



Childcare Inspection Report on

Pont Hafren Playgroup Flying Start

**Thornwell Primary School
Thornwell Road
Bulwark
Chepstow
NP16 5NT**



Date of Publication

2 January 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

Pont Hafren Playgroup Flying Start is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide day care for up to 12 children aged between two and three years. The service is based in a dedicated classroom within Thornwell Primary School, Chepstow, and provides care for five mornings each week, term time only, for children living in the Flying Start area of the town. The group is managed by two Responsible Individuals (RIs) on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). There is a Person in Charge (PiC) who manages the setting on a day to day basis; they are supported by a second PiC who is also one of the RIs. English is the main language of the group, with good use of incidental Welsh to promote children's learning.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The playgroup effectively promotes children's well-being. Children are able to take part in a very good range of interesting and engaging activities, both indoors and outside. These activities are planned to help each child develop in accordance with their needs; they also promote children's sense of wonder and problem solving skills. Their environment is stimulating and interesting, and enables children to feel valued and secure. The imaginative and interactive lay out encourages them to engage positively with the resources, displays and activities. Children are able to form very warm and secure relationships with the staff who know them well and provide skilful support to promote their development. The service is very well managed and staff are motivated, keen to develop their professional skills and are valued by the RIs. There is an ethos of continuous development to ensure outcomes for children are very positive.

2. Improvements

Since the previous inspection:

- The outdoor area has been developed and is now an exciting and stimulating area for children to play and
- staff have continued to attend relevant training to develop their professional knowledge and skills.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The playgroup is compliant with the relevant regulations so there are no requirements as a result of this inspection. We made two recommendations in relation to recording food allergens in the food provided and developing review systems so parents can see how their views are influencing the development of the service; these are discussed in the body of the report and highlighted towards the end.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children's well-being is effectively promoted. They are able to build warm and nurturing relationships with staff and their views and feelings are valued. They are excited to take part in the activities provided and can make lots of choices about what they do.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children can make choices and decisions about their play. Sessions are well structured so children can determine their own play and choose their own resources for the majority of the time. Whole group activities are short and although children are encouraged to take part, they can choose not to if they prefer. The door to the outside play area is open for a large part of the session and children can choose where they play. Staff work closely with the children to extend their opportunities to make their own decisions. For example, we heard staff asking the children what sized paper they would like or which colour they would like to add to the water tray. During snack time children could choose where they sat and select from a choice of fruits and other foods, with water or milk to drink.

Children are empowered to make their own choices and decisions about their play and resources, and these are valued by staff.

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

Children are happy and excited to take part in the activities. Most came into the group confidently and all were greeted individually by staff. Photographs of the children with their families are used effectively by staff to help children feel at home and settled. Those who were finding it hard to separate from their parents/carers were given extra support and cuddles by staff. One child felt more secure to keep their coat on and staff respected their wishes. Children are supported to settle into the group at their own pace and one parent's thank you card we saw showed they felt their child had "*grown in confidence*". Children are able to build up close relationships with the very small, consistent staff group. They are shown lots of attention and receive smiles and words of encouragement from staff, and staff celebrate their achievements, also sharing them openly with the other staff. Children are proud to hang their work on the pegs in their art area and enjoy the positive comments from staff. They recognise their work on the displays and were keen to talk to us about what they had been doing and who their friends are. They know where their resources are kept, where to put them at tidy up time and interact positively with the displays. This all adds to their sense of belonging and feeling that they are valued.

Children feel valued, confident and happy at the service.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning to share, socialise, and manage their own behaviour successfully with gentle guidance and support from staff. They are learning about the need to follow rules, such as to put their wet weather clothes on to go outside, and respond well to the staff who explain things to them positively and simply. Children follow the staff's lead who model the appropriate behaviour. For example, they followed the staff's example to wash their hands at appropriate times, they were happy to help with tidying up their activities before their snack, and were learning about how to support and think about their friends.

Children are well-supported to develop good social skills and they respond positively to the staff.

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

Children are very active and involved in their play. They enjoy exploring their environment both indoors and outside. They spend time on activities that interest them and are confident to use the resources. With very good support from the staff, they are excited and eager to join in with the activities. For example, one group of children were fascinated by the effect food colouring was having on the water; another group excitedly made a "fire" and then used the extinguisher to put it out. Group activities are varied, focused and short; children happily listened to their favourite story, sang familiar songs with their musical instruments, and jumped and ran to "keep fit".

Children are very engaged and interested in the activities provided.

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

Children experience a range of meaningful play opportunities to promote their learning. They are well-supported by staff who engage in and develop their play through skilful interactions and conversations. For example, in the home corner we heard staff talking with the children, supporting their communication; outside, staff encouraged children to work together to solve the problem of how to get the fire extinguisher to the fire, extending their thinking and giving purpose to their play.

Children benefit from the different strategies in place to promote their self-help and decision making skills. They were able to manage their own food at snack time, with staff sitting with them to assist them to pour their own drinks and butter their own crackers. They were able to access the washrooms independently and staff were on hand to support them with their hand washing skills, joining in with them sometimes to embed the correct routine. Children were happy to wipe their faces after their snack

and help each other as well. They are able to make their own decisions about what want to play with and can help themselves easily to the resources.

Children are able to take part in activities which promote their learning, acquisition of skills and independence.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff promote children's learning and development effectively. There are very good systems in place to help children progress. Activities are varied and interesting and help children develop their sense of wonder, curiosity and imagination. Staff are keen to help children develop their problem solving skills and self-help skills. They provide very warm, sensitive and nurturing care and are responsive to children's needs and feelings. They have a consistent, calm and flexible approach to support children to manage their behaviour using positive and effective strategies. Staff implement the setting's policies successfully to ensure children are kept safe and their health and welfare is promoted.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote children's welfare and health effectively. Staff we spoke with have a clear understanding of their role in protecting children because they attend relevant training annually, and safeguarding is discussed as part of their regular meetings. They are all familiar with Prevent duty, which is Government legislation designed to protect children from radicalisation. Staff ensure children benefit from healthy snacks with milk or water to drink. Suitable systems are in place to ensure staff are aware of children with allergies. Allergens in the food are currently not recorded and we discussed this with the RI. Staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures and have all attended suitable training to ensure children's health. They support children to wash their hands at appropriate times and to embed good hand washing techniques with them. Children enjoy lots of outside play and can enjoy the outdoors even in inclement weather. All staff are first aid trained and can therefore follow appropriate procedures in response to an accident. Staff implement effective measures to ensure they all know how many children are present and to maintain good oversight of all children. Fire drills are practised regularly with the children so they would know what to do in an emergency.

All staff are appropriately trained and implement the required policies and procedures effectively to ensure that children's health and welfare is promoted.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff use positive strategies to promote children's social development. They give meaningful praise to children for their efforts and congratulate them when they follow the rules. For example, staff praise children for helping their friends or helping to tidy up. Staff explain calmly to children what they should do rather than should not do and make suggestions to help children manage their actions, praising them when they make the right choices, such as sharing their toys. They model the required interactions and dialogue so children can follow their example. For example, staff sit with the children during snack and eat with them, so helping them learn the

appropriate social skills, and they speak to each other calmly and respectfully. We heard staff talking with the children about feelings and children were able to talk about the emotions of the children in the photographs displayed. All staff have undertaken training so they can manage children's behaviour using consistent and positive strategies.

Staff work closely together to promote children's social development using consistent and effective strategies.

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

Staff are well qualified, experienced and motivated. They work together closely to effectively support children. Staff help children to develop their sense of curiosity and wonder and have fun with them. For example, staff showed excitement as the food colouring changed the colour of the water in the tray and had great fun joining in with a keep fit session; they sometimes hide objects in the outdoor area and encourage children to find them while they are playing. Staff are very responsive to the children's play and adapt the play areas and displays to encourage children's interaction with them. Staff organise themselves to work with small groups of children and individuals to support their play and language development. For example, staff sat with children in the home corner to develop their play; one member of staff sat with a child who was drawing, also drawing and talking with the child about their pictures. Staff encourage children to use their creativity and imagination and solve problems such as how to get in their den when the entrance is blocked with planks of wood. They effectively use repeated phrases, words and sign language to help reinforce language development with the children and we could see how children had embraced the recent topic on pirates and were using words such as 'treasure' when showing us their display. They use incidental Welsh effectively within the sessions to help children become familiar with the Welsh language. Staff observe children's play and identify the next steps in their learning. Activities are planned to support children's development in relation to these next steps. Children who need additional support are provided with detailed play plans and staff work closely with other professional such as the speech and language therapist to ensure children receive effective support. The key worker system, where one member of staff works closely with their key children, supports staff to focus on their key children and work with each child's parents/carers so they are aware of how their child is progressing. Staff ensure children's personal needs are responded to promptly whilst encouraging children to manage their own needs or to help their friends.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development successfully and ensure they receive high levels of support.

3. Environment

Summary

Good systems are in place to ensure the environment is secure and safe. The playroom is stimulating, welcoming and bright. Resources are thoughtfully set out so children are excited to come into the group and play. Displays are interactive and help children remember the activities they have enjoyed. The outside area is easily accessible to the children, very well resourced, interesting and spacious. Together with the Forest School, children are able to explore, learn new skills and experiment through their outdoor play.

Our findings

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

Suitable procedures are in place and followed by staff to ensure the safety of the environment. The playgroup is located in a classroom within Thornwell Primary School. The RIs ensure appropriate systems are in place to provide assurance that all necessary maintenance and safety checks are carried out. There are good systems to ensure the outside area and classroom are secure. Staff carry out visual daily checks of the premises to ensure children's safety. We noted that all play areas were clean and free from observable hazards and risk assessments are followed. An audit of infection control has been carried out and no issues were raised. The kitchen has been awarded a level 5 food safety rating, which shows appropriate procedures are in place to maintain a suitable environment and protect children's health.

The RIs and staff take appropriate steps to ensure the environment is safe.

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

The environment is welcoming, interesting and very interactive for the children. The indoor room, although not large, is well designed with different areas for children to explore and enjoy different types of play, such as role play, messy play and mark making. Toys and resources are clearly visible, within easy reach and labelled with photographs so children can find what they need and know where to put things when they have finished with them. This encourages their self-help skills and allows them to make their own decisions. A cosy book corner with cushions and soft toys allows children space to relax and enjoy stories and there is sufficient space for children to comfortably take part in group circle times, enjoy physical activities or play with the construction resources. Children talk about their "work" on their displays and interact with and talk about the photographs, displays and pictures placed around the room. This shows they feel secure and confident within their play space. Staff adapt the displays and areas to meet the children's needs and interests and encourage their involvement. The washrooms are located so children can access them by themselves

and coat hooks are at child height and individually labelled with each child's photograph allowing children independence and a sense of belonging. The outside area is easily accessible for children from the playroom so they can move between the inside and outdoors as they wish. Outdoors is very well resourced and organised with well-defined play areas and a covered area so children can play regardless of the weather. The group uses the Forest School within the school grounds once a week and the school hall for a physical play session with a language focus to provide further play and learning opportunities.

The RIs and staff ensure that the environment is of a very good standard and continually adapted and varied so children's changing needs are met.

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

There is a very good range of age appropriate, high quality resources, furniture and equipment both indoors and outside. The play resources are thoughtfully set out to encourage children's play and curiosity. For example, during our visit there were three water trays; one with silver foil at the base, one with small world animals, shells and rocks and another where children could experiment with food colouring. The staff ensure children have access to many natural resources such as bark, logs, leaves and real vegetables, both indoors and outside. The playgroup fish and school guinea pigs encourage children to learn about caring for animals. There are a number of resources and books to help children learn about diversity and promote children's cultural awareness.

The RIs and staff ensure the resources and equipment of are of a high standard and promote children's learning, engagement and sense of fun.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The RIs and staff are committed to providing an excellent service for the children. There are effective systems in place to ensure the continued development of the setting. Staff are well supported and keen to develop their professional practice and the RIs welcome new approaches in childcare practice and recommendations from CIW and other professionals to help improve outcomes for children.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The RIs ensure the service is well run, compliant with the relevant regulations and effectively promotes children's safety, development and well-being. They support staff very well through a number of systems and initiatives, which help ensure the service runs successfully. They have clear goals and a sense of purpose, which are shared with the staff so the setting is continually improving. For example, new environment rating scales are being used to support staff practice and identify areas for improvement to enhance outcomes for children. There is an ethos of continual professional development and staff are keen to learn and apply their knowledge and embrace new ways of working to improve children's well-being. Policies are detailed and shared with parents before their child starts at the group so they have a clear picture of how the service runs. Good systems are in place to ensure staff understand and keep up to date with the policies and we saw they implement them well.

The playgroup is led by RIs who create a positive atmosphere which focuses on supporting staff well and developing the service to ensure good outcomes for children.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The RIs and staff are motivated to develop the service and there is a culture of continuous improvement. There are good systems in place for evaluation and improving quality. The service undertakes annual self-evaluations and uses various schemes to help identify points for future development. We saw areas for improvement identified in the most recent review had been addressed successfully and the group were in the process of undertaking their next review. Parents' views are welcomed and changes are made in response to their views. These changes could be included in the review report so parents may be clear how their ideas are influencing the development of the service. Staff are continually looking for effective ways to canvass children's views in addition to using close observations of their play. The RIs are keen to ascertain staff views and staff told us about the changes that have been implemented as a result of their ideas. The views of professionals are welcomed and included in the review report for parents to see.

The RIs effectively evaluate the service and draw on the views of parents, staff, children and professionals and outcomes from childcare quality assessment tools to evaluate the service and plan for improvement.

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

Management of staff and resources is very good and the playgroup runs smoothly and efficiently. There are effective systems in place to support staff and identify strengths and training needs. Staff told us they feel very well-supported and are able to access the training they need. They are keen to develop their professional knowledge to help develop their practice and bring about improvements in the service. Staff support one another and work very well as a team, sharing roles and responsibilities such as taking circle times. Recruitment procedures are robust to ensure that staff are suitable to care for children and there are good systems in place to make sure all staff are up to date with their mandatory training. A comprehensive induction system is in place which enables staff to feel confident in their roles. Registers include the times of attendance of staff and children and show ratios of staff to children are in line with those required by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS). Good systems are in place to cover staff absence so that children's sense of security is not compromised.

There are effective procedures in place to support staff well and promote their professional development in order to ensure good outcomes for children.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The service has excellent links with other professionals within the Flying Start team and the school. The staff and RIs strive to ensure parents understand what playgroup is all about and to feel involved with their child's progress. The RI and/or main PiC visit parents at their home before their child starts at the setting, which, together with a welcome session ensures parents are clear about what to expect. Parents are able to share information with the group about their child which, together with input from other professionals within the Flying Start team, ensures appropriate plans to support their child can be put in place. There are a number of systems to ensure continued good communication with parents. These include the open door policy, a notice board and informal conversations, particularly when parents drop off their child. A catch up session has been introduced so parents can discuss their child's progress in more detail and any support they may need with their child at home. The PiC told us they work very closely with the school nursery and there are very good systems in place so children benefit from a smooth transition into maintained education.

The service works effectively with other professionals and is keen to implement improvements to continually develop how they work with parents in order to promote children's well-being.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from the previous inspection

None

5.2 Areas of non compliance from this inspection

None

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

- Consider reflecting how the views of parents have influenced the development of the service in the quality of care review report and
- record allergens in the food provided.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook two visits to the service.

- We observed the children undertaking their activities and the care provided by the staff;
- we looked at an extensive range of records and documents including staff files, policies and procedures, children's records and planning;
- we looked at the premises, risk assessments and other documentation relating to safety measures and took account of the security measures in place;
- we spoke with the RI, PiC and staff present during the inspection to obtain their views and clarify information about the running of the playgroup and future plans and
- our findings were fed back to the RI present, and all recommendations were discussed.

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 Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individuals	Deanna Friend Beth Watkins
Persons in charge	Deanna Friend Le-Arne Hereford
Registered maximum number of places	12
Age range of children	2 – 3 years
Opening hours	9am – 11.30am, weekdays, term time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	22 May and 4 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	12 and 13 November 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an "Active Offer" of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use 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.