Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Action For Children Stepping Stones

Mayhill Family Centre, Mayhill Road, Mayhill, Swansea, SA1 6TD

01792477130

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visit took place on 14/04/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Action for Children
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	9
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children are confident, enthusiastic communicators whose views, interests and choices are valued and acted upon. They feel safe, happy and secure, showing a strong sense of belonging. Positive relationships, consistent routines and freedom to explore support children's all round development.

Staff support children's care and development through clear routines, healthy food choices and strong safeguarding practice. Staff know children very well, respond quickly to cues and promote emotional regulation. Warm, considered interactions support emotional wellbeing and learning, while regular reflection and communication with parents help track progress and meet individual needs.

Leaders maintain a very safe, well organised environment with strong security, regular checks and purposeful risk assessments. Fire arrangements are effective, however some recording needs improvement. Thoughtfully planned spaces and high-quality resources support children's learning,

independence and regulation, with an inclusive approach that reflects children's needs, interests and cultural diversity.

There is strong, consistent leadership at the setting. They have a clear understanding about their roles and responsibilities and implement strong policies and procedures. Leaders ensure information is shared fully and used effectively to support children. Recruitment, and development are robust, though some minor improvements are needed. Partnerships with parents and professionals are highly positive and effective.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children are very confident communicators as their wants, moods and needs are fully considered. They use verbal and nonverbal communication which are responded to fully. For example, after using the spinning chair to spin the small plastic balls around, the child said, "*and more?*" to indicate they wanted more balls. The staff member responded warmly, collected the balls and handed them to the child. They then repeated the play with the child tapping the chair to show they wanted to continue. Children's opinions and interests are valued and acted upon. They know their communication will be responded to which gives them the confidence to communicate. Children have freedom to choose and follow their interests throughout the session. They choose which room they wish to play in, whether they want to have snack or not and what to play with. For instance, a few children pulled out resources stored in drawers, while others join in with activities staff have on offer.

Children feel very safe, happy and secure. They arrive at the setting and cope well with separation because consistent daily transitions recognise and support individual needs. Any unsettled children are given reassurance and comfort, which allows them to settle quickly. Children have a clear sense of belonging, moving confidently around the play environment and exploring the toys and resources available to them. Children are familiar with the routines of the setting. For example, when a staff member said, "*let's get ready for snack*", one child walked straight over to wash their hands and then sat at the table ready for food.

Children's feelings, likes, dislikes and needs are acknowledged as they have good bonds of affection. They communicate confidently with staff and interact with other children at times. For instance, when one child wanted another child's toy, the child firmly said "*no*". Staff supported this communication and highlighted to the child wanting the toy, they already had their own toy by pointing at it. Interactions between children and adults are consistently very good. They interact positively with the people around them and interact confidently with visitors at the setting. For example, one child placed a hat on a visitor's head.

Children are engaged for a good period and at times an extended period for their stage of development. They have many opportunities to repeat their play and activities. For instance, children enjoy throwing the sensory balls, watching them bounce on the floor before picking them up and starting the process over with different types of balls. They consistently follow their own instincts, ideas and interests. Children express enthusiasm and enjoyment as they play. For example, there was lots of smiles and giggles as a staff member used a toy which bounced characters up into the air.

Children have considerable freedom to safely explore their indoor environment. They move between the different play areas engaging with what takes their interests. Children are self-motivated to initiate their own play and to influence their tasks and activities. This supports

children’s feelings of belonging and promotes their well-being fully. For instance, whilst in the ball pit, children fully immerse themselves under the balls before popping back up, smiling at the staff member and repeating the process. Children have good opportunities to develop their independence skills and can access a range of resources which promote their all-round development.

Care & Development — Excellent

Children's health is promoted through consistent routines, including supervised handwashing and the use of individual towels. Snack provision is healthy and adapted to children's sensory needs, including bananas, vegetable sticks and fruit wafers. All staff demonstrate an embedded approach to safeguarding, with some able to further articulate the role of external agencies and the importance of accurate record keeping. Staff understand potential risks and are aware of children's individual needs to support effective care. They communicate well as a team to ensure clear supervision. Staff have meaningful connections to the setting and take pride in the long-standing support it has offered families. This is reflected in the care, consistency and commitment they provide to children.

Staff respond well to children's non-verbal cues and take time to understand their individual wants and needs. They have purposeful interactions with children. For instance, a child exclaimed, "*oh ow, look!"* as blocks tumbled to the floor., Staff immediately recognised the need to respond and offer reassurance. Staff provide gentle reminders to children, such as "*we're going to give some to our friends"* and "*kind hands"* while naturally modelling kind and respectful behaviour. They effectively diffuse situations through confident use of distraction techniques. Staff consistently promote learning and development and offer praise regularly, such as *"you're walking so well"* and *"we are proud of you."* Staff respond warmly when children confidently seek reassurance, saying *"I know darling"*, offering comfort, demonstrating strong, trusting relationships that support both physical and emotional safety. They are highly attuned to children's emotional regulation and intervene promptly and sensitively when required. Child-led play is rich in sensory experiences, with staff narrating play using enthusiastic language such as 'ready, steady, go' and 'oh wow,' encouraging participation and joy.

Staff are enthusiastic and engaging. They respond sensitively when children become unsettled by offering a range of engaging activities. Staff use their skills effectively to quickly identify children's interests and individual needs and apply effective tailored strategies to support engagement throughout sessions. Children are thoughtfully grouped to meet needs and, at times are offered intensive support activities based on children's next steps. Staff create a rich vocabulary environment by consistently modelling appropriate language. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Daily staff debriefs demonstrate strong reflective practice. Staff use observations from their individual focus areas to carefully monitor children's development. Daily feedback sessions are incorporated into a monthly progress report and shared with parents. This supports strong partnership working between the setting and families and ensures parents are well informed about their children's progress.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders ensure the environment is exceptionally safe and well managed. Secure entry systems are in place, including a front door operated by a high-level release button and internal gates with locks restricting access to certain areas. A visitor's book is in place and in regular use. High door handles throughout the setting further reduce risk. Leaders regularly monitor the physical environment to ensure safety. Fire safety arrangements are strong and there are excellent processes in place to support fire and emergency evacuation procedures., For example, there are clear evacuation maps and roots displayed in each room as well as an evacuation bag. However, there is not a clear record of parents attending the session. The setting carries out fire evacuation practises. However, these are not in place for all groups. The setting has a range of purposeful risk assessments in place, identifying risks, including anxiety and how they minimise them. Leaders demonstrate effective leadership and a proactive approach to risk management.

Leaders provide a highly purposeful and exceptionally well-designed environment that fully supports children's learning, regulation and independence. The setting is carefully zoned to meet a wide range of sensory, developmental and physical needs. The main playroom includes gated areas to create safe, contained spaces for exploration, with easily accessible low-level resources such as cause-and-effect toys, puzzles, stacking activities and sensory materials.
Larger physical areas include soft play equipment, ramps, a trampoline and a spinning seat, supporting gross motor development and sensory regulation. The sensory room is a standout feature, fully matted and equipped with lighting effects, well considered resources and calming seating to promote emotional regulation for children.

Leaders ensure resources and equipment are of high quality, well maintained and developmentally appropriate. Leaders and staff demonstrate pride in the setting. They tidy throughout the session and regularly check resources. Resources are plentiful and stored effectively, enabling children to see and select resources that capture their interests. Tuff trays reflecting a range of celebrations throughout the year are used, promoting cultural awareness and diversity with celebrations such as spring, Eid and Diwali being promoted. Additional resources are at hand enabling staff to select items responsively to meet children's emerging interests and support shared play, such as introducing additional road map mat to encourage cooperative play alongside peers. The environment is highly inclusive, adaptable and clearly planned to meet the individual needs of children.

Leadership & Management — Good

There is strong and consistent leadership at the setting. The person in charge works positively to develop and promote the setting. They are aware of their responsibilities around their role at the setting and ensure that they provide a robust, positive partnership. There is a clear statement of purpose which fully reflects the setting, their ethos and includes regulation and National Minimum Standards (NMS) information. Leaders at the setting work positively with Care Inspectorate Wales and have fully implemented the recommendations from the last inspection. However, not all notifications are completed within the required timescale. Leaders collect and securely store regulatory and other information about the children before they begin at the setting. This information is used efficiently to prepare and implement strategies to support the children when they begin but also as they develop at the setting. Leaders have a range of policies in place, which are reviewed regularly and they ensure these are implemented in practice. However, the safeguarding policy did not include clear procedures to follow if there was a concern about a member of staff or management.

There is an embedded process to gather feedback from parent/carers, staff, children and other partners. This process allows the setting to reflect upon their areas of strength and where they want to make improvements. The quality of care report gives appropriate information about their setting, and the additional documents reflect the more detailed plans and aims for the future development of the setting.

The leadership at the setting ensures staff are suitable to work at the setting. They carry out a robust recruitment procedure, and all pre-employment checks are in place. There is strong professional development at the setting. Staff attend a range of courses to support children's additional and emerging needs and implement these in their care and work. However, the current safeguarding training does not meet the required descriptors in the NMS. There are regular worthwhile supervision and effective annual appraisals in place. These allow staff to discuss and reflect on their wellbeing, their role and raise any concerns they may have. The meetings are adapted to the role of the staff member and support the setting's aims. Leaders ensure that the staffing ratio exceeds the required staff to children ratios, and staff are utilised to support the children effectively.

Leaders ensure that all communication and engagement systems with parents are fully inclusive. They keep parents extremely well informed. Parents told us they are really happy with the setting. All staff are approachable and the person in charge is very supportive, they feel like this is a family and can't praise it enough. Leaders have very strong links with a wide range of professionals and other stakeholders. They consistently respond positively to information and advice given to improve children's well-being and identified needs. There are clear and effective procedures and protocols in place for sharing information. These are followed consistently and children have benefitted greatly from the action taken.

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.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

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)
Standard 24 - Safety	Develop and embed regular emergency evacuation procedures.
Standard 20 - Child protection	All staff have accessed safeguarding training relevant to their work role.

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)
Develop and implement a system to record parents who attend the setting.
Tighten procedures to ensure notifications are completed within required timescales.
Further develop the safeguarding policy to ensure that there are clear procedures to follow if there is an allegation against staff or management at the setting.

Mae’r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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