



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Buds to Blossoms Cwm Nursery**

**Flying Start - Cwm Hub  
Canning Street  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 7RD**



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## **Description of the service**

Buds to Blossoms Cwm Nursery is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide day care for up to 26 children aged between two and four years. The service is based in a dedicated room within the newly built Flying Start Hub in Cwm. Morning and afternoon sessions of varying lengths are provided weekdays, term time only, between the hours of 8am and 2.45pm to meet the different needs of the families in the area. For example, children living in the Flying Start area are able to access 5 mornings each week from 8.45am to 11.15am; in the New Year an afternoon session for will also be provided. A morning and afternoon wrap around service is offered for children attending the local nursery, from 9am to 12.30pm or 11.15am to 2.45pm. The group is managed by two Registered Persons (RPs), Lee Fowler and Sarah Adlam. There is a Person in Charge (PiC) who manages the setting on a day to day basis. English is the main language of the group with good use of incidental Welsh to promote children's learning.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

The service strives to promote children's well-being and provide engaging, varied activities, which follow their interests and develop their sense of curiosity. The environment is calm and homely, with natural and authentic resources used to promote children's imagination and learning. Children are able to form very warm and secure relationships with staff who know them well and who provide skilful support to promote their development. The RPs are proactive in bringing about improvements to the service and share their vision enthusiastically and effectively with staff.

### **2. Improvements**

A service has already made a number of improvements since registering in October 2017. These include:

- Developments to the environment such as introducing lamps and fairy lights, and using natural lighting, rather than bright overhead lights, to create a more relaxed atmosphere; and, introducing more natural and household resources to spark children's imagination and curiosity;
- moving snack time to later in the session so children have more time to enjoy the activities and resources available to them;
- ongoing training for staff, to develop their professional knowledge and practice;

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

The service is compliant with the relevant regulations so there are no requirements as a result of this inspection. We made two recommendations to help improve outcomes for children and parents. These are discussed in the body of the report and highlighted towards the end.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children's well-being is effectively promoted. They are able to build warm and nurturing relationships with staff, and in particular their key worker, and friendships with their peers. Their views and feelings are valued. They are excited to take part in the activities provided and can make lots of choices about what they do, with staff on hand to follow their ideas and promote their learning.

## **Our findings**

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

Children can make choices and decisions about their play. Sessions are well structured so children can determine their own play and choose their own resources for the majority of the time. They are regularly consulted about what they would like to do, and well supported to make their own decisions. Children can choose to play alone, in pairs or small groups. Within the activities set up, children are free to explore and use the resources as they wish. For example, with the playdough, children could use the willow sticks for rolling if they chose, and the curtain rings to make their snowman's eyes or cut out shapes; they could use the construction area to build, or as a stage. There are some group activities, which children are encouraged to take part in, but they can choose not to if they prefer. The door to the outside play area is open for the majority of the session and children can choose where they play. During snack time children can select from a choice of foods, with water or milk to drink, and at lunch they can leave what they don't want.

Children are very well supported by staff to make their own choices and decisions about their play.

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

Children are happy and excited to take part in the activities. They are supported to settle into the group at their own pace and the parents we spoke with told us how much their child's confidence had grown since they had started at the group. Most came into the group confidently and all were greeted individually by staff. If children were feeling a little insecure when they arrived, they were given extra support and led gently to activities the staff know they have a particular interest in. Photographs of the children with their families are displayed to help children feel at home. Children are able to build up close relationships with their key worker. One parent told us their child always talks about their key worker and what they have done with them during the session. Children are encouraged to express themselves and they approach staff confidently to say what they need. They are listened to by the staff, given time to talk and their feelings are understood and acknowledged. Staff provide running commentaries to children's activities which helps them feel included. They openly

celebrate their achievements, sharing them with the other staff and encouraging children to tell staff what they have achieved. Children have built up very good friendships with each other and parents we spoke with told us how their children always come home talking about their friends.

Children feel valued, confident and happy at the service.

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

Children are learning to share, socialise, and manage their own behaviour successfully with gentle guidance and support from staff. They are learning about the need to follow rules, such as to sit down when eating and respond well to the staff who explain things to them positively and simply. Children follow the staff's lead, who model the appropriate behaviour. For example, they followed the staff's example to wash their hands at appropriate times, they were happy to help with tidying up their activities before their snack, with staff assisting, and were learning about how to share with their peers.

Children are supported well to develop good social skills and they respond positively to the staff.

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

Children are very active and overall, are engaged in the activities. They spend time on activities that interest them, with very good support from staff, and are confident to use the resources. They are able to initiate their own play and staff enrich their play and promote children's sense of fun. For example, children loved singing on their stage with musical instruments and the member of staff sang along with them, conducting and joining in with their chosen songs. Due to the age range and differing needs of the children, we did feel that the whole group story and singing activities were less enjoyable for some children. Also, the hand washing routine before snack meant children had to wait their turn to use the sink, and then wait before they could leave the bathroom. We discussed this with the PiC and RP, and on the second day, children enjoyed circle time in smaller groups and the stories and songs were differentiated to suit their varying needs. The bathroom routine was changed so children went to wash their hands in smaller groups, which was much more personal for them.

Overall, children are very interested and involved in the activities provided. Embedding the new circle times and hand washing routines should ensure children are able to feel fully engaged in these activities also.

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

Children are motivated to follow their own interests and choose their own activities. The interesting environment, varied resources and excellent staff interactions allow them to experience a range of meaningful play opportunities, and promotes their curiosity and development. Children benefit from different strategies to promote their self-help and decision making skills. For example, they are encouraged to pour their own drinks at snack time and from the drinks station; older children are able to access the washrooms independently, with staff on hand to support them with hand washing to ensure they are following the correct routine. Children are able to lead their play, with staff joining in to promote their learning, whilst following the children's rules. For example, staff played with children in the home corner, cooking eggs and encouraging the children to check they were not burning, in line with the ideas initiated by the children.

Children are able to take part in activities that promote their learning, sense of curiosity and independence.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff interact very well with children to promote their learning and development effectively. Activities are varied, interesting, help children develop their senses and encourage them to explore. There are very good observation and assessment systems in place to help children progress. These are currently being reviewed to help staff provide activities which specifically follow children's interests. Staff provide very warm, sensitive and attentive care, acknowledging and responding to children's needs and feelings. They show their sense of fun with children and actively join in with their play. They have a calm and flexible approach to support children to manage their behaviour using positive and effective strategies. Staff implement the setting's policies successfully to ensure children are safe and their health and welfare is promoted.

### **Our findings**

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

Staff promote children's health and welfare effectively. They have a good understanding of their role in protecting children because they attend relevant training annually, and discuss safeguarding as part of their regular meetings. They are all familiar with Prevent duty, which is Government legislation designed to protect children from radicalisation. The group are undertaking the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme, which is designed to promote the health and well-being of pre-school children, and has recently been awarded the Gold Snack Award. Staff ensure children benefit from a variety of healthy snacks, with milk or water to drink. Water is freely available to children throughout the session. Suitable systems are in place to ensure staff are aware of children with allergies and, following a discussion with the RP on the first day of the inspection, allergens in the food provided are recorded. Staff implement 'Designed to Smile' well, which is a National programme to improve children's oral health. They follow appropriate hygiene procedures, and those whose food hygiene training requires refreshing do not prepare snacks. Staff support children very well to wash their hands at appropriate times, cleaning their hands with them to embed good hand washing techniques. Children enjoy lots of outside play, and can access the outdoors even in inclement weather, as the group provides suitable wet weather gear. Nearly all staff are first aid trained and the group ensure there is an appropriate number of staff present who are able to follow suitable procedures in response to an accident. Staff practise fire drills with the children regularly so they would know what to do in an emergency.

Staff implement some safety measures to help promote children's safety when walking them to and from school, such as ensuring suitable ratios of staff to children are adhered to. A written risk assessment and an outings policy is in place, but there was

no specific written procedure which would provide additional support for staff and clarity to parents. This was provided immediately following the inspection. We discussed additional measures/equipment and/or different routes that could be used to minimise risks, in addition to those measures already used, which the RP has begun to look into, and will update the procedure and written risk assessment to reflect the new measures once these have been put in place.

Staff implement the group's policies and procedures effectively to ensure that children's health and welfare is promoted.

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

Staff help children develop their social skills using a range of positive strategies. They praise children for their efforts and encourage them to share their achievements with other staff. They have agreed ways of supporting children to follow the rules such as singing a specific song to encourage the children to tidy up at the required time. Staff recently changed the wording of the song to help children understand more easily what is expected of them. This shows staff are proactive in finding positive and effective ways to promote children's social skills. Staff explain calmly to children what they should do, rather than should not do, and make suggestions to help children manage their actions, praising them when they make the right choices, such as sharing their toys. For older children, staff support children well to find their own resolutions to conflict. Staff model the required interactions so children can follow their example. For example, staff sit with the children during snack and lunch times, so helping them learn the appropriate social skills, and they speak to each other calmly and respectfully. We heard staff acknowledge and talk to children about their feelings. They tailor their ways of managing children's behaviour in accordance with each child's individual needs and seek professional advice to support their practice. Staff discuss the management of children's behaviour together to ensure they are using consistent strategies.

Staff work closely together, and welcome the advice of other professionals, to promote children's social development using consistent and effective strategies.

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

Staff are very well qualified, experienced and motivated. They are keen to attend training and welcome new initiatives to support their practice and improve outcomes for children. They work together closely to effectively support children and provide nurturing, responsive care; where possible, intimate care is provided by each child's key worker, which allows the children to build up a special and secure relationship with a particular member of staff. Children approached staff confidently and received lots of cuddles, smiles and words of encouragement. Staff join in with children's play and



show a sense of fun, taking part in the activities themselves in order to invite children in, whilst voicing their thoughts to help model different ideas for children. For example, staff at the playdough table provided a running commentary about what they were thinking and doing to help give children ideas and support their learning. Staff help children develop their sense of curiosity and use all their senses. For example, in the home corner staff invited children to enjoy the smell of the cinnamon sticks, a projector lit up the ceiling with moving snowflakes which children loved watching, and the excellent range of different types of resources gave children lots of experience of handling real materials with different textures. Staff engage children in conversations whilst supporting their play and use repeated words, phrases, and songs to help their language development. They use open-ended questions to encourage children's thinking. As highlighted earlier, it was difficult to engage all the children during whole group circle times due mainly to the range in their ages and needs, which meant their learning was less effective. Following our first visit, staff reviewed this arrangement and introduced circle times for smaller groups, whilst differentiating the stories, songs and activities. The PiC plans to develop and embed this approach so circle times extend learning opportunities for all children. Staff are responsive to the children's play and are adapting the play areas and the resources to encourage children's interaction with them. They use incidental Welsh effectively to help children become familiar with the Welsh language; we heard children talking with staff about the weather confidently in English and Welsh. Staff observe children's play, and work together to support each child's key worker identify the next steps in their key children's learning. Staff we spoke with knew their key children very well and how they were developing. Until recently, activities were planned to support children's development in relation to these next steps. However, the group is currently reviewing the planning process so activities are provided which follow children's interests and enable them to learn through activities that captivate them. Staff work closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists and portage, to ensure children receive effective support.

Overall, staff promote children's play, learning and development successfully and ensure their individual needs are effectively met.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Good systems are in place to ensure the environment is secure and safe. The playroom is homely, welcoming and calm. Resources are thoughtfully set out and carefully selected so most are authentic and made from natural materials in order to encourage children to use their imaginations, different senses and promote their curiosity. The outside area is easily accessible to the children, very well resourced, interesting and spacious. Children are able to explore, learn new skills and take risks within their environment.

#### **Our findings**

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

There are good procedures in place to ensure the safety of the environment. The playgroup is located in a room within the Flying Start Hub in Cwm. Access to the building and room are via fobs and controlled by staff, and the outside area is fully enclosed. Certificates show all necessary maintenance and safety checks are carried out. Records show staff carry out visual daily checks of the premises so that any issues may be addressed. Written risk assessments for the room and outside area are in place and overall, we did not identify any observable hazards, although we did have a discussion with the leaders about the main washroom door, as we felt there was some potential for trapped fingers. The leaders are looking into ways to minimise the risk beyond the current measures in place, but as it is a fire door it may be difficult to take any further steps. Staff are vigilant to water spills and monitor the room effectivity to ensure it remains a suitable environment for children to play. The RPs have carried out an audit of infection control and no issues were raised. The kitchen has been awarded a level 5 food safety rating, which shows appropriate procedures are in place to maintain a suitable environment and protect children's health.

Leaders and staff take appropriate steps to ensure the environment is safe.

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

Leaders and staff have worked very hard to develop an environment that engages children's interests, promotes their learning, and is a calm and inviting place for them to play. Inside, natural lighting, lamps and fairy lights, together with pale colour walls that allow the children's work to be seen easily, and uncluttered play areas, creates a calm and relaxing atmosphere. The role play area is well set up to reflect the home environment with framed pictures, a sofa and reading lamp. Flowers are placed on the tables at lunchtime, which adds to the homely atmosphere, and the book corner is set up with rugs and a sofa so it is inviting and cosy. Areas are well set out for children to enjoy different types of play such as messy play, with a 'picture frame' as a low level

easel, mark making and construction/stage area. There is a spice table, fresh lilies in a vase and moving lights on the ceiling to encourage children to use their different senses. The construction area allows children to leave their creations from one day to another if they wish to, avoiding the need for them to have to pack them away.

Resources are easily visible to children and are set out in a variety of interesting ways to encourage children to explore and use them in different ways. For example, some are placed in baskets, some set out individually on shelves and others set out on tables with the activities. Children know where the resources 'live', which helps them put them away independently at tidy up time. The outside area is easily accessible for children from the playroom so they can move between the inside and outdoors as they wish. The space is well set out with a very good range of resources and surfaces. Staff told us they move activities from inside to out depending on where the children are mainly playing to help ensure they access a range of experiences throughout the session. Children have their own named coat hooks and places to put their belongings, which helps them feel valued. The washrooms are located so the older children can access them by themselves, which encourages their independence.

Leaders provide an innovative, child friendly environment, which encourages children's curiosity and inspires them to learn and play.

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

Leaders and staff are striving to develop a setting which captures children's interests, promotes their curiosity and introduces them to different smells and textures. They review how children play in the different areas, so resources can be tailored to the children's interests. Resources and materials are carefully chosen which are authentic and/or made from natural materials. For example, in the water tray children were having great fun pouring from tin jugs and in the sand they were making "*strawberry soup*" in shells, using metal spoons to "*eat it!*" Furniture is of very high quality and there are a suitable number of tables and chairs so children can sit and enjoy their meals and snacks together. We did note that some of the older children would benefit from slightly larger chairs; this was addressed immediately following the inspection. There is a very good variety of different types of books including fiction, non-fiction and Welsh language books. Some books, resources and pictures are thoughtfully placed throughout the setting, which quietly help child learn about diversity and promote their cultural awareness.

Outside there are variety of resources and materials to encourage children to take risks and experiment in their play, such as the climbing frame, planks, bikes, a sand pit and mud kitchen.

Leaders and staff ensure the resources and equipment of are of a very high standard, interesting, and promote children's learning, curiosity and sense of fun.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

The RPs are committed to providing an excellent service for the children, which promotes their learning, safety and well-being. They welcome the views of other professionals, use a variety of schemes and proactively seek out positive approaches to childcare to help develop the service and improve outcomes for children. The RPs share their vision very effectively with staff who feel very well supported to attend relevant training and implement their own and the RPs' ideas to improve the service.

### **Our findings**

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

The service is very well run, compliant with the relevant regulations and effectively promotes children's safety, development and well-being. The RPs have a clear vision for the service and have adopted childcare approaches which, as outlined in their statement of purpose, aim to bring '*curiosity, awe and wonder*' into early childhood. The RPs are very proactive in bringing about improvements in line with their vision and share these effectively with staff. For example, one of the RPs recently visited Italy to attend a conference on one of the childcare approaches the group are adopting and held an Italian evening with staff to share their knowledge and ideas. Staff we spoke with were very enthused by the ideas and eager to implement changes to promote good outcomes for children. There is an ethos of continual professional development and the RP has implemented an observational tool to support staff with their interactions with children and identify any training needs. Policies are detailed and the RPs are keen to ensure these are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). They are shared with parents at an introductory session before their child starts at the group so they have a clear picture of how the service runs. Parents we spoke with felt they had received very good information about the setting and were confident in what to expect.

The service is led by enthusiastic and committed leaders, who create a very positive environment, which focuses on supporting staff well and developing the service to ensure good outcomes for children.

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

The RPs are very keen to improve the service. They draw on the views of children, parents, professionals and staff and use various accredited schemes to bring about positive changes. For example, the Healthy and Sustainable Scheme is being followed to help bring about improvements in children's health and well-being, and as part of this, parents were consulted about the types of healthy snacks their children enjoy at

home. The service has acted on recommendations raised through the local authority environmental rating scheme. In order to ensure improvement during their first year of operation, leaders identified matters they wish to develop, and the setting is currently working towards these. The RPs told us they are planning to undertake a review of their quality of care shortly, which will involve collecting the views of staff, parents and other professionals. Leaders value the voice of the child, and we could see changes being made in line with observations from children's engagement with activities and resources. The setting implements a complaint policy, which is shared with parents, and parents we spoke with told us they were aware of the process for raising concerns. The policy did not include the process for concerns subject to concurrent investigation. This was included following the inspection.

The RPs are continually evaluating the effectiveness of the service in order to bring about improvements in the quality of care provided.

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

Management of staff and resources is very good. Leaders actively support staff. For example, the service is currently working towards the Small Workplace Health Award, which is designed to assist the creation of activities that promote the health and well-being of staff. Staff told us they are very well supported and able to attend the training they feel they need. They are keen to develop their professional knowledge to help develop their practice and bring about improvements in the service and the RPs value their ideas. For example, one member of staff created a mark-making box with black sand and fairy lights, which the children really enjoy, and developed a reward system to help encourage children to take part in physical activities at the weekend; following training on outdoor play, one member of staff extended the ways in which children could interact with the mud kitchen. Staff work very well as a team, sharing roles and responsibilities such as taking circle times. Recruitment procedures are robust to ensure that staff are suitable to care for children and there are good systems in place to make sure staff are up to date with their mandatory training/booked on the next available course. A comprehensive induction system is in place and staff we spoke with felt this enabled them to feel confident in their roles. Registers include the times of attendance of staff and children and show ratios of staff:children are in line with the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS).

There are very good processes in place to support staff well and promote their well-being and professional development in order to ensure good outcomes for children.

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

The service has excellent links with other professionals within the Flying Start team and the local school. Together with information from the parents, this allows the service to put appropriate plans in place to support each child before they start, and to

continue to provide effective support. The staff and RPs work to ensure parents feel involved with their child's progress through daily conversations, daily diaries and parent meetings. Parents we spoke with felt the information they receive is very informative. They value the daily diaries and the opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their child's key worker. There is a small notice board for parents so they can review some information about the service. However, the board space available is quite small so the amount of information available to parents on the board is limited. The RPs are aware of this and, since the inspection, have raised the matter again with the local authority. The service works closely and effectively with the local school nursery; the nursery have been flexible with their times to accommodate the wrap around children, and there are very good systems in place so children benefit from a smooth transition into maintained education.

The service works effectively with other professionals and parents to promote children's well-being.

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

### **5.1 Recommendations for improvement**

- Investigate different systems, products and/or routes, that promote safety of children and staff when walking to and from the local nursery and
- consider providing a larger notice board area for parents so that they can easily access pertinent information about the service, such the staff details, including their qualifications and roles, insurance details, the latest CIW report, the latest service review of the quality of care and action plan for the future.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook two visits to the service.

- We observed the children undertaking their activities and the care provided by the staff;
- we looked at a range of records and documents including staff files, policies and procedures, children's records and planning;
- we looked at the premises, risk assessments and other documentation relating to safety measures and took account of the security measures in place;
- we spoke with two parents to obtain their views;
- we spoke with the RPs, PiC and staff present during the inspection to obtain their views and clarify information about the running of the playgroup and future plans and
- our findings were fed back to the RPs and PiC, and all recommendations were discussed.

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

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)



## About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Lee Fowler Sarah Adlam
Person in charge	Sara Eales
Registered maximum number of places	26
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Opening hours	8am to 2.45pm, weekdays, term time only. Children may attend one of the session times below, depending on their needs: 8am – 11.15am 8.45am – 11.15am 9am – 1pm 8am – 1pm 9am – 12.30pm 12.30pm – 2.45pm 11.15am – 2.45pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	This was the first inspection of the service since registration in October 2017
Dates of this inspection visit	26 and 27 November 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	The service currently provides a number of Flying Start places for children from 8.45am – 11.15pm In January 2019, the service plan to provide an additional Flying Start session in the afternoon for those children who do not attend the morning session
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh	This is a service that does not provide an

**Language active offer?**

**“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: This service provides 3.5 hours per day free childcare for 3 to 4 year olds, under the Childcare offer for Wales**