



Childcare Inspection Report on

St Thomas Flying Start

**St Thomas Community Primary School
80 Grenfell Park Road
St Thomas
Swansea
SA1 8EZ**



Date of Publication

Wednesday, 1 August 2018

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2018.

You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.

Description of the service

St Thomas 'Sunflowers' Flying Start has been registered since February 2014 and provides sessional day care for up to 20 children aged two to three years under the Flying Start initiative. The service is based in a converted classroom within St Thomas Community Primary School and is open Monday to Friday from 9.10am to 11.40am and 12.40pm to 3.10pm for 42 weeks of the year. The service is provided in English with Welsh language promoted through songs and activities. The person in charge is Sarah Watkins-Harris and the responsible individual on behalf of the local authority is the head teacher, Russell Dwyer. Children have access to a large open-plan play room, toilets and an enclosed outdoor play space.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children attending the service are happy and enjoy their time there. They benefit from a wide range of play and learning experiences and make good progress. Children experience warm and nurturing relationships with staff and other children. The environment is safe and secure and well maintained. Children have free access to a wide range of good quality toys, materials and equipment, which encourages them to explore and learn. The service is well run. Leaders 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 a good foundation for learning and development.

2. Improvements

There was evidence of ongoing improvements and investments in the service. We saw that:

- two new children's wash basins had been installed in the playroom to enable children to wash their hands before snack time or after messy play; and
- the outdoor play space had been increased and there was a secure boundary railing with a gate.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no requirements following this inspection.

We made a recommendation that the name and contact details for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are updated in policies and documents when they are next reviewed.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are happy and have opportunities to make decisions about their play. They experience warm and caring relationships and have a good choice of activities that are designed to promote their development. Children are developing well and are becoming independent; they are learning to interact and to cooperate with each other and with staff.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are listened to; they express their views and are able to make choices.

Most children were confident to choose where to play and what to do and were very familiar with the activities and play areas. We saw that children chose the activities that interested them and which friends to play with. At greeting time we saw them talk about how they were feeling that day; and they chose the songs to sing and the story they wanted to hear. Children had a choice of colour for their plates and beakers at snack time; they ate and drank at their own pace and we saw them ask for and receive second helpings. Children asked staff to read books to them; to help with jigsaw puzzles and with craft activities; and staff listened and supported them. As part of the annual quality of service review, we saw that parents were asked to complete a questionnaire with their children that focused on the type of activities the children liked, indoors and outdoors. This helped ensure that children's views were taken into account when planning activities.

Children have a strong voice in this service.

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

Children experience warm relationships with each other and staff. They become familiar with their surroundings and the routines of the service, which gives them a sense of security.

Most children arrived happily at the service; they greeted each other and staff, moved around confidently and settled quickly. Some children, who were new to the service, were a little apprehensive to part from their parents but they settled into activities with staff support and encouragement. Children had a sense of belonging because staff knew their names and there were photographs of children on their coat hooks and also displayed on the walls. We saw children point to their picture and say their name and smile as they took their coats off. Children played independently and with others and there was a happy and relaxed atmosphere. We saw that children approached staff readily and asked for assistance or for cuddles and reassurance. Children happily sang songs for routines such as tidying up and snack time. We saw that they joined in with actions and laughed. They responded positively to praise and proudly showed us stickers they received for their achievements. Parents told us that the person in charge and a key worker had visited them at home to get to know their child's needs, and that the keyworker helped their child settle in. All of this helped children to feel happy and secure.

Children have a good sense of belonging, which helps them feel safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning the importance of sharing and turn taking.

Children played happily together and interacted well with staff. During greeting time the children sat together and mostly listened to what others had to say in response to questions from staff. Children lined up to wash their hands after painting; they sat and waited patiently at the tables for their snacks; and went in small groups to brush their teeth. We saw that children were learning to co-operate and play together. Children shared resources such as paints and we saw them play in the home corner and with a toy garage on the floor together. They passed plates to each other at snack time and we saw them smiling and hugging. Children chatted to us, and wanted to know who we were. We heard children respond with 'please' and 'thank you' with some prompting from staff.

Children interact well with each other and with staff.

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

Children enjoy a wide range of play opportunities designed to support their development.

We saw children enjoying free play as well as structured adult-led activities inside and outdoors. This included making animal foot prints with paints, decorating cards, playing with toy cars, farm animals, dolls and soft toys, picture books, singalong and story-telling in the playroom, and trikes, scooters, balls and sand outside. Children engaged in their activities for a suitable length of time for their age and stage of development. They smiled and nodded when we asked if they enjoyed coming to the playgroup and if they liked the toys and activities. Children listened avidly to stories and they answered questions, counted, smiled and laughed. Children happily sang songs in English and Welsh during greeting time and jingles for routines such as a tidy up song. We saw several children cry because they didn't want to go home at the end of the session.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning experiences.

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

Children have good opportunities to learn and become independent.

Toys, equipment and resources were arranged so that children could help themselves and routines and staff-led activities supported children's development. Children's social and language skills were developing well. They communicated confidently with each other, with staff and with us. Children were developing their self-help skills; they fed themselves independently; made choices at snack times; brushed their teeth and washed their hands with minimal prompting. They enjoyed singing songs they had learned and they joined in eagerly with familiar responses, repeated phrases and actions. Children helped to tidy up toys. The children's development records evidenced that they were making good progress and developing new skills in line with set targets.

Children are developing very well and are becoming independent with support from staff.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are well trained, caring and attentive; they keep children safe and promote good health. Staff know the children well and provide a good range of activities to help children to learn and develop. They manage behaviour well.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff keep children safe because they are well trained and know their responsibilities.

Staff had attended relevant training including health and safety, paediatric first aid, food hygiene, safeguarding training and the Prevent Duty relating to terrorism and radicalisation. Staff were very consistent in ensuring children's safety and promoting healthy lifestyles. They were well aware of the importance of recognising signs of abuse and were clear about what to do if they had concerns about a child or in case of an accident. The service had relevant policies and procedures that staff followed to keep children safe. For example, we saw that staff carried out daily safety checks before children attended and records were kept to evidence this; only parents or named persons were allowed to sign their children out of the sessions and there were up to date records of children's health needs and any allergies. We heard staff giving safety messages such as 'be careful' and 'put your hats in the sun'. We saw staff prompt children to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. The service encourages healthy eating and children have a choice of water, milk and a healthy snack including fruit in each session. We saw staff actively encouraging children to try the fruit by saying, *"I'm eating the water melon, mmm it's very sweet. Do you like it? Is it juicy? What do you think?"* Staff promoted good oral health by encouraging children to clean their teeth as part of the 'Designed to Smile' programme. The service promoted physical exercise as well as outdoor play whenever possible and staff ensured that children were protected with sunscreen and hats in hot weather.

Staff promote children's health and safety very effectively.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are good role models and help children understand the importance of sharing and being kind to each other.

We saw that staff were polite to each other and set a good example by always saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Staff listened to the children and gave them plenty of time to finish conversations, activities and their snacks, which created a relaxed atmosphere where children felt safe to ask questions, explore and learn. We heard lots of praise and encouragement such as, *'excellent', 'you've got a sticker!', 'well done!', 'thank you for sharing', 'good helping'* and children were excited to choose different stickers as rewards for particular achievements. Staff helped children take responsibility and care for others through designating a helper to give out plates and help at snack time. Staff managed minor behaviour and sharing disputes well. We saw them gently intervene to resolve issues and they got down to the children's level, made good eye contact with children and spoke calmly and clearly so that

children understood what was expected in playgroup. Staff encouraged children to sit together for routines such as snack time and greeting time, in order to prepare them for more formal education. Staff used routine phrases, songs and tone of voice effectively to gain attention and cooperation. For example, staff said 'roll and stop' to signal the end of different activities; we heard songs for snack time and for tidying up; and one staff whispered and asked children to walk on tip toes as they walked upstairs to the library. We saw that children responded well; they stopped and helped to tidy up; moved to the area for greeting time; joined in with the singing; they washed hands and moved to the tables for snack; giggled as they tip-toed quietly through the school and sat down happily to say goodbye to their friends.

Staff manage behaviour well and this supports their social development.

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

Staff ensure they get to know the children well and aim to meet their individual needs through good preparation, practice and reviewing.

Staff planned activities to ensure that all children could engage, have fun and enjoy them. Keyworkers were familiar with the needs of individual children. We saw that they monitored and recorded children's progress in meeting developmental targets and celebrated successes. Staff also monitored children's expressions and body language to ensure that they were happy and settled. We saw staff responding when children demonstrated they needed to use the toilet and when they were tired. We heard staff developing children's social, language and numerical skills by encouraging them to talk about what they enjoyed doing that day. At snack time, staff asked children to select a coloured plate and pass it on; and to count the pieces of fruit. Staff encouraged children to use the outdoor play area whenever possible so they had physical exercise and fresh air. They also used the opportunity to talk about wildlife such as insects, butterflies and birds; to discuss weather and listen to different sounds. We saw that staff provided children with opportunities to use and experience the Welsh language. There were bilingual signs, labels and posters in the playroom. Staff counted in Welsh and asked children to repeat the words and staff said 'da iawn' (well done) and 'diolch' (thank you). Children sang Welsh songs and we heard them use Welsh words for numbers and colours. A parent spoke of their child's progress and the improvement in their speech since attending and we saw this child confidently chatting with her friends and with staff. The records also indicated that children were developing well.

Staff promote children's play, learning and all round development very effectively.

3. Environment

Summary

Children are cared for in an environment which offers a very good variety of play and learning opportunities indoors and outdoors. Risks and hazards are identified and minimised or eliminated to ensure children's safety. Resources and furniture are good quality and suitable for the needs and age range of the children.

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 and that unnecessary risks to children are identified and reduced or removed.

We saw that the entrances to the service were secure from unauthorised access. The external door had a key fob system and there were secure gates in the outside play areas. There were clear policies and risk assessments relating to health and safety and we saw that staff followed them. For example, staff asked visitors to show identity cards and to sign in and out; and staff carried out daily checks on the premises, toys, equipment and the outdoor area, to keep children, staff and visitors as safe as possible. The kitchen had been awarded a level five rating (the highest) from the Food Standards Agency. Staff had undertaken food hygiene training and we saw their certificates in the staff files. We saw good hygiene practices when staff prepared for snack time and when they changed nappies and supported children to use the toilets. Since the last inspection, two children's wash basins had been installed in the messy play area so that children could wash their hands easily and quickly before snack time. We saw that all areas, equipment, furniture and toys were clean and the outside play area had a soft surface to minimise injuries if children fell. There were also records of regular fire drills; annual tests on the portable electrical appliances and for the heating system

Leaders have ensured that children are very safe and secure at the playgroup.

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

Leaders provide a welcoming and stimulating environment that is suitable for children's use.

The playroom was light and airy with sufficient space for a good range of activities as well as areas for children to relax and reflect. There were child sized chairs and tables so that children could use them easily and a washable floor surface to allow for floor play and messy play. Leaders had ensured that the play areas were well set out for children, with resources within easy reach to encourage choice and independence. We saw that children could choose their activities and had free access to the toilets. Since the last inspection, the service has increased the available outdoor play area. There was a secure section of playground next to the playroom with a paved area and grass. There was a small canopy on one side to provide cover and a section of the play area was covered in soft matting to minimise injuries from falls. There was sufficient space for a small slide and tunnel; and for children to run around or ride trikes and cars. We also saw children enjoying sand and water play and throwing balls to each other. The person in charge told us there were plans

to create an additional doorway from the playroom so that children had free access to the outside play space.

Leaders ensure that the environment is very suitable for children to play, explore and learn.

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

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.

The service had an excellent range of indoor and outdoor toys and resources. The playroom was divided into areas for drawing/ mark making, crafts and messy play, a play kitchen and home corner, dressing up, quiet book area, dolls and farm yard animals, a garage and construction. The Welsh language was promoted and we saw bilingual Welsh and English posters and signs, numbers, colours and shapes and months on the walls. We saw evidence that various festivals were celebrated throughout the year and toys and books promoted diversity and a multi-cultural society. There were systems in place for staff to check toys and equipment regularly and to assess the play areas and identify any maintenance issues. We saw that toys, resources and equipment were good quality and in good condition.

Leaders provide good quality resources and equipment that are well maintained.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders provide clear direction for staff and work to the national minimum standards and the regulations. They ensure that staff receive relevant information, training and supervision to support them in their work. Leaders regularly review the quality of the service they provide and involve children, parents, staff and other professionals. There are positive relationships with parents and professionals.

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders ensure that the service is well run and complies with the regulations and the national minimum standards.

Leaders were clear about the aims of the service. The statement of purpose was up to date and provided a clear description of the service and what it sets out to provide. Policies and procedures were reviewed annually; were easy to understand and focused on children's needs and well-being. Leaders ensured that they were translated into effective practice through regular meetings and discussions with staff. Staff said they had 'brilliant 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. The systems to monitor the development of children were very effective. Staff met regularly to discuss children's progress and to evaluate what had gone well and also what could be improved and how. We saw that everyone was involved in planning interesting activities to promote learning and development.

Leaders are motivated and effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders have good systems to monitor the quality of the service and plan for improvements based on feedback from children, parents and staff.

Leaders collected information about the quality of the service in many ways. We saw that staff regularly reflected on their practice and continually evaluated activities and changed them to meet children's identified needs and preferences. This ensured that developmental targets were met and supported the children's transition to school. Staff also completed annual questionnaires anonymously on the quality of the service. We saw records of meetings with staff from other playgroups and with health professionals to seek views on best practice. As the children were young and many were pre-verbal, staff gained their views about activities through watching what they enjoyed and how they reacted as well as asking them to complete child friendly questionnaires. Parents were consulted regularly through an open door policy and more formally through evaluation questionnaires. There was also a suggestion box and the service used a tool called SSTEW or Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing Scale to assess quality in the service. Leaders collated the feedback in annual reports. The 2017 report outlined the achievements of the service and reflected the views of children, parents and staff, including how they had influenced changes. For example, in response to parents' requests for more feedback on their children's well-being,

progress and events in the service, leaders had set up a social media communication system to provide parents with regular updates.

Leaders continually evaluate the service and plan effectively for improvement.

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.

The records evidenced that staff ratios were usually higher than the minimum standards of 1 staff to 4 children and this was seen during the inspection. The person in charge was in addition to the staff numbers. Leaders followed safe recruitment processes. We saw that staff records contained the required information including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and identification checks and references. Each file had a checklist at the front, signed by the leader, to verify that all the required information had been checked. Staff were managed well. There were records of monthly team meetings and termly case management discussions; and staff told us that they also had opportunities to discuss any issues in the morning, lunch time and at the end of the day. They received induction, essential training, regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Training records showed that the leaders had provided all the required mandatory training for staff as well as specialised training to meet the needs of individual children. This included speech and language, food and nutrition, and moving and handling. All staff had access to a range of professionals including speech and language therapists, early years' advisors, health visitors and educational psychologists, to support their work with children. Discussions with staff revealed that they were very aware of their roles and responsibilities, that they enjoyed their work and that they received 'great' or 'brilliant' support. Staff told us that they were listened to and this enabled them to provide a successful service for children and families. We saw that the leaders deployed staff effectively to meet the children's needs as well as to promote their job satisfaction. For example, staff took turns for different activities and responsibilities such as crafts, singing and story-telling and they said that this helped them learn from each other.

Leaders manage staff and resources very effectively.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders and staff have good relationships with parents and excellent 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 started attending the playgroup, the person in charge and a key worker visited them at home to get to know the children and their needs, preferences and routines. Parents could also attend sessions with their children to get to know the staff and new environment and help the children settle. Staff encouraged parents/carers to communicate informally each day and parents could arrange to visit the service and discuss their child's progress at playgroup with their key worker. We heard staff give parents feedback when they collected their children, including what the children had had eaten/ drunk, who/ what they played with and goals reached. The service also organised events and outings that linked to themes and parents were encouraged to take part. Parents were kept informed of activities, snacks, themes, forthcoming trips or important events

through a notice board in the corridor which was updated daily. The service had also set up 'CLASS DOJO', a social media platform that enabled staff to update parents directly, through whole class messages or individually including photos and videos. Parents said that this was very helpful and reassuring, particularly when their child was settling in. Parents described staff as 'lovely', 'very caring' and the service as 'great' and brilliant'. 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 years' advisory teacher, the speech and language team and educational psychologists in order to provide the care each child needed. There were also good links with schools which supported an easier transition for the children.

Leaders have developed effective partnerships which benefit the children.

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

None

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

- We recommended that leaders ensure that the change of name to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and new email address is reflected when policies and documents are next reviewed.

6. How we undertook this inspection

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

One inspector made an unannounced visit to the service on 14 June 2018 and spent the whole day at the service;

- we saw the morning and afternoon sessions;
- we spoke to children, ten parents, five staff, the person in charge;
- we observed children and staff in the playroom and outside;
- we observed two children 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 and visitor book, staff files, children's development records, the statement of purpose, policies and procedures, health and safety records, accident records and the service's quality of care review report for 2017; and
- we gave feedback to the person in charge after the inspection.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Russell Dwyer
Person in charge	Sarah Watkins-Harris
Registered maximum number of places	20
Age range of children	2-3 years
Opening hours	9.10 – 11.40am and 12.40 to 3.10pm M-F term time, also one week at Easter and two weeks during the summer holiday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	29/09/2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	14 June 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?	No. This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort in promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture We saw a good range of bi-lingual posters, books and materials and we heard a lot of incidental Welsh as staff incorporated Welsh language and songs into each activity with children.
Additional Information:	