Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Ton Tots Playgroup and Afterschool Club

Ton Pentre Infants School, School Street, Ton Pentre, Pentre, CF41 7LS

07504254367

The inspection visits for this service took place between 09/06/2026 and 10/06/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Jordan McDonagh
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	16
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	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children are confident, happy and settled. They make choices in their play, express their needs clearly and are listened to by staff. They form warm relationships, feel safe, and seek comfort when needed. Children play cooperatively, are developing social skills, and respond well to guidance. They are engaged in activities and show enjoyment in their play.

Staff provide consistent care that supports children's health, safety and development. They follow appropriate hygiene and safeguarding procedures, build warm relationships, and use positive approaches to support behaviour. Staff know children well, plan around their interests, and promote progress.

The environment is safe, well organised and supports children's needs. The service is welcoming with accessible resources and effective use of space, including outdoor provision.

Leaders support positive outcomes, with clear direction and effective partnership working. Quality assurance systems are in place and used to drive improvements, and staff are generally well supported through supervision and training. Overall, leadership is effective but requires improvements to ensure consistency, compliance, and stronger oversight.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children express themselves confidently and have a suitable voice in the service. They communicate their needs, preferences and feelings in a meaningful way, and staff respond appropriately. Children make choices about their play and activities, which supports their sense of control and independence. For example, children take the lead in their play, freely choosing activities that interest them, such as building with blocks, exploring creative materials, or engaging in imaginative role play. They decide how they want to play and whether to join group experiences like story time or continue with their own ideas, which helps them feel confident and in control of their choices. Overall, children are listened to and their views are respected.

Children feel safe, happy and valued. They are familiar with routines and feel a sense of belonging within the service. Relationships between children and staff are warm and supportive, which helps children to feel secure. Children approach staff for comfort and reassurance when needed and staff respond in a prompt and caring way. For example, when a child stumbled during outdoor play, they immediately went to a nearby staff member, who offered comfort and cuddles, helping them to feel settled again.

Children interact positively with others and are developing social skills. They cooperate during play and begin to understand the need to share and take turns, with support from staff. For example, when a member of staff asked a child to share their play dough with a friend, the child did so willingly. Children learn expectations and respond well to guidance.

Children are engaged in their play and learning. They show interest in activities and sustain their attention for suitable periods. Children enjoy developmentally supportive experiences and actively explore their environment. They have many opportunities that encourage participation and curiosity. For example, we heard bursts of excited chatter as children eagerly mixed and shaped play dough with a staff member and giggles and squeals of delight as they chased and popped the floating bubbles from the machine.

Children develop independence skills in line with their age and stage of development. Children manage many aspects of their own care, such as feeding, tidying away or personal care routines. They confidently do things for themselves and seek support when needed. For example, children show growing independence by confidently pouring their own drinks at snack time, putting their food waste in the bin, and taking responsibility for tidying up alongside others when play ends.

Care & Development — Good

Staff support children's health, safety and overall well-being successfully. They follow effective procedures to help keep children safe and promote their physical health through daily routines. We saw that staff conduct a daily tooth-brushing scheme to support children's oral health and ensure children have regular access to outdoor play for fresh air and physical activity. Staff generally follow suitable hygiene practices. For example, they wear personal protective equipment when preparing snacks and changing nappies, and support children to wash their hands before snack time. However, we saw that children did not yet use tongs to serve their own snack, offering an opportunity to further promote good hygiene practices. Staff show a sound understanding of their responsibilities in keeping children safe and act where needed. For example, they are confident to follow child protection procedures and know to report any concerns to the manager or to children's social services themselves if needed. Overall, staff provide consistent care, help children feel secure, and meet children's needs well.

Staff manage interactions positively and support children's learning and development in a caring and responsive way. They form warm relationships with the children and use these effectively to support behaviour and emotional development. Staff give clear guidance and apply consistent approaches, helping children understand expectations. They provide encouragement and recognise children's efforts and achievements. For example, we heard staff regularly praising children for being kind, encouraging them to keep trying with tasks, and celebrating their efforts by offering high fives for a job well done. As a result, children respond well to staff and benefit from a calm and supportive environment that promotes positive interactions and engagement.

Staff know the children well and support their development through planning and observation. They use information about children's needs, interests and stages of development to provide suitable experiences. For example, when children showed a keen interest in fossils and dinosaurs, staff built on this curiosity by helping them explore further, using books and the internet to discover more together. Staff monitor progress and adapt activities as needed, helping children to make steady progress. They collaborate with parents and others to share information about children's development and well-being. Overall, staff provide care and support that meets children's individual needs and supports their development effectively.

Environment — Good

Leaders provide an environment that is safe and well kept. They ensure that beneficial risk assessments are in place to identify and reduce potential hazards. Staff take suitable steps to keep children safe and follow clear procedures in their day-to-day practice. The environment is clean and suitable for the needs of the children attending. However, we saw that the nappy changing mat was torn, which prevents staff from effectively cleaning and sanitising it and increases the risk of poor hygiene and cross-contamination. Staff conduct regular fire drills and leaders test fire alarms regularly. Records show that staff care for children within the required staff-to-child ratios. Leaders keep the premises secure and ensure staff supervise children appropriately.

The premises are welcoming and organised to meet children's needs. Leaders ensure there is sufficient space for children to play, rest and take part in a range of activities. Different areas are set up to allow children to access toys and resources easily, supporting their independence and choice. The environment supports children's comfort and well-being, with areas for quieter activities as well as more active play. For example, there is a cosy book corner with books displayed attractively and a comfortable child sized sofa and a well-resourced role play area including some real-life items to ignite children's curiosity. Leaders ensure children can access outdoor play in all weather, supported by a large, sheltered area. However, there is currently no system in place to safely secure the door open, which limits children's ability to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments.

Resources and equipment are appropriate and in suitable condition. Leaders offer a range of toys and materials that support children's play and development. Resources are accessible, which helps children to make choices and engage in activities independently. There are some resources available to promote children's understanding of cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion such as dressing up clothes and Welsh displays. Staff use resources effectively to support children's experiences. For example, staff enhanced a tuff tray activity by drawing roads with chalk, which children eagerly used to move their cars around, showing enjoyment and becoming fully absorbed in their play. Overall, the environment and resources support children's play and learning effectively.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders set a clear direction for the service and ensure it runs in line with its statement of purpose. They have established suitable policies and procedures, which guide practice and help staff understand their roles and responsibilities. However, they do not always ensure that staff apply them consistently. For example, staff do not always include parent signatures and children's date of birth on accident records and leaders have not updated some policies, such as safeguarding, additional learning needs and medication, to reflect current guidance. In addition, there is no formal disciplinary policy in place to support managers in addressing such situations. Leaders inform Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of significant events; however, they do not always let CIW know of staff changes within the required timescales. We expect the provider to take action.

Leaders put suitable arrangements in place to monitor quality and plan for improvement. They complete a review of the quality of care and take ongoing action in response to the information they have gathered. For example, leaders have improved the environment by buying new tables, chairs, a reading corner and a play kitchen. They have also introduced more regular team meetings to plan children's activities, listen to staff views, and put improvements into practice. Leaders check records, including accidents and incidents, to find patterns and support children's safety.

Leaders manage staff appropriately and support them to conduct their roles effectively. There are suitable arrangements in place for recruitment. Staff understand their responsibilities and work within clear expectations. Leaders provide opportunities for staff to develop their skills and knowledge through regular staff and supervision meetings. However, the manager had not yet undertaken annual staff appraisals, which offers an opportunity to further strengthen performance management arrangements and support ongoing staff development. We expect the provider to take action.

Leaders ensure there are beneficial arrangements for partnership working and communication. They share information with parents and carers to keep them informed about their child's care and development offering verbal feedback at pick up and sharing photos and messages via a digital app throughout the day. Leaders and staff work with Flying Start advisors, speech and language professionals and education psychologists to support children and meet their individual needs.

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
Outcomes for children require improvement because staff do not consistently receive appraisals, which limits effective performance monitoring, support, and the quality of care provided.	09/06/26
CIW cannot be assured we have all relevant up to date information when making decisions about the setting and its operation.	20/09/22

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)
Strengthen hygiene practice further by supporting children to use tongs when serving snacks and replace torn nappy changing mat.
Introduce further resources to promote children's understanding of cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion.
Install mechanism to safely secure the door open, to enable children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments.
Leaders must ensure accident records are fully completed, including parent signatures and children's dates of birth, and that all relevant policies are regularly reviewed and updated in line with current guidance.

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