Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Western Flying Start

Western Leisure Centre, Caerau Lane, Cardiff, CF5 5HJ

07494813427

The inspection visit took place on 04/02/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Darling Buds FS Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	30
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	Excellent
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children have a strong voice and are very happy, settled and enjoy attending the setting. They form very strong bonds with staff and begin to form friendships. Children are extremely enthusiastic in their play and learning. Their independence is consistently encouraged throughout their time at the setting.

Staff are professional and passionate about their roles and successfully implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy. They form warm, respectful relationships with children and respond sensitively to their needs. Staff place children at the centre of their learning and development and monitor developmental progress effectively.

Leaders provide a warm and welcoming setting for children where they can play safely in a rich environment. They ensure the resources and equipment are suitable to meet children's individual needs. Leaders identify any unnecessary risks to children and eliminate them where possible ensuring the environment is safe, secure and well maintained.

Leadership and management of the setting is excellent. The management team is very strong and passionate about providing an outstanding service in the local area. They form exceptional partnerships with families and other agencies and professionals to ensure consistent care for the children.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children make many choices about how they spend their time at the setting. They move easily between the activities and areas transporting toys and resources to support their play. Children express themselves very confidently, knowing staff listen to their needs and wants and value what they say. For example, we saw children immediately tell staff members when they needed help or were worried about something. Children chat extremely happily to staff as they play and learn, eagerly inviting them into their play. Children's voices are very strong at the setting. Staff know their likes and dislikes and use this information to plan how areas within the environment are developed.

Children are extremely settled, confident and enjoy attending the setting. They cope very well with separation from their parents and carers and form strong emotional attachments with staff. They show from their demeanour that they feel secure and relaxed in the staff's care, approaching them readily and seeking out hugs from staff when needed. Children are very familiar with and evidently enjoy the routines of the setting and this gives them a sense of security and belonging. For example, children are eager to wash their hands in preparation for snack time.

Children are beginning to develop positive, healthy relationships with their friends and staff in line with their age and stage of development. They play happily alongside each other or together and are learning to co-operate together. For example, children play happily together in the play kitchen, while others play contentedly alongside one another in the sand. They are learning to co-operate together, for example they take care as they pass each other on their bikes. They show respect for others and for the resources and toys.

Children are very enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning, following their own interests with the resources available each day. For example, children concentrate as they happily experiment with sand whilst others enjoy dressing up in different hats. Children excitedly engage with outdoor resources, many of which support their physical development. For example they smile and laugh as they enjoy using ride on toys in a large area and eagerly climb up the grassy bank to walk under the trees. As well as free play, children thoroughly appreciate more organised activity, for example they join in enthusiastically with singing and rhymes with staff.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills. For example, children are supported to develop their independence in the toilet, with washing their hands, putting on their coats and looking after their bags. They are supported well if they show an interest in learning new skills. For example, children indicated they wanted to clean their wellies and were helped and

supported to do so.

Care & Development — Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. Leaders and staff prioritise safeguarding and have a thorough knowledge of the actions they need to take should they have concerns about a child. Staff accurately record accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries, and ensure they are shared appropriately. They record both their own and children's attendance to ensure they always know who is on the premises. Staff implement robust cleaning and hygiene practices effectively. For example, they sanitise tables before use and use personal protective equipment when preparing food. Staff are fully aware of children's dietary and allergy needs, and ensure separate cooking utensils, cutlery and plates. Staff actively promote healthy lifestyles. They encourage children to try healthy foods at snack time and provide daily outdoor play experiences that support their physical development and wellbeing. Staff practise regular fire drills with children so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency. They review each drill carefully and make any necessary adjustments to meet the needs of all children.

Staff have a strong understanding of children's needs and respond to them sensitively. They treat children with kindness and use effective behaviour management strategies. Staff interact in a patient, caring manner and chat naturally with children to support their play, learning and emotional well-being. They show genuine interest in what children do, using praise thoughtfully to celebrate achievements and encourage perseverance. Staff speak respectfully to children and to each other, acting as excellent role models, they use gentle tones, explanations and distraction methods effectively. The behaviour management policy promotes positive strategies that help children to regulate their own behaviour and build their self-esteem.

Staff clearly recognise how best to support children through providing a wide range of opportunities for them to explore and experiment independently within the environment. As a result, children are at the centre of their own learning and development. Staff operate an effective key worker system; regular observations and assessments enable them to monitor and track children's progress. Each child has a 'care book' where progress is recorded, and staff use speech and language toolkits to identify any emerging communication needs at an early stage. Staff are extremely proactive in promoting children's play, learning and development and work closely with a range of partners and external professionals. They meet children's individual needs through targeted support, such as providing specific additional needs staff and adapting the environment with sensory resources and toys. Staff also work sensitively with families from diverse backgrounds. They ensure parents receive appropriate support and understanding, for example by arranging translators when language barriers are identified. Staff use the Welsh language during activities and children engage well with this.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders have highly effective measures in place to ensure staff fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. Staff ensure children are cared for in an extremely safe and secure environment. They remain vigilant and always supervise children closely. Staff ensure doors are always locked and secure, and only authorised persons are permitted entry to the setting, maintaining a log of any visitors. Routine maintenance checks for the premises and appliances are carried out frequently, including checks on smoke alarms and fire safety equipment. Leaders ensure effective systems are in place to ensure infection control and store hazardous substances away securely.

The environment is extremely welcoming and very child friendly. Leaders use neutral colours and resources throughout the environment, creating a sense of calmness and relaxation. The indoor playroom is light and well organised with clearly defined areas offering rich opportunities for play and learning. Leaders ensure there is ample space for children to move freely and independently and provide areas for children to relax and unwind. The outdoor environment is arranged as an effective play and learning space that is safe and stimulating. It consists of thoughtfully laid out areas, such as a gardening zone, a kitchen and an art station. Children also have access to an additional outdoor play space where they engage in physical activity, such as using bikes, trikes and push along toys. Wall displays include examples of children's work, photographs of children and bilingual labelled images, all of which stimulate children's interests and create a sense of belonging. Children can access toilet facilities directly from the playroom encouraging independence and maintaining privacy.

Leaders provide high-quality furniture, toys and resources that stimulate children's play and learning. Resources and equipment are clean, well maintained and easily accessible, enabling children to choose what they want to play with independently. Many resources are made from natural materials and can be used flexibly, encouraging imagination and open-ended play. Furniture is appropriately sized for children, allowing them to sit and play comfortably. For example, tables and chairs are the correct height for children, and a breakfast bar provides them with an additional surface, where they can eat snack, communicate and socialise. Resources are plentiful and in excellent condition. Leaders provide toys and materials that encourage children to engage in play creatively. For example, children enjoy the role play area, which has a home-themed set up and includes real life elements such as a washing-up bowl containing water and sponges, and a vanity area with mirrors, tools and props next to the dressing-up station. These thoughtful additions enrich children's imaginative play and support sustained engagement.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders have a very strong sense of purpose seeking to promote and sustain excellent outcomes for children. They are passionate about children's wellbeing, and share this passion with staff, creating a highly motivated and positive team. Leaders are highly organised and conscientious. They keep written records consistently and effectively and store them securely. There is an extensive range of policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed. Leaders manage the setting well and promote a positive culture of openness, encouraging communication between the management team and staff.

Leaders continually look for ways to improve the service and outcomes for children. They are pro-active and take responsibility for keeping up to date with latest research and guidance thinking and best practice standards in the childcare sector. They have well developed and established systems to ensure regular feedback from parents, children and staff to inform their annual quality of care review which supports planning for improvement. They have fully engaged in the inspection process as a means to improve quality.

Leaders follow robust recruitment processes to ensure there are always enough staff and checks are carried out to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. There is a clear system in place to ensure that staff's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are current and there are a suitable proportion of qualified staff at the setting. People who run the service invest significantly in their staff team. All staff receive regular supervisions and annual appraisals. These are high quality and enable them to celebrate their strengths and identify areas for development. Leaders ensure that staff receive excellent opportunities for further training, Staff we spoke to told us that they felt valued and supported by the management team.

Leaders and staff who work there have established very strong relationships with parents. Parents feedback shows they think highly of the setting and the care their children receive. Leaders have very strong working relationships with a range of external support agencies, ensuring that when there are concerns about children's progress or development, they share information and work with parents and professionals to support children. Leaders work with professionals and organisations to share good practice, ideas, and suggestions.

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)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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