



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**First Friends**

**Flying Start Centre  
Attlee Way  
Cefn Golau  
Tredegar  
NP22 3TE**



**Date Inspection Completed**

28/01/2020

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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

First Friends is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide day care for up to 20 children between two and three years of age. The group is based in a self-contained building in the Golau area of Tredegar and is part of Blaenau Gwent's Flying Start programme, providing free child care places for eligible families. The service runs morning and afternoon sessions, weekdays, during term time. It is managed by two Responsible Individuals (RIs) on behalf of the local authority, and on a daily basis by a person in charge (PiC). The main language of the service is English. Welsh is introduced through simple phrases, stories and songs to promote children's learning.

## Summary

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

### 1. Overall assessment

Children form warm and secure relationships with staff, and in particular their key worker, who offer responsive and nurturing care. This helps children feel settled and secure and able to enjoy the very good range of activities designed to promote their learning and meet their interests. Staff are well qualified, motivated, and work closely with each other, parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual needs and development are very well supported. The environment is very well organised so children have space to play and relax, and they can find their play resources by themselves. Management of the service is excellent and ensures staff, parents and children feel valued and able to contribute meaningfully to improvements.

### 2. Improvements

- The indoor environment has been developed to create a calm space with natural and real resources to promote children's curiosity and imagination. The lay out has also been re-organised to give children better space to play;
- skills are planned for children over a two week period rather than one to give children longer to embed new skills;
- staff have undertaken a number of training courses to develop their professional knowledge and practice;
- the setting has completed the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme (a local authority scheme to promote children's health and well-being), has been

awarded the Bronze Small Workplace Health Award, and is an Autism Aware Setting;

- staff take responsibility for specific play areas, and
- work has begun on the new outside play area.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

There were no non-compliance issues following this inspection. We made recommendations to help develop the service and improve outcomes for children. These are discussed in the body of the report and highlighted in section five.

## 1. Well-being

Good

### Summary

Children experience nurturing and attentive care and benefit from a strong key worker system. This allows them to feel safe and secure, and gives them a good foundation for them to enjoy their play and learning and make good progress.

### Our findings

Children make good choices about their play and care needs. They find the resources and activities they wish to engage with very easily and are confident to move resources from one area to another to suit their needs. For example, some children moved the sand from the sand tray to the home corner to 'cook with'. Children are free to leave the adult-led activities for an alternative activity at any time. However, we discussed children having more time during the session to enjoy their free, undirected play. Children have choices at snack time and benefit from staff ensuring the snack menu consists of foods they know the children like.

Children are able to settle at their own pace and form warm bonds with staff, in particular their key worker. They happily invite staff into their play and seek out extra cuddles or comfort if they are upset or need more support, confident their needs will be met. They are keen to show staff their 'work' and enjoy lots of praise and encouragement. Parents commented in their questionnaires for the setting: *"My child loves coming", and "My child always seems very happy coming from there"*.

Children enjoy their time at the service. They joined in excitedly with the physical literacy session, listening to the story and taking part keenly in the physical play. They eagerly find what they want to do and actively seek out play activities such as role play, messy play and mark making. There was a busy but relaxed atmosphere with children very involved in play of their choosing, such as 'ironing', exploring the play dough and looking at books. They gain a strong sense of achievement from what they are doing, such as mark making, completing jigsaws or cooking.

Children have a very good variety of experiences which are carefully planned to follow their interests and which help them develop their individual skills successfully. They are developing their self-help skills well. For example, they are learning to pour their own drinks and spread cheese on their tortillas, and are well supported if they need assistance. Parents commented positively on how well their children are developing in relation to, for example, speech, behaviour, potty training and confidence.

## 2. Care and Development

Excellent

## Summary

Children are cared for by well qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff. They work very closely together to support children and promote their development, health and welfare.

## Our findings

Leaders and staff ensure safeguarding is given a very high priority and staff are very clear of their roles and responsibilities should they have any concerns about a child's welfare.

The setting has recently completed the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme which is a program designed to promote children's health and well-being. As part of the scheme staff encourage children to develop healthy habits such as cleaning their teeth, good hand washing, healthy eating and being active. All staff have current first aid qualifications and the accident book shows minor accidents are dealt with appropriately. All staff are up to date with food hygiene training and follow appropriate procedures when preparing food to protect children's health. The setting undertakes regular audits of infection control measures in place to ensure hygiene procedures are up-to-date and implemented effectively. Staff work very well together to ensure they supervise children and manage the environment successfully so children remain safe throughout the session.

Staff understand age-appropriate behaviour and are very calm and consistent in their approach to promoting children's self-regulation. For example, they encourage children with what to do rather than what not to do and praise them meaningfully for their efforts and achievements. They ensure the routine is well-established and give children plenty of reminders if a change is happening soon, such as tidying up ready to go home. They speak kindly and respectfully to each other and sit with children at snack times to model wanted behaviour.

Staff work very closely together with each other and parents, and deploy an effective key worker system. This ensures children feel valued and secure and their development is promoted. Staff make observations of children's play and meet regularly to plan activities which will develop children's individual skills and meet their interests. The current structure of the session includes some adult-led group activities. During this inspection, quite a few children went to wash their hands at one time. We discussed reviewing the hand washing routine. Staff provide very nurturing and supportive care. They are calm, have fun and play in accordance with the children's needs and moods. The setting values their relationship with parents and involves them in their child's experiences. For example, parents are invited to help with activities at home with their child. Staff use various strategies to promote children's communication skills. For example, there is lots of singing within the session's routine, they model language clearly and provide running commentaries to children's play. They use Welsh incidentally, through songs and activities such as Teddy Ticw. There are excellent systems to support children with additional learning needs. For example, staff work closely with parents and other professionals within Flying Start such as speech and language to ensure children receive the support they need; they are keen to attend training and implement strategies to help support children. One parent commented in their questionnaire to us: *"This setting is honestly amazing. Staff went above and beyond to help [my child] cope and grow. They always listened, took on all professional advice... they went on additional courses to learn new ways to help my [child]."*

### **3. Environment**

**Good**

#### **Summary**

The service operates from a purpose built building which is maintained by the local authority. Very good procedures are in place to ensure the building and environment are



well maintained and children are safe and secure. The areas used by children are thoughtfully set out to help them develop a very good range of skills, follow their interests and make their own decisions about their play.

## **Our findings**

Appropriate systems are in place to ensure the building is suitably maintained by the local authority. Staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities in keeping the environment safe for children. For example, each staff member has responsibility for a particular play area. They routinely tidy areas that become too cluttered, supervise children closely and are always aware how many children are present. Access to the service is via a locked inner door, and visitors are required to sign in. Staff and children's attendance are recorded, although not the actual times of arrival and departure. This was addressed following the inspection. There are clear written risk assessments in place covering all aspects of the service. These are reviewed annually or as required, and any changes needed are put in place. For example, new risk assessments have been provided for the building work in the garden to ensure staff, children, parents and visitors are safe.

The setting is very welcoming, with a spacious entrance foyer with notice boards displaying relevant information for parents. The main play room is well organised and calm, with room for children to move freely. Lamps, bubble lights and framed documents help create a homely and relaxing atmosphere. There are clearly defined areas for different types of activities such as dramatic play, messy play and construction. The book corner is cosy and comfortable with cushions and small den. The layout of the environment fosters children's independence. For example, resources are set out on open shelves or in baskets so children can find what they need by themselves, and children can access the washrooms easily. However, the layout of the nappy change area does not promote children's privacy as well as possible. The PiC is looking into providing a separate area which would address this issue. Photographs showing children undertaking activities and of their family, and named coat hooks where children can hang their personal items gives them a sense of belonging. There is an office which is locked so records may be kept securely and confidentially. The PiC is planning to create a dedicated staff room to improve facilities for staff. The outside play area is currently being renovated and will provide a valuable and easily accessible outdoor space for children.

Children have easy access to a very good range of developmentally appropriate play resources. The amount of resources available encourages children's ability to make decisions but does not overwhelm them with choice. Play resources are of excellent quality and help children develop a range of different skills. New resources are provided as required and staff are gradually introducing more real and natural resources to promote children's curiosity and imaginative play. There are resources which help children learn about diversity and promote their cultural awareness. Furniture is of excellent quality and appropriate to the needs of the children and staff.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

**Excellent**

### **Summary**

Leadership and management of the service is excellent. Staff and leaders are very supportive of one another. They value relationships with parents and are keen to develop the service to improve outcomes for children and their families.

### **Our findings**

The service is very well run and complies with the relevant regulations. The PiC feels well supported by the RIs and values the systems in place to support her in her role. She works very closely with staff to ensure they feel valued and effectively supported. One member of staff commented in their questionnaire for CIW how the PiC *“has been very proactive in implementing improvements and increasing staff morale.”* There is a clear statement of purpose which accurately reflects what the service offers. Policies and procedures are shared with staff and parents, and reviewed annually or as required. There are clear goals which support the development of the service and staff. The RIs and PiC promote safe practices. Children’s records and day-to-day records such as accidents and incidents are maintained appropriately and regularly reviewed by leaders. We discussed ways to ensure observational records of children’s activities can be maintained in a way to maintain confidentiality if viewed by parents.

The service undertakes annual reviews of the quality of their care and draws on input from a range of sources to identify strengths and areas for development. For example, parents’ views are sought through questionnaires termly and following their Parent and Child Together sessions (which are sessions designed for parents to attend with their children and join in with their activities). Staff feel their views are valued and they are able to contribute meaningfully to the development of the setting. For example, they recently gave their input to the outside play area which is currently being developed. Observations of children’s engagement with activities are used to make changes and improve their experiences. Leaders are keen to implement schemes designed to develop the setting to improve outcomes for staff and children. For example, the service has recently been accredited with all aspects of the Healthy and Sustainable pre-school scheme and has achieved the Small Workplace Bronze Health Award. The annual review and development plans are shared with parents so they can see how the service is improving and that their views are important to the service. The setting implements a complaints policy, and parents are aware of the process for raising concerns. During the inspection the policy was updated to include additional relevant information.

Recruitment procedures are robust to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. There is a suitable induction for new staff to the Flying Start programme and to routines specific to the setting. The PiC and staff are very well qualified and experienced, and keen to further their professional development in order to improve outcomes for children. Staff are very clear of their roles. They work extremely well as a team to support each other, ensure the setting runs smoothly. For example, they meet weekly to discuss general issues and plan individual targets for their key children. Staff know they are valued by the PiC and feel very well supported both on a daily basis, and through the supervision and appraisal process. One member of staff commented in their questionnaire for CIW that the PiC is *“very easy to talk to, very professional and fair.”* There are good systems in place to support their well-being such as termly day trips and a weekly walk.

The setting values their relationship with parents and strives to involve them in all aspects of their child’s care. For example, at initial visits parents can share information about their child such as their daily routine, and preferences so staff can help their child settle; the ‘Meet and Greet’ session allows new children and their parents to attend their first session together where they can meet their key worker; and termly parent consultation sessions are held, where staff discuss topics with parents of their key children, including children’s development and how

they have settled. The setting also organises trips to further promote the relationship between staff, parents and children such as to the local library and Bedwelty Park House for a Teddy Bear's picnic. The setting keeps parents well informed about events through newsletters, the notice boards and daily conversations. Staff use drop-off and collection times to talk with parents about their child's experiences during the session and share a daily sheet which includes information such as their activities and food intake.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- Consider extending the time available to children for free, undirected play and review the organisation of the hand washing routine;
- continue with plans to provide a more private nappy change area, and
- ensure observational records of children's activities can be maintained confidentially if viewed by parents.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

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

One inspector undertook two visits to the service, over two days.

- We observed children undertaking their activities and the care provided by staff;
- we spoke with one parent at the service and viewed parent questionnaires provided to the setting as part of their quality of care review, to CIW, and to the local authority as part of the groups nomination for the Early Years, Childcare and Play awards;
- we looked at an extensive range of records and documents including some documentation in staff files, policies and procedures and children's records;
- we looked at the premises, risk assessments and other documentation relating to safety measures and took account of the security measures in place;
- we spoke with the PiC and staff present during the inspection to obtain their views, and clarify information about the running of the group and future plans; we also considered the comments in staff questionnaires provided to the group as part of their processes and to CIW, and
- our findings were fed back to the PiC following the inspection.

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 Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Vikki Curtis Natalie Hill
Person in charge	Amy Weaver
Registered maximum number of places	20
Age range of children	2 – 3 years
Opening hours	9.15am to 11.45 am, and 12.30pm to 3pm, weekdays, term time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	2 November 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	27 and 28 January 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
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. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use the service. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. However, we recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government’s “More Than Just words” strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information: None	

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