



Childcare Inspection Report on

Building Blocks Too

**Fairwater Way
Cwmbran
NP44 4PS**



Date Inspection Completed

09/01/2020

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Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	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
Good	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.
Adequate	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.
Poor	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

Building Blocks Too is a privately owned nursery located in the Fairwater area of Cwmbran. The nursery is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for 50 children from birth to 12 years. The nursery offers full and part-time care for children up to five years and is registered with the Torfaen Flying Start program to offer 24 subsidised spaces for children aged 2 to 3 years. The two Registered Persons (RPs) Joanne Boycott and Lesley Price employ a Person in Charge (PiC) to manage the nursery on a daily basis. The nursery operates from a single-storey premises attached to Cheeky Monkey's, with outdoor play space and ample parking facilities. This is an English language setting with Welsh introduced daily.

Summary

Theme	Rating
Well-being	Adequate
Care and Development	Adequate
Environment	Adequate
Leadership and Management	Adequate

1. Overall assessment

Most children appear happy and content and establish close attachments with staff. The playrooms are spacious but improvements to the resources and areas of learning in the older children's room are needed to enrich children's play and learning experiences. Some staff interact and engage in children's play appropriately but activity planning in both the playrooms and outdoors could be improved. Robust policies and procedures to underpin health and safety practices and safeguard children's welfare are in place but are not always consistently applied in practice. Staff feel well supported by management who liaise regularly with the RP's. They demonstrate a commitment to make improvements but systems for monitoring record keeping, to recognise weak practices and identify issues within the environment need strengthening.

2. Improvements

Since the last inspection staff have received additional training and support to help develop their skills in managing challenging behaviour. We observed staff seek support from each other to manage particular behaviours so that impact on the other children is minimised. Written records are now kept of checks on sleeping children and the temperature of the sleep area in the older children's room is recorded daily.

This helps keep the children safe and ensures the room for sleeping is at an appropriate temperature. A screen has been erected in the entrance hall offering the older children's playroom some privacy. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities throughout the day and understand what these are.

We have advised the registered persons that improvements are needed in relation to Hazards and safety Regulation 25 in order to fully meet the legal requirements. This is because pipework exposed in the older children's playroom was hot and insufficient action had been taken following an incident in December 2019. Wires from a baby monitor were also found dangling in a child's cot and had not been observed by staff in their daily checks. The main gate leading out to the car park did not shut. A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as the registered persons took appropriate action to rectify these issues promptly. This will be followed up at the next inspection.

We have advised the registered persons that improvements are needed in relation to Keeping of records Regulation 30 in order to fully meet the legal requirements. This is because registers to show children's and staff's times of arrival and departure were not consistently recorded. A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as the registered persons took appropriate action to rectify these issues promptly. This will be followed up at the next inspection.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We agreed several good practice recommendations including: safeguarding, health and safety records, supervision, activities, playrooms, staff engagement and activity planning. These are outlined in more detail at the end of the report.

1. Well-being

Adequate

Summary

The younger children generally have a strong voice and express themselves appropriately but choices for the older children and their independence are not consistently promoted. Children feel safe and have established some close bonds with staff but interaction and attention for quieter children is inconsistent. Older children learn to manage their behaviour appropriately. Children appear happy but the few activities available meant that some children were bored. Nevertheless, children benefit from daily opportunities to learn some Welsh language and concentrate well at activities they enjoy.

Our findings

Some children have choices and readily make decisions about their care and play. During the two visits, the youngest children were consistently consulted and expressed themselves confidently. We observed them nod to indicate what food they wanted at snack time, if they wanted to go for a nappy change and select if they wanted to join in the drawing activity or play with other toys in the room. They communicated their needs in a variety of ways. We saw a child pointing and looking at the comforters on their peg and when staff confirmed their understanding, the child smiled, nodded and when received, walked off happily. However, choices and options for the older children are lesser. They were all given a yoghurt at snack time and had a minimal range of resources and activities available during the day.

Children feel safe and secure. Children in both the older and younger groups were sensitively supported throughout the day demonstrating the strong attachments with staff. We observed a younger child make some crying noises which staff instantly responded to, reassuring them and soothing with a cwtch. This was also the case in the older children's room helping the child to feel safe with the staff. Older children feel a strong sense of belonging because they have named coat pegs and individual named drawers for their pictures and personal items. Children are learning to share and play co-operatively with their friends and respond well to use of the two minute sand timer. For example, when an issue with sharing came up, children were asked to think about how they could share and take turns with the large rocket they had built. They all agreed that the sand timer could be used and at the end the two minutes the children handed over the rocket for their friends to play with.

Overall, children appeared to be happy and content but quieter children spend long periods alone with no interaction and children staying late were bored and wandered around aimlessly as all activities and resources had been packed away so staff could clean. Nevertheless, some children spent around 20 minutes drawing, colouring and happily chatting with the staff member and their friends. We observed two children spend a long period designing and building their huge rocket. They then discussed their ideas to create a story, taking their rocket on a journey around the playroom. At circle time we observed

pre-school children discuss the weather and day of the week and use Welsh consistently, including counting and singing the weather song. Children's independence is encouraged some of the time but we noted a number of missed learning opportunities. We saw older children wash their hands before meal times and pass a plate of fruit around the table at snack time. Although raised as a recommendation at the last inspection, older children are still not encouraged to serve themselves or consistently pour their own drinks.

2. Care and Development

Adequate

Summary

Whilst safeguarding does not currently underpin all aspects of the service, steps to address staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues is being addressed. Health and safety records were inconsistent and in the older children's rooms, staff do not supervise or have sufficient oversight of the children. In addition, some staff interaction and engagement in children's play was variable. Activity planning was weak and significant improvements are needed to ensure activities are meaningful, enrich children's play experiences and help them progress.

Our findings

Policies and procedures to safeguard and promote children's health and safety are detailed and clearly outline procedures to support staff's understanding. Nevertheless, discussions with several staff highlighted that knowledge of child protection concerns and the Prevent Duty (Government initiative to identify signs of grooming and radicalisation) was weak. Following the inspection, the RP's sent all staff on safeguarding training and displayed the Safeguarding Policy in the staff room to enable staff to refer to easily. Discussions with staff showed they had clear understanding of the medication procedures. However, a review of the incident and medication records found these were not completed consistently or accurately. In addition, accident forms in the older children's room identified that staff do not supervise or have sufficient oversight of the children. Consequently, a third of children's accidents in November were not observed by staff.

Children benefit from a variety of nutritious, home cooked meals in good quantities. The RP's and management are currently reviewing breakfast/snack time in the older children's room to ensure all children's needs are met. We noted that older children helped themselves to their named drinks bottle when they wished to help keep them well hydrated. Although younger children could not access their water bottles easily, they were available at mealtimes and milk bottles were given in line with each child's daily routine. Staff followed suitable nappy changing practices and also washed their hands after each nappy change. However, staff did not help younger children to learn good hand washing practices.

Staff generally manage children's behaviour well. They used positive praise consistently to recognise children's achievements using both English and Welsh "*Well done, Da iawn*". When a pre-school child got up to sing a song at circle time by themselves, they coyly smiled in response to the praise given, "*Well done (child) for getting up and singing your song, daddy will be very proud*". They then had a story and staff used some good questioning to encourage children to take part and talk about what they could see. However, being sat for some time meant that several children lost interest and became quite restless.

Staff meet fortnightly in their rooms to plan activities and refer to their key children's skills ladder to identify activities that help encourage their learning. However, activity planning for

children accessing the flying start element of the nursery is weak with very few activities or resources planned. In addition, a review of the planning for the younger children and pre-school and observations of the activities available in the rooms we found no links to children's next steps, the range of activities were limited and no planning took place for children's outdoor play. More sensory and messy play activities are needed daily for the younger children to extend their play experiences and ensure the same activities are not set out daily. We completed a Short Observation for Inspection (SOFI) observation in the older children's room and noted some children who are quieter wander around and fail to engage in purposeful play experiences. Staff did not see this and some sat around and failed to interact or respond to children for lengthy periods.

Nevertheless, a group of older children spent a long time at the drawing table, happily chatting with the staff member about their pictures. Circle time for flying start children was poorly planned and provided little challenge or learning opportunities. In their key worker groups we observed three staff give each child a small wooden brick and the other group were given one piece from a peg board puzzle. Together the children made a small tower. Whilst the bricks were then put straight back in the box, we did hear one group count the bricks as they put them away. The children also easily found where their piece of puzzle went.

3. Environment

Adequate

Summary

Appropriate security measures are available and safety policies and procedures and records are in place but these are not always consistently applied. The layout of the children's playrooms provides children with plenty of space and enables them to move around freely and independently. There is an adequate range of suitable furniture available in both playrooms to meet children's needs. However, the resources available outside and the areas of learning in the older children's playroom could be more defined and better resourced to enrich children's play and learning experiences.

Our findings

Safety and security measures are adequate. Closed Circuit Television is in operation in the building and the main door has a buzzer when opened to alert management and staff when someone enters the property. However, the inspector was able to enter, observe the older children and not be challenged for several minutes. Nevertheless, finger print entry system was in place on the internal entry door and we observed staff supervise parents when accessing their child's playroom at collection times. Risk assessments and daily safety checks were not sufficiently robust as staff fail to identify significant risks within the environment. For example, dangling wires, accessible hot heating pipes, broken gate in the garden and the main entrance gate leading out to the car park not closing properly. However, following discussion with the leadership and management team adequate steps have now been taken to address many of the safety and security issues highlighted. We noted that sleeping babies were checked every 10 minutes and written records of these are now completed routinely. Appropriate insurances were up to date and fire risk assessments and logs were in place. Whilst staff and the nominated fire officer indicated that fire drills are practised every month, the fire log indicated the last drill took place in October 2019.

Both playrooms are spacious and provide different areas for children to play, such as carpeted and messy play areas. We observed the younger children access toys easily from the low-level open storage units, sit at the table when mark making and enjoy quiet time with a member of staff in a cosy area. However, play areas in the older children's room were not clearly defined or were poorly resourced and uninviting. We observed children sat at the mark making table and although there was paper, crayons or other writing materials were not available for them to use. Whilst they initially pretended to write, both children quickly lost interest and got down. Wet suits were available for children to spend time outside but very few resources and no activities, limited the play and learning opportunities available for children. However, staff and senior management confirmed that plans to develop the outdoor environment will be commencing shortly.

4. Leadership and Management

Adequate

Summary

The leaders and management work hard to promote safe practices through detailed and informative policies and procedures. Whilst these are routinely shared with staff, they are not consistently applied resulting in some inconsistencies in practice and record keeping. Management and staff work well with parents and there are strong links with the Local Authority Flying Start team. There are various systems in place to monitor practice and staff performance but systems need strengthening to ensure inconsistencies and weak practices are identified and addressed.

Our findings

The two RP's and management are committed to providing a quality service and set clear aims and policies. A review of the nursery's policies and procedures found they were detailed and provided clear information for both parents and staff. Discussions with several staff showed that most had sound knowledge of the policies and procedures and generally understood their roles and responsibilities. However, these are not always consistently applied resulting in some records not being completed or good quality practices sustained. Attendance registers for both staff and children were not completed routinely but sufficient improvements have now been made and will be monitored at the next inspection. Suitable measures are in place for the safe recruitment of staff. Formal interviews take place and as part of the interview process applicants are assessed working with the children in a room. Examination of four staff files found that overall, most information was in place to confirm staff's suitability. The RP's agreed to obtain relevant records to confirm a staff member's identity and seek missing written references. We discussed verifying references and putting in place systems for checking staff's understanding of policies and procedures during the induction process and at staff meetings. Overall, children's files observed contained all the necessary information and all confidential records were stored securely. Although an updated Statement of Purpose (SoP) had not been received by CIW since 2017 a review of the September 2019 SoP, provided during the inspection, found it contained most of the information necessary.

There are various methods in place to monitor practice and identify some areas that require improvement. Staff trialled the Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing system throughout 2019 and complete the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) annually. This is part of the Torfaen Quality Assurance Mark and the 2018/2019 assessment achieved many positive results. They introduced changes to breakfast and snack time but management, the RP's, staff and children have found this difficult. A Quality for All assessment was also completed in 2019 where the nursery achieved 'Highly Commended'. Although issues identified during the inspection had not been identified, some improvements were made promptly. In addition, some recommendations from the last inspection have been adequately addressed. However, the nursery's Quality of Care Review report has not been updated or submitted to CIW annually. Staff told us they

enjoyed their job, were well supported by management and feel they have regular access to training. We found there are adequate systems in place to monitor staff performance. All staff attend staff meetings and have regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals with the PiC but further support and training is needed to improve some practices.

Partnerships with parents are good. We observed parents happily talk with their child's key person on arrival and collection times, demonstrating that relationships are well established. Staff shared useful information with parents about their child's day and diaries are used for parents of babies. Parents gain some useful information about the service on the notice board, in the SoP and through monthly newsletters to keep them abreast of events taking place in nursery. Annual parent meetings enable parents to discuss their children's progress. Parents we spoke to praise the nursery and staff and value the information they receive about their child.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

The following recommendations were made:

- Improve staff supervision so that they have sufficient oversight of children to keep them safe and minimise accidents;
- strengthen staff knowledge of child protection issues and their awareness of procedures to follow with any safeguarding concern and the Prevent Duty;
- ensure all children are purposefully engaged and stimulated and they receive quality attention and support;
- improve the quality of staff interactions in the older children's playroom and their engagement in children's play;
- develop the activity planning for both nursery and flying start to provide a greater range of activities and play experiences daily across all areas of learning both inside and outside. Ensure key group activities are meaningful, interesting and provide sufficient challenge;
- extend the sensory and messy play activities available for the younger children and ensure there are sufficient activities and play opportunities for the older children at the end of the day so that they are meaningfully engaged;
- ensure incident logs and medication forms are completed accurately and necessary parental permissions are in place, and
- improve the areas of learning in the older children's room to ensure they are clearly defined, inviting and better resourced.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a scheduled, unannounced inspection carried out by one inspector over two visits. Evidence for this report was gathered using the following methodology:

- Examination of information held by CIW including the last inspection report, Statement of Purpose, SASS and Quality of Care Review report;
- observation of children's play both inside and outside and their interactions with staff;
- we completed a timed Short observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI) observation in the older children's room;
- discussions with children, staff, the PiC and deputy, both RP's and three parents;
- scrutiny of operational records and documents, including policies and procedures, staff and children's files; registers; health and safety records; activity planning and children's assessments; and
- we carried out a visual inspection of play areas and resources.

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www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Joanne Boycott Lesley Price
Registered maximum number of places	50
Age range of children	Birth to 4 years
Opening hours	07.30 to 18.00 each weekday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	2 November 2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	8 th and 9 th January 2020
Is this a Flying Start service?	There are 24 subsidised flying start places
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. The provider operates in an area where Welsh is not the dominant language. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i> '.
Additional Information: None	

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