



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**First Steps Playgroup**

**Crumlin High Level Primary School  
Commercial Road Crumlin  
Newport  
NP11 4PX**



**Date Inspection Completed**

23/01/2020

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| <b>Ratings</b>   | <b>What the ratings mean</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Excellent</b> | These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being |
| <b>Good</b>      | These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.                                                                                             |
| <b>Adequate</b>  | These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Poor</b>      | These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice                                           |

## Description of the service

1<sup>st</sup> Steps Playgroup Ltd is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide care for up to 24 children under the age of 12 years. The service offers full day care, as well as sessional and a wrap-around care. It operates, Monday to Friday, from 8.45am to 3.00pm, term time only. There is a Responsible Individual (RI) and Persons in Charge (PIC) are responsible for running the service on a daily basis. It is an English speaking service with some incidental Welsh used during the day.

## Summary

| Theme                                     | Rating   |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|
| <a href="#">Well-being</a>                | Good     |
| <a href="#">Care and Development</a>      | Good     |
| <a href="#">Environment</a>               | Adequate |
| <a href="#">Leadership and Management</a> | Adequate |

### 1. Overall assessment

Children have established positive relationships with staff caring for them and benefit from a good selection of age appropriate play opportunities to support and promote their development. They are thriving in a supportive and nurturing environment, enabled by staff who are caring and engage positively with them. The environment offers sufficient space indoors and outside for children to play in comfort and the setting is safe and suitable for children. Leaders have some effective systems in place to support the running of the service, but in order to meet legal requirements staff recruitment processes should be more thorough. Links with parents are positive and they value the service offered to them and their children.

### 2. Improvements

Leaders have acted on recommendations made at the previous inspection in relation to the supervision arrangements for the RI, the dignity and privacy of children when using the toilet facilities and use of Welsh. Additionally, leaders have purchased new outdoor play resources to give children greater choice. They also made a number of improvements to staff records between our first and second inspection visit.

### 3. Requirements and recommendations

We have advised the registered provider that in order to fully meet the legal requirements improvements are needed in relation to:

- Suitability of workers: Regulation 28 as we found that information was missing from staff records.

A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as there was no immediate or significant impact for children using the service. We expect the registered person to take action to rectify this and it will be followed up at the next inspection.

We have made a number of recommendations around development of risk assessments, the frequency of supervision for casual staff, development of the statement of purpose, evidencing the voice of the child in activity planning and assessment of children.

# 1. Well-being

Good

## Summary

Children are happy and confident in a setting they know well. They are able to make independent choices around their play and benefit from a good variety of activities, making their time at the setting enjoyable. They are developing their independence through play and learning the importance of sharing with others.

## Our findings

Children are confident to speak up and make their wishes known to staff. They make decisions around their play and follow their play preferences. Throughout the inspection, children approached staff to ask them for specific songs and music. In all instances, staff acted quickly to address children's wishes. Children were clear about what they wanted to do and when asked if they would like to work on their snowman picture, a child replied 'no' and said they would like to do it later. Children told staff when they disliked a particular story and one child said '*I want to pick,*' and chose a different story for the member of staff to read.

Children are comfortable with routines of the setting and cope well with separation from their parents. One child was a little restless on the first day of the inspection but staff were aware of their particular circumstances and the child responded positively when reassured by staff. A new starter was very confident, playing with other children and chatting to staff. One parent told us that their child attends school in the morning, but also attends the playgroup in the afternoon because they enjoy it so much. We saw the children collected from the nursery class were relaxed and settled immediately on arrival.

Children are learning to co-operate and consider the needs of others. Whilst there were one or two minor disagreements between children, they coped well when staff spoke to them about being kind and we heard a child apologise to another child. At mealtimes, children sat appropriately at the table to eat their food and in the afternoon, children snuggled into each other to listen to a story, and took turns to answer questions.

Children enjoy their play and have good opportunities to engage in a wide selection of developmentally, age appropriate activities during their time at the setting. Play is predominately child led and we observed children enjoying messy, outdoor and creative play, a music and movement activity and quieter activities. We heard one child say they wanted to stay and play for longer, and saw a child happily singing into a toy microphone. We saw that children were confident to develop their skills and enjoyed using, for example, rollers to spread paint onto paper. Furthermore, they had opportunities to develop their independence through washing their hands, hanging up their coats and taking responsibility for tidying toys away.

## 2. Care and Development

Good

### Summary

The staff team are friendly, welcoming and provide a nurturing environment for children to play and learn in safety. They plan developmentally, age appropriate activities and identify children's learning needs, although we have made some recommendations in this area.

### Our findings

Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They follow appropriate procedures in relation to infection control, administering of medication and safeguarding. The service has a gold star Healthy Snack Award and children have healthy snacks and drinks. Children are encouraged to follow good hygiene routines for handwashing before mealtimes and after using the toilet. There is a clear procedure for administering of medication and staff are able to deal with minor health issues as they have current paediatric first aid certificates. There is a formal system for recording safeguarding issues and staff are aware of their responsibilities to report and record concerns about children in their care. Accident and incident records are maintained and the nature of accidents are typical of the age and stage of development of children who attend the setting.

Staff deal with interactions in a positive manner and respond to minor issues, quickly and calmly. They explain quietly to children the importance of sharing and being kind and these strategies mirror those outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy. Throughout the inspection, staff frequently used praise to promote children's self-esteem and acted as good role models at all times, speaking to each other and children respectfully.

Staff promote children's play and learning in a positive way, encouraging and acknowledging children's efforts, as a result children are confident to make decisions and follow their interests. Play opportunities are sufficiently interesting and challenging. Records show activities are age appropriate, but evidence of the voice of children in deciding on themes and topics and staff evaluation of activities could be stronger. Staff have an understanding of children's development and use a variety of methods to capture this information. These include scrapbooks and formal development records, although signposting of children's next steps is not as consistent or clear as it could be. In practice, staff are enthusiastic and supportive when engaging with children. We saw examples of creative objects that children had completed with staff that included the use of recycled materials and stones children had collected from the garden. Staff made stories interesting and encouraged children to think for themselves and ask questions. A Development Officer has visited the service to offer guidance to staff on the use of incidental Welsh, and we heard some Welsh introduced through song.

### **3. Environment**

**Adequate**

#### **Summary**

The service operates from a demountable classroom based in the grounds of Crumlin High Level Primary School. The premises is safe and suitable for children, who benefit from a good selection of play and learning resources.

#### **Our findings**

Leaders have appropriate systems and procedures in place to ensure that the environment is safe. The Local Authority is responsible for fire, electrical and gas safety checks of the premises and records indicated that these are up to date. The premises is cleaned daily by the school cleaner and there is a termly deep clean of the building. Staff at the setting are responsible for cleaning of rooms whilst the service is operating and ensure that floors remain uncluttered and tables clean. There are daily visual checks of the internal space and outdoor area by staff, although we noted trailing wires in the playroom, which staff had addressed by our second visit. There are visual checks undertaken by staff and a weekly risk assessment check is completed, but consideration of more detailed risk assessments for all aspects of the service would be beneficial.

The premises offers sufficient space for children to play in comfort, both indoors and outside. There is a small entrance area for the storage of children's belongings. The main playroom benefits from good natural light from a number of windows and is clean and in good decorative order. The layout and design is considered from a child's perspective, with zoned areas for different activities such as messy play, quiet activities and a home corner for imaginary play. Children have a sense of belonging, their artwork is displayed and resources are well organised to enable them to select what they would like to play with. There is a small food preparation area and children's access to this space is restricted. The toilets are easily accessible for children and are clean and well maintained. There is no private office space for confidential conversations with parents and no dedicated staff room, so space is limited in this regard. Children have access to an adequate outdoor area for physical play. There is a small area for planting and a canopy provides protection from the weather, meaning the outside space can be utilised all year round.

Children benefit from a good selection of play and learning resources, which are of a good standard. In order to give children greater choice, staff have purchased additional outdoor equipment, such as skittles and a basketball hoop. There are cultural resources, Welsh books, as well as an appropriate supply of art and craft materials. There is a comfortable sofa and floor cushions for children to relax on in the reading area and appropriately sized furniture suitable for the age of children who attend the setting.



## 4. Leadership and Management

Adequate

### Summary

Leaders are keen to move the service forward and are receptive to feedback given. They acted promptly to address issues identified during the inspection, and had updated documents and improved staff records by our second visit. However, a more effective and robust staff recruitment process is required to ensure compliance with regulations. Partnership with parents is good and leaders have established positive links with parents who use the service.

### Our findings

Leaders have appropriate record keeping processes in place to support the service. Policies are sufficiently varied and detailed. The statement of purpose provides an overview of the service. However, more detail on, for example, facilities; services and routines would give parents greater clarity when deciding on the suitability of the service for their child. Accident and incident records are completed and shared with parents, and contracts and registration forms contain relevant information.

Leaders review and evaluate the service to ensure best outcomes for parents and children who use the service. In September 2019, they undertook a review of the service and consulted with parents and children as part of this process. This involved sending out questionnaires with parent/children's views feeding into the review of quality of care report. We examined returned questionnaires and found that all were very positive with comments such as: *'We are delighted with the provision provided.'*

Management of staff recruitment processes is not robust enough and improvement is required to ensure compliance with regulations. We found that information was missing from staff files, for example, in relation to health declarations, photographs, identification and references. Between our first and second inspection visit, leaders had taken action to update files, but continued work is required to meet regulatory requirements. Newly employed staff benefit from an induction programme and permanent staff have the opportunity to discuss their practice through one to one supervision sessions. Leaders have a small pool of casual workers they can call on to cover for staff absences, but presently there is no established programme for supervising these members of the team. Staff are appropriately qualified and hold current safeguarding, food hygiene and paediatric first aid certificates. Formal team meetings take place approximately every two months and staff discuss issues informally between these times.

Leaders have established good links with parents. Parents are welcome to discuss issues with staff when they drop off and collect their child, newsletters keep them updated about important events and there is an open day twice a year. We spoke to six parent during the inspection; comments were very positive and indicated that parents hold the service in high regard. There are close links with the nursery teacher/school and some links with the Caerphilly Development Team.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- Ensure that the voice of children is evidenced in activity planning and review development records so that children's next steps are clearly signposted;
- strengthen risk assessments to cover all areas of the service;
- develop the statement of purpose to offer parents more detailed information on the service and
- review the frequency of supervision for casual staff so they have regular opportunities to discuss their role within the service.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, unannounced inspection as part of our normal schedule of inspections. The methodology used to gather evidence for the report included:

- One inspector visiting the service on two occasions;
- speaking to the RI, PiC's, staff, children and six parents;
- observing care practice and interactions between staff and children;
- examining service records and documents include safety records, policies, contracts and staff files;
- completing and visual inspection of the setting and
- examining information held by CIW.

We gave feedback to leaders at the end of the inspection process.

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

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## 7. About the service

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of care provided                                                          | Children's Day Care<br>Full Day Care                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Responsible Individual                                                         | Vicky Price                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Person in charge                                                               | Sharon Griffiths<br>Marketa Carpenter<br>Vicky Price                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Registered maximum number of places                                            | 24                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Age range of children                                                          | 2 to 4 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Opening hours                                                                  | 8.45am to 3.00pm, Monday to Friday, term time only.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Operating Language of the service                                              | English                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection                            | 09 May 2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s)                                              | 17 January 2020 and 23 January 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Is this a Flying Start service?                                                | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow up strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.'</i><br>The service is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh language service. |
| Additional Information: None                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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