Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Cwmlai Playgroup

Cwmlai School
Penygarreg Road
Thomastown
Porth
CF39 8AS



Date Inspection Completed

03/05/2024

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About Cwmlai Playgroup

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Registered Person	Mair Harris
Registered places	32
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	26 September 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Good**
Care and Development	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children enjoy their time at Cwmlai Playgroup. They have a good voice and can make choices about what they do and how they spend their time. Children are safe, settled, and happy. They learn and develop well from the opportunities and experiences provided for them.

Staff promote children's health and safety well. Staff interact in a warm and respectful manner with children. They provide many opportunities for play and learning which children find interesting.

The leader ensures they care for children in a safe and secure environment. The playroom is large, bright, and welcoming with ample space for children to move about freely and access a good range of toys and resources independently. Children can access the outdoor area directly from the playroom which offers further secure play opportunities.

The leader has a good vision for her setting and is committed to providing quality childcare. She is very reflective and responds positively to feedback from others. The leader supports staff well and values their contributions. The leader and staff develop close partnerships with parents, the school and other agencies as necessary.

Well-being — Good

Children are happy. They have a good voice with many opportunities to make choices and decisions that affect them. For example, they choose where they wish to play, and with whom or what, and when they eat snack. Children become confident communicators as they know staff will listen to them and respond. For example, we heard a child tell an adult there wasn't enough playdough for them and the adult immediately suggested they make some more.

Children are safe and nearly all settle easily when they start at the setting. They quickly become familiar with the routines of the day such as rolling snack and tidy up time which helps them develop a sense of security and belonging. Children develop close, positive relationships with staff and seek them out to play or for comfort if they are feeling unsure or unwell.

Children behave well in line with their age and stage of development. Younger children play alongside each other, whilst older children play together, and some are developing friendship groups. They benefit from kind, caring staff and respond well to gentle encouragement to share, take turns, or change their behaviour such as when asked to use 'walking feet'. Children begin to develop consideration for others. We saw a child help a younger one to put their coat on and others wait patiently for their turn to spoon flour into the playdough mixing bowl.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They can explore a good range of toys and resources, often carrying these to different areas to use as their ideas develop. We saw a small group take resources from inside to outside and set up a picnic using a large cable coil as a table and crates for chairs. Others chose resources and tools to use in the craft area to make a variety of pictures of their own choosing. Children also enjoy joining in with adult-led and group activities such as singing and registration time, playing ball or making playdough.

Children learn and develop well from the opportunities and experiences provided for them. They can explore a good selection of resources and equipment that support their all-round development. However, large physical play opportunities are a little limited. Children develop skills, concentration, and perseverance as they engage in activities such as building with blocks, learning to catch, or painting, glueing, and drawing. They have good opportunities to develop independence and self-help skills that allow them to do things for themselves successfully. For example, they put on their own coats, return their plates to the kitchen after snack and manage their own personal needs with increasing confidence.

Care and Development — Good

Staff consistently implement the setting's policies and procedures and work effectively to keep children safe and healthy. Safeguarding is a priority for the leader and staff understand their responsibilities to protect children. The leader has developed a safeguarding refresher file which is readily available for staff to re-visit. Staff consistently record children's attendance and accurately complete accident and medication forms. They follow good hygiene procedures in relation to food preparation and serving, as well as nappy changing. Staff are very aware of allergies and food preferences and implement suitable systems to ensure they keep children safe. Staff encourage healthy eating and provide a variety of healthy snacks such as toast or fruit with milk or water to drink. They ensure children get plenty of opportunities to play outside in the fresh air which further contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

Staff interact very well with children. They create a respectful atmosphere and effectively implement a good behaviour management policy. Staff notice when children are kind or do things well and offer lots of praise. For example, 'A*re you trying to help? That is so kind'* or '*Can you bring your plate back? thank you, well done'.* They use positive strategies sensitively to manage minor issues, such as offering an alternative when two children want the same truck. Staff implement a kind and calm approach and act as good role models for children.

Overall, staff meet the needs of children effectively and are skilled in supporting their play and learning. Staff provide a rolling snack time so children can choose when they want to eat, and their play is not interrupted unnecessarily. They provide a play-based curriculum and plan daily in response to the children's interests or needs. For example, following a child's comment, several children engaged for an extended period in making playdough with a member of staff, developing concepts of change, maths and turn taking. Most of the activities staff provide engage the children well. Many children loved the open access craft area which staff supported effectively, offering guidance on how to use some of the available tools and then letting children do it for themselves. Many spent a long time building with connecting bricks or at the playdough table, and nearly all spent lots of time outside. Staff make observations of children and track their development. However, they do not use their observations to plan the provision. As a result, they sometimes miss opportunities to plan for interests or next steps in learning which can lead to occasional times when a few children are not purposefully engaged. Staff have not yet considered the Curriculum for Wales or the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales to help support assessment and planning. At times throughout the session, we heard staff use Welsh. Staff successfully provide the support needed for children with additional learning needs. There is a good policy in place and the leader and staff work well with parents and other agencies to make relevant referrals and provide good support.

Environment — Good

The leader ensures they care for children in a safe and secure environment. The setting is housed in a new part of the school with its own external entrance. Staff lock the external gate after children arrive and visitors can ring the setting to gain entry or enter through the main school entrance. Staff ensure they record visitors to the setting. Comprehensive daily risk assessments are in place and consistently completed. The building is maintained as part of the school and all relevant safety checks are in place. The premises are extremely clean and well maintained. Leaders carry out and record periodic fire drills although these are not as regular as required.

The playroom is large, bright, and welcoming. Decoration is neutral, which helps to create a calm feeling, and display boards are relevant to the children attending. For example, they celebrate children's artwork around St David's Day, display family photos or children engaged in activities. The layout allows children space to move about and play freely. The leader makes good use of open shelving and attractive storage baskets so that children can access toys and resources independently. Suitable nappy changing facilities are in place and older children can use attached toilet facilities independently as they grow and gain confidence in managing their own personal care. A good size outdoor area is accessible directly from the playroom and provides further interesting opportunities for play and learning including an area for planting and growing.

There is a good range of high-quality resources and equipment that are suitable for the children using them. They are clean and well maintained. Overall, the environment is interesting and stimulating for children and includes resources of natural materials and those that support diversity and cultural awareness. However, planning for provision is not always effective in making sure best use is made of available resources or play spaces.

Leadership and Management — Good

The leader has a good vision for her setting and is committed to providing high-quality childcare. She is a very good role model for staff and works effectively with them to meet children's needs. Overall, paperwork is very organised and regularly reviewed. The leader promptly made minor amendments to a few policies and documents during the inspection process. She maintains a Statement of Purpose that is useful for parents and accurately reflects the service offered.

The leader recognises the importance of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. She carries out a thorough quality of care review annually. She seeks the views of children, parents, and staff to contribute to this and help evaluate the impact of what they do. The leader produces a comprehensive report of this review and identifies relevant areas for improvement. The leader told us she will now develop an action plan with staff to take these improvements forward. The leader is highly reflective and welcomes any ideas and suggestions to improve their practice.

The leader implements suitable recruitment procedures to safeguard children and ensure staff are suitable to provide care for them. However, not all required documentation was available in staff files during the inspection visit. Since the visit, the leader has confirmed that all files now contain the required information. The leader supports staff well with annual appraisals, periodic supervision meetings, and well-being check-in meetings. She ensures staff keep up to date with mandatory training and is supportive of staff attending other training opportunities. Staff we spoke to said they enjoy working at the nursery, feel part of a team and are well supported. Leaders ensure they meet staffing ratios and deploy staff well to support children effectively.

The leader and staff develop strong partnerships with parents and carers as well as with other professionals, outside agencies and the school. They gather relevant information and parental permissions before children start at the setting to ensure they can meet children's individual needs. They keep parents informed about their children's progress through a variety of methods such as an electronic app, verbal feedback, or annual reports. Parents we spoke to were very happy with and highly complimentary of the service they receive.

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Consider ways to extend physical play opportunities.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Consider the Curriculum for Wales and the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales to help support planning and assessment arrangements.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure fire evacuation practises are carried out more regularly.

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.

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