



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

Childcare Inspection Report on

Flying Start St James

**St James Primary Icc
St James Primary School
Pen-y-Cae
Caerphilly
CF83 3GT**



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Description of the service

St James Flying Start Childcare Centre was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in 2008. It operates in two rooms from St James Integrated Children's Centre at St James Primary School in Pen-y-Cae, Caerphilly. The service provides care under the Welsh Government's Flying Start programme for up to 40 children between two and three years of age, during two sessions a day in term time. It is one of a number of Flying Start playgroups operated by Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC), which has nominated two responsible individuals to oversee their management. There is one supernumerary person in charge to oversee both rooms with a deputy in each room responsible for each session on a day to day basis. English is the main language of the service, while the Welsh language is introduced and supported through daily activities.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are happy and well cared for at the playgroup and take part in stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors in all weather. Children relate well with the staff caring for them. The staff team is experienced and well qualified and use their skills and knowledge to plan for and effectively meet the children's individual needs. Children benefit from a warm comfortable environment in a well-resourced playgroup.

2. Improvements

No recommendations were made at the last inspection. Children's care has been enhanced by the improved arrangements to invite parents into the setting on arrival, which strengthens links between playgroup and home.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The provider is meeting their legal responsibility in providing a safe child care service. We made some recommendations to develop the service and improve outcomes for children, including additional ways to collect and record children's views; and hygienic use of potties.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children's views are valued and they are able to make choices within their activities, although there is some scope for developing this practice. Children are made to feel welcome and have formed good relationships with the staff. They are able to develop their self-help skills and undertake activities which build their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a good range of activities indoors and can spend lots of time outside.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children can make choices and express their views. We observed children moving freely about the play space, choosing what they wanted to play with, such as the home corner, vehicles, and small world activities. Their attempts at language were encouraged and reinforced by staff during play opportunities, including focused activities. We observed children responding happily to questions about counting items, choice of colours and what they wanted to draw. We spoke to the manager and discussed how staff may consider additional ways in which children's views can contribute to their care.

Children are listened to by staff and are able to make lots of choices within their activities.

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

Children are relaxed in the care of the staff, who know them well. We observed lots of praise and encouragement as well as some hugs. We saw a child spontaneously sit on an adult's lap and engage in a conversation: "*Who's fetching you today?*" and "*Yes, you've got a mami too*". Children were given stickers to acknowledge their positive acts and encourage the development of their self-esteem. A child spent some time sitting in the book area, quietly looking through a book with a member of staff, enjoying focused attention away from the busier activities.

Children feel secure and comfortable in their care with staff who provide a relaxed approach to the service.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact reasonably well in this playgroup, in line with their age and stage of development. We observed children comfortably playing alongside each other, and as individuals. A child spent some time quietly concentrating on the play figures at the doll's house, following their own imagination. They were joined by another child and they continued their game together, holding the small figures, making them act out scenes in the doll's house. We observed a child giving a friendly hug to one of their friends, which was happily accepted. Children are learning to take turns and respect each other through focused activities such as circle time and snack time. We observed staff giving gentle but firm prompts as needed when a child's personal space was overwhelmed by an enthusiastic friend.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing are enhanced by the positive relationships fostered by staff.

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

Children are able to enjoy a good variety of activities which suit their interests and their age and stage of development. We observed that children's natural curiosity is encouraged by observant staff who noted and facilitated children's growing skills. These included the current interest in transporting objects and we saw a child taking dried pasta from one play area to another, and another exploring what happened when they put the playdoh into a beaker of water. Children happily and enthusiastically joined in action songs and rhymes and playing outside on their wheeled toys.

Children are engaged, busy and enjoy their time at the playgroup with positive support from adults.

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

The ethos of the service supports children to become independent and prepares them for when they move onto nursery. At the start of a session children self-register, and before going outside to play, children are encouraged to put on their own coats and outdoor clothing. We observed that children are supported to learn to manage their personal needs independently and are given the time and space to do as much as they can for themselves. We saw children helping themselves to a drink from a water station as they needed, and helping to pour their own drinks from a jug at snack time. We observed a child learning to pedal their bicycle with close focused support from an adult. The child was fully engaged for some time, discovering what was needed to make the bike move forward, and that it was easier when going down a slight slope. They were rewarded with praise such as "*Good pedalling*" and "*High five!*".

Children learn skills, and develop confidence and independence in a service where staff encourage children to do things for themselves and give them time to carry out their chosen activities.

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 calm nurturing atmosphere where children are supported to participate in play of their choice. The staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues, are able to identify children at risk and have the confidence to follow appropriate procedures. They have realistic expectations of children and treat them with warmth and respect and carry out appropriate hygiene routines and promote healthy eating.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The provider and practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and they promote a safe and healthy environment. The provider keeps a good range of policies and procedures to support and manage a safe child care service. We looked at the safeguarding policy and noted that it includes a statement about the Prevent Duty 2015, which is a new responsibility to prevent children who attend child care settings from being drawn into extremism. We spoke with a member of staff and a student on placement who were both clear about what action to take in the event of a safeguarding situation. We found that risk assessments, including fire safety are in place to maintain a safe service, and drills are logged. Health and safety meetings are routinely and regularly carried out, and relevant training is undertaken by all staff. We observed an effective record summarising individual staff members' training records. Children benefit from healthy snacks such as toast and fruit, with water or milk to drink. Water is also freely available throughout each session. There is a regular fortnightly session when children make and eat vegetable soup. The manager told us that they enjoy good links with the health visitors who are based on the premises and are informed of children who may require any additional support while attending the service. They have received accreditation for all three phases of the Healthy Early Years scheme and the Bronze stage of the Small Workplace Health Award. There is an effective recording system in place for pre-existing injuries and accidents. We observed staff modelling good social interaction and health and hygiene routines at snack time, as well as throughout the session. Staff sat with children at snack time, chatting about topics that were relevant to children, linking their home life and playgroup.

The provider maintains good systems to promote children's health and welfare.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Children are helped to learn what is, and is not, acceptable because staff apply a consistent approach that takes into account the age, stage of development and needs of the child. Circle time activities helped children understand about taking turns, and staff calmly explained how actions can impact on another. We observed an adult explain that a child's action made them "*feel sad*" and encourage another child to "*be gentle*". We observed a child who left the circle time activity and was encouraged to re-engage. They were then told "*If you want to play with some blocks, we'll get some out. Then if you want to join us with our singing, you can*". Staff asked each other for nominations for 'Star of the Day', when positive actions were noted and rewarded with stickers. They were proudly received by the children, with discussion about the reasons for having them.

Staff set and hold realistic expectations of children's behaviour and celebrate their achievements.

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

The service provides care which is child centred and meets children's individual needs in a cheerful and caring atmosphere. We found a good range of toys, activities and resources that are suitable for the children who attend. This is an English speaking service, although the Welsh language is promoted through some activities. We were told that staff had taken steps to learn some words to support communication with a child whose home language was neither English nor Welsh. Children learn about the world around them through planned and themed cultural celebrations and we learned that this term had been very busy celebrating the Chinese New Year, St David's Day, Mothering Sunday and St Patrick's Day. We observed that children's individual and changing needs were met by staff who adapted activities and opportunities for them throughout the session in an inclusive manner. An effective key worker system is in place, and key staff take responsibility for observations of their group and completing individual learning and play plans for each child. The Foundation Phase Profile Handbook is used to effectively plan for children's next steps in play and learning. Staff are using the sustained shared thinking approach to facilitate children's growing ability to problem solve. We saw targets for individual children and groups displayed, and an effective, simple way of recording 'wow' moments for staff to transfer to children's individual progress files later, without interrupting the flow of a session. Children benefit from good systems to help them transition to the school's nursery. We saw examples of children's individual development journals that are shared with parents and the school.

Children's play and learning are promoted by practitioners who have skills and knowledge to meet their individual needs.

3. Environment

Summary

The provider ensures that children receive care in a safe, secure and child friendly setting. Children are given a good range of resources and experiences that enhance their learning and development both indoors and outside. It is an environment in which children can play and learn and take on appropriate challenges safely where staff minimise risks to children.

Our findings

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

Practitioners take a measured and recorded approach to ensuring the environment is safe. Safety checks are carried out on a daily basis and maintenance issues are recorded and dealt with. The fire blanket and first aid kit were easily accessible to all staff. Safety maintenance certificates were in place and risk assessments were detailed and thorough. Insurance certificates are up to date. Records demonstrated that regular fire alarm testing and evacuation drills are carried out on a regular basis in both morning and afternoon sessions to ensure all children experience them. There are clear and robust procedures for lock-down situations which have been practised and recorded appropriately. We noted that all areas were clean and free from hazards, including finger guards provided on toilet doors. Entrance to the child care area is locked and staff were seen to be vigilant about visitors and potential intruders.

The staff are clear and pro-active about their responsibilities for maintaining a safe environment for children.

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

The premises are bright, warm and welcoming. Children are cared for in two rooms sharing toilet, kitchen, office and outdoor facilities. The toilet facilities are child sized, supporting independence. We discussed nappy changing and toilet training management with staff and found that children's privacy and dignity is maintained at these times within a hygienic routine. However, there is no sluice sink available for cleaning potties and we recommended the managers refer to the Public Health Wales document: *Infection Prevention and Control for Child Care Settings – All Wales Guidance* and consider best practice for the use and storage of potties. There is also a soft play room for all children to use, particularly when outdoor play may be restricted. Outdoor play is easily accessed from both rooms and children can socialise with their peers from each room. This arrangement ensures that a large number of children can be cared for at each session, but within smaller groups. They stay within a stable staff team who can provide additional cover in either room if needed. The person in charge is responsible for overseeing both rooms. Similar routines take place in each room, and staff are clear about their individual roles and shared responsibilities in all the child care spaces. We saw a good range of resources available and accessible that stimulate and interest children and meet the needs of their particular stage of development. Children can mostly reach activities of their choice for themselves. These included toys and resources from the labelled storage units or with resources left out, such as vehicles, construction toys, small world and home corner and role play

equipment. Children's learning is facilitated by experiential, hands-on activities such as play-doh, sand and water. A cosy cushioned reading area is provided, and we saw children benefitting from quiet 1:1 experiences with their key worker. The play spaces were set out in learning zones that meet the recommendations of the Foundation Phase learning framework in Wales. Outdoor play routinely takes place each session, unless specific circumstances prevent it. During reasonable weather conditions, the doors are open throughout the play session. We observed children choosing to play with their mud kitchen, wheeled toys, and play house (currently themed as a library) and hobbit homes. There is an extended outdoor play area where children can explore and play in the grassed area, and take part in planting, such as strawberries and runner beans. They can check on progress in the bug hotel or enjoy their story circle. The manager told us that the children thoroughly enjoyed digging and rolling in the recent snow. There is a store of resources so that they can be used rotationally, following planned themes and children's interests.

Children are cared for in an environment which provides good play and learning opportunities.

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

The person in charge ensures that children have access to a wide range of quality resources that support and develop their needs, meeting the ethos of the Flying Start programme. Resources are plentiful and are readily available supporting children's independence and choice. We saw that tables were cleaned by staff before and after snack time, demonstrating their awareness of infection control. There were recorded systems in place to ensure resources and equipment is clean and well maintained. Resources are checked in a daily visual risk assessment and more formally within the annual risk assessment. Toys and resources are also checked for wear and tear as they are used, or tidied away. Deep cleaning of all toys and play space is planned and carried out regularly.

Practitioners maintain good routines to ensure resources are suitable for children's use.

4 Leadership and Management

Summary

Children are cared for in a service that is well run and organised, meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (NMS) and relevant regulations. Paperwork and records are kept in a clear system and accessible to those who need them. Parents are given the information they need to make an informed choice about using the service. Practitioners are well-qualified and experienced, and there are good systems in place to ensure that required training is maintained. Additional relevant training opportunities are offered to ensure that experiences for children are positive. This is an improving service, where practitioners work with other professionals, reflect on their practice and include parents' and children's views in the process.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership is good with effective monitoring systems in place. It is fully compliant with the relevant child care regulations and national minimum standards for registered child care providers. There is a range of effective and well written policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed and ensure all who use and work within the service are clear about roles and responsibilities. We spoke to staff who are competent, feel supported and enjoy their work. They told us there had been some changes in staff due to professional development opportunities. This had not impacted on the care given to children and we observed staff worked well as a team and as individuals, supporting positive outcomes for the children who attend.

The service delivers a good, consistent and improving standard of care to children.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Children's outcomes are enhanced because practitioners are pro-active in taking a reflective and responsive approach to running the service. It is formally reviewed annually and we looked at the latest summary which was completed in July 2017 and sent to CIW within the Self- Assessment of Service form. Staff work closely with the Local Authority Teaching Advisor who we met, and who had contributed to the annual review of service, saying *"The staff at St James Flying Start setting work tirelessly to provide the highest quality childcare possible for the children of the area. They support parents and the children with transition to setting from home and from setting to school. Everything they do is child centred and they follow the children's interests in the daily running of the setting. The setting has achieved an excellent ITERS assessment and they continue to look for areas of improvement within the setting. As a team, they are willing to embed any changes that are advised to them and again, this is done to a high standard"*. The manager told us that they are looking to explore ways to assist children's emotional development over coming months.

Leaders ensure there are effective self-evaluation and future planning systems in place.

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

There is a culture of continuous professional development which is modelled by leaders. Staff working in the playgroup are qualified and experienced and they have access to ongoing training to improve their knowledge and practice. We viewed two staff files and found that comprehensive information was in place to evidence suitability of staff. Induction processes and training were in place, and we also saw contracts of employment, job descriptions and confirmation of up to date DBS certificates on file. We spoke to staff and a student on placement and found they are clear about their own and others' roles and responsibilities. We observed managers of the two rooms communicating effectively together to ensure children's needs were fully met by appropriate numbers of competent staff.

Management of practitioners and resources is effective and ensures the smooth-running of the service.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The staff work closely with parents and professionals to ensure their children's needs are met. Discussion with staff showed they know the children and their families well and there were sessions with parents planned for the current week. We observed staff making adjustments to ensure that all parents could be included in the face to face meetings to confirm and support their children's learning and development. We spoke to parents who all made positive comments about the care their child receives. These included *"Brilliant; can't fault it"*; and *"They're all learning all the time"*. A parent told us their older child had also attended several years previously, and were happy with the care both their children had received. Contact with professionals within the Flying Start ethos is effective and positive, and there are arrangements in place to facilitate good transition to the adjacent primary school nursery when places allow. Families join staff and playgroup children on specific outings in the summer months, such as to the park or castle. Parents are invited to join in get togethers while their child is in playgroup, such as the baby club, and parenting classes via the Flying Start initiative. Health visitors are available on site, and parents are welcome to use the comfortable seating area and coffee machine in the foyer of the building. We saw parents were welcomed into the play space with their child at the start of a session and a friendly exchange of information between parents and staff at the end of a session.

Practitioners understand the importance of working in partnership to ensure that children receive the support they need.

2 Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

In order to develop the service and improve outcomes for children we discussed the following matters:

- consider additional ways in which to record children's views and choices to help them contribute to their care; and
- to consider the use of potties and hygienic cleaning routines of them.

How we undertook this inspection

This inspection was unannounced and undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. The inspector undertook one visit to the service on the one day, of approximately five hours across the two playgroup sessions. Feedback of our findings to the manager took place at the end of the visit. There were a total of 24 children present during the morning session and 20 children present during the afternoon session. Evidence for the report was gathered using the following methodology:

- we looked at the range of paperwork kept about the service – including policies and procedures, risk assessments, contracts, children’s records, accident records and safety certificates;
- we observed the children interacting with the staff team and choosing their activities and used the Short Observational Tool For Inspectors (SOFI) to assist the process ;
- we spoke with the children, and
- we spoke with the manager, deputy, staff and parents about the service.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website www.cssiw.org.uk

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Helen Morris Sarah Mutch
Person in charge	Laura Cook
Registered maximum number of places	40
Age range of children	Between two and three years
Opening hours	Five days a week; term time only; 9.00 – 11.30 and 12.30 – 15.00
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CIW inspection	11 April 2014
Dates of this inspection visit	13 March 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'</i> .
Additional Information:	