



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

Childcare Inspection Report on

Little Angels Playgroup

**Blenheim Road
Community Primary School
Cwmbran
NP44 4SZ**



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Description of the service

Little Angels Playgroup is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for 36 children aged between two and five years. The playgroup is commissioned by Torfaen Local Authority to provide a Flying Start service for two years olds. Places for three-year-old children from the local community are also provided based on demand and spaces available. Morning and afternoon sessions operate each week day, during school term times. This element of the service is located within the Integrated Children's Centre situated on the grounds of Blenheim Road Community Primary School. The Registered Person, who is also the Person in Charge, is referred to in the report as the provider. The provider employs a deputy to run the playgroup and a deputy to run the wrap around service on a daily basis. English is the prominent language with some basic Welsh introduced daily within the playgroup.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children enjoy attending and have established some close attachments with staff. New children are well supported to settle and activities in playgroup are well planned to promote children's learning. Staff recognise the uniqueness of each child so that no one is disadvantaged but the key person system and activities and planning in the wrap around could be strengthened. Suitable emphasis is given to promoting children's health and safety. The playgroup provides welcoming play spaces that are inviting and well resourced but further consideration is needed to developing the wrap around element of the service. Parents speak highly of the service and their children's care. The provider is committed to delivering a quality service and now accepts that policies must be followed at all times and partnerships with the nursery improved.

2. Improvements

The Flying Start element of the service has moved into a new dedicated, purpose-built area within the Integrated Children's Centre.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The provider was not meeting their legal responsibility regarding undertaking safe recruitment procedures but addressed this following the inspection. We identified several recommendations to enhance the quality of the playgroup and wraparound further. These related to attendance registers; drinking water; key person system; fire drills; complaints; children's information; independence; activities in wraparound and partnerships.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children actively make choices and decisions in their play in playgroup but this is not consistent in the wrap around. Children's emotional well-being is supported successfully during daily transitions and they are learning to express what they need but the key person system is not consistent across all parts of the service. Most children engage in experiences and play based activities that interest them but more opportunities need to be made in the wrap around.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Most children make choices and decisions. Children in playgroup confidently select areas and toys they wish to play with and are fully aware of the options open to them. We watched some children choose the home corner while others selected to paint at the easel, build with blocks or do a floor puzzle. We discussed increasing children's choices in the wrap around and giving them more of a voice in any activity planning. Children are confident to communicate their needs fully assured that they are listened to. We observed younger children and those with additional needs use facial expressions, gestures, sounds and attempts at language well to express themselves. Children's emotional attachments are considered well because their key person is chosen based on which staff member they relate to best.

Overall, most children have a voice and make suitable choices in their play.

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

Children are generally settled and comfortable. New children are supported well to help them cope with separation from their parents. Most children stopped crying and engaged in purposeful play following cuddles and reassuring words from staff. This emotional support was provided throughout the session to help reassure the children and help them settle. Older children know the daily routine well. They coped well with the transition from playgroup, to lunch club and wrap around, helping them to feel safe and secure. Children in the wrap around are reassured that staff know their individual needs and adapt practices to suit. For example, at lunchtime children who need additional support and find it difficult to cope with sitting at the main table receive one-to-one care and sit on their own table. In playgroup children have individual named coat pegs for their personal belongings and have their pictures displayed on the wall. This helps them feel valued and a strong sense of belonging.

Children's feelings and emotional well-being are promoted well.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are beginning to develop a sense of right and wrong. We saw the children smile in response to regular praise and use good manners at snack time. Children who participated in small group circle time were thanked for their participation. They

were each rewarded with a star and showed patience when queuing to select which star they wanted. Children in playgroup were fully aware of the rules for acceptable behaviour but those in the wrap around were unclear of what was expected. As a result, they tested the boundaries for sharing, turn taking and co-operating with their friends. Children are developing resilience and appropriate coping strategies when dealing with the change in routine. We watched some children get upset when they were asked to come back inside for circle time at the end of the session because they were having fun outside. Positive, calm support helped the children change their behaviour and take an active part in circle time.

Most children interact and manage their behaviour generally well although children's involvement in service rules could be developed.

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

Children are content and enjoy their play. On arrival, the children were busy playing and participating in planned activities. We watched a child enjoy reading a book to themselves, happily talking about the pictures and adding their own ideas to the story. Children eagerly engaged in the small group planned activity, paying attention and concentrating for an appropriate amount of time for their age. We heard lots of laughter and saw the children cover their face with sheer excitement when banging the box and trying to guess what was inside.

Children in playgroup have lots of fun in play based activities that interest and excite them.

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

Most children have a good variety of experiences and sensory play activities that promote a broad range of skills. They explore the texture of playdough, squeezing and pressing it in their hands and learn to use the rolling pins and different tools to extend their skills and creativity. However, opportunities for children to follow their personal interests and engage in a wide range of stimulating activities in the wrap around provision needs improvement. Children's independence is generally encouraged in playgroup. The annual Quality of Care report states that at snack time children serve themselves and clear away their plate and cups when finished. However, this is not consistently implemented. Rather than serving themselves we observed children being given tiny pieces of toast and the manager confirmed that this was not normal practice. Children in playgroup develop their Welsh language skills well. We heard them learning greetings, songs and key words during planned circle times and small group work. Younger children are positively supported during toilet training and show pride in their achievements when they have successfully used the potty or toilet.

Children's independence and development are promoted well in playgroup but more work is needed to ensure children in the wrap around service consistently have the same experiences and learning opportunities.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Strong focus is given to promoting children's health through participating in lots of healthy lifestyle awards and programmes and implementing most policies and procedures well. Safety measures are implemented appropriately and children's behaviour managed positively. Staff facilitate most children's learning well and work hard to provide a wide range of stimulating activities that challenge and promote children's development. However, the selection of activities and play experiences in the wrap around service could be developed further.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote children's health and safety well. Staff have all completed first aid, food hygiene and child protection training. Staff we spoke to had secure knowledge of safeguarding issues and implement procedures confidently. Children play outside safely through a combination of supervision and protection from hazards. We heard clear, age appropriate explanations given on how to use the outdoor toys and equipment safely, helpfully increasing children's awareness. We observed children hold hands when walking along the path to the wrap around classroom in the school. Staff also ensured that children were positioned on the inside away from the road in line with the settings risk assessments. Staff implement best practice in relation to promoting most aspects of children's health. They have achieved numerous awards, such as Gold Snack Award, Oral Health Award and Active and Physical play Award, demonstrating the high quality practice. Children are well supported in managing their personal care and learn good hygiene routines. Staff introduce hand washing cleverly asking "*we have to go and.....?*" to which the children replied "*wash our hands*". They all sing the 'wash hands' song and join in the actions, reinforcing correct practices. Children enjoy healthy snacks of fresh fruit, toast and cereals with milk or water to drink. Although the Quality of Care report stated that drinking water is available in the day children do not have access to water throughout the session. We also saw that children had to wait until they had finished their snack and lunch to have a drink. We recommended that water be made available at all times and drinks provided during mealtimes.

Overall, policies and procedures are implemented well to keep children safe and healthy although the provision for drinks needs more consideration

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Interactions are managed well in line with the basic Behaviour Management Policy. Staff were consistent and positive in their approach to promote children's self esteem and confidence. We heard frequent praise and encouragement given during play and daily routines to recognise children's achievements and good behaviour, such as "thank you very much, good boy". A sharing issue with a tea pot and cups in the home

corner was handled calmly and sensitively. Softly spoken explanations about how the behaviour had made their friend sad and how they could share meant the child listened and co-operated. We recommended extending the behaviour policy to make it clear what is expected and strategies used to manage unacceptable interactions. Staff also need to discuss and agree the rules with the children in the wrap around so that there is no confusion as to what is acceptable.

The staff's calm, positive approach is effective but improvements could be made to the Behaviour Management Policy.

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

Suitable measures are in place to support children's play and learning. Playgroup staff explained that they use group, environmental and individual observations to help target learning and plan activities. The provider told us that communication trackers had recently been introduced to monitor more robustly children's speech and language. This enabled staff to tailor their support, language and communication during children's play. We undertook a Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI) observation in playgroup to assess staff interactions. We observed staff demonstrate genuine affection and warmth towards a child when they got upset. They stayed close to provide comfort and reassurance when needed and positively interacted and engaged in the child's play with the football. We found a baseline assessment report is completed by children's key person. These cover children's cognitive, social, emotional, communication and physical skills. Whilst staff confirmed this is only completed when children leave the setting, observations are completed throughout the year. We observed several children's individual profiles and recommended identifying next steps across the seven areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. Scrutiny of the activity planning highlighted a good range of stimulating activities, although links to children's next steps were not clearly visible. Nevertheless, most staff support the children's play appropriately and help them progress and build on what they already know and can do. Children with additional needs are supported effectively and progress well because staff implement their individual play plans successfully. Staff described clearly what learning and support was needed outlining hand gestures and 'on-body' signs they use to encourage communication. The deputy explained she uses 'vehicles for learning' planning in the wrap around. However, more effort is needed to expand the range of activities and play experiences inside and outside in the wrap around. We noted the children quickly lost interest in what was available and appeared bored.

Staff promote children's learning well but improvements are necessary in the wrap around and assessments and activity planning need developing.

3. Environment

Summary

Children play in a generally safe, clean environment where security is given high priority. Suitable policies and procedures are in place although these are not consistently implemented. The playgroup is warm, welcoming and really well resourced but improvements are necessary in the wrap around to make it more inviting inside and outside.

Our findings

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

The manager ensures the premises are secure. The main entrance is rigorously controlled meaning any visitors have to wait to gain entry and are then escorted to the playroom. On arrival and collection, parents for the playgroup and wrap around use the relevant garden entrance and are supervised closely by staff. Records confirmed that relevant safety certificates and insurances were in place in line with Standard 24 of the National Minimum Standards. We were told cleaners are used daily and between sessions we saw staff implement good hygiene practices, minimising any risks to children's health. We observed daily checklists completed prior to each session to maintain safe spaces for children to play and learn. Scrutiny of the risk assessments clearly identified the hazards and the risks these posed to children indoors and outdoors. Although records for the wrap around need developing, the hazards and risks are communicated well to all staff. The Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) completed in July 2017 confirmed that fire safety equipment and risk assessments were all checked in November 2016. The Quality of Care report and the deputy, who is the designated fire warden and Health and Safety Officer, stated that fire drills in playgroup were practised termly. However, the SASS confirmed the last one had taken place in November 2016. The deputy confirmed that practice in the wrap around was regulated by the school but highlighted that the escape plan was different to that of the school. We recommended increasing practice of the emergency escape plan in both the playgroup and wrap around to increase children's awareness of safe action to take.

Suitable systems are in place to ensure regular maintenance and safety checks are implemented but improvements to emergency procedures and risk assessments are needed.

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

The new playgroup playroom is bright and cheerful and is used creatively to provide a rich play and learning environment. The lunch club and wrap around service is located in a classroom within the school. Both venues are self-contained with dedicated outdoor space. In playgroup staff are responsible for an area of learning and plan their dedicated areas accordingly. Consequently, play areas are welcoming with the layout

and design well thought through. The integrated bathroom facilities actively promote children's independent access and the underfloor heating helps to regulate the heat and keep children safe and warm. The playgroups outdoor classroom and garden area are inviting and give children a choice and a good variety of play and learning experiences. The bi-fold doors into the outdoor classroom and large shutter provide children with free flowing indoor and outdoor play at set times in the daily routine. However, outdoor play is not consistently promoted in the wrap around to broaden children's play experiences. A child-sized sofa, soft mat and cushions provide a comfortable area for children to read and share books. Colourful displays of children's work and various educational posters and boards adorn the walls with several positioned at child height. This allows the children to interact with the displays. For example, in the maths area children could move and match the number balloons, numerals, colours and shapes in both Welsh and English to support their learning. The layout and design of the playgroup is very inviting and child focused but more work is needed to develop the wrap around facilities.

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

There are stimulating resources and equipment to meet most children's needs. In playgroup we saw a broad range of toys and resources in each of the different areas of learning. These are used creatively to promote children's learning in a fun, purposeful way. For example, we observed numbers on bricks and wooden spoons and dots on the opposite side to support children's early counting skills. We also observed children use the interactive Velcro number board on the wall, counting the correct number of leaves to a corresponding number. However, resources in the wrap around need developing further to help broaden children's play experiences and enable them to follow their personal interests. All toys are kept in clear boxes in low-level open storage units to actively promote children's independent play. Observations of the wraparound garden showed only a small selection of ride on toys available for children to use. Nevertheless all the toys and equipment across the different services appeared in good condition because maintenance checks are completed termly.

The provider ensures children have access to resources and equipment that are suitable for their needs but these need expanding in the wrap around.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The provider is committed to secure improvement and provide a quality service for children and their families from the local community. Inconsistencies in the safe recruitment of staff were identified but procedures have improved and are now more robust. Most records and policies and procedures are in place, contain all the necessary information and are understood by staff. High priority is given to staff training and suitable methods are in place to monitor staff performance. The current staff team work well together and are motivated to improve outcomes for children.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The provider has sound understanding of current best practice and works hard to achieve this. Staff attend daily feedback sessions and monthly team meetings to share information, discuss practice and communicate expectations. Consequently, staff work well together to support the smooth running of the service. Minutes of meetings showed various topics discussed that promote safe practices and a clear vision for the service. Although the Statement of Purpose needs some amendments to ensure details are thorough and accurate, it includes some useful information about the service. We reviewed a number of records, including accident and medication records and overall, these contained the necessary information. However, some children's files are not complete and improvements to the attendance register are necessary. The settings policies and procedures are updated annually and contain all the necessary information. Practice observed and discussions with staff showed that these are well understood and most are implemented appropriately. For example, accident forms were completed accurately and shared with parents and safeguarding issues recorded and communicated to the provider. However, following a concern the Complaints Procedure was not followed robustly or a complaint file put in place in line with National Minimum Standards. The provider also confirmed that methods to notify CIW and other agencies of any future safeguarding incidents involving staff and children will be implemented robustly.

The provider has a clear vision for the service and an effective team of staff but some improvements are needed to drive the quality of the service further.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The provider is reflective and adopts an inclusive approach to self-evaluation. The annual Quality of Care Review report completed in May 2017 details well the setting's strengths and highlights the various methods used to inform the review. Feedback from parents about the quality of the service was sought using questionnaires. Parents were very positive with 13 rating the service as excellent. Parents we spoke to value the friendly, welcoming space and all agreed that the staff were a real strength of the service. The annual report also highlighted that the Early Childhood Environmental

Rating Scale system was used to help structure part of the review. This enabled them to evaluate practice in relation to the quality of the play areas, resources and children's learning. However, this needs to be completed more thoroughly in the wrap around to help increase children's play and learning experiences. The provider outlined a number of improvements they were aiming to achieve to enhance outcomes for children. Some included, adapting the daily routine to a more child-led approach, developing a more formal system to capture children's views and providing a rolling snack. To assist with this the provider told us she has visited other childcare settings who already implement a rolling snack to gain an insight into how to introduce it. Staff meetings are used effectively to engage all staff in the evaluation process. A sample of minutes observed from the meetings show how practice is reviewed and discussions held about what is, or is not effective and appropriate solutions agreed.

Useful methods are implemented to monitor, evaluate and secure improvements across most aspects of the service.

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

The management of staff has improved to create a close and effective staff team. However, recruitment procedures were not followed consistently to confirm new staff's suitability and a Non Compliance Notice was issued. Discussions with the provider showed that lessons have been learnt to meet the non compliance and safer recruitment processes are now consistently applied. Staff files are well organised with checklists detailing that all relevant security checks and mandatory training are in place. Staff questionnaires confirmed that they felt well supported by the provider and had good access to training to develop their skills and knowledge further. Regular supervision and annual appraisals help monitor staff performance closely and staff told us they felt comfortable to raise any concerns. The deployment of staff is well managed between the different aspects of the service with daily discussions to communicate expectations. Consequently, staff knew their roles and responsibilities and implemented them well to support the smooth and efficient running of the service. However, the key person system could be improved to further promote the close bonds between staff and children. In playgroup we noted that children's personal care was carried out on a rota basis rather than by their key person and there was no system in place in the wrap around.

The provider is a good role model and motivates the staff team effectively, although adaptations to the key person system should be considered.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships are generally well established. The nominated Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator liaises with other professionals and goes to relevant meetings to champion the needs of specific children. In addition, being based in the Integrated Children's Centre enables staff to liaise very closely with Health Visitors and other professionals promptly. The Quality of Care report states that partnerships with the nursery class teacher in the school are good. However, discussions with the provider

and deputy highlighted that these relationships were not robust. This is because information shared with the wraparound staff about children's development and next steps is very limited. Consequently, the support and activities provided are not tailored to the children's needs. We recommended improving the partnerships with the nursery to assist and update staff and ensure a consistent approach in promoting children's learning. Parents receive useful booklets and information about the service including details of key policies and procedures to help them make informed decisions about using the service. Regular updates are posted on the playgroups social media page, ensuring they are kept well informed and up to date. The parents' notice board also provides a wealth of information about how they can promote their children's health and well being. As noted in the annual review, playgroup staff confirmed that parent meetings sometimes take place to update them about some aspects of their child's progress.

Staff work well with parents to establish strong relationships but partnerships with the school's nursery could be strengthened.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Areas of non compliance identified at this inspection

We notified the provider that the service was non compliant with Regulation 28: Suitability of workers. This is because procedures for recruiting staff had not been followed to confirm their suitability. Following the inspection CIW received written confirmation from the provider that all staff who are employed by the service have been subject to the correct suitability checks. All information required by the regulations in terms of staff recruitment is held in staff files.

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

We identified some practice recommendations to improve the quality of the service and children's outcomes. These included:

- Making sure the attendance registers detail accurately children's times of arrival and departure;
- providing drinking water for children to access when they wish throughout the session and during mealtimes;
- reviewing the key person approach in playgroup and implementing a system in the wrap around service;
- increasing practise of the emergency escape plan so that all children attending gain secure understanding of safe action to take;
- ensuring any complaints received are dealt with appropriately and a system for recording complaints is put in place in line with National Minimum Standard 19.7;
- monitoring children's information and records more closely so that all the necessary details are in place;
- ensuring children's independence is consistently promoted;
- extending the range of activities and play opportunities inside and outside in the wrap around provision, and
- developing the partnerships between the wrap around and nursery in the school to encourage greater sharing of information about children's next steps and ongoing progress.

6. How we undertook this inspection

An unannounced full inspection was carried out in response to CIW receiving a concern regarding the treatment of children and meeting their individual needs. This inspection was undertaken by one inspector over two visits. Evidence for this report was gathered by:

- Reviewing information held by CIW;
- speaking to children, three parents, the provider and staff members present;
- using feedback from seven CIW staff questionnaires;
- observing the children's play and their interactions and engagement with staff;
- undertaking a Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI) observation that assesses children's engagement and staff interactions;
- scrutiny of the annual Quality of Care Review report and Self Assessment of Service Statement, and
- assessing service records including: staff files; attendance registers; policies and procedures; activity planning, risk assessments and Statement of Purpose.

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

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Marcella Passmore
Person in charge	Marcella Passmore
Registered maximum number of places	36
Age range of children	2 to 5 year olds
Opening hours	Playgroup – 09.00 to 11.30 Lunch club – 11.30 to 12.30 Playgroup and wraparound – 12.30 to 14.45 Each week day during school term times
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	26 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	10 and 11 January 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?	The service does not provide the 'Active Offer' with regard to the Welsh Language. An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services. The service is in a predominantly English speaking area and none of the children had Welsh as their first language.
Additional Information:	