



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

Childcare Inspection Report on

Flying Start Playgroup (Afon y Felin)

**Afon Y Felin Primary School
Heol-y-Parc
North Cornelly
Bridgend
CF33 4PA**



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Description of the service

Afon Y Felin is a Flying Start Playgroup that was registered in 2011 and provides sessional day care for a maximum of 20 children aged two to three years. The service is located in the grounds of Afon Y Felin Primary School, in North Cornelly. Care is provided in a converted classroom, which has an integrated kitchen area, toilet facilities and an adjacent outside play area. The registered provider is Action for Children, the responsible individual is Jane Weeks and the person in charge is Louise Davies. The playgroup is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 11.30am and from 12.30pm to 3pm. The service is provided in English with incidental Welsh.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children attending the service settle quickly and enjoy their time there. They benefit from a wide range of play and learning experiences and make good progress. Children are cared for by a team of caring, competent, enthusiastic staff. The environment is stimulating, safe and secure and well maintained. Children have free access to a wide range of good quality toys, materials and equipment, which encourages them to explore and learn. The service is well run. Leaders work in partnership with parents and other professionals in health and education to ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed. Parents told us that they are very happy with the service. They said they feel that their children are developing well and that they are supported as parents.

2. Improvements

- There was a new information board for parents with information about the local community and community events.
- Leaders had changed the meet and greet process to help children (and parents) better cope with separation anxiety. Parents were encouraged to support their children to put their photos on the 'Who is here today?' board and to stay until they settled.
- The layout of the playroom had been re-organised to provide a better free flow of activities and continuous provision.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no regulatory requirements.

We made recommendations in relation to:

- adding more detail in the Statement of Purpose;
- ensuring that contracts are in place before children attend the playgroup;
- ensuring that in staff records there is a satisfactory explanation of gaps in employment;
- lowering the paper towel holder in the children's toilet; and
- providing smaller water jugs in the playroom to increase children's opportunities for independence.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are happy; they settle in quickly and they enjoy their play. Children choose what they do and benefit from a range of interesting activities. They interact and cooperate well with each other and with staff. Children are developing well and are becoming independent. They experience a quality, nurturing service which gives them a good foundation for their learning and development.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children have opportunities to choose and communicate their needs in different ways.

Children have a wide range of activities available during free play sessions and we saw them move between the indoor and outdoor area freely, choosing activities that interested them and which friends to play with. Most children were confident to choose what they wanted to do and we heard children chatting with staff and asking them for assistance while playing, asking for drinks of water and to go to the toilet. We saw that sessions were adapted to meet the needs and preferences of children, expressed verbally or non-verbally. For example snack time was delayed because some children were engrossed in a play dough activity and others were enjoying a game in the sun outside. We saw that children chose the songs they wanted to sing and the story they wanted at circle time. We saw that most children helped themselves to a choice of fruit portions at snack time. Children ate snacks at their own pace and we saw them ask for and receive second helpings.

Children have a strong voice in this service.

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

Children cope well with separation from their parents and enjoy their time at the playgroup.

We saw that most children arrived happily at the service; they moved around with confidence and settled quickly. Children had a sense of belonging because their photographs and names were on their coat hooks and on the registration board. We saw children pointing to their photographs and smiling. There was a relaxed atmosphere and children were happy to explore the playroom and to play independently or with others. Children approached staff readily, they asked questions, asked for cuddles and assistance and smiled proudly when praised for their efforts and contributions. Parents told us that they had attended link sessions at the playgroup so that staff understood their children's needs, routines and preferences. We saw that parents were encouraged to come into the playroom and help their children register by fixing their photograph on a collage which was at children's height. All of this helped children to feel happy and secure.

Children have a good sense of belonging, which helps them feel safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact well with each other and with staff.

Children played happily and welcomed others to join in. We saw them absorbed in activities for long periods, sharing toys and taking turns. During story times the children sat together and mostly listened to what others had to say in response to questions from staff. Children passed cutters and rollers and followed staff's advice for cutting play dough shapes; they waited patiently and in line to wash their hands and most of them sat at tables for snack time. In the playground, children played chase; kicked a ball to each other and gathered around to look when one child found a bug. We saw that children's behaviour was generally very good, we saw some minor disputes but they were quickly sorted out with the support from staff who reminded them about being kind and sharing. Most children remembered to say 'please' and 'thank you'.

Children are learning the importance of sharing and turn taking in preparation for more formal education.

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

Children are interested and motivated in their play and learning.

On arrival children were excited and after registering, most of them went independently to a play area or to staff. Children joined group activities and had the freedom to leave to do something else at any time. We saw that they persevered in activities for a suitable length of time for their stage of development. They enjoyed free play as well as structured adult-led activities including sand and water play, dolls and soft toys, picture books, making shapes and pies with play dough, singalong and story-telling. Children particularly enjoyed playing with play dough and were very attentive during story time. We saw children smiling and laughing outside, when they jumped, balanced, kicked balls and swung hoops; played on cars and trikes and searched for bugs in a wood pile. All children fervently sang the farewell song in English and Welsh as each child left the group. They told us that they enjoyed coming to the playgroup and liked the toys and activities. Parents told us that their children had settled in well and that they enjoyed coming. Many children were reluctant to leave.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning experiences.

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

Children have good opportunities to learn and become independent.

Children had access to a rich and imaginative play environment. Toys, equipment and resources were arranged so that children could help themselves and routines and staff-led activities supported children's development. We saw that children were confident to choose their play and try new things. They followed their own interests, explored, made choices, participated with others and learned through play. We heard them counting and singing in English and in Welsh. We saw that children were supported to use the toilet independently and they were encouraged to wash their hands without adult support. We saw children serve themselves with fruit and cut their banana, and some children cleared away their own plates and cups after snack time. Parents said, "He is really coming on now", and "It's brilliant. She has good support and is becoming independent". Children's development records evidenced that they were making good progress and developing new skills in line with set targets. We discussed with the manager how some opportunities to promote

independence were missed. Children could not reach the paper towel holder in the toilet and most could not help themselves to water because the jug was too big or too heavy when full.

Children are developing well and are becoming independent.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are very caring, motivated, enthusiastic and responsive to children's needs. They work well together to keep children safe and promote good health. They know the children well and provide a good range of interesting activities to help them to learn and develop. They manage behaviour well.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff keep children safe because they follow the policies and procedures and know their responsibilities.

Staff were familiar with the service's policies to keep children safe. They had attended relevant training including health and safety, paediatric first aid, food hygiene, safeguarding training and the Prevent Duty relating to terrorism and radicalisation. Our conversations with staff evidenced that they were clear about what to do if they had concerns about a child or in case of an accident. We saw that keyworkers ensured that records of children's health needs and any allergies were up to date. Staff used registers when children arrived and left; the number of children attending was recorded on a wall chart; and we saw head counts when children came in for snack. Parents or named persons were required to sign their children out at the end of the sessions. Staff made daily checks on the premises, toys and equipment to keep children as safe as possible. We saw that toys, equipment, the kitchen and toilets were very clean and well maintained; and staff cleaned the tables before and after snacks. Staff consistently promoted healthy lifestyles. They encouraged children to brush their teeth; they prompted children to wash hands before snack time and after using the toilet. Drinking water was available throughout the day and children had a choice of water, milk and a healthy snack in each session. We saw staff encouraging children to eat 'happy toast and cheese' and 'delicious, sweet apple and banana' and all the children then tried each item and most of them asked for more. Staff encouraged outdoor access whenever possible and a large canopy outside ensured that children could play safely outdoors in all weather. We heard staff giving safety messages to children, for example to sit on chairs properly, to 'be gentle' with each other and 'be careful' when running outside.

Staff promote children's health and safety effectively.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are good role models for the children and help them understand the importance of sharing and being kind to each other.

Staff followed the service's behaviour management policy and set a good example by always speaking calmly and politely to each other. They listened to the children or watched their expressions and body language closely to understand their needs and wishes; and they gave them plenty of time to express themselves or finish activities. This created a very calm and positive atmosphere. Staff used songs effectively to gain attention and cooperation from children. For example one sang "This is the way we tidy up" and children

joined in and helped to clear toys away for story time. We saw that staff used every opportunity to praise positive behaviour such as when children were helpful and shared. We heard lots of praise and encouragement such as 'Well done!', 'Marvellous', 'You are doing really well!' and 'Good boy/ girl!' and children responded with smiles and nods. Staff managed minor behaviour and sharing disputes well. They made good eye contact with children and spoke calmly and clearly so that children understood. We saw that when a child was unwilling to share a toaster toy, a staff member calmly said, "We must share; look there is room for two pieces of toast" and the child responded positively.

Staff manage behaviour well.

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

Staff know the children well and respond appropriately to their needs.

Prior to starting, staff introduced children to the service through link up sessions with the children and their parents and there was a staggered intake at the start of each term to give children time to settle in. The key worker system then ensured that children's needs were identified and activities were tailored to promote their confidence, self-esteem and development. All staff in the service were familiar with the needs of individual children and we saw that they monitored children's expressions and body language to ensure that they were happy and settled. We saw that staff shared relevant information with other staff and provided a good balance of child and adult led activities using a wide range of resources to stimulate interest. Children had good opportunities to develop their skills and staff extended their learning. For example we saw that staff used every opportunity to encourage children to count and name shapes and colours. There were photographs of recent activities including craft work and hatching eggs and caring for the chicks, which children were still very excited about. Staff also provided children with opportunities to use and experience the Welsh language. We heard children singing songs in Welsh, staff counting in Welsh and asking children to repeat the words, we heard them use Welsh words for numbers and colours, and to say 'da iawn' (well done) and 'diolch' (thank you) during each session and there were bilingual posters on the walls. We saw that responsibilities for activities and routines were rotated weekly so that all staff had a turn. Staff said this kept them motivated and helped them to share good practice and learn from each other. The service used the 'Foundation Phase Profile' to track children's development, which was the same format that the school used. This supported a smooth transition from the service to school. The records we saw showed that the children's needs and progress were clearly recorded and reviewed regularly.

Staff promote children's play, learning and all round development effectively.

3. Environment

Summary

Children are cared for in a safe environment which offers a wide variety of play and learning opportunities indoors and outdoors. Risks and hazards are identified and minimised or eliminated to ensure children's safety. Resources and furniture are good quality and suitable for the needs of the children. Children benefit from an environment that is easily accessible and has been designed to meet their needs.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment and that unnecessary risks to children are identified and reduced or removed.

Leaders had ensured that entrances to the service are secure from unauthorised access. There is a secure external door with a key code entry system and the outdoor play area has a lockable gate. Visitors must show identity and sign in and out. Leaders had clear policies and risk assessments relating to health and safety and staff followed them. We saw annual tests for heating and electrical equipment and that staff had carried out fire drills each term. Staff told us they checked the indoor and outdoor play areas and equipment each day and cleaned them regularly, and we saw that all areas, equipment, furniture and toys were very clean and in good condition. The kitchen had been awarded a level five rating from the Food Standards Agency and all staff had completed food hygiene training. We saw good hygiene practices when staff prepared for snack time and when they supported children to use the toilets. The outside play area had a soft surface to minimise injuries if children fall and a large canopy that provided protection from the sun and rain.

Leaders keep the environment as safe as possible.

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

Leaders provide a stimulating environment for children's play and learning.

Leaders ensured that the indoor and outdoor areas provided a rich and stimulating learning environment. The playroom had a variety of play and learning areas as well as areas where children could relax and reflect. The outdoor play area was a large open space for children to ride trikes, scooters and cars and included a large canopy to enable play in all weather. Children could move around and explore freely and toys and resources were within easy reach to promote choice. Play areas included drawing/ mark making, a home corner with a kitchen and comfy armchairs, threading and sorting, dressing up, a carpet area for quiet reading and circle time, construction and areas for messy play with sand and water. Staff told us that equipment was varied and areas rotated to ensure children experienced a good range of activities and we saw photographs to evidence this. The toilets were located on one side of the playroom and we saw that children were encouraged to access and use them independently. However, as the paper towel holder was too high, we saw that staff always had to be present to hand the towels to children.

Leaders ensure that the environment is very suitable for children to play, learn and grow.

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

Leaders ensure that children have access to a wide range of good quality resources and equipment that suits their interests and supports their learning and development.

We saw children engrossed in playing with play dough, building blocks, cars and dolls, mark making with crayons and paint, playing with glitter sand and water, looking through books and playing outside where they rode trikes, scooters and cars, played with balls and hoops, balanced on tyres and looked for insects. The toys and equipment were clean and in good condition and we saw that different cultures and identities were reflected and celebrated. For example, there were books about different children and homes around the world, dolls of different races and posters on the walls with Welsh numbers, colours and shapes. Leaders offered a balance of good quality play equipment as well as low cost home-made and innovative ideas. For example we saw staff creating learning opportunities with homemade play dough and glitter in a sand tray. Children laughed and learned as they moulded the dough and cut different shapes, felt the textures, made patterns and described the colours.

Leaders provide a wide range of good quality resources which are accessible to children.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders provide clear direction in line with the service aims to put children at the centre of all its practice and to give children a flying start in life. Leaders regularly review the quality of the service and the feedback from children, parents, staff and other professionals is used to inform the future planning of the service. Staff are well trained and they receive regular supervision and appraisals to improve their skills and knowledge. Leaders have developed effective partnerships with parents and other professionals.

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders ensure that the service is well run and complies with the regulations and the national minimum standards.

Leaders were clear about the aims of the service. The statement of purpose was up to date and provided a clear description of the service and what it sets out to provide. Leaders reviewed policies and procedures annually. They were easy to understand and focused on children's needs and well-being. Leaders ensured that they were translated into effective practice through regular meetings and discussions with staff. Staff viewed the leaders as responsive to both the children's and their needs. They said they felt valued because they were listened to, involved in planning activities and encouraged to develop their skills and interests. The systems to monitor the development of children were very effective. Staff met regularly to discuss children's progress and to evaluate what had gone well and also what could be improved and how. We saw that everyone was involved in planning interesting activities to promote learning and development. We suggested minor additions to the statement of purpose to fully reflect the service. We also noted that the contract for one child who was a new starter was not available on the child's record. However it was brought in by the parent at the end of the session.

Leaders are motivated and effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders have robust quality assurance systems and plan for improvements based on feedback from children, parents, staff and other professionals.

We saw records of weekly meetings when staff reviewed what the children enjoyed and what had gone well and planned suitable activities for the following week. Children's feelings about activities were gained through watching what they enjoyed and how they reacted as well as asking them and collating the responses. Leaders consulted parents regularly through an open door policy as well as more formally through evaluation questionnaires at the end of the first term and when the child left the service. We saw records of meetings with staff from other Action for Children playgroups and with health professionals to seek views on best practice and to evaluate performance. The service is also monitored by the Flying Start coordinator and link teacher. Leaders had collated the feedback and outlined the achievements of the service and areas for improvement. We saw that many of the issues raised had been addressed, for example the playroom had been re-organised, the layout of information in the foyer had been changed and parents were encouraged to access the playroom at drop off times to

ease separation and help children settle. We also saw that activities were continually evaluated and changed to meet children's identified needs and preferences and to ensure that developmental targets were met, which supported the children's transition to school.

Leaders evaluate the quality of the service effectively and make improvements that benefit children, parents and staff.

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

Leaders ensure that there are always sufficient numbers of suitable staff on duty, who are well supported and know their responsibilities.

Leaders ensured that there were sufficient numbers of qualified staff and suitable contingency plans to cover staff absence. The ratio of staff was very high at the time of this inspection; we saw that children received plenty of individual attention and the records evidenced that staff ratios were always higher than the minimum standards. Leaders followed safe recruitment processes. We saw that staff records contained the required information including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and identification checks and references. We noted some unexplained gaps in the employment records on two files we looked at and brought this to the leader's attention. Staff received induction, essential training, regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Training records showed that the leaders had provided all the required training for staff as well as specialised training to meet the needs of individual children. This included speech and language, autism awareness, nutrition, wellbeing and growing skills. All staff had access to a range of professionals including speech and language therapists, early years advisors and health visitors to support their work with children. We saw that the leaders deployed staff effectively to meet the children's needs as well as to promote their job satisfaction. For example staff took turns for different activities and responsibilities and said that this helped them learn from each other. We saw the person in charge directing staff and modelling good practice, which reinforced the practice of the team. Discussions with staff revealed that they were aware of their roles and responsibilities, that they enjoyed their work and felt supported.

Leaders manage staff and resources very effectively.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders and staff have good relationships with parents and excellent links with other professionals.

Leaders and staff worked closely with parents to meet children's needs and to keep them informed of their child's development. Before children start at the playgroup, parents are invited to attend link up sessions with their children to get to know the staff and new environment. Parents told us that these sessions helped them to feel confident and to give information about their children's routines, needs and preferences. We saw staff talking to parents before and after the sessions to give information about and to gain feedback from them. Staff encourage parents to become involved their children's education so that children experience maximum benefits from attending. Open sessions are held each term to give parents the chance to visit the service and discuss their child's progress at playgroup with their key worker. Staff also work alongside Communities First and as part of 'Give Me 5' week they encouraged parents to participate in cookery sessions, trips out and

physical activities with their child, to promote consistency between home and the playgroup. We saw that children's progress was recorded regularly and that keyworkers shared relevant information with the team relating to each child's development and their family life/circumstances. As a result, additional needs and support were quickly identified and parents were supported to access additional services they needed. Health visitors and the advisory teacher are based in the office next door to the playgroup so were readily available and they confirmed very good working partnerships with the service. We looked at records for children and saw that staff regularly sought additional advice and support from other professionals including health visitors, the early years advisory teacher, the speech and language team and educational psychologists in order to provide the care each child needed. There were good links with schools which supported an easier transition for the children.

Leaders have developed effective partnerships which benefit the children.

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

We made the following recommendations:

- include additional detail in the Statement of Purpose including the location and outside space available and opportunities children will have to learn about pets and animals;
- ensure that contracts are in place before children attend the playgroup;
- review all staff files to ensure there is a satisfactory explanation of gaps in employment;
- lower the paper towel holder in the children's toilet to support independence; and
- consider providing smaller water jugs in the playroom to increase children's opportunities for independence.

6. How we undertook this inspection

- one inspector made an unannounced visit to the service on 11 September 2017 for a full day;
- we talked to children and spoke to seven parents, four staff, two health visitors, an early years advisor and the person in charge;
- we observed children and staff in the playroom and outside;
- we observed two children using the SOFI-2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff;
- we inspected the premises;
- we looked at a sample of documentation and policies including the last CSSIW inspection report, the registers and diary, children's records, staff files, the statement of purpose, the self-assessment and of quality of care report for 2017 and a sample of policies and procedures;
- we gave some feedback to the person in charge and staff after the inspection; and
- we gave feedback to the responsible individual by telephone.

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

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Jane Weeks
Person in charge	Louise Davies
Registered maximum number of places	20
Age range of children	2-3 years
Opening hours	9am-11.30am and 12.30pm to 3pm Monday – Friday Term Time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	12 November 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	11 September 2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	<p>This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort in promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture</p> <p>We saw staff incorporate Welsh language and songs into each session and we heard a lot of incidental Welsh.</p> <p>Action for Children also provides Welsh language places for children whose parents seek Welsh language education at a separate service nearby.</p>
Additional Information:	