



Childcare Inspection Report on

Swallow Playgroup

**West Camp Community Centre
St Athan
Barry
CF62 4WA**



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Description of the service

Swallows Playgroup operates from a community hall in St. Athan and is registered to care for up to 30 children under the age of 12 years. Its Statement of Purpose identifies that it cares for children aged from two to four years. The nursery is a registered provider of Early Years Education for the Vale of Glamorgan County Council and is therefore also inspected by ESTYN. It is open Monday to Friday and offers full (9am-4pm) and part time care (9am - 12pm or 12.45pm – 4pm). There is a Registered Person (RP) and a Person in Charge (PiC) with day to day responsibility for the running of the service. This is an English speaking service with incidental Welsh used throughout the day.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The group provides children with interesting age appropriate play activities. Care practice is warm and responsive and the staff team know the children well. Children are developing firm relationships with their peers and staff. The environment is stimulating and welcoming, with lots of examples of children's work on display, celebrating their achievement and show casing what they have learnt. It has suitable inside and outside play spaces for children across the age range and leadership of the service is effective.

2. Improvements

The setting has undertaken a risk assessment of the nappy changing area as recommended at the last inspection. A mud kitchen and astro turf have been added to the outside area to enhance children's outdoor play. The home corner inside has also been further developed and extended. Children's safety has been improved through the introduction of safety guards around the swings. Children's speech and language is being closely monitored and supported as staff have received training in the Wellcom method.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The service is fully compliant with all of its legal requirements. Some recommendations were made and these are included at the end of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children have positive experiences. They are settled and well supported and have a good selection of play and learning activities to support their all round development. They are forming strong friendships with their friends and staff and have good opportunities to develop independence skills.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are listened to and their views are taken into account. We observed children making independent choices with regard to their play activities and staff giving children choice in terms of materials available to them. For example, what designs they would like to colour in. Play was predominately freely chosen and unstructured and this meant that children had free choice when it came to the activities they wished to participate in. For example, we noted that some children were given the option of indoor music and physical exercise or choosing from the continuous provision. Some children chose to play with a castle and small world figures and these decisions were respected.

Children are able to communicate freely and this promotes their well-being and self-esteem. Staff told us that they discuss topics and themes with the children and will often change the long term plans in response to children's requests and responses. For example, we were told that a car wash play activity had been set up in the garden after being suggested by children. We were also told that one week of each month is totally child led play supported by staff.

Children have a voice and their preferences are listened to and acted upon.

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

Children are settled and comfortable and they are valued by the staff team. There is a flexible settling in policy which is tailored to meet the individual needs of children. We noted that children were happy and content and on the few occasions when children were unsettled they were comforted and reassured quickly. Children self register their names on a registration tree which helps them to quickly settle into their chosen activities and feel a sense of belonging. We saw children were happy and confident moving around the environment and were eager to start their play when being dropped off by parents. Children told us who their friends were and introduced us to areas of the nursery where they liked to play.

Children appeared to be happy, settled and reassured at the setting.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact well with their friends and are supported in their social development by staff and consistent daily routines. We saw that all children attended the daily circle time. This gave children opportunities to participate and practice their social skills such as sharing, listening, being polite and taking turns. Children clapped the child acting as “Helpiwr heddiw” at circle time and said “*Well done!*”. We heard children using ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ throughout the inspection, showing good manners. They clearly enjoyed working with staff on focus tasks and willingly followed instructions. We saw one child had so enjoyed their play they gave the member of staff a big hug. Most children worked co-operatively with their friends. We saw spontaneous acts of kindness between children and older children including younger children in their play. Children were learning how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships.

Children are happy and interact well with their friends and the staff looking after them.

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

Children are motivated and engage in their play and learning well. We saw children playing with a good variety of age appropriate toys such as construction, torches and extensive arts and craft materials. These activities enabled children to extend their creative and imaginative play. There was lots of chatter and conversation as well as laughter and warm interactions as they played showing their enjoyment. We saw that there was a book corner outside so that if children wanted to relax and look at books they could. Our observations showed that the staff and the resources available, support children to extend their learning very well. We observed children concentrate for an appropriate amount of time for their stage of development during staff led activities. For example, we saw that children really enjoyed using their torches with staff in a darkened den within the hall. Another child happily made ‘Zz’ noises stating “*its our sound this week isn’t it!*” whilst other children really enjoyed ‘sound lotto’.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

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

Children are developing important self help skills and independence in line with their age and stage of development. Toys and resources are situated so that the children can access them easily and there is continuous provision of resources supporting foundation phase learning. We saw children use the bathroom independently showing increasing skills in their personal care and parents informed us that children’s potty training was very well supported at the setting. Low level coat pegs allowed the children to access their personal belongings independently and put on their shoes and coats if they were able to when going outside. Opportunities to develop a broad range of self help skills are utilised with all children. At lunch time we saw children eating independently and heard staff say, for example, “*Can you open it yourself?*” as children removed items from their lunch boxes. At snack time children give out plates and cups to the group and are encouraged to pour their own drinks. We were also told the children help to make their own sandwiches for snack when these are on the

menu. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and we saw children get tissues to wipe their own noses and then dispose of them in the bin. We heard lots of incidental Welsh used throughout the setting and children responded well to simple instructions and conversation. When playing outside children were able to climb, run and use various equipment that promoted their physical development and encouraged their confidence, balance and co-ordination.

Children are given time, space and frequent opportunities to learn and do as much for themselves as they can.

2. Care and Development

Summary

The staff team work effectively together to manage interactions and provide good quality, responsive care. They promote children's play positively and are well qualified and experienced in caring for children. Staff have a good understanding of key policies and practices and follow these in their every day work to keep children safe and healthy.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy and do this to a high standard. The setting has been awarded a Level 4 by the Food Standards Agency and achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Eating award. This demonstrates that food health and hygiene practices and procedures are well understood and implemented by staff. We were told that parents are encouraged and informed about what to include in healthy lunch boxes for their children. Menus indicated a variety of healthy, fresh choices for snack. We also saw a photograph of a child making a salad wrap for their snack demonstrating children's involvement in snack time routines. All staff have completed Food Hygiene training and information relating to children with specific dietary needs is clearly displayed. All staff we spoke with were able to describe relevant health and hygiene procedures and policies in place. We noted that fresh water was readily available for children to access throughout the session. The service has undertaken the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme and we saw children encouraged to brush their teeth through the Design to Smile initiative. This has helped children to learn about recycling, good hygiene practices and appropriate oral hygiene. Children's physical health is promoted effectively. They benefit from monthly sessions of Happy Hands and Step by Step music and dance sessions and access to a stimulating outside area. The importance of physical play is well understood by staff and is underpinned by a 'Physical Play' policy. We saw staff implementing indoor physical play using tunnels and a small indoor climbing frame. We saw that managers complete regular audits of accidents and incidents to help determine any trends of problem areas. We reviewed the medication policies and procedures and saw that they were appropriately completed with witness and parent signatures. Children's health needs are recorded when they start the nursery. We spoke to several staff and they were able to discuss with a high level of confidence the health needs of the children in their care. Child protection including Prevent training had been completed by all staff and discussions found they had secure understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures?.

Staff and managers are mindful of their responsibilities in providing a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Children are supported very well by the staff team. There is a clear behaviour management policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement to support children's social behaviour. There were 'Golden Rules' such as 'soft talking voices' and 'be kind to everyone' which were consistently applied. Staff were respectful and children gentle with the children. They encouraged them to share toys and acknowledged when they did something kind or helpful. We heard lots of praise to promote children's self esteem and confidence, such as *"Good team work. Well done, we did that together!"*. We noted very little unwanted behaviour during the inspection and any issues were dealt with calmly by staff. They explained *"Pencils are to draw on paper not walls"* and asked if they would like some paper or to play with something else. Children established within the group understood the rules and when asked, were able to tell us what some of these were. For example *"Tell them to stop if you don't like what they are doing"* and *"say pardon me!"*

Staff manage children's interactions well.

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

The setting provides a very good range of interesting learning experiences for children and has good systems in place to assess and plan around children's individual needs. We saw Foundation Phase Curriculum planning and evaluations with comments from children included. Children's developmental files included observations to show their ongoing progress. For example, *"X showed compassion to an upset child....dot to dot 1-10 identified correctly...10 piece slot in jigsaw puzzle to promote concentration, fine motor skills and memory skills"*. Staff have trained in and adopted the Wellcom model of supporting speech and language in early years settings. It helps promote children's communication and identify if early intervention is needed regarding their speech and language. The setting had won an award for wildlife and had encouraged this through bug hotels and bird feeders. We were told that children were encouraged to water their plants with recycled water from the water butts in the garden. They also planted carrot seeds and then used them for vegetable printing. Staff had undertaken quality circle time training and consequently group time was well planned with clear learning objectives to support and encourage children's learning. Welsh was encouraged and all staff had completed Welsh language training. Staff broaden children's understanding of inclusion and diversity through a wide range of multi-cultural toys and resources, such as Chinese dresses, dolls, books and small world figures. We were told that staff were preparing for the introduction of further ICT resources to support children in their use of technology. This would help development and learning with technology, such as the sound lotto game children had really enjoyed in the morning session.

Staff promote children's play and learning and meet children's individual needs to a very good standard.

3. Environment

Summary

The setting was originally established in 1975 as a playgroup for children of Ministry Of Defence (MOD) families. Swallows Playgroup now also serves families from the local community. It is based within St.Athan community hall and is owned and maintained by the MOD. Although shared by other community groups, the nursery itself has designated separate facilities not accessed by the general public. The nursery is safe and appropriate safety checks are in place. The wide range of good quality toys and equipment are maintained to a high standard. There is sufficient space for the number of children cared for. It is bright, well decorated and child focused with suitable resources and equipment to promote children's independence. Toileting facilities would benefit from further improvement.

Our findings

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

The manager ensures that the premises are safe and there are daily check sheets completed by staff to support this process. Risk assessments are well written with hazards identified and preventative measures put in place to minimise any risks to children. When asked, staff were able to tell us safety procedures, for example covering the outdoor sandpit and checking outside areas before children went outside. They understood who was responsible for certain checks as there is a rota staff refer to so that they are clear about their daily responsibilities. This ensures the environment is safe and suitable for children. The manager explained that she reports any maintenance issues to the MOD and confirmed that any identified repairs or maintenance tasks are dealt with quickly. The building had all the required gas safety and electrical certificates and was in very good repair. We noted that staff positioned themselves well throughout the setting. This helped to ensure that they could monitor the children's safety in an unobtrusive manner and be on hand to offer assistance if needed. We heard lots of communication between the staff and they worked well together. This ensured that all areas of the setting were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore in a safe and engaging manner. The fire log book demonstrated that emergency evacuation procedures are practised every three months to help raise children's awareness of safe action to take. We found the log would benefit from the inclusion of exits used. Records also showed regular testing of safety equipment, such as smoke alarms and emergency lighting support the overall safety of the setting.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.

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

Both the indoor and outdoor play spaces are very well decorated, warm and welcoming. Access to toilets and the nappy changing area is directly off the main play

room. However, there is only one toilet that is independently accessible for children and whilst there are other toilets throughout the building these are not accessible to children without adult supervision. We have recommended that this situation is reviewed in order to improve children's direct access to toilet facilities. Children's work is displayed throughout the nursery showing some of the topics they have covered. For example, during the inspection children were working on a large Welsh dragon which was to be displayed on the wall in preparation for St. David's Day. The displays help celebrate the children's efforts, as well as promoting a sense of ownership and belonging to the setting. There is considerable bilingual Welsh/English signage supporting children's language recognition. The outside play areas are very well equipped with a range of resources that enhance children's skills and outdoor play and learning experiences successfully. Some of these included, a mud kitchen, water play, planting area, bird boxes, bug hotels, swings, climbing frame, area for ride on vehicles and a quiet book area. Although most children only stay for a morning or afternoon session there is a cosy sleep area with a bed, within the main play area. This enables children to nap safely in comfort. We noted that temperatures within the two side rooms used for arts and crafts and some sensory activities could not be monitored effectively and we discussed this with the manager.

The nursery ensures that children can play and learn in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared and vibrant environment although consideration needs to be given to improving toileting facilities.

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

All staff check resources and ensure that they are of an appropriate standard. There are daily checks of equipment and play areas by the staff team and damaged resources are removed immediately. There is a good supply of toys to promote children's learning and development. We noted a good amount of Welsh books and cultural resources available and the RI informed us that they were getting new equipment to improve children's ICT skills. The small tables and chairs used for meal times and table top activities allow children to access the activities easily and be independent at mealtimes.

Systems are in place to ensure that high quality equipment and resources are available to enhance all of the children's play and learning.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The nursery is well organised and managed to a high standard. Management and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and were open and transparent throughout. They are keen to make continual improvements to enhance the experiences of children who attend the service.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Management of the setting is highly effective and the nursery is fully compliant with the national minimum standards and day care regulations for children. Management has high standards and these are shared with the staff team. It was evident that management value and invest in cultivating good quality staff. Staff we spoke with were clear about their roles and expectations and were enthusiastic and committed to the nursery. Consequently, staff turnover is low. There are clear, informative policies and procedures in place which support the smooth and effective running of the nursery. However, we have recommended that systems for recording any complaints or safeguarding referrals need to be reviewed.

Overall, leadership of the service is highly effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

There are good systems in place to review practice and implement improvements to the service. There is a suitable, clear system to capture the views of children, parents, staff and other professionals, with the use of questionnaires which are distributed on at least an annual basis. Management undertake a Quality of Care review annually and produce a report which incorporates all feedback received and an action plan outlining specific areas for development. During discussions with the management team, we found them to be open and receptive to new ideas and committed to address the recommendations identified during the inspection. Managers demonstrated that they understood the importance of thorough, on going self evaluation and planning for improvement to the service. They had, for example, developed a Training Feedback Policy capturing staff feedback as a means of evaluating training and we saw from records that staff completed these records and they were used by management. We were told that training had been arranged for staff with the Local Education Authority so that they would be able to deliver Forest School learning to children.

Self evaluation and planning for improvement is effective and is the basis for on going improvement and service development.

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

There is effective management of staff with robust recruitment processes, however supervision of staff needs to be recorded. All staff have defined roles and

responsibilities as stated in a job description. On viewing staff files, we saw the necessary recruitment checks, such as two references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates were complete and routinely updated. All staff are suitably qualified and all held the necessary Paediatric First Aid qualification. Agency staff are not used at the service as contracted staff familiar to the children are used to cover annual leave or sickness. The RP completed the Self Assessment of Service Statement which was circulated by CIW earlier in the year. Staff we spoke to stated that they received regular supervision and felt well supported by management. However, these meetings are not routinely recorded to outline discussions, training needs and help monitor performance. The RP had identified introducing recording observations of staff would be beneficial to improve both supervision and promote best working practices.

Management of staff and other resources is effective and this is evident in the day to day running of the setting. However, supervisions need to be recorded so that they can be used to support and improve best practice and ensure all training needs are identified.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Partnerships are effective and promote positive outcomes for the children and parents/carers who use the service. We spoke with three sets of parents all of whom were happy with the levels of communication they had with staff and stated that they were pleased with the overall service. We also saw a range of thank you cards and letters which demonstrated that many parents were happy and pleased with the service they had received. Staff are very experienced in supporting children whose families move frequently or are posted abroad and manage these transitions well for children. We saw staff preparing photographs of activities undertaken and friend's children had made at the setting as a memento for children leaving. Records demonstrated that parents complete contracts and personal information forms prior to their child starting at the setting. Staff also offer a home visit to meet the children and discuss nursery practices and policies and play routines with parents, ensuring they are comfortable with the arrangements. There are also a number of well-established, positive relationships with both the local authority support teacher and members of the Early Years Partnership. This has resulted in effective professional development, support and staff training options. We were told that the setting has been involved in pilot schemes, such as the introduction of ICT and has very positive relationships with health professionals supporting children with additional needs who attend the setting.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Consider ways to improve children's direct access to toilet facilities;
- review the system for recording any complaints or safeguarding referrals;
- record all staff supervisions, and
- ensure temperatures in all areas inside are routinely monitored so that children play and learn in a comfortable environment

6. How we undertook this inspection

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

Evidence for the information held within this report was gathered via:

- Discussion with the Manager, Person in Charge and staff;
- observations of care practices, activities undertaken and interactions between the staff and children;
- a visual check of the premises;
- a review of some staff files, including training and supervision records, and some children's files;
- scrutiny of a selection of daily records, policies and procedures;
- speaking with parents and children, and
- assessment of documentation held by CIW.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Tracy O'Callaghan
Person in charge	Andrea Glenton
Registered maximum number of places	30
Age range of children	Two to four years
Opening hours	9am – 4pm term time only Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	21 November 2014
Dates of this inspection visits	28 February 2018 20 March 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language. An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services
Additional Information:	