



Childcare Inspection Report on

Machen After School Club

**Emmanuel Church
Forge Road
Machen
Caerphilly
CF83 8PH**



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Description of the service

Machen After School Club is registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide out of school care for 24 children aged under 12 years. They mainly care for children attending the local primary school where children are collected at the end of the day by club staff and walked a short distance to the setting. However, children outside the village may attend but travel arrangements must be made by parents. Carol Norman is registered as the Responsible Individual (RI) with overall responsibility for the operation of the service and also acts as the Person in Charge (PiC), responsible for its' day to day management. The service is conducted in the medium of English.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are happy and settled at the service. Staff are appropriately qualified and they have developed good relationships with the children who benefit from stimulating activities and good play opportunities. The club operates from a shared community facility but endeavours to make children feel comfortable within the environment which is safe and appropriately resourced for the age range of children attending. Improvements are required in relation to the management of the service but the RI is motivated and eager to move the service forward

2. Improvements

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed;

- children prepare their snacks in order to promote their self help and independence skills and
- systems have been initiated to ensure staff induction, appraisal and supervision takes place.

During the course of the inspection some records were revised and information on staff files updated to include necessary information.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The RI was not compliant with regulations as she had for short periods not operated her service as it is outlined in the Statement of Purpose. However, as this had no impact upon the children and she addressed issues immediately we have not issued a non compliance notice. We have made some recommendations which are mainly focused upon the record keeping element of the service and are outlined at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are happy and settled at the service and have formed positive relationships with staff and their peers. Children have access to good range of activities and resources to suit their wide range of interests. Children have a strong voice and are regularly consulted about their opinions. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop independence due to the range of activities available.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children at the service have a strong voice. We saw that they were confident to approach staff because they knew they would be listened to. We saw that all children had plenty of opportunities to make choices and follow their interests. We noted that they were made aware of the activities that were available to them at the beginning of each session and this allowed them to make appropriate choices. Staff told us that they regularly consult with parents in order to understand children's needs and improve communication.

Children are consulted on their opinions and their views are respected.

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

Children are happy and settled at the service. Routines are well established and children know what to expect when they arrive. Children were quick to settle on arrival, although we noted that one child was unsettled for a short period of time. They received lots of attention and reassurance and as a result they quickly engaged in play. Children were confident and one child happily gave us a tour of the club and its' facilities happily chatting to us and answering our questions.

There are good procedures in place to ensure that children feel valued, confident and gain a sense of security and belonging.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children at the service interact well. They have formed positive relationships with staff and peers. We saw that children attending had formed friendships and we observed them playing group games such as a timed obstacle race or sitting around tables completing art activities and chatting happily together. Children confidently approached staff for help or to chat. They played happily together or alongside each other depending on their age and developmental stages. Older children take on the role of 'buddy' to help younger children settle and learn rules. Children responded well to requests from staff and to reminders such as 'kind hands please'. Children were able to tell us some of the rules they had devised for the club which were also displayed on the wall. Children shared resources and took turns to use the equipment. There was a positive atmosphere throughout the inspection and children were polite and kind to their friends.

Children interact well and are developing self-regulating strategies to manage their own behaviour.

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

Children enjoy a good range of activities. We saw that there were plenty of opportunities for children to lead their own play and follow their interests. They could choose where they wanted to play and staff were suitably deployed to facilitate this choice. We noted that children were engaged in activities for a good length of time and persevered to complete them. We saw a group of children playing alongside a member of staff and were happy to include her and also take on responsibilities themselves, for example, timing how quickly their friends completed the obstacle course. They were engaged and excited by this activity and there was lots of chatter and laughter.

Children enjoy their play and learning and benefit from a good range of activities.

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

Children develop well in line with their age and stage of development. We saw activities that allowed children to participate in imaginary play, construction and art and craft along with opportunities for physical activity. We noted that staff supported children very well and played alongside them, making good use of opportunities for language development and to address learning points. Children demonstrated good levels of independence and very good use was made of opportunities for children to develop self help skills, for example, snack was served as a buffet allowing children to choose what they wanted to eat. They were able to serve themselves and practice skills such as pouring drinks. Children have direct access to suitable toilet facilities which are easily accessible. This promotes their independence and allows children to access the facilities without the need for adult assistance. Whilst the hall is a community facility, no other groups use it whilst the club is operating.

Children are becoming independent and the development of these skills is supported.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are enthusiastic, caring and responsive to individual needs. They support children sympathetically and value their relationships with them. Staff are well qualified and on-going training ensures they are up to date with best practice guidance. They understand and implement procedures to ensure the health and safety of children.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff are appropriately qualified and conscientious in their role to keep children safe and healthy. There is a safeguarding policy and we spoke to staff who knew the procedures and their own responsibilities should child protection concerns arise. Fire evacuation drills are carried out with children every four to six months and records are kept and during the inspection the RI added information to these records. We saw that medication records were completed but would benefit from further information which the RI began to address during the inspection. Accident and incident records are monitored to identify emerging risks and accidents were of the expected nature for the age of children who attend the service. However, we noted that some accident and incident records had not been signed by parents and some parents had omitted to sign to give consent for emergency medical treatment. An infection control audit had not been formally completed but good health and hygiene procedures were followed by all staff. We saw that the premises were clean and routines such as hand washing were firmly embedded. A healthy eating policy is followed and children are served a healthy snack including fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and water. Information on allergens were clearly displayed and staff were aware of children's individual needs.

There are systems in place to ensure that children's health and safety is promoted but some areas need strengthening.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Interactions are consistently managed by staff. We saw that there was a detailed behaviour management policy, with emphasis upon positive behaviour management strategies which are in line with the age and stage of development of children. Staff had undertaken behaviour management training and were seen to work in line with the policy and confidently discussed strategies for managing unwanted behaviour. Ratios were maintained at a 1:6 ratio which is higher than required by National Minimum Standards. We heard lots of praise for positive behaviour and we observed high levels of good interactions and engagement between staff and children. We spoke to children who were aware of the rules and expectations of behaviour. On the day of the inspection, behaviour was very good but when reminders were needed they were done in a calm and sympathetic manner.

Staff manage interactions very well and work in line with the behaviour management policy.

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

Staff provide children with a nurturing environment in which their individual needs are met. Children are provided with a good range of activities. There is a good mix of free choice and adult led activities, allowing children to follow their own interests. We observed children's individual needs identified and supported by staff. Children were encouraged in their fine motor skills and younger children's pencil grip was commented upon. We heard staff discussing the concept of 'small' and 'big' with younger children during craft activities. We were told that during summer months children go on tracking expeditions, observing nature and using chalks, stones, sticks and leaves as a means of playing hunters and seekers which was a great favourite of the children. Most staff have either qualified or are currently in the process of completing their Playwork qualification. We saw staff control group activities very well whilst engaging children and getting them to identify and follow appropriate rules for the game.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the children in their care and are committed to meeting their individual needs.

3. Environment

Summary

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The hall is a community resource and shared with other groups which limits the amount of children's work that can be displayed. However, leaders have ensured that the environment is warm and inviting for children with stimulating play opportunities. Risks are assessed well and where possible eliminated. Resources for the children are of good quality, plentiful and appropriate for the age range of the children.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that the environment is a safe place for children to play and learn. We saw that inside play areas were secure and our identification was checked upon arrival. Risk assessments were completed and daily visual checks of the rooms are completed by the PIC. When risks are identified we were told that they are promptly addressed by the buildings maintenance personnel. We saw records that demonstrated the PIC can identify emerging risks as she had recorded that the outside wall required maintenance. This had been addressed and recorded within three days of her raising it as an issue. The club has received a hygiene rating of five and suitable procedures were followed by staff to ensure the environment was clean and hygienic. We noted that, on the days of the inspection children did not access outside as it was dark and raining. The PIC explained that children are supervised when outside and that checks of the outside area are completed before children access this area. Gas and electrical safety checks were in date and insurance policies were current.

Leaders ensure that environment is safe.

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

Leaders ensure that the environment is suitable and provides a stimulating place for children's play and learning. We saw that there was sufficient space for the number of children as they have access to two large rooms. Both inside and outside areas provided space for children to be physically active and we saw that children were encouraged to build an obstacle course within the main hall as children were reluctant to play outside due to poor weather conditions. The space was thoughtfully arranged to provide a wide variety of free choice. Resources were laid out so that children could access most things although some resources needed to be stored as it is a shared community space. We noted that table top activities had been laid out so that children could choose games, crafts or books and that an area had been arranged with comfortable chairs so that the children could relax if they wished to. One child decided that they wanted to read quietly whilst other children watched a film within the main hall, or played on an obstacle course.

Whilst it is a shared community space leaders are mindful to make the most of the environment to ensure it is suitable and stimulating for the children.

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

Leaders ensure that resources and equipment are of good quality and suitable for the age range of the children. Resources were seen to be clean, well maintained and complied with relevant safety standards. Resources were plentiful and allowed children good variety and choice. Good use was made of natural and recyclable materials. We saw that there were resources to promote cultural awareness such as dolls and books.

Children benefit from good quality resources.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

During the inspection we found that some record keeping elements of the service did not meet National Minimum Standards and needed more attention. The RI immediately began to address these issues during the inspection. Staff are well supported and the RI ensures they are suitably trained and has developed good working relationships with them as she attends the service on a daily basis in the role of PIC. Partnerships with parents are well established.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership of the service needs to improve so that it is more effective and ensures that it complies with regulations and National Minimum Standards. Parents have access to the statement of purpose which gives them information about how the service operates, but the RI needs to ensure that the service consistently operates in line with this document paying attention to the age range of children stated. There are a good range of child centred policies and procedures which ensures that the service operates smoothly on a day to day basis. We saw from the policies and procedures file that she had initiated a review of policies and that she used NMS as guidance. Discussions we held with the RI demonstrated that she was very motivated to develop the whole service and to make improvements specifically to the record keeping elements of the service. The staff team works effectively and staff reported that they felt well supported and knew who to go to if they had concerns.

The RI is motivated but record keeping needs to be strengthened.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The RI shows a strong commitment to drive improvement and secure positive outcomes for children. They were receptive to advice given and acted promptly to address some of the issues identified during the inspection to ensure compliance with regulations. The RI had initiated a quality of care review and questionnaires have been sent out to parents and children, however she had not formally compiled this into a report and discussions were had with her regarding the requirement that this quality assurance is undertaken annually. However, the service had responded positively to feedback from parents and children who are encouraged to contribute ideas for improvement. As a result their ideas and suggestions for snack, improvements to the environment and lists of toys they would like, had been taken into account in developing the service. For example, a paddling pool and water shooters had been purchased during the summer in response to children's feedback and a poster board detailing snacks was developed in response to parent suggestion. We observed the RI and staff discussing daily practices and reflecting on how each session went to identify any areas for improvement.

The RI actively takes account of feedback from children, parents and staff but needs to strengthen the procedures for the annual quality of care review.

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

The RI and staff work well together to support the smooth running of the service. Discussions with the RI clarified that she had taken over the running of the service and whilst recruitment procedures had been undertaken and safety checks completed on staff, some information was missing or unclear on their files. However, whilst some staff files were initially incomplete, adequate improvements have been made to ensure necessary information is now in place. Staff are suitably qualified and the RI ensures that training such as safeguarding, food hygiene and paediatric first aid is relevant and up to date. The RI has undertaken annual appraisals and has initiated a system to complete termly supervisions with staff. Termly team meetings are held to discuss and agree practice and daily discussions are held with all staff to ensure information is shared. The RI and staff team are suitably qualified and experienced and have all worked at the service for a number of years

The RI has suitable measures in place to manage the staff and service appropriately.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Staff understand the importance of building and maintain good working relationships with parents and professionals to benefit children. Parents are provided with an information booklet informing them about the service and are sent newsletters to keep them updated. There is a complaints procedure for parents and children have a suggestion box which they understand can be used as a means of anonymously raising any issues of dissatisfaction or ideas for the service. We were told that no complaints had been received about the service but a log book is kept so that should any be received they could be recorded and monitored. The service strives to maintain links with the local community and children have participated in charity events to raise money for, for example, Children in Need. Feedback from parents we spoke to demonstrated that the service is highly regarded and that parents and children have high levels of satisfaction regarding the care children receive.

The RI and staff have very effective relationships with parents and children.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Update the safeguarding policy to include information on 'Prevent' which is a government strategy to support child care providers in recognising signs of extremism and radicalisation;
- ensure permissions to seek emergency medical advice has been sought from parents and that all forms are consistently signed by parents;
- update medication forms so that they record witness and parent signatures and times when medication has last been given;
- continue to review policies and procedures and
- complete a quality of care report and forward it to CIW as soon as possible;

6. How we undertook this inspection

One inspector undertook an unannounced inspection as part of our normal schedule of inspections. Approximately eight hours were spent at the service over two days. The following methodology was used to gather evidence for this report:

- Observations of care routines and practices;
- discussion with the RI and staff;
- conversation with some children;
- discussion with two parents;
- visual inspection of play areas;
- consideration of information held by CIW such as the last inspection report and
- sight of a range of policies and procedures including information held in staff personnel files.

Feedback was provided to the RI at the end of the inspection.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Out of School Care
Responsible Individual	Carol Norman
Person in charge	Carol Norman
Registered maximum number of places	24
Age range of children	From three to under twelve years of age
Opening hours	3.15pm to 5.30pm Monday to Friday term-time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	01 May 2015
Dates inspection visits	12 and 18 December 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use the service. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. However, we recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just words' strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information:	