



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Melin Infants Flying Start**

**Melin Infant School  
Herbert Road  
Melin  
Neath  
SA11 2DD**



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## **Description of the service**

Melin Infants Flying Start has been registered since 2008 and is registered to care for a maximum of 12 children aged two to three years. The service operates a morning and afternoon session Monday to Friday from 9am to 11.30am and from 12.30pm to 3.00pm. It is located in Neath Melin Infants School premises in a separate demountable cabin. The registered provider is Melin Infants Flying Start and the responsible individuals are Sacha Worth and Jayne Edmond. Bethan Doyle and Teresa Slater are the persons in charge. Sacha Worth was present during the inspection. The service is provided in English with incidental Welsh.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

The standard of care provided by this service is very high. Children thoroughly enjoy their time there because the service is well-planned and child-centred. Children experience warm and nurturing relationships with staff who provide consistent care. The environment is safe and secure. Children have free access to a wide range of good quality toys, materials and equipment, which encourages the children to explore and learn through play. Staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals in health and education to ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed so that they have an excellent foundation for learning and development. Children are cared for by a knowledgeable, nurturing and motivated team of staff who are dedicated to meeting the children's individual needs and learning.

### **2. Improvements**

There was evidence of ongoing improvement and investment. Since the last inspection, leaders have:

- enabled staff to access the Level 5 Advanced Practice in Child Care Learning and Development.

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

Recommendations made can be seen at the end of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning at this service and interact in a highly positive manner. Children are actively engaged in activities and are able to play with a vast range of resources which stimulate their curiosity and interests. They are confident in communicating their experiences and their choices and they are fully valued and secure. The children develop emotionally, physically, socially, creatively, linguistically and intellectually and thrive through their learning and play experiences.

## **Our findings**

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

Children communicate effectively; they have choice and are listened to.

Children are very happy; they settled in quickly and they thoroughly enjoy their play. They benefited from a wide range of interesting activities in a well planned structured playroom that gave children ease to choose what they wished to play with. They interact and cooperate well with each other and with staff. Children were at the centre of the service and were listened to and their views valued. They talked freely to staff and to us about what they were doing. We saw children communicating well during circle time; they were fully involved in singing action songs of their choice. Free play let children choose the toys and or games they wished to play with. Some children played outdoors whilst others remained indoors playing in the home corner or with dinosaurs. Children confidently followed their own interests. We heard children contribute their ideas towards activities, expressing if they enjoyed the activity or what was best. For example children said, 'I like the dinosaurs not the blocks' and happily played with their chosen toys which had been put out for the children for easy access. Staff ensured that the children were given freedom to make choices, explore and learn at their own pace, with appropriate support to reach their full potential. Children made independent choices in their play, particularly during free play.

Children are able to make excellent choices and are highly valued and listened to.

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

Children have formed positive relationships and are very confident and happy in their play.

We saw most children were happy and contented and busied themselves with the activities on offer. Those children on their first day at play group were a little upset for some of the time but with cuddles and reassurance from other children and staff settled quickly. Throughout the visit children smiled when they were praised for their actions, which showed that it had boosted their self-esteem. Children approached staff with ease either for support or comfort. Children were open with their affections and staff responded excellently giving the children time to express themselves and for children that needed extra support or a little help they were given one to one attention.

Children received praise for their efforts, for completing tasks and activities such as repeating Welsh words, tidying up, brushing their teeth and good listening. Children were engaged in a range of outdoor activities with much smiles and laughter.

Children feel confident, very happy, valued and safe.

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

Children interact easily with their peers and with staff and are learning how to manage their emotions and behaviour.

We saw children and staff chatting and laughing together making good eye contact throughout. We saw many examples of children playing together and taking turns; when they played with dolls and building blocks, whilst playing outside with chalks and during free play. Children played very happily and joined in with group activities. They were absorbed in activities for extended periods. Children interacted well together. They played nicely and were taking turns and sharing toys with each other. For example, items from the home corner and filling up their saucepan to carry out pretend cooking. Snack time was a calm social occasion with the children happily sitting at small tables with the staff. They washed their hands and brushed their teeth in small groups. In the outdoor play area, children played very happily together on the slide, using chalks to draw pictures, with dolls and buggies and in the play house. We saw that children's behaviour was very good and some very minor disputes were quickly sorted out with the support from staff who reminded them about being kind, sharing and taking turns. The children were very well mannered remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you'.

Children co-operate well with each other and with staff at the nursery and are learning the importance of sharing and turn taking very well.

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

Children are engaged and interested in their play. They sustain interest for age appropriate amounts of time whilst enjoying the activities on offer.

Children gained a sense of achievement. They persevere at their tasks and respond well to encouragement and praise. Children were developing well; they counted numbers and repeated words through the Welsh language as well as in English. Children were engrossed in play and activities during our inspection visit. They easily accessed an excellent and wide variety of materials and activities. We saw them smiling a lot as they freely explored the play areas. Children happily sat together for structured adult-led activities such as sing-along and story-telling.

Children are developing well and overall their independence is promoted excellently.

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

Children have excellent opportunities to learn and become independent.

Children were developing very well and were becoming independent. Children independently washed their hands before snack which most children managed for themselves with staff on hand to offer help if required. Some children were able to use

the toilet independently, they were encouraged to brush their teeth and some children helped their friend to clear away after snack time. They independently wiped their nose and placed the tissues in a bin. Children experienced a quality, nurturing service which gives them an excellent foundation for their learning and development. Children's development records evidenced that they were making good progress and developing new skills in line with set targets. Children had access to a rich and imaginative play environment which encourages the children to learn and experiment through play with opportunities to try things out for themselves. This was enhanced by a multitude of toys, equipment and resources which were arranged so that children could help themselves to. Staff also ensured that children had routines with planned activities. Children enjoyed different play and learning experiences throughout the session including free play, table top activities, physical play outdoors, and circle time, which included use of a 'tap tap' box. The children's expressions showed their excitement, delight and wonder as to what would appear from the box.

Children develop and learn well and become independent with the support and guidance of staff.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff know the children in their care well and provide responsive care that meets their individual needs. They create a relaxed and nurturing atmosphere where children are supported and their individual development is promoted. Staff are positive role models who manage interactions effectively. They are well trained and qualified and effectively follow policies and procedures. Staff work well with external agencies to support children's individual needs and actively promote children's health and safety. They have a consistent approach to meeting children's needs and promote children's all round development. Staff are very caring, motivated, enthusiastic and responsive to children's needs. They manage behaviour well.

### **Our findings**

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

Staff have attended relevant training in child care. Staff ensure that children's individual needs are met to keep children safe and healthy.

Staff implemented a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in order to keep children safe and healthy. The staff supervised the children well with a key worker responsible for a group of children. Good hygiene procedures were in place as staff wore gloves and an apron to prepare and serve food, cleaned tables and had been inspected by the environmental health agency and had received a rating of 5 in relation to food hygiene. They were familiar with the All Wales Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings' and used this information to support with infection control procedures within the setting. Staff promoted good oral health by encouraging children to clean their teeth as part of the 'Designed to Smile' programme. The staff were aware of children's dietary and any food allergies, which were recorded on each child's personal file, and readily displayed for staff preparing food. They were diligently working towards the Sustainable and Healthy Pre-School award. There was a clear safeguarding policy in place and 'Prevent Duty' had been added to their safeguarding policy. The staff was able to tell us how to implement the policy and were aware of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and who to report any concerns to. Staff had attended relevant child protection training. We saw completed records of any accidents or incidents. Staff had attended first aid training and food hygiene training courses. There was a timely procedure in place that ensured that training was re-booked prior to the expiry date.

Staff consistently and effectively keep children safe and healthy.

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

The behaviour of children was managed in a way that respected and promoted their welfare and development

Staff were very good role models. They positively interacted with children and promoted good behaviour and good manners. We heard staff praising children for their efforts such as when children tasted some fruit, saying 'good children for trying'. Staff encouraged children to be active playing games and we saw staff allowing the children use their curiosity to build a house out of rubber play bricks. Others enjoyed and had fun on the slide. However, any children not wishing to do so were able to follow their own interests and play with chalks or indoors. Staff encouraged children to help, tidy up and children were excited to help brush up using a small brush and pan at first but asked for a bigger brush. Children's behaviour was very good they listened to staff and responded positively. We saw that staff used every opportunity to praise positive behaviour such as when children were helpful and shared. We heard lots of praise and encouragement such as 'Well done', 'Absolutely wonderful', 'Excellent', 'Good listening' and 'Good sitting' and children responded with smiles and nods. Those children who were upset were given one to one care and support from staff with lots of cuddles, reassurance and genuine care and affection.

Staff manage children's interactions and behaviour very well.

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

Staff provide good opportunities for child-led play which promotes their development and in general addresses their individual needs.

Staff were enthusiastic and took delight in the children's skills and achievements and knew the children in their care well. Children's records were comprehensively completed with individual children's needs and preferences identified. Children's files contained various permissions from parent(s) and/or carers which ensured that their individual needs were met such as, permission for emergency treatment. Staff used detailed assessment and profile forms to record children's developmental progress. The service uses the 'Foundation Phase Profile' to track children's development and WellComm assessments (to assess language and communication skills). The records we saw showed that the children's needs and progress were clearly recorded, reviewed regularly and that children were developing well. Prior to starting, staff introduced children and their parents and/or carers to the service through conducting a home visit and arrangements of an open day with their parents or carer. They also gave parents a brochure all about the playgroup. They provided a good balance of child and adult led activities using a very good range of resources to stimulate interest. Children had good opportunities to develop their skills such as creativity, coordination, dexterity and social skills through free play; and we heard staff extending children's learning by introducing numbers, colours, shapes, taste and sounds whenever they could. Children joined in with actions as they sang songs such as 'Twinkle, twinkle



little star', 'Hickory Dickory Doc' and 'the Wheels on the Bus'. Staff provided children with opportunities to use and experience the Welsh language.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development well and meet their individual needs effectively.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children are cared for in a safe environment which offers a wide variety of play and learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors. Risks and any hazards are identified and minimised or eliminated to ensure children's safety. Resources and furniture are good quality and suitable for the needs of the children. Children benefit from an environment that is easily accessible and has been designed to support their needs. Improvements could be made to the exterior of the demountable building.

#### **Our findings**

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

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment.

We saw that the entrances to the playgroup are secure from unauthorised access. The outdoor play area has secure boundaries. Visitors must show identity and sign in and out. There were clear policies and risk assessments relating to health and safety and staff followed them. We saw annual tests for heating and electrical equipment and that staff had carried out fire drills each term in line with the school policy as the premises are connected and therefore the school have control over fire drills. Staff checked the indoor and outdoor play areas and equipment each day to ensure they were safe and clean. We saw that all areas, equipment, furniture and toys were very clean and in good condition. The outside play area has a soft surface to minimise injuries if children fall and there is a fenced section for the children so that they do not have access to the school yard. There is a shaded area to protect the children in the warm weather. We saw that some areas of the demountable cabin externally were in a poor state of disrepair. The responsible individual said that this matter has been addressed with the appropriate people as the building is maintained by Neath Port Talbot CBC who were looking into repairs being carried out.

Leaders keep the environment as safe as possible. However some repairs are needed to the building.

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

Leaders provide a stimulating environment for children's play and learning.

The indoor and outdoor play areas provide a rich and stimulating learning environment as well as areas for children to relax and/or reflect. We saw that children could move around and explore freely and toys and resources were within easy reach to promote choice. There was a large indoor area divided into a various sections with room for quiet play, messy play and snack area, a carpet area, home corner, construction activities, books, dressing up, small world and puzzles to name but a few. Children were escorted to the outdoor play area, with space for children to run, play balancing games, ride trikes and scooters and use a small slide and a play house and various other outdoor resources. Toys and equipment were rotated to keep them appealing to

all children. The toilets are located on one side of the playroom and there is also a small kitchen and a disabled toilet. Staff ensured that the environment was very suitable for children to play, learn and grow and that it was very welcoming to both children and families. Regular risk assessments were reviewed annually with daily check sheets used which enabled staff to find external problems or broken equipment at the start/end of the sessions. Staff ensured that all equipment was cleaned and replaced as necessary. There was a secure entrance, with a locked gate to prevent unwanted visitors wandering onto the school yard.

Staff ensures that the environment is very suitable for children to play, learn and grow and that it is welcoming to families.

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

Leaders ensure that the resources and equipment are of a good quality and are suitable for the needs and ages of the children.

Leaders provide a wide range of good quality resources which are accessible to children. Children were engrossed in playing with construction toys, building towers with plastic blocks, books and playing outside where they could ride trikes, play in the home corner with dolls and/or buggies, use the slide, ball games or enjoyed chalking and making drawings. The toys and equipment were clean and in good condition and we saw that different cultures and identities were reflected and celebrated. For example, there were books about different children and homes around the world, dolls of different races, posters showing basic sign language and also Welsh numbers, colours and shapes.

Leaders ensure that children have access to a wide range of good quality resources and equipment that suits their interests and supports their learning and development.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Leadership at this service is strong. Leaders have successfully created a culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. They ensure that the service is well run, that children's needs are met and that practitioners are supported to fulfil their roles by providing regular supervision and training opportunities.

There is a clear statement of purpose in place and the policies and procedures support staff practice and inform parents. The leadership at the playgroup is effective. Leaders provide clear direction in line with the service aims to give children a flying start in life. They regularly review the quality of the service and feedback from children, parents, staff and other professionals which is used to inform the future planning of the service. The ratio of staff to children is above national minimum standards and flexible to meet the needs of the children. Staff are well trained and they receive regular supervision and appraisals to improve their skills and knowledge. Leaders have developed very good partnerships with parents and other professionals.

### **Our findings**

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

Leaders create a clear vision for the service and ensure that the service is well run and maintains high standards.

The service complies with the Child minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010 and the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare. On the day we visited the service ran smoothly, which meant that children were cared for safely and their needs were met promptly and calmly. There is a strong team ethos in the nursery and the leaders and staff had developed good links with parents, schools and the local community. Staff are qualified and experienced and are supported by the responsible individuals and persons in charge and Flying Start Co-ordinator who are involved in all aspects of the service. Staff had a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities on the day and there was a very good team spirit. Staff turnover was low and the staff we spoke to said that they enjoyed their work. They were able to develop their skills and said they were encouraged to follow their particular interests with support or training opportunities. The service has a statement of purpose which is reviewed regularly and provides a clear description of the service and what it sets out to provide. The leaders had recently reviewed policies and procedures to ensure they are easy to understand and focused on children's needs and well-being. Staff said they had 'excellent support' to do their work and they felt valued because they were listened to, involved in planning activities and encouraged to develop their skills and interests.

Leaders are motivated and very effective.

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

Leaders are effective at planning for improvement of the service provision actively involving parents, carers, staff and other professionals in their quality of care review.

Leaders carry out regular reviews of service. The service is supported by the Flying Start team and practice is regularly reviewed through meetings, supervision and appraisals, along with quality assurance measures. Leaders have good systems to monitor the quality of the service and plan for improvements based on feedback from children, parents, staff and other professionals. Children's feelings about activities were often gained through watching what they enjoyed doing and how they reacted as well as asking them what they enjoyed and their likes or disliked. So as to collect views from parents of the children who attend the group questionnaires are sent out twice a year. They also had a 'suggestion box' where parents were able to make anonymous comments or suggestions and a 'Facebook' page where parents are able to leave their views on the service provided. The quality of care report for 2018 is currently in the process of completion. Parents and/or carers were invited to an open day with the opportunity to see the playgroup, discuss their child's progress, and meet with the staff to chat in general. We also saw that activities were continually evaluated and changed to meet children's identified needs and preferences and to ensure that developmental targets were met. This supported the children's transition to school. The responsible individual said that "We receive feedback from the Flying Start officer annually through different topics such as the use of speech and language and the materials used to promote, feedback forms are sent to us with improvements/targets, they come out to support and guide us with new initiatives Flying Start provide". Which enhanced the overall improvement of the playgroup.

Leaders evaluate the quality of the service very effectively and make improvements that benefit children, parents and staff.

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

Leaders ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of suitable staff on duty, who are well supported and know their responsibilities.

There were sufficient numbers of qualified staff and contingency plans to cover staff absence. Staff files were well organised. There was a robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure that the staff employed were suitable to care for children. All the required information including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and identification checks, employment histories and references. Staff attended monthly team meetings as well as informal daily chats morning, lunch time and at the end of the day. Training records showed that the leaders had provided all the required training for staff as well as specialised training to meet the needs of individual children. This included for example forest school training, paediatric first aid, first aid at worked trained. All staff had access to a range of professionals including speech and language therapists, early year's advisors and health visitors to support their work with children. Discussions with staff revealed that they were aware of their roles and responsibilities;

that they enjoyed their work. They worked very well as a team; and said that they received 'excellent' support. Staff told us that they were listened to and this enabled them to provide a successful service for children and families.

Leaders manage staff and resources very effectively.

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

Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents and good links with other professionals.

Leaders and staff worked closely with parents to meet children's needs and to keep them informed of their child's development. Before children start at the playgroup, parents were invited to attend the playgroup with their children to get to know the staff and new environment and a settling in plan was made. Staff also carried out home visits prior to the children commencing attendance at the service. There was an 'open-door' policy and staff encouraged parents/carers to communicate informally each day. We saw that children's progress was recorded regularly and that keyworkers shared relevant information with the team relating to each child's development and their family life/circumstances. As a result, additional needs and support were quickly identified and parents were supported to access additional services they needed. We saw that staff regularly sought additional advice and support from other professionals including health visitors, the early year's advisory teacher, the speech and language team, physiotherapists and educational psychologists in order to provide the care and support that each child needed. There were good links with the school which supported an easier transition for the children. We saw that many siblings who had moved on to the school greeted staff warmly over the railings in the playground.

Leaders have developed very effective partnerships which benefit the children and their families.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

**The following recommendation was made:**

- to send a copy of the quality of care report to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and
- to monitor the state of repair of the building externally.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

Two inspectors made an unannounced visit to the service on 6 September 2018 which lasted for a period of 3 hours;

- we talked to children and spoke to parents, staff and the responsible individual and person in charge;
- we observed children and staff in the playroom and outside during the morning session;
- we observed one child using the SOFI-2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff;
- we inspected the premises;
- we looked at a sample of documentation and policies including the last CIW inspection report, the register; children's records, staff files, the statement of purpose, the tracker systems used that monitor children's developmental progress and a sample of policies and procedures;
- we gave some feedback to the responsible individual after the inspection; and
- we gave formal feedback to the responsible individual by telephone on 11 September 2018.

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

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



## About the service

<b>Type of care provided</b>	<b>Childrens Day Care Sessional Day Care</b>
<b>Responsible Individual</b>	<b>Jayne Edmond Sacha Worth</b>
<b>Person in charge</b>	<b>Teresa Slater Bethan Doyle</b>
<b>Registered maximum number of places</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Age range of children</b>	<b>2 to 3 years</b>
<b>Opening hours</b>	<b>Monday to Friday 9am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3.00pm.</b>
<b>Operating Language of the service</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection</b>	<b>02 June 2015</b>
<b>Dates of this inspection visit(s)</b>	<b>06 September 2018</b>
<b>Is this a Flying Start service?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?</b>	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. Basic Welsh and signage is used. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's More 'Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
<b>Additional Information:</b>	