



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

# Childcare Inspection Report on

**The Mill Child Care Centre Ltd**

**Lon Parcwr  
Ruthin  
LL15 1BX**

**Mae'r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg**

**This report is also available in Welsh**



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## **Description of the service**

The Mill Child Care Centre is located in the town of Ruthin and is registered to provide care for a maximum of 118 children from 0 up to 12 years old. School aged children are cared for in the holiday club operating during school holidays and the service also offers an after school service. The core opening hours are Monday to Friday 08:00am to 5.30pm and 7:30am to 8:00am and 5:30pm to 6:00pm are also available if pre-booked. The main language used is English; children are introduced to the Welsh language, but at present the service does not provide the 'Active offer'. The registered person is Ffion Roberts and the person in charge is Gillian Kensall.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children are busy and enjoy their time at The Mill Child Care Centre. They benefit from an extremely well planned service that offers positive experiences to promote their learning and development. Staff are enthusiastic and diligent in their roles; they take great pride in their work and strive towards ensuring good outcomes for the children in their care. Staff are committed to continuous professional development and they positively share knowledge and good practice. The environment is well planned from a child's perspective and is tailored to meet various stages of development. Risks are well managed and children's safety is given high priority. Leadership of the service is forward thinking with committed and dedicated management. Parents provide positive feedback and are extremely happy with the care offered.

### **2. Improvements**

Leaders have appointed four members of staff as ambassadors whom take a leading role in ensuring the service preforms well in specific areas.

Staff meetings are used to share good practice and cascade learning from specific training courses attended by staff.

The staff induction process is reviewed and evaluated.

Leaders and staff have implemented a new system to plan for next steps in children's learning.

Individual performance targets are set and agreed between staff and leaders.

The nursery has been re-awarded the NDNA Quality Award at level 3 in July 2017.

Leaders had recently received recognition for their dedication and have been awarded the exemplary employer award by 'Chwarae Teg'.

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

We made some recommendations in relation to promoting children's health and promoting the use of the Welsh language.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children are happy, settled and thrive in a caring and stimulating environment. They are developing relationships and benefit from the positive experiences offered.

## **Our findings**

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

Children can choose from a variety of activities and resources, enabling them to make competent decisions about how they spend their time.

Children were given choices throughout the day about what activities they wanted to take part in and they were confident to express themselves. Children enjoyed creating shapes with play dough; they were confident to point things out to each other and staff, they asked questions and cheered when they successfully completed a task. One child didn't want to take part in a hand painting activity and was offered alternative choices. They were confident they would be listened to and asked staff when they wanted something. Children asked if they could play outside and they were supported to do so. A child requested to draw a picture and independently went to get some pencils.

Children are confident and comfortable to make their own choices and make their wishes known. They express their views with ease and influence how they spend their time.

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

Children are happy and settled. They are forming friendships with those around them.

Children shared smiles with their friends and staff. They were comfortable in their surrounding and knew those around them well. Children were familiar with the routine; they knew what was expected of them and this gave them security and confidence. For example, they knew when it was time for them to sit with each other for circle time or when it was time for them to freely choose which item they wanted to play with. Children helped and supported each other to complete tasks; we saw a toddler sharing the bibs amongst friends whilst they sat at the table in preparation for lunch time. Children received the bibs with smiles and the child was happy and proud of their achievement. Children's needs were recognised and staff responded appropriately, we heard them asking 'are you ok?' 'do you want a hug?' Children approached staff for comfort and they enjoyed the affection.

Children are gaining a sense of belonging and are happy to spend time with those around them.

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

Children are learning to manage their behaviour, take turns and are becoming sensitive to the emotions of others.

Children cooperated well with each other; for example they showed an interest in what other's were doing around them. Children sat at the table completing a focused activity, and they helped each other to match the correct flags. During meal and snack times, children had opportunities to chat and socialise with each other. For example, we saw two children enjoy a lengthy conversation whilst they eat their lunch. They laughed and smiled with each other and then shared with staff what they had been talking about. During circle time children chose what songs they wanted to sing and dance to and they all clapped and cheered when friends were chosen to sing or take part in the activity.

Children interact well with each other. They congratulate each other's achievements and are eager to help and support their peers.

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

Children are excited and interested in the activities offered.

Children attending the holiday club benefit from being able to self-direct their time at the service. For example, at the start of the school holidays they devised their own programme of activities, making their time fun and meaningful to them. We saw photos of the activities they had recently taken part in and saw how plans had been changed and adapted dependant on children's preferences and interests. Children had regular opportunities to enjoy play that offered them a sensory experience, for example, we saw babies enjoy playing with oats and treasure baskets and tweenies' (12-18 months) children later enjoyed exploring with custard. Learning was made fun and interesting, for example story sacks were regularly used in all the rooms to bring stories to life. We observed an animated story being read to the children and they were actively involved in the story telling adding to the experiences through movements and noises.

Children are curious learners, they are eager to share their achievements and learn from the world around them.

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

Children are confident, independent and make good progress.

Children were prepared for transition between the rooms and they, were well supported to progress and move forward. For example, toddler children were provided with daily opportunities for a play group session in the pre-school room, thus enabling them to become familiar with the routine and allow them to experience a wide range of positive experiences. Children were encouraged to carry their own belongings as they were taken by staff to change their nappies; and they took great pride in being given a task to do.

Children were frequently asked if they wanted to try and do something themselves or did they want somebody to help them. Children had regular access to drinking water and drinking bottles had been labelled with children's photos as well as names to support their independence.

Children could choose when they wanted to enjoy their snack in the pre-school room and they took responsibility for clearing their dishes. Children attending the holiday club were supported to choose which additional resources they wanted to purchase with funds made available to them. Mathematical and reasoning skills were developed as they reached an agreed decision as to what would be most suitable for all and what they could afford,

Children are able to accomplish things for themselves and thrive because of the experiences offered.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are extremely dedicated to their roles. Responsibilities and duties are clearly defined. Keeping children safe and healthy is given high priority. Activities are planned well with consideration given to children's abilities and ensuring they benefit from time spent at the service.

### **Our findings**

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

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they are committed to promoting children's overall well-being.

Policies and procedures were easily accessible and embedded in practice. All emergency contact numbers were located within easy reach in the main office. Staff demonstrated a sound understanding of safeguarding and ensuring children's continued well-being. Staff spoken to were familiar with the process to be followed if they were worried about a child and they also told us they had opportunity for one to one discussions during their supervisions. The service has appointed safeguarding officers who are available to offer support and guidance when required. All staff spoken to informed us they felt they had ample opportunity for discussion with each other and leaders to monitor the well being of children.

Staff have established a close and effective working relationship with each other and parents. Dedicated members of staff have been appointed as ambassadors over specific areas to promote children's well-being. The ambassadors take a leading role in promoting good practice. Accident and incident forms had been completed fully and a thorough review was conducted every month to ascertain whether there were any significant patterns which would highlight that changes needed to be implemented.

Staff followed the procedure recommended by the All Wales Infection Control audit tool when changing nappies to reduce the risk of spreading infection. The information was logged and later shared with parents through the online daily diary system. At the point of registration parents complete detailed information about their children's health, enabling staff to safely care for the children.

Staff supported children to wash their hands with soap and water before meal times, but we saw some children sharing the same bowl of water. We recommended that all children should have access to individual clean water and liquid hand soap and clean water to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Staff were seen to regularly sanitise their hands, for example before they gave the children their food. Meals and snacks provided were healthy and nutritious, prepared by a dedicated chef on the premises; an alternative menu was followed for children with allergies and dietary preferences. After meal time children were provided with individual face cloths to wipe their faces and hands.



Physical activity was given high priority. Babies were seen enjoying being able to comfortably move between inside and outside. Staff regularly took children out to the local community for walks and visit sites of interest.

Staff have excellent measures in place to ensure children's overall health and well being are promoted

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

Staff are consistent. They are approachable and caring.

Staff spoke with children in a calm and caring manner and children responded in the same way. We heard lots terms of endearment used regularly and positive behaviour was celebrated. Staff regularly showered children with praise and encouragement, letting them know how well they had done. Staff modelled appropriate behaviour; they regularly thanked and congratulated each other for their dedication and hard work. We saw a gratitude wall displaying notes completed by staff sharing thanks, congratulating and recognising others for their hard work in helping and supporting staff and children. Some staff recently completed positive behaviour management training. Staff recently attended an information sharing session on effectively implementing the use of distraction techniques. Resources to support positive behaviour management techniques had been made easily available to all staff to support them when caring for children.

Staff foster and promote positive relationships, they are caring and passionate in their approach. They are positive and nurturing and support children to understand what is appropriate and expected of them.

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

Staff promote children's development by planning for interesting and varied play and learning experiences suitable for all ages and stages of development.

Staff endeavoured to provide children with individual attention. For example, key workers were allocated and they had specific individual information about their allocated children. All staff members had devised their own key worker boxes specific to them. These contained personally chosen items to share and complete activities with their allocated children. These could be sent home for parents to also use, which fostered a close working relationship between The Mill and home.

Staff were committed to ensuring children's days were busy and full of interesting activities. Planning had been effectively managed and children's progress and achievements were tracked and celebrated. Room leaders took a leading role in implementing planned activities and these had been reviewed and evaluated to ensure they achieved their agreed objective. Staff made regular observations about children's progress which informed detailed activity planning linked to current themes. We saw children's next steps for

learning were displayed proudly in each room and were shared with parent through regular progress reports.

Staff have high expectations of children's learning; they foster positive relationships to ensure daily routines provide stability and security and create a sense of fun and enjoyment.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

The environment is well planned from a child's perspective. Risks are well managed and resources are of good quality, offering children a variety of different learning opportunities. Leaders provide areas where children can relax as well as plenty of areas for them to explore and play.

#### **Our findings**

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

Leaders prioritise the safety of children and ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities and implement changes when required.

Access to the premises is effectively managed and monitored at all times, the effective use of a fingertip recognition system enables leaders to monitor and control who enters the building. All parents were logged into the system and they can enter to collect and drop off their children. A visitors log and daily register were kept, recording the staff and children who attended; parents were also responsible for signing their children in and from records seen we saw that parents endeavoured to follow the procedure.

Risk assessments were in place for all areas used and these had been reviewed and updated annually. Additional risk assessments had been completed for specific activities or changes to the environment. We saw an effective daily cleaning routine was implemented, with appropriate methods and procedures being followed. Leaders have appointed two fire wardens from the staff team and an independent fire service company regularly evaluates fire safety procedures. Fire drills had been regularly undertaken and following a recent review leaders had decided to trial an alternative fire assembly point to determine if it would be more suitable. The evacuation route was clearly displayed in each room.

Leaders ensure hazards are identified and measures are put into place to minimise the risks to children's safety.

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

Leaders provide an interesting and comfortable environment which meets the children's needs well.

Leaders ensured the setting was well-maintained, and staff worked hard to consistently provide a stimulating and interesting environment for the children. All rooms and areas used were welcoming and enriched children's play experiences. All facilities were located on one floor, allowing children to access and use them independently. For example, older children were able use the toilet on their own. Children had immediate access to the garden and outdoor play areas. The babies were able to freely explore their outside play area due to the all weather flooring. There are dedicated sleep spaces for each room and leaders are

continually looking at ways to develop and improve on the space available for children to use. We saw how a wall had been dedicated for children to display their own work and they could select what they wanted to display. Thus instilling a sense of ownership and belonging in the children. A mud kitchen had recently been installed and a sand play house for children to play in. There was a wig-wham where children could enjoy stories and children benefited from the same positive play and learning experiences both inside and out.

Leaders and staff successfully provide an interesting and stimulating environment which appropriately meets children's needs.

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

Leaders provide children with access to play resources that are suitable and appropriate for their needs.

Staff were familiar and confident with the resources available. For example, we saw staff regularly changing the items for the children during the day. Staff worked effectively as a team, ensuring children were positively occupied whilst resources were made available to them. Resources were stored in clearly labelled boxes making them easily accessible. A broad range of different materials were available and staff followed a robust system for ensuring toys were kept clean and well maintained. For example, we saw a list of duties and who was responsible for each displayed in the play rooms. Any issues or any additional resources required are logged on as issues and successes which are discussed monthly by leaders and action plans agreed.

Leaders provide inventive resources which promote children's curiosity. Resources are appropriately stored, kept safe clean and well maintained.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Leaders are committed and successfully promote and support a clear sense of purpose. Leaders strive to ensure the service is forward thinking and a service where children will thrive. Staff are highly supported and motivated to deliver good outcomes for children. Parents highly value the service offered and speak positively of the care their children receive.

### **Our findings**

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

Leaders model and deliver an excellent service.

Leaders have communicated their vision for the service well and support staff to fulfil their roles. Leaders had recently received recognition for their dedication and have been awarded the exemplary employer award by 'Chwarae Teg'. The registered person and person in charge succeed in working together to lead the service; they are visible and available. They give top priority to ensuring the service continues to move forward and have exceedingly high expectations for the direction and achievements of the service. The person in charge is exceptionally committed and goes over and above to support practice to be innovative and forward thinking. All recommendations made at previous inspection have been acted upon with the person in charge also implementing additional innovative changes to drive the service forward. Leaders are meticulous in their leadership to motivate the setting to be a nurturing, caring environment where children are happy, eager to learn and confident. Staff ambassadors have recently been appointed for specific areas. This offers staff opportunities to thrive and excel within areas of particular interest to them. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and easily available for parents and staff. We discussed with leaders the recent introduction of the 'active offer' and the expectation the Welsh language is readily available within the service. Recent changes in staffing has meant the services has lost a number of Welsh speakers but they demonstrated an awareness and eagerness to ensuring the Welsh language is promoted and introduced children to the language.

Leaders and staff have a clear sense of purpose that promotes improvements and regularly exceeds The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care.

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

Leaders regularly assess the quality of service delivery and implement robust strategies to improve and move the service forward where required.

We saw evidence of leaders assessing outcomes and regularly reflecting on what they do and making positive changes as and when required. Positive practice is shared with all staff during staff meetings, with staff presenting case studies to share good practice. This

supports other staff to implement positive changes and learn what has worked well to benefit and improve outcomes for children. Leaders provided regular feedback, support and guidance to staff and all had contributed to the annual quality of care review. Parents had also provided positive comments and their views had been reported on in the extremely detailed quality of care review. Regular observations had been completed in each of the rooms and the information gathered also used to further support staff in their work in driving practice forward.

Leaders draw on their wealth of experiences in order to improve outcomes for children and staff. Leaders know the service well.

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

Leaders provide staff with a high level of support; resources are regularly reviewed and updated when needed.

Staff had been recruited in a timely and effective manner. Leaders supported staff in their roles and newly recruited staff followed a robust induction programme giving them time to adapt and become familiar with their duties and responsibilities. A mentoring system is effectively implemented; giving staff a colleague they can rely on for support on a day to day basis. The induction process was reviewed and evaluated at the end of each process. Staff told us they felt very well supported in their roles and annual appraisals were meaningful and identified how staff would further progress in their roles. Supervision roles are delegated in some rooms; this aids staff to develop their skills. Individual performance targets are set for all staff members and we were told how staff felt this benefitted them and supported them to progress and strive to move forward. Staff attended appropriate training to enhance their knowledge. Team meetings were used as an opportunity for sharing knowledge, staff who have attended training prepare a short presentation for the next team meeting effectively cascading learning through the whole team. Leaders clearly conveyed what the service seeks to accomplish and supported staff to be forward thinking and highly valued the work they do.

Leaders have appropriate high expectations of themselves and others, set realistic targets and are good role models to motivate staff.

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

Leaders work closely with partner agencies and promote working in partnership with parents.

Leaders provide parents with detailed information about what their child achieves whilst at The Mill Child Care Centre. Parents are able to access information and photos of what their child has achieved during the day on the childcare app. Their child's key worker provides them with written information on how their child has been and parents are able to log information they wish to share with staff regarding how their child has been whilst at home. In addition to this a progress report is sent home every three months and

newsletters are shared. Leaders hold social events such as an annual Christmas fair in order to meet with parents informally and they are offered mini meetings with their child's key worker.

Leaders use resources within the local community. Children have been able to explore their local community through arranged events, such as a recent pancake race and a challenge where the children had to recognise different landmarks within the town. Relevant information was made readily available to parents and following recent feedback from parents, they can obtain recipe cards for meals their children have enjoyed eating whilst at The Mill Child Care Centre. A library of books has also been introduced and parents can access books to enjoy with their children, with some supporting specific life events, such as the arrival of a new baby in the family.

Large floor books are used to display and document what children's activities, these are easily accessible for parents to view and children enjoy using them to reflect on what they have achieved. Parents are welcomed to the service regularly, we heard how parents supported staff to help them communicate with children when their first language is neither Welsh or English and a Makaton (sign language) course has been arranged by a parent for the whole team to help with non verbal communication in the nursery. External agencies also provided positive feedback and noted that children progress well at the nursery. The contribution the service makes to children's lives is highly valued.

Leaders work closely with parents to improve children's learning and well being, they are kept well informed and encourage parents to be active partners. The service is working hard in order to promote good links with the community and partner agencies.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

Leaders to consider;

- Supporting all children to wash their hands with clean water rather than a shared bowl before snack and meal times;
- promote use of Welsh language further.



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

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

One inspector visited the service on the 22 February 2018 from 09:20am until 18:00pm and on the 14 March 2018 from 11:00am until 14:00pm.

We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice and completed observations using the SOFI 2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- spoke to the children and staff;
- read questionnaires from parents and
- looked at children's files and staff files;
- provided feedback to the registered person and person in charge on the 14 March 2018.

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

## About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Ffion Roberts
Person in charge	Gillian Kensall
Registered maximum number of places	118
Age range of children	0 – 12 years of age
Opening hours	08:00am – 17:30pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	23 February 2016 and 24 February 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	22 February 2018 and 14 March 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	No, the service does not provide and 'Active Offer' of the Wels language, this is because the service is located in a primarily English speaking area but provider plans to build on the Welsh language provision.
Additional Information:	

