Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Castle Kids Childcare

Gaer Community Centre, Gaer Road, Newport, NP20 3GX

01633 631733

The inspection visit took place on 24/02/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Newport City Council Child Care and Play Service
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	40
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children are very happy and settled. They make lots of choices and have a strong voice at the service. They are confident and engaged in their activities as most of their play is child led. Children form close, warm relationships with staff and the other children and have lots of opportunities to develop their independence.

Most staff follow policies and procedures to ensure children's health and safety are prioritised. They interact with children with warmth and kindness, manage behaviour positively and are very good role models. They know the children very well, listen to them and provide exciting opportunities that promote their development, interests and curiosity. Whilst staff's overall communication with colleagues is of a high standard and completion of daily records is very good, not all incidents have been reported promptly.

The environment is very well organised and well-equipped both inside and outside to meet the

developmental needs of children. There is an excellent range of play equipment and real-life resources for the ages and stages of children attending. Leaders undertake risk assessments which are regularly reviewed.

Overall, leaders have good oversight of the service and record keeping is of a very good standard. They follow safe recruitment procedures and provide very good opportunities for staff professional development and training. Leaders operate transparently with other agencies and build good working relationships with parents and outside professionals which benefit the children attending.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children are exceptionally happy and settled throughout the session. They know their choices and ideas will be valued and readily contribute their thoughts and ideas for play, which staff record in a large 'floor book'. Children follow their own interests, make decisions around where they play and who they play with confidently.

Children interact well with staff who are very familiar to them. They ask staff for support or go to them if they need reassurance. Children cope with separation from their parents and caregivers successfully. They form strong emotional attachments and are at ease with staff and are familiar with the routines and expectations at the setting. Children move independently and confidently around the environment. They know where they can play and readily help themselves to favourite toys and resources that interest them.

Children are starting to form friendships and play happily with or alongside each other and are beginning to co-operate and share resources well. They quickly learn to respect others and enjoy sociable mealtimes, chatting happily with their friends and staff. Children politely line up to wash their hands and listen attentively to the staff and their friends during circle times. They feel a sense of pride seeing examples of their work on display and a sense of belonging seeing themselves represented in photographs.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning opportunities. They are enthusiastic, engaged and enjoy playing and learning together. During 'Talking Together' time they learn to listen and communicate with one another whilst supporting their friends with words and sounds. Through purposeful play, they develop curiosity about the world around them. Children become deeply absorbed in transporting water using containers, to various locations in the outdoors. They have great fun as they play together in the home corner or when singing during circle-time. Children were visibly pleased when they knew the sign language for 'Tuesday' and loved adding different types of animals to the 'Sleeping Bunny' song. They laughed and giggled as they stomped around as dinosaurs, snapped like crocodiles or flew like birds.

Nearly all children develop their independent skills well, such as finding their name or picture and self-registering when arriving. They develop skills such as pouring their own drinks at meal-times or helping to get their nappies from their bags before nappy change. Children with additional needs are encouraged to join in all activities and are supported well with one to one support as needed.

Care & Development — Good

Nearly all staff understand their roles and responsibility to keep children safe. They have a very good understanding of the nature of potential child protection concerns and understand the policy and their duty to report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. Staff keep records of accidents and incidents involving children, and parents are fully informed. However, the robust accident and incident procedures in place are not always implemented by all staff promptly. Whilst nearly all staff implement these procedures to ensure children's health and safety, a very few staff do not identify or respond quickly enough in reporting emerging risks, and this could impact upon children's safety. Therefore, this has been identified as an area for improvement, and the provider must take action to improve outcomes for children. Staff implement consistently thorough hygiene procedures around nappy changing, toileting and mealtimes, to help keep children healthy and safe. Allergy procedures are clear and implemented by staff. Staff promote healthy eating habits and water is always available to ensure children remain hydrated. Staff ensure all children spend as much time as they wish playing outside. They encourage children to exercise and explore their environment by engaging in stimulating outdoor activities that promote the development of children's fine and gross motor skills.

Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with the children. They understand child development and consistently use positive management of children's behaviour. They offer praise and encouragement to children for good tidying up and accomplishing their goals during play. They anticipate children's needs very well and accommodate their wishes in a timely manner. For example when children indicate that they wish to have their snack during rolling snack time. Staff are good role models; they encourage good manners and remind children to say 'please', 'thank you' and 'diolch'. Staff create positive relationships with children in their care and celebrate their achievements. They praise children, saying they were impressed with the children's ability to use sign language to choose from 'water' or 'milk' during snack.

Staff ensure children have lots of opportunities to direct their own learning as well as adult led activities. They undertake thorough observations of children's progress. They plan and evaluate with them ensuring activities meet their interests. Staff know children and their individual needs very well. They naturally adjust the care and the behaviour strategies they use to suit individuals. Children with additional needs are very well supported and staff work effectively with outside agencies to ensure the best outcomes for children. Staff are highly motivated, knowledgeable and enthusiastic in their role to support children to reach their full potential whilst at the setting.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders are highly motivated and dedicated to providing a safe, stimulating learning environment for all children. They implement thorough risk assessments and constantly monitor and evaluate the play space, eliminating risks to ensure that areas effectively meet children's needs and interests. Staff ensure that the environment is well maintained, and complete daily safety checks of the environment. They ensure children are supervised appropriately. This oversight of children is communicated between staff throughout the session and procedures are also discussed during team meetings. All visitors are greeted and signed in, and staff oversee the safe handover of children. Staff complete registers so that they know who is in the building and are clear about the children they are responsible for. They complete fire drills regularly with children, so that everyone is confident of what to do in an emergency. A maintenance team supports leaders to maintain the setting. Leaders ensure the servicing of utilities and equipment on the premises is undertaken in a timely manner.

Leaders give due consideration to all aspects of the environment and, as a result, they provide warm, welcoming spaces that make children feel safe and inspire their curiosity and imagination. Leaders ensure that the environment offers good facilities to meet the needs of the children. There are a suitable number of children's toilets and a nappy changing facility for the children that attend. These ensure children's privacy and dignity and support their growing independence. Suitable arrangements are in place to allow for confidential conversations if required. The indoor area is organised appropriately with interesting zones for play that promote children's curiosity, imagination, and development. Children easily and independently access activities and resources both inside and outdoors. The outdoor area is stimulating and an exciting place for children to play and explore. It is well-resourced containing sheltered areas, forest school, mud-kitchen, continuous play provision and a small area where children attending after school are able to, for example, play football and exercise.

Leaders have a clear vision for the environment and use feedback from children to support this vision. The resources and equipment are of a high standard and ensure that the environment is child focused. Leaders plan ahead in order to replace equipment that becomes worn, such as the large wooden wigwam which is due to be replaced soon. Communication between leaders, staff and children is excellent, and constant evaluation of activities and resources ensures that children remain engaged and stimulated by the rich learning environment they access.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders are motivated, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and operate the service to a good standard. They have a clear vision for the setting and effectively communicate this with the staff ensuring a cohesive and professional staff group. There are suitable policies and procedures in place, many of which have been recently reviewed. However, the behaviour management policy does not reflect the current good practice followed by staff. Overall, leaders maintain good oversight of the service and ensure record keeping is effective. They have addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection ensuring a rich well-resourced environment is available to children attending the After School Club element of the service.

Self-evaluation is regularly undertaken and the feedback from parents, staff and children is used to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement and development of the setting. Parent feedback we received demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the service, and they clearly identified the real progress made by their children through the efforts of the staff and leaders. Record keeping such as accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries are regularly reviewed to ensure that any issues are identified and addressed as soon as possible. Leaders take appropriate steps to address issues as they arise. Leaders have developed good working relationships, with regular meetings being undertaken with staff and managers.

Leaders manage staff effectively and follow recruitment procedures to ensure the staff they employ are suitable and able to work in line with current childcare practices. All staff have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. They ensure there are enough well qualified staff to care for children and value the importance of training and professional development of their staff. They ensure adult to child ratios are maintained or exceeded. Supervisions are undertaken regularly and are meaningful to ensure the professional development of staff and identify appropriate training needs. Staff we spoke with said they feel leaders are very approachable and supportive and they feel listened to and valued. Leaders respond appropriately to risk and safeguarding issues once these are brought to their attention.

Leaders build strong partnerships and work openly and transparently with outside agencies. They have a suitable complaints policy and procedure in place, including for children aged over eight years old, although no complaints have been received. Partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies are good and benefit children's development greatly.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Children's health and safety could be put at risk if procedures are not followed and if information of emerging risks are not immediately responded to.	24/02/26

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

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.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Best Practice

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.

Recommendation(s)
Review the Behaviour Management policy so that it reflects current working practices implemented by the setting.

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