Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Here We Grow

The College Merthyr Tydfil
Ynysfach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1AR



Date Inspection Completed

22/01/2025

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About Here We Grow

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Merthyr Tydfil College Limited
Registered places	72
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	21 August 2023
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of 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 are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the nursery. They are confident to express their ideas and opinions and can make decisions about how they spend their time. They are developing positive relationships with each other and staff. Children's independence skills are developing well.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of children. They promote good hygiene practices with children and support their development well. Staff build positive relationships with children, they are attentive, warm, patient and offer reassurance to children when needed.

The environment is safe, clean and secure. Leaders ensure there are appropriate systems in place to maintain a safe environment. There is a wide range of equipment and resources both indoors and outdoors to encourage children to play and learn. The environment provides children with good opportunities to make independent choices in their play and develop their self-help skills.

Leaders are motivated to running a quality provision. Safe recruitment procedures are followed. Leaders provide staff with a range of beneficial policies and procedures to guide them in their roles and outline expectations. Staff are happy at the setting and feel supported in their roles. Relationships with parents are strong.

Well-being Good

Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. They can freely move around their dedicated playrooms. Children have access to a beneficial range of toys, resources and exciting activities. They choose where and what they want to play with. For instance, a child assertively selected the bike they wanted to play with from under the covered area to ride freely around the outdoor play space. Children demonstrate they feel empowered to make choices during their time at the setting. They express themselves confidently, as they know their wants and needs will be considered and respected. For instance, we saw children confidently ask for more food at mealtimes which staff warmly responded to.

Nearly all children are very happy and settled at the nursery. Children who are a little unsettled are quickly reassured by staff and are soon playing happily with their friends. Children are frequently reminded about the routine of the day. This helps children to predict what will happen next, making them feel safe and secure. Children feel valued and have a strong sense of belonging. They clearly enjoy being in the company of each other, forming warm and affectionate friendships and developing secure relationships with staff. We saw, children chatting away to staff and their friends while they engaged in activities and happily having cuddles with staff members. Children receive lots of encouragement and praise from staff for their efforts, giving them the confidence to play and learn.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They benefit from a wide range of play opportunities enabling them to develop, learn and use their imagination. For example, when a child was asked if their doll was hungry, they pretended to use a recycled empty washing up bottle to feed their baby. This provides them opportunities to explore and enhance their imaginative and social play experiences. Children fully immerse themselves in their play, they experience a sense of excitement and empowerment to explore their interests freely. They embrace the invitations to play which are suitable for their age and stage of development. We saw babies playing outdoors, exploring the different textures of the soil and foam with their hands, excitedly engaging in this sensory experience.

Children are beginning to develop a wide range of skills as they play and engage in routines. They have many opportunities to become independent, enabling them to do things for themselves. Children are supported to access the bathroom and actively encouraged to independently wash and dry their hands. At mealtimes children take turns to competently and confidently hand out cups to their friends. They are supported to pour their own drinks, scrape off any uneaten food and place their plates in the appropriate box after eating. All children independently access water from their individual water beakers or bottles which are accessible in their playroom. This promotes children’s self-help skills and builds their self-esteem.

Care and Development — Good

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of children. The setting has a range of beneficial policies and procedures that guide staff and outline expectations. However, a few practices observed did not align with infection control guidance or the nursery's established policies and procedures. For instance, staff do not consistently wipe children's noses and wash their hands afterwards. Additionally, personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons are not always being worn when carrying out intimate care routines such as potty training. These practices increase the risk of cross-infection. Nevertheless, staff do promote good hygiene practices among children. For example, children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating, after participating in messy activities, and following the use of the toilet, thereby reinforcing good hygiene routines.

Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding and the procedures to follow. They are aware of their duty to report any concerns and are confident in the steps to take should this be required. Staff implement appropriate procedures to support children when recording and monitoring accident, incident and pre-existing injury forms. These are shared with parents in a timely manner. Staff administer medication and maintain records in accordance with the policy.
The nursery provides a wide range of freshly cooked meals and snacks, which offer balance, variety and promote healthy eating practices. Staff follow robust procedures when dealing with children with allergies, intolerances, and preferences. For example, documentation is displayed which enable staff to check prior to serving any food to children if needed. Staff ensure mealtimes are relaxed, social and enjoyable experiences, where opportunities for children to talk about their day are encouraged.

Staff promote children's physical development and the benefits of getting out into the fresh air, through regular access to the outdoor play environment. Staff interact extremely well with the children and build positive relationships with them. They are attentive, warm, patient and offer reassurance when needed. They implement a positive approach to behaviour, frequently praising and reinforcing positive behaviour in line with the setting's behaviour management policy. Staff know the children very well. They regularly observe the children and use a speech and language assessment tool to track progress and identify next steps. Staff promote the Welsh language purposefully, through introducing basic incidental Welsh during activities and routines.

Environment — Good

Leaders ensure staff follow suitable procedures to maintain an environment which is safe, clean, and secure. Visitors, staff, and children are accurately recorded on arrival and when leaving the building. However, records viewed did not consistently identify which staff are

working with which children at all times. For example, when staff provide cover in different playrooms. Regular fire evacuation drills are carried out at different times to include all children and staff and records are maintained. However, they do not capture the reflections regarding any learning that has taken place to inform future practice drills. Maintenance and safety checks are completed promptly. Leaders have developed a range of risk assessments regarding the environment and some activities such as loose parts play.

The environment offers good facilities to care for children. All rooms are equipped with high quality and suitably sized furniture for the varying ages of children. The layout of the playrooms supports children to move around freely. Bathrooms are situated in the older children's playrooms which assists independence. Nappy changing facilities are accessible and are well equipped. Babies and older children can rest during the day in designated areas, which are relaxing as lights are turned down and soft music is played. Babies sleep in cots and older children have access to low-level individual sleep mats and bed linen. Staff closely monitor sleeping babies and children. Children access a purpose-built sensory room, which is equipped with soft matting, lights, mirrors and a bubble machine. It offers a safe space for them to explore, interact, and relax.
Leaders provide a range of open-ended authentic resources and toys which are of good quality. Real-life, natural, re-purposed and recycled items are used to enhance all areas of the environment and support children of all ages, aiding their play experiences. For example, the use of an empty cardboard box with a few cushions and a large blanket over the top creates a fun play space for children to explore. Real life experiences are mirrored by using items such as kettles, hair straighteners, telephones and jewellery. Along with empty recycled household items such as cleaning sprays are available in the role play areas across all age groups. The use of loose parts such as various twigs, fir cones, wooden rings and corks are positioned close to the playdough resources. This enables children to decorate their creations, promoting creativity and curiosity. Resources are organised and displayed attractively on low level shelving units, so they are easily accessible and inviting to children.

The outdoor play spaces are accessible directly from all playrooms and are of a good size. Babies have a dedicated area, enabling them to move freely and safely in the space. The play spaces offer a range of experiences. For example, a mud kitchen area along with large trays with changeable materials such as soil and foam support creativity and imaginative play. The use of CD disks hung and used saucepans with various supporting objects to make music provide opportunities for children to engage in sensory play in the outdoors.

Leadership and Management — Good

Leaders are committed to providing a quality service to children and their families. They have addressed all recommendations for improvements identified at the previous inspection. A detailed statement of purpose provides parents with relevant information about the setting, enabling them to make an informed choice. Parents also receive an information pack that includes key details and examples of forms they may need to complete. Leaders provide staff with a range of policies, procedures, and documentation to support the operation of the setting. These are reviewed annually or as needed to reflect current guidance. Documents such as children's contracts are signed and exchanged with parents before the children start at the setting. Information about the child, including key routines, is gathered to support the child's experience while at the setting. Permissions are sought for activities such as the administration of emergency first aid and taking children on trips in the local community.

Leaders are aware of their responsibilities to undertake self-evaluation procedures. They actively seek the views of parents and staff. As part of this process, they produce a helpful report that identifies both achievements and areas requiring improvement. Recently, leaders have implemented a new approach which captures two positive remarks (stars) and one area for reflection (wish) from each parent. This feedback is used to inform their annual review. Leaders have reported that this approach has significantly increased parental participation in providing feedback about the service.

Leaders are committed to improving outcomes for staff, children and their families. They employ a variety of methods including team meetings, group observations and supervisions reflecting on the quality of provision and staff practices. These approaches are further supported by individual staff supervisions and annual appraisals. However, documentation reviewed identified a significant gap in the timeliness of conducting these supervisions and appraisals. Prior to the inspection, leaders had already devised plans to address this issue. Staff we spoke to expressed feeling well-supported in their roles by both leaders and colleagues. They experience a strong sense of 'team spirit' and take great pride in working at the setting. The majority of staff have worked at the setting for several years, contributing to stability and continuity within the team.

Leaders follow safe recruitment procedures, ensuring staff have up-to-date job descriptions outlining their roles and responsibilities. New staff undergo a suitable induction process. However, leaders do not always inform Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of significant events or changes to staff at the setting. Staff are well-qualified and have completed all the required mandatory training, such as safeguarding and paediatric first aid. Additional training such as anti-racist practice and positive behaviour management training is undertaken.

Leaders and staff maintain strong relationships with parents. Parents were highly complementary about the setting, noting that leaders and staff are approachable. They

appreciate receiving regular updates about their children’s experiences through the setting's communication app and verbally when dropping off and collecting their children. Additionally, they shared how staff provide support to them and their children such as offering guidance on potty training and sharing toys.

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.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	
30	The responsible individual must ensure all records are accurate and information is appropriately recorded. Medication and accident records must include the relevant detail and permissions.	Achieved
38	The responsible individual must ensure measures are taken for the regular maintenance of fire extinguishers. They must ensure all fire prevention equipment conforms to fire safety standards to assure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the event of a fire.	Achieved
25	The responsible individual must ensure all reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate potential risks within the environment to safeguard children at the setting.	Achieved

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 10 - Healthcare	Ensure infection control practices are followed consistently and are inline with current guidance.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure accuracy when maintaining staff registers. Records must clearly document which staff are working with which children at any given time.
Standard 21 - Notifications of significant events	Ensure Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are kept informed in line with regulatory requirements.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure supervisions and appraisals are completed in a timely manner.

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice
Recommendation(s)
Fire drill records should include any key learning to inform future practices.

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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