



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Sweet Peas Flying Start Playgroup**

**Somerton Primary School  
Nursery Unit  
Hawthorne Fosse  
Newport  
NP19 9AP**



**Date of Publication**

**Wednesday, 12 September 2018**

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## **Description of the service**

Sweet Peas Flying Start Playgroup is one of several settings run by Newport City Council (NCC) within the flying start programme. The playgroup is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for 24 two-year-olds from a self contained unit in the grounds of Somerton Primary School in Newport. NCC have nominated a Responsible Individual (RI) to oversee the playgroup and employ a Person in Charge to operate the playgroup on a daily basis. The operating language of the service is English with Welsh introduced occasionally.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children make some choices and engage in activities and play experiences that interest them. They form positive emotional attachments with staff they choose to be their key worker and respond well to some positive praise and encouragement but improvements to managing children's behaviour are needed. Children's learning is routinely assessed and monitored and although not consistent, some staff positively support and nurture children's development. Robust safety and security measures are in place but infection control measures and food safety standards are not always followed. Staff are deployed effectively both inside and outside to allow children to move freely and ensure they are closely supervised. The playroom is inviting with lots of space for children to play comfortably but the resources and activities available outside could be developed. The leadership and management team are motivated and committed to develop the playgroup and agreed that weaknesses with staff performance, training and skills would be addressed. Partnerships with parents are strong and they talk highly of the playgroup.

### **2. Improvements**

Children have access to a drink during the session and any updates to the Statement of Purpose are sent to CIW. The gas safety check is completed annually and the emergency escape plan is practised routinely when new children and staff start at the playgroup. Children's choices have improved because free flowing indoor and outdoor play is available throughout the session. A Premises Management System has been introduced to rigorously monitor health and safety practices and new accident forms implemented to ensure they contain all the necessary information. The Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) assessment tool has been introduced to monitor interactions and staff engagement in children's play.

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

We identified one area of non compliance regarding staff files. This was addressed promptly after the inspection.

A number of practice recommendations were identified, including behaviour management, food safety standards, infection control, safety and staff interactions. These are outlined in further detail at the end of the report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children communicate their needs well and are aware of the options open to them to help them make appropriate choices in their care and play. Their emotional attachments are considered well through the key worker system to help them feel safe and they are adequately supported during daily transitions. However, children's dignity needs to be respected and their attempts at communication consistently valued. Children engage in some positive learning experiences that help them develop new skills and their independence is encouraged much of the time.

## **Our findings**

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

Children make some choices about their care and play. On arrival we watched the children decide what activities and toys they wanted to play with from those set out in the room. Once the doors to the garden were opened, we saw the children decide where they played, freely moving between the inside and outside play areas to fulfil their play ideas. Children chose if they wanted to join in the craft activity outside and they confidently selected the colour glitter they wanted to use to decorate their beach ball. We noted that children are consulted if they want to have snack and choose what food they want to eat. The children selected if they wanted sauce on their pasta, what fruit they wanted and if they wanted milk or water to drink. Children's attempts at communication are listened to and mostly valued. A child with limited speech and language, playing with a member of staff outside, glanced over to a child on a ride on car. This was cleverly interpreted and when asked if they wanted the other car out, the child nodded and smiled. However, when a child explained they wanted to assist staff during an activity, they were promptly rebuffed.

Children have a sufficient voice by the choices they make but not all communication is valued.

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

Children feel generally safe and happy in the setting and are greeted warmly by some staff. They are comfortable in the playgroup and on arrival are eager to get straight down to playing. We observed some children greeted with a smile on arrival and they are generally supported during transitions when moving from playing to snack time and playing to circle time. There is a strong commitment to nurture children's emotional wellbeing through the key worker grouping and for them to feel reassured that their feelings are taken into account. The PiC explained that although initial key groups are planned, these are routinely changed based on who the children build their special attachments with. When a child became upset while playing, they were quickly reassured with a cwtch from the PiC, helping them to feel safe and resume their play. However, more consideration should be given to respecting children's dignity by ensuring children's nappies are checked in private.

Children are generally happy and their emotional wellbeing is nurtured well through the key worker system but their privacy during personal care needs to be respected.

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

Children are beginning to understand their feelings and be sensitive to their friends. We observed children sharing books and ask their friends if they were happy with the books they received. When an adult or new child came over they politely asked “*Would you like a book? Would you like to read this book?*” We also saw a child offer help to a friend while playing in the water tray. When the friend tried to copy sliding the play people down the ramp into the water, they patiently explained and modelled how they did it. Children show pride in their achievements. When a child completed their glitter ball, they cheered “*Yeah I did it*” and beamed with pride when they told another staff member what they had made. The children are learning to comply with the rules. We observed some children follow staff instructions to help tidy away the stickle bricks to clear the table in readiness for snack time.

Children interact generally well and are kind and helpful to their friends.

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

Children sustain interest and engage in a range of free play and planned activities that they enjoy. They concentrated until they had completed their glitter balls, while others were eager to practise their balancing skills over and over again until they improved. We observed two children spend long periods with the play people and house, using their imagination to act out different play scenarios, engaged and responding to the PiC’s engagement in their play. The children were eager to get their shape mat to sit on in readiness for story time and many took an active part, while others were happy to just sit and listen.

Children engage in play based activities that interest them and they enjoy.

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

Children develop and learn through their play generally well. Children’s independence is encouraged most of the time. We observed children learn appropriate hygiene practices. They washed their hands after nappy changes and toileting and before snack times and disposed of the paper towels in the bin. We also heard a child tell staff they wanted to wipe their own nose and after snack they wiped their faces with a wet wipe. Although at snack time children did not pour their own drinks, on the second visit, they were given a small jug of milk to pour on their cereals. Some children participate in a variety of experiences that help them gain a range of skills. They learn about quantity and weight when playing with the stones and weighing scales. A child told us, “*It’s kind of heavy*” when they picked up one of the pots full of stones and proceeded to tip them in and out. When staff joined them, the child responded well to questions to introduce purposeful learning but continued to lead their play. When asked how many pebbles they thought they needed to remove to balance the pots, the child confidently stated “5”. The child avidly watched, waiting for the point on the scales to settle in the middle, exclaiming “*its level*”. However, we observed another

child become bored and lose interest in their play with the stickle bricks, because there was no interaction from staff sat at the table. Nevertheless, children participated positively at story time because they were given time to respond “*mummy duck said.....?*” eagerly filling in the gap with, “*Quack, quack, quack*”. Children’s Welsh language skills are not encouraged because Welsh is rarely modelled or introduced during play and daily routines. Throughout the two visits, Welsh was only used once when a member of staff asked children if they wanted ‘pin-afal’ (pineapple) at snack time. Children with additional learning needs receive targeted support enabling them to access all aspects of the setting. Although there are currently no children needing one-to-one support, individual play plans are created and targets set each term to help support and encourage their development.

Children’s independence and learning is promoted but not consistently.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Suitable health and safety policies and procedures are in place and these are generally well understood by staff. Children benefit from a wide variety of delicious snacks in good quantities but infection control measures and food safety standards are not consistently applied. Some staff interact and engage positively in the children's play but more work is needed to ensure this approach is consistent and strategies to manage and support children's behaviour are appropriate. Children's learning and development is routinely monitored and staff demonstrate clear understanding of their key children's needs.

### **Our findings**

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

Overall, staff have suitable knowledge of health and safety policies and procedures. Discussions showed they had good knowledge of the medication and sick child policies and secure understanding of procedures to follow with any safeguarding concerns. Accident and medication records are completed accurately and monitored by the PiC to identify any trends and safety measures needed. We carried out a review of the first aid box and found that most items were in date to confirm their sterility. Adequate infection control measures are followed but these are not consistently applied by all staff. Staff undertaking nappy changing duties or preparing children's snacks use appropriate cleaning materials and always wear disposable aprons and gloves. On the first visit we saw aprons and gloves were put on the snack tray for staff to wear while serving the food. However, staff do not wash their hands first and those serving snack on the second visit did not wear aprons or gloves. We also observed staff come directly in from the garden and sit straight down to undertake their snack duties. Nevertheless, good hand washing routines were encouraged with the children and brushing of teeth during most sessions helps them learn good oral health. Children benefit from nutritious, wholesome snacks in good quantities. However, appropriate food safety standards are not consistently followed. We found that playgroup food was not labelled in the fridge or cupboard and the guidance followed was relating to child minders and not day care. Staff implement appropriate safety practices and procedures to help keep the children safe and secure. Fire drills are regularly practised to help children learn safe action to take in an emergency.

Adequate health and safety practices are implemented.

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

Most staff are consistent and fair and implement the Behaviour Management Policy consistently. The Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) highlighted that the policy was last reviewed in July 2017. However, observations of practice indicate that this should be reviewed with all staff and training provided to ensure they are consistent in delivering the playgroups aims regarding behaviour management. We heard the PiC model clear and polite explanations and provide good support to help



children learn to manage their behaviour. However, when a child wanted to help staff put the glitter back in the pot they were sternly told to stop and move away. When the child continued to want to help and the glitter went on the floor, the staff member got cross and was very abrupt. We also observed another staff member tell children they were to walk inside, there was no eye contact or explanation and staff had their back to the children throughout. Positive praise and encouragement is used consistently by the PiC and some staff. We heard staff positively encourage a child to practice their balancing skills as they walked along the wobbly board and jumped off the end. As a result, the children eagerly repeated the task over and over again, positively increasing their confidence and skills.

Some staff manage children's interactions positively but improvements are needed to ensure the Behaviour Management Policy is implemented consistently.

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

Some staff interact appropriately during children's play. We heard some good questioning from staff during children's play in the sand, helping to sustain their interest. We also noted the PiC provide a sensitive and effective commentary while a child played with the wooden house and play people, skilfully modelling language to encourage their communication. However, we completed several observations, including a Short Observation Framework for Inspection (SOFI) observation and found several examples of less effective interactions. There was no eye contact, smiling or open body language. This impacted significantly on the children's engagement, their play and learning experiences and their emotional wellbeing. Recent ITERS assessments also identified staff interaction, their enthusiasm and their welcome of children as areas that needed addressing. Children's assessments show that staff routinely observe and monitor their key children's learning. They complete a termly report of the children's progress, which also includes some next steps for them to achieve. Staff we spoke to had suitable knowledge of their key children's next steps, enabling them to provide sufficient support at key times. Good systems are in place to support and nurture children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). They benefit from a home visit from the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo). This enables staff to gain valuable information about each child's individual needs to ensure relevant support is provided when the child starts. They receive one-to-one or targeted support and Personal Centred Plans are created each term and shared with all professionals involved with the child. The plan is used to help identify very specific targets every six weeks to help guide staff in meeting children's individual needs.

Strong systems are in place to assess and monitor children's learning but more training is needed to ensure staff interactions and engagement in children's play are positive, purposeful and consistent.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Robust safety and security management systems are in place to maintain a safe environment for children but further measures are required to ensure the doors are safe in certain weather conditions. Play areas inside are welcoming, spacious and well resourced. However, some improvements to outdoors and the development of interactive display boards and cosy areas are needed to enrich the children's play and learning environment further.

#### **Our findings**

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

The newly implemented Premises Management System ensures all health and safety procedures, safety measures and relevant records are in place and well maintained. These are rigorously monitored by NCC Health and Safety Officer and a report completed with an action plan for the team to address. Stringent security measures are routinely followed to ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. Two staff, including the PiC monitor the gate and playroom door, ensuring children are supervised and enter or leave the premises safely. Staff are deployed well throughout the premises ensuring that all areas inside and outside are supervised closely to help keep children safe. Risk assessments in place were informative and covered all aspects of the premises and several activities. However, we recommended finding solutions to minimise the risk of the door leading to the garden from slamming shut in a gust of wind. Daily safety checks and cleaning sheets are now used which are monitored by the nominated health and safety officer to ensure they are completed consistently.

The PiC and RI ensure security measures are robust and consistently applied and they agreed to put suitable measures in place to ensure the garden door is safe.

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

Welcoming, spacious play areas positively invite children to play and learn. We observed the children explore the inside and outside play areas consistently during the session, enabling them to lead and direct their play. The large playroom is well organised and provides ample space for children to play with clearly defined areas of learning offering different play experiences. The garden is spacious and benefits from a roadway and a large covered area for all year round outdoor play. However, the outdoor space could be developed and the range of activities outside improved to give those children who prefer to be outside the same play and learning opportunities as inside. We observed a cat from the local community enter the garden and a dog repeatedly bark at the fence, disturbing children's outdoor play. Staff put a temporary barrier up at the fence and was able to coax the cat out of the garden whilst encouraging the children not to touch it to keep them safe. We observed children access the self contained bathroom to promote their independence. However, the

pedal bin in the bathroom could be moved so children can reach the sink more easily and their use of the foot pedal could be encouraged to limit the risk of infection. The playgroup has one allocated board to display children's work to help them feel a sense of belonging. As identified in the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) assessment, plans to introduce low level display boards for children to interact with are being discussed. It also highlights developing soft cosy areas inside and outside but records show this has been raised as an action at previous assessments.

The leaders and staff team provide a spacious, friendly and child-centred environment but some improvements could be made to enrich children's play experiences further.

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

Play areas are well resourced with high quality toys and resources. NCC invest well to ensure play areas are well resourced to nurture children's play and facilitate their learning. We observed puzzles and small coloured bears, a wide selection of books and mark making resources and various art and craft materials to engage children in purposeful play experiences. There are trikes, balancing equipment and large blocks that challenge children's physical skills but resources that encourage all areas of learning should be provided. There has been good investment in technology resources, such as coloured torches, electronic magnifying glasses and mobile phones with colours and shapes. However, these are not set out regularly for children to explore and learn to operate. Low level open storage units throughout the room and a portable trolley outside, enable children to access the toys they wish to play with independently. We observed children search for home corner resources to use in their imaginative play and others help themselves to sand toys outside. Colourful, child-sized soft seating in the book corner and small tables and chairs ensure play areas are fully accessible for all children attending.

Leaders provide a broad range of resources and equipment that support and facilitate children's play and learning but the daily activities and resources available outside could be strengthened.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

The leadership and management team are caring, approachable and keen to provide a quality service for children and parents. There are good quality policies and procedures and most records and information are in place. Staff work well together to assist the smooth running of the playgroup but further training and support is needed to address some practice and performance issues. Self evaluation is strong although more focus could be given to monitoring strengths and addressing areas identified for improvement. Staff work well with parents to support strong partnerships and work closely with other professionals and agencies.

### **Our findings**

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

Leadership and management of the playgroup are strong. Both the RI and PiC have drive and commitment to develop the service and support staff to do their best. The flying start programme sets high expectations and provides plenty of opportunities for staff's continuing professional development. Overall, records and documents are detailed, well organised and stored securely. The three children's files observed contained all the necessary information to support staff to meet their key children's needs. However, contracts with parents were not consistently in place to agree business arrangements. Those that we saw are organised in alphabetical order to allow easy access and are stored in the locked office to promote confidentiality. All visitors and staff sign in on arrival and departure and staff on the door record children's precise times of attendance. The informative Statement of Purpose provides a good insight into what the playgroup provides and is routinely updated and shared with CIW and parents. We examined four staff files and found most of the information required to confirm their suitability was in place. Evidence that all staff contracts and their proof of identity was provided following the inspection. We also discussed reviewing staff's health declaration at the annual appraisal. Suitable policies and procedures are in place and the SASS confirmed that these are reviewed annually to ensure they reflect current practice and legislation.

Effective leadership and management supports a well run service but some improvements to records are needed.

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

Methods to monitor and review the service and children's care and make relevant improvements are sound. The RI undertakes the annual Quality of Care Review report to evaluate the service against the regulations and National Minimum Standards. Parents, staff and the PiC take an active part in contributing to the annual report which was informative and clearly outlined the setting's strengths and prioritises for improvements. The RI also makes sound use of the twice yearly ITERS assessments tool. This is used to review and monitor children's experiences and staff's focus and

performance in facilitating their play and learning. The July 2018 assessment identified strengths, such as staff interactions and highlighted specific areas to develop, including staff greetings to welcome children and introducing soft cosy areas inside and out. However, more focus is needed to ensure these, and all the actions from both systems for 2017 and 2018, are monitored and addressed. The PiC attends regular cluster meetings with leaders and management from other flying start services to receive updates, discuss practice and plans for the next term. Discussions with the PiC and RI highlighted their commitment to continue to develop the service and children's care. This was displayed by the RI addressing issues with the staff files straight after the inspection.

The PiC and RI undertake quality, inclusive methods to monitor all aspects of the service and address most actions appropriately.

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

Management of the playgroup and staff is strong. Robust recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are consistently followed to assure staff's suitability. Discussions with staff and a review of their files highlighted robust interview processes and security checks are routinely followed. For example, applicants do an activity to a group of children while being assessed. We noted that the sessions run smoothly because staff implement their roles highlighted on the weekly rota appropriately. Key worker groups are generally effective but arrangements around managing children's personal care could be strengthened to further enhance the strong emotional attachments. The PiC and RI routinely monitor staff performance. Discussions and staff files show that they set clear targets during regular supervisions and annual appraisals and are committed to address any weaknesses. Staff we spoke to praised the support given from management and valued the good access to training to extend their skills. However, further support and training is needed to ensure practices are suitable and consistent.

Overall, systems to manage the playgroup are effective.

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

Partnerships are well established. New parents attend a welcome meeting where they receive useful information about the playgroup, including a summary of key policies. NCC health team and family development officers also attend to share useful information about support available. This also helps parents and children meet their allocated key person and become familiar with the environment and routines. Parents spend time with the key person to help establish a relationship, share useful information about their child and complete all the necessary records and contracts. Regular newsletters, text messages, a notice board and daily communication ensure parents are kept well informed. Parent participation days and weekly Language and Play sessions help involve parents in the playgroup. Termly parent questionnaires help parents feel their voice and views are valued and respected. Feedback from eight questionnaires and parents we spoke to express their delight at the progress their children have made and positively praise the staff, with one writing "*Brilliant staff*".

Parents told us they felt well informed about their children's progress and next steps, praising the termly parent consultations and daily discussions with staff. The PiC confirmed that they have a good partnership with the nursery teacher and praised the support they received with their planning.

Partnerships with parents are good and links with other partners and agencies strong.

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

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

Regulation 21(2): Food provided for children. Drinking water was not available for children to access a drink at any time. A dedicated water station was set up in the room for children access their individual drinks bottles during the session.

### **5.2 Areas of non compliance from this inspection**

We notified the RI that the service was non compliant with Regulation 28: Suitability of workers. Full and satisfactory information or documentation was not in place for all staff to confirm their suitability.

We did not issue non compliance on this occasion because the RI provided copies of the staff's contracts promptly after the inspection and confirmed that evidence of identity was now in place.

### **5.3 Recommendations for improvement**

- Ensure the Behaviour Management Policy is understood and consistently applied by staff;
- ensure appropriate food safety standards are consistently implemented,
- ensure infection control measures are consistently followed to improve hygiene practices and routines;
- improve staff interactions and engagement during children's play;
- develop the activities and resources available outside daily;
- eliminate the risk of the door to the garden slamming shut;
- strengthen the key person system, particularly around children's personal care, to enable them to sustain strong emotional attachments with a special person, and
- ensure all weaknesses identified are routinely monitored and addressed.

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

This was an unannounced, scheduled inspection undertaken by one inspector over two visits totalling 6 hours 30 minutes. Evidence for this report was gathered using the following methodology:

- We examined information held by CIW, including the last inspection report, annual Quality of Care Review report, Statement of Purpose and notifications;
- we observed the children's play inside and outside;
- we assessed children's interactions with staff and their friends;
- we undertook a 28 minute SOFI observation;
- we spoke to staff, the PiC, three parents and the RI;
- we examined policies and procedures, all operational records and documents, action plans and children's learning journals and assessments, and
- we carried out a visual inspection of play areas and resources.

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## 7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Sian Williams
Person in charge	Keysha Bird
Registered maximum number of places	24
Age range of children	2 - 3 years
Opening hours	12.30 to 15.00 each weekday during school term times.
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	2 October 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	17 and 19 July 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 providing a full service in Welsh as the provider operates in an area where Welsh is not the dominant language. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i> '.
Additional Information:	