



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Childcare Inspection Report on

St Donats Nursery School

**Atlantic College
St Donats
Llantwit Major
CF61 1WF**



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Description of the service

St Donats Nursery is an English speaking service located within the beautiful grounds of Atlantic College, Vale of Glamorgan. It operates a full day care provision from the gymnasium, having to set up and store their equipment daily. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 19 children between two and a half and five years of age. The Responsible Individual (RI) is Gillian Durbin, who is also the Person in Charge (PiC) on a daily basis.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children attending St Donats nursery are very happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at the service. Children are provided with excellent daily experiences and very well planned activities that keep them engaged and stimulated all day. Close relationships with staff and lasting friendships are being developed. The indoor environment is well thought out, clean and welcoming. However, the outdoor area and opportunities the college grounds provide are simply exceptional. The leadership and management of the service exceed the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (2016) and this is reflected in parents' comments that they have "every confidence in the manager" and feel they get "good information" relating to the service and feedback on children's development.

2. Improvements

Some recommendations were made by us during the re-registration process all of which have been met in full by the nursery. Previous recommendations from Estyn to improve Welsh language provision have been implemented.

3. Requirements and recommendations

Two minor recommendations were made and are detailed at the end of the report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children's well-being is given the highest priority at this service, they are treated with dignity and respect by staff and this is reflected by the caring nature that children interact and treat each other. Their views and opinions are taken into account in every way possible. There is an inclusive, fun filled, yet calm atmosphere where children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning allowing them to achieve their full potential in a safe, non judgemental environment.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are encouraged to express their views and contribute to ideas. Children were working on fairy themed activities during our visit, they told us about the fairy door they had found in the tree and how they had drawn pictures for the fairies and helped them build their village. Staff explained that during a walk in the woods a child had found a "fairy door" and the children had become very excited. The enthusiasm continued and staff decided to plan the next fortnights work around fairies and fairy tales, asking the children what type of activities they would like to do. We heard children asking to go out to visit the fairies and staff arranged a walk, the children were thrilled. During story time the children were encouraged to discuss the characters and the plot of the story, giving their opinion. We saw that children views and opinions had been considered during the quality of care review and some of their ideas had been implemented.

Children's communication is highly valued, ensuring that children's voices are not only heard but listened to and acted upon.

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

Children feel secure and confident at the service. All children are aware of the daily routine and know what to do as soon as staff ask or prompt them. Staff told us that it was time to tidy up ready for snack. When we asked children why they were putting the toys away, they said "it's snack time now and we get to have milk or water". Children approach staff confidently and we often saw displays of affection between children and staff and children and their friends. On several occasions we heard children asking about their friends who were not in attendance on the day. A sense of ownership and belonging is further developed as they have their own peg for their personal belongings with their name and a picture. We saw children taking their belongings and hanging them tidily. We asked another three children what they would do if they wanted to talk to someone at nursery for example, if they felt sad. They said they would "tell Gill", indicating that they feel confident that they will be supported.

The ethos of the nursery promotes a strong sense of security which enables children to feel safe, happy and valued.

1.3 How well do children interact?

All children are self disciplined and becoming aware of the emotions of others. During a colouring activity one child was colouring very neatly when another child joined in. The first child commented that her friend was scribbling outside the lines and took the colouring pens away. When the second child stopped colouring the first child said "it's very good colouring, I know you are trying your best" and proceeded to share the pens. Children were

polite and used good manners; we often heard them saying please and thank you to each other as well as staff. When a child felt that manners had been missed they did not hesitate to prompt their friends to use them.

Children have learned to respect themselves and each other allowing relationships to flourish and interaction to be positive and meaningful.

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

Children are fully engaged and interested in the activities and resources on offer. We saw children taking great pleasure in their play and learning whether self initiated or with staff members. They participated well and concentrated for appropriate time periods. We often heard laughter especially during the messy play and the singing and dancing activities. It is clear that the extensive and stimulating outdoor provision allows children to become inquisitive thinkers and develops their imagination with resources such as the mud kitchen, an under cover allotment, a private beach and a castle to explore.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning because they are provided with a variety of opportunities indoors and excellent outdoor play.

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

Children are able to develop confidence and self esteem at the service. The resources and activities are set out according to the foundation phase with each area developing skills within the seven areas of learning. Children can move around freely and choose what to participate in, although practitioners encourage each child to participate in the focused task. We saw children using a wide variety of materials throughout the nursery. A child found a toy tree with a broken base and asked to fix it rather than throw it away. The person in charge assured him that after dinner they would mould some clay to create a new base. This develops children's skills around being creative and experimenting with different materials. There are water and cups set out for children to help themselves to drinks and they were eager to show us what to do and where to go when we said we were thirsty. We observed children appropriately washing their hands in the portable sink, using soap and drying their hands after messy play and before food. We did observe that a communal towel was used to dry hands and infection control procedures recommend the use of paper hand towels.

Purposeful experiences enable children to develop an extensive range of skills and be independent.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Children's safety is of paramount importance to practitioners, they have sound understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. Interactions are well managed with staff setting a good example for children to follow and clear expectations of right and wrong. Practitioners ensure children's holistic development is met through clear and detailed planning of resources and activities which are firmly based on the children's interests.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Practitioners ensure children are protected from harm. There were thorough policies in place at the service and the practitioners demonstrated a good understanding of the procedures to follow in order to keep children safe from harm including child protection, behaviour management, health and safety and fire safety. Risk assessments are in place with detailed daily checks undertaken. There were posters displaying healthy food options and the PiC told us that she was arranging an information morning with the healthy eating coordinator for parents to receive ideas of healthy options for the children's packed lunch. We observed practitioners cleaning the tables before and after food and encouraging children to wash their hands at appropriate times, ensuring that infection control procedures were met.

Practitioners implement the services policies and procedures very effectively allowing children to remain safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff set realistic and appropriate standards for behaviour. Practitioners modelled good behaviour throughout the inspection. We saw them showing children how to help their friends and to take turns. When a child wanted to hold two items they discussed why it would be nice to allow another child to have one item and for the first child to keep the other. When children were asked not to do something most practitioners would also provide an explanation to why they should not do it and what would be more appropriate behaviour. Whilst all staff were fair in their approach, the more senior practitioners took the lead on the behaviour management. There was an isolated occasion during children's lunch where some staff sat at a table away from the children and watched over them from a short distance. This was a missed opportunity to engage with children. This period would have been ideal for open discussion. However, there was no significant impact on the children's wellbeing in any way.

Practitioners have the appropriate skills and qualifications to work with children but some need to develop their confidence within the service, to ensure interactions are managed consistently.

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

Whilst detailed information about children's likes and dislikes is recorded when they begin at the nursery there is also a keyworker system in place, allowing staff members to get to know a small group of children more personally and for trusting relationships to be developed. Baseline observations are undertaken when children start at the service and planning is undertaken on how to develop their skills, with regular assessments to monitor their progress. Thorough planning for the next steps in their learning was available for viewing along with well planned activities and how these could be developed on a daily basis to progress children's understanding and knowledge. The nursery has clearly worked hard to implement the use of the Welsh language and its culture and we heard basic phrases being used regularly by staff and children and a practitioner was teaching the children a Welsh song by saying a word and asking children to repeat it, then they would all attempt to sing together. The children were very enthusiastic to learn the songs and were very proud when they remembered the Welsh word for different items. We also saw Welsh and English labels and posters around the hall. Children's individual needs are met and their holistic development promoted through an understanding of individual children's backgrounds and good planning of fun and enjoyable experiences.

3. Environment

Summary

The environment is child friendly and welcoming, it is kept safe and secure with hazards identified and minimised. Resources are age appropriate and very well planned to provide opportunities for children to become independent and follow their own interests.

Our findings

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

Children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment. Key pad entry to the premises restricts unauthorised visitors, additionally, there is a security guard at the gate making checks before anyone enters the college grounds. Risk assessments detail the risk identified and how these can be minimised and all staff are aware of their responsibility to keep children safe. The toilets are located across the courtyard and can occasionally be accessed by students. However, when nursery children need to access the toilets thorough safety procedures are followed to ensure that they are the only ones in the block. The nursery work closely with the college to make sure the premises is well maintained, for example the nursery participate in the college fire drills and evacuation. However, because children are much younger attending the nursery, more frequent drills are practiced for children to become familiar with the procedure.

Good systems are in place to ensure the safety of the environment.

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

The service is welcoming, friendly and provides a rich play environment. The room is brightly painted, clean and well lit with many windows allowing in natural light. Being located across one level and well planned, the layout allows children to access all indoor play areas independently. A sense of belonging is created by displaying children's work around the nursery and a birthday chart is located on a display board for children and parents to see. Whilst there is not a room for confidential conversations within the hall, the nursery has use of other rooms within the college should parents want to discuss any issues. Although there is not direct access to the outdoors the service ensures children can go out regularly, when possible and whenever the children ask. Additionally, they try to incorporate the outdoors into the classroom by bird watching and collecting items to discuss inside.

Leaders are methodical in ensuring the environment is suitable to the ages of the children in attendance.

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

Children have access to developmentally appropriate play and learning resources. There are child sized tables, chairs and soft furnishings for children to relax on. The toys and resources are made from varied materials. Kitchen paper with water and glitter was being used to create special "fairy putty" which fitted into the current theme. The resources and equipment are regularly checked and cleaned. Broken items are discarded, repaired or replaced. Toys and resources are stored in the storage room away from children but toys and resources relating to the current learning theme are stored at child height. These are well labelled and allow children to follow their interests.

The quality of resources and equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is developmentally appropriate for children.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The leadership of the nursery is very strong with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Detailed self evaluation is undertaken and information gained is used to plan improvements for the year ahead. Robust recruitment policies are in place and regular continued professional development is actively supported and encouraged. The nursery works closely with Atlantic college, external agencies and parents and has an outstanding reputation within the local community.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leadership at the service exceeds the guidance provided within the National Minimum Standards for regulated Child Care. Detailed information about the service is available through a Statement of Purpose and supporting information outlining what the service offers, their values and expectations. The policies and procedures for the nursery are reviewed annually or more regularly if required and this ensures that the practice undertaken within the nursery is always current and appropriate, for example the person in charge was aware of her responsibility relating to Prevent Duty and was awaiting further training. Requests from staff to undertake relevant training are listened to and acted on, to develop the staff skills. All records are complete and up to date with daily systems for recording children's attendance, staff working hours and visitors to the premises.

4.2 How effective is self-evaluation and planning for improvement?

Parents and children benefit from a quality service that is effectively monitored. There are effective monitoring systems in place which take into account the views of children, staff and parents. Questionnaires had been completed by parents and staff and staff told us they are regularly encouraged to provide feedback regarding the service. The person in charge told us that staff discussed the children's views during circle time as this was felt to be less intimidating than asking individuals. We viewed a comprehensive report created from the quality of care review detailing what had worked well and not so well, plans for the coming year and what the nursery hoped to implement to meet children and parents requests. A positive culture of self evaluation and planning for improvements ensures the nursery is always progressing.

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

Children's needs are fully met by those who look after them. There are robust recruitment processes in place to ensure staff are fully checked and vetted before they start their employment at the service. Once employed there is a comprehensive induction for practitioners to become familiar with the expectations upon them, the policies and procedures of the nursery and their understanding is checked after a period of six months, although practitioners confirmed more regular supervision meetings are held every two or three months. Unfortunately, recent supervision records were unavailable. However, past documents were available for staff who had left the nursery and these demonstrated that regular and meaningful one to one sessions are held with realistic targets set for staff.

Management of practitioners, staff and resources is very effective due to well organised and planned service.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The person in charge ensures that the nursery works well with the college, parents and external partners. The nursery can utilise the grounds and facilities available at the college for example, students often come in to provide drama and music sessions for the children and currently the students studying design and technology have come to measure the nursery children to create appropriately sized musical instruments especially for them. The nursery is beginning to participate in the 'Designed to Smile' tooth brushing scheme and have received starter pack information. Parents are kept fully informed about the children's day through regular photos and feedback. The person in charge and staff have protocols in place when concerns around children's development are identified and previously they have worked closely with the children's parents and health professionals to achieve the best outcomes for children.

Strong and effective partnerships help to improve children's learning and wellbeing.

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

The following recommendations were discussed;

- Develop staff confidence within the service to ensure opportunities are not missed and;
- provide paper towels at the portable sink

6. How we undertook this inspection

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

- 1 inspector visited the service for 3 and a half hours, observing children and the care they receive. We undertook a SOFI 2 observation at lunch time to capture the children's engagement and care provided.
- we sampled a range of records and documentation held at the service and reviewed information held by CSSIW
- we carried out a visual inspection of the premises and outside environment
- We spoke to children, staff and three parents during the inspection.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website www.cssiw.org.uk

About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Gillian Durbin
Person in charge	Gillian Durbin
Registered maximum number of places	19
Age range of children	2.5 years – 5 years
Opening hours	09:00 – 16:00
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	21 June 2016
Dates of this inspection visits	12 & 13 January 2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language.
Additional Information:	