range of activities. We saw that in the playgroup there were plenty of opportunities for children to lead their own play and follow their interests. They could choose if they wanted to play indoors or outside and staff were suitably deployed to facilitate this choice. Resources were readily available and were suitable for the age range of the children. They are stored at low level allowing children to access them independently. We noted that children were engaged in activities for an appropriate length of time and persevered to complete them. We saw a group of children playing with a member of staff outside. They were excited by the 'snap snap' crocodile game and there was lots of chatter and laughter. Resources in the after school club were more limited and we spoke to children who told us that they would like to have more choice. This was discussed with the RI who agreed to gather feedback from the children about what they would like and purchase additional resources.

Overall, children enjoy their play and learning and benefit from a good range of activities.

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

Children develop well in line with their age and stage of development. They are able to lead their own learning through free choice activities which are carefully planned to support their all round development. We saw activities that allowed children to participate in imaginary play, caring for animals, construction and art and craft along with opportunities for physical activity. We noted that staff supported children very well and played alongside them, making good use of opportunities for language development and to address learning points. Children are also provided with a very good range of adult led activities to address specific skills. Children demonstrated good levels of independence and very good use was made of opportunities for children to develop self help skills, for example, snack was served as a buffet allowing

children to choose when and what they wanted to eat. They were able to serve themselves and practice skills such as buttering toast and pouring drinks.

Independence of toileting is somewhat limited due to toilets being situated away from the main playroom. As the service operates from a community building, children must be accompanied by staff. This was discussed with the RI and PiC who were aware of the limitations and they told us that there are plans to convert a storage area adjacent to the playroom into children's toilets.

Overall, children are becoming independent learners and their holistic development is supported.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are enthusiastic, caring and responsive to individual needs. They support children sympathetically and value their relationships with them. Staff are very well qualified and on-going training ensures they are up to date with best practice guidance. Safeguarding procedures are robust and this has a high priority within the service.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff are conscientious in their role to keep children safe and healthy. There is a detailed safeguarding policy that includes information on 'Prevent' which is a government strategy to support child care providers in recognising signs of extremism and radicalisation. We spoke to staff who confidently explained safeguarding procedures and knew how to refer concerns. Fire evacuation drills are carried out monthly and records are kept of children present to ensure that all children have the opportunity to practice and know what to do in an emergency. We saw that medication records were detailed and accident and incident records were of the expected nature for the age of the children. Accident records are monitored monthly to identify trends and patterns. An infection control audit is undertaken to ensure best practice in health and hygiene procedures. We saw that the premises were clean and routines such as hand washing were firmly embedded. Children are served a healthy snack including fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and water. Information on allergens were clearly displayed and staff were aware on children's individual needs.

There are robust systems in place to ensure that children's health and safety is at the heart of the service.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Interactions are consistently managed by staff. We saw that there was a detailed behaviour management policy, with emphasis upon positive behaviour management strategies. Staff were seen to work in line with the policy and confidently discussed strategies for managing unwanted behaviour. We heard lots of praise for positive behaviour and achievements were celebrated with high fives. We heard phrases such as 'good waiting' and 'good listening' being used by all staff throughout the day, demonstrating that these practices are firmly embedded in the service. We saw records of detailed observations carried out for children with behavioural needs. These observations took into account triggers for specific behaviours and identified appropriate strategies to be used by staff to address them. We spoke to older children attending the after school club who were aware of the rules and expectations of behaviour. On the day of the inspection, behaviour was very good but when reminders were needed they were done in a calm and sympathetic manner.

Staff manage interactions very well and work in line with the behaviour management policy.

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

Staff provide children with a nurturing environment in which their individual needs are met. Children are provided with an excellent range of activities. There is a very good mix of free choice and adult led activities, allowing children to follow their own interests. An overview of planning is completed termly. Key workers complete weekly planning and evaluations for individual children and activities target children's next steps in learning that have been identified. Parents are involved in planning through 'planning in partnership' meetings with key workers. This allows them to share information about their children with staff, such as their strengths, likes, dislikes and any concerns they may have. One parent told us that their child had enjoyed playing 'shop' at home and staff had included this in the child's planning. We noted that the service is very inclusive. All staff use 'Sign-a-long' which allows children with communication difficulties to be fully involved in group activities. Staff told us that this has been very beneficial and children, including those with English as an additional language, pick it up very quickly. There is an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) who takes responsibility for managing provision for children with additional needs. We saw that there are robust systems in place to identify needs and monitor progress. Children with additional needs have individual play plans identifying targets and strategies to support them. Appropriate referrals are made to outside agencies such as speech and language therapists and advice is acted upon. One parent told us that they had been very grateful for the support they had received with their child's needs. The PiC had attended meetings outside her working hours and had gone 'over and above' to help.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the children in their care and are committed to meeting their individual needs.

3. Environment

Summary

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Risks are generally assessed and where possible eliminated although care must be taken to ensure that the outside area used for the after school club is checked daily. Resources for the playgroup are of good quality, plentiful and appropriate for the age range of the children but some improvements are needed to the range of resources available for older children attending the after school club.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that the environment is a safe place for children to play and learn. We saw that the playroom and outside play area was secure and our identification was checked upon arrival. Risk assessments were seen to be detailed and daily checks of the room used for playgroup are carried out. When risks are identified these are promptly addressed. We noted that, on the day of the inspection, daily checks had not been carried out for the outside play area used by children attending the after school club. We saw that litter had not been removed and this was discussed during feedback. We were told that some of the staff were covering for staff absences and this would be addressed with them immediately. We saw that gas and electrical safety checks were in date and insurance policies were current.

Overall, leaders ensure that environment is safe but more attention must be given to daily checks of the after school club.

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

Leaders ensure that the environment is suitable and provides a stimulating place for children's play and learning. We saw that there was sufficient space for the number of children. The playroom and outside areas provided space for children to be physically active and take appropriate risks, for example, with large play equipment such as climbing frames. In the playgroup, the space was thoughtfully arranged to provide a wide variety of free choice. Resources were stored at low level which allowed children to access them independently. There were lovely displays of children's work which were bright and stimulating. However, we noted that the room used for the after school club was not as well utilised. Whilst most of the children chose to play football or build dens outside, indoor activities were very limited and the arrangement of the chairs and tables did not appear to be comfortable with no suitable area for children to relax. This was discussed with the RI who agreed to review how the room is arranged in order to make it more attractive to children.

Overall, the environment is suitable and stimulating but the room used for the after school club should be reviewed and improved.

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

Leaders ensure that resources and equipment are of good quality and suitable for the age range of the children. We saw that furniture was child size and of suitable design to promote independence. Resources were seen to be clean, well maintained and complied with relevant safety standards. On the day of the inspection we were told that sand and water was not available due to a recent outbreak of Hand, Foot and Mouth. This demonstrates the awareness of good hygiene practice and appropriate infection control. In the playgroup, resources were plentiful and allowed children excellent variety and choice although resources in the after school club were more limited and this should be reviewed. Good use was made of natural and re-cyclable materials. We saw that there were resources to promote cultural awareness such as dolls and books. We noted that the service has a number of pets such as mice and shrimps. These were clean, risk assessed and appropriately housed to ensure that associated risks were addressed.

Children benefit from good quality resources but the range of resources available for the after school club should be developed.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leadership of the service is strong. The PiC and RI work closely together to ensure that it is subject to on-going evaluation and improvement. The recruitment process is robust and staff are well managed and supported. Partnerships with parents are very well established.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership of the service is very effective and ensures that it complies with regulations and National Minimum Standards. There is a clear statement of purpose that gives an accurate view of what the service provides. Leaders have a clear vision for the service and this is effectively communicated with staff. A very good range of child centred policies and procedures ensure that the service operates smoothly on a day to day basis. Staff are well qualified and leaders ensure that training such as safeguarding, food hygiene and paediatric first aid is relevant and up to date. The staff team works effectively and staff reported that they felt well supported and knew who to go to if they had concerns. However, due to different PiC's there is some discrepancy between leadership of the playgroup and after school club. Systems and procedures should be shared in order that there is consistency across the service. This was discussed with the RI during feedback.

Leadership is strong and the service runs very effectively.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

There are very good systems in place for the self evaluation and improvement of the service. A comprehensive quality of care report has been produced and draws upon the views of children, parents and practitioners. Parents are able to offer opinions about the service through comment books and question tubs that ask for a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Questions we saw included 'Do you know your child's key worker?' Answers had been evaluated and we saw evidence that areas for improvement had been addressed. Leaders ensure that good practice is highlighted and areas for development have been included in a very detailed action plan for improvement. There are systems in place for staff to evaluate their own work and one to one management notes and annual appraisals were well detailed. During the inspection we noted that staff and leaders were fully engaged with the process, open to suggestions of how to improve the service and willing to try different ways of working.

Systems and procedures for self evaluation of the service are very effective and ensures that the service is subject to on-going improvement.

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

Management of staff and resources is effective. The recruitment process is robust and we saw that staff files contained all of the required information. We saw that new

members of staff have an induction program and policies are shared and signed. All practitioners have defined roles and responsibilities which are outlined in job descriptions. Registers and observations showed that staff / child ratios meet the national minimum standards. Targets for staff are set during one to one supervision and annual appraisal and are these are reviewed regularly. Staff have undertaken all of the required training and there is a commitment from leaders to the ongoing professional development of staff through additional training opportunities for good practice issues. We spoke to staff who told us that they felt well supported and were given time to complete their roles such as planning. The ALNCo told us that she has regular non-contact time to carry out her management role.

Staff are very well managed and challenged to do their best.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships are very effective. The service has an open door policy and welcomes interactions with parents. During the inspection we heard warm interactions between staff and parents. There are excellent systems for gathering parent feedback such as comment books, question tubs and questionnaires. Parents are invited to attend a parent participation day every term when they can come to the playgroup to work with their children. Parents are involved in planning through contributing to children's one page profiles, individual play plans and individual behaviour plans. When children start at the service parents are asked what they want for their children and their answers are displayed in the playroom. We saw comments such as 'To be kind and helpful' and 'To be happy and healthy'. We spoke to two parents who regularly attend the service to help with the preparation of resources. They both gave very positive feedback about the service and told us that they thoroughly enjoyed volunteering.

Partnerships are well established and parental involvement is promoted.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Ensure daily checks are carried out on the after school club outdoor area;
- review and improve range of resources available to children attending the after school club and
- ensure consistency of leadership across the playgroup and after school club.

6. How we undertook this inspection

One inspector undertook an unannounced inspection as part of our normal schedule of inspections. Approximately nine hours were spent at the play scheme over one day. The following methodology was used to gather evidence for this report:

- Observations of care routines and practices;
- discussion with the RI, PiC and staff;
- conversation with several children;
- discussion with several parents;
- visual inspection of both inside and outside play areas;
- consideration of information held by CIW such as the last inspection report and
- sight of a range of policies and procedures including information held in staff personnel files.

Feedback was provided to the RI and PiC at the end of the inspection.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Lynda Goodwin
Person in charge	Rebecca Mifsud
Registered maximum number of places	32
Age range of children	Playgroup 2 - 4 years After School Club up to 12 years
Opening hours	Playgroup 9.15am – 11.30am / 1.00pm – 3.00pm Flying Start 12.30pm – 3.00pm Wraparound 11.30am – 1.00pm After School Club 3.15pm – 5.45pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	Post registration
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	04 October 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	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 the service. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. However, we recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just words' strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information: None	

