Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Blossom Early Years

Heolgerrig , Merthyr Tydfil , CF48 1RP

07983505037

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): **29 April 2025**

29/04/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Blossom Early Years
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	19
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	Yes
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service 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 are extremely happy and enjoy their time at the setting. They have excellent opportunities for play and learning within an extremely nurturing setting. Children interact well and form close bonds with their peers and staff. They have many opportunities to develop skills for independence. They learn skills through an extensive range of high quality experiences and play.

Staff are professional, well qualified and work seamlessly together as part of a team. They have a very good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. Staff have implemented robust, in-depth policies and procedures. They provide an excellent variety of interesting and fun activities, to support children's all-round development. Staff keep very good records of children's progress.

The environment is clean, welcoming and well organised, with best use made of the space available. The outside area is an interesting, stimulating and safe area. There is an excellent

selection of well-maintained and good quality resources both inside and outside. Staff follow procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable, completing risk assessments and daily checks consistently.

The leadership and management of the setting is strong. Leaders are passionate and committed to providing high quality childcare. They have extremely thorough processes in place to ensure that staff are fully involved in working together to provide excellent care for the children. There is a clear culture of continuous improvement and building strong partnerships with parents and others for the benefit of the children.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children are listened to and have many opportunities to make choices about what they want to do. They decide what they would like to play with from the numerous activities on offer. Children choose from an excellent range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating resources. This promotes their all-round development, enabling them to follow their own interests with confidence. For example, children move between inside and outside areas and take items that interest them with them. Children are offered snack and most readily accept the invitation. A few children want to continue to play and are initially reluctant to sit at the table. They decide in their own time to join their peers and then sit happily, choosing what they want to eat and drink.

Children are happy, relaxed, and confident. They develop strong attachments with staff, and they are comfortable to approach familiar people when they need help, or reassurance. For example, on numerous occasions children spontaneously went to staff for cuddles and sat on their lap during a story. Children playing alone, are content and soon joined by other children and staff in their games. For instance, a child made dough and others joined in making shapes with it. Children feel secure by knowing the daily routines and confidently respond to staff as they join in tidying up and preparing to go home.

Children are learning to behave very well. They use good manners, respect each other and share resources well. For example, we saw children building a train track together and cooking in the home area, cooperating to reach their objectives. Children sit happily together for snack chatting to each other and staff, listening to others talking about subjects such as what they liked to eat and what activities they liked. Children are starting to understand the expectations of the staff and respond positively to instruction such as to slow down or to use kind hands.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop new skills through the play and learning experiences available. Children enjoy free play and are very engaged in their chosen activity. For example, children really enjoy messy play and need little encouragement to mix dough themselves and take it outside to add it to the water, mixing it to make a gloop. Others enjoy grating coloured chalk to make a rainbow out of the powder in a jar. A child spent a long period building a train track, showing real interest in the magnets connecting the trains and working out how they joined together.

Children are developing very well and have many opportunities to practice skills to support them to become independent. They are curious and engaged learners who value the chance to explore the environment. Children are given time to do things for themselves such as putting on sun hats to go outside and serving themselves food and drinks. They enjoy helping to tidy up and are becoming

proficient in using the toilet facilities and washing their hands independently.

Care & Development — Excellent

Staff understand their role and are conscientious, implementing policies and procedures to a high standard to keep children safe and healthy. They have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues including the setting's safeguarding procedure and how to refer any concerns they have to relevant agencies. Staff follow robust procedures to manage any food allergies and dietary requirements. They prepare food safely and consistently follow thorough hygiene and cleaning practices as part of the infection control process. For example, hand washing, use of protective equipment and cleaning tables before snack. Staff are organised and attentive to ensure that snack time is enjoyable, sociable and safe. They chat to children about healthy food and encourage them to try different fruits. Staff encourage children to play safely outdoors. They talk about the dangers of the sun and how they should wear a hat and keep hydrated.

Staff manage interactions extremely well and are very good role models. They have a sound understanding of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. They implement a clear behaviour management policy well. Staff are kind, caring and patient and work hard to ensure children feel valued and enjoy their time at the setting. They encourage children to express their feelings and emotions and are extremely responsive and nurturing, meaning children approach them with great ease. Staff manage interactions and behaviour skilfully, using gentle tones, clear boundaries, distraction methods and plenty of praise for children's efforts and achievements. They model aspects of the routine such as tidying up so children can join in confidently.

Staff are motivated and keen to effectively promote children's development. They know the children's individual needs very well and monitors children's progress effectively. Staff set up an excellent range of interesting activities in response to what they know children like. They sensitively engage with children to challenge their thinking, extending their enjoyment and learning. For example, a child struggled to join trains together with magnets. Staff noticed this and engaged them in a discussion about how magnets can 'repel' or 'attract'. The child listened attentively and then tested out what they had learned, smiling as the trains attached to each other. Staff use the Welsh language extensively during activities and children engage well with this. They have undertaken many training courses, which allows them to care for children confidently. For instance, staff place a high priority on culture, equality and anti-racist practices. They are trained in these areas and champion the principles in all aspects of their role.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders provide a safe, well-maintained and very welcoming environment. They have detailed risk assessments for all areas of the premises and many of the activities which are reviewed on a regular basis. They liaise with the owners of the building to ensure that the required maintenance checks are completed in a timely manner. Staff confidently implement a secure system for entry to the setting and routinely record any visitors. Leaders place numerous health and safety reminders around the setting, such as posters outlining fire evacuation, safeguarding flowcharts and hygiene procedures. Staff undertake regular fire drills with children to ensure they are all confident in the procedure.

Leaders organise the space to a very high standard and with children's needs at the forefront of the ideas. They provide an environment that is extremely welcoming and child friendly, with walls decorated in neutral colours and many natural materials, providing a calm ambiance. Staff ensure that play areas are organised in a highly effective manner to stimulate children's curiosity, exploration, and development. They set up areas with invitations to play and children are excited by and engaged with their environment. The low-level furniture and resources support children's independence, enabling them to follow their interests and direct their own play easily. Staff supervise children to use the toilet facilities which are child size, allowing them to use the facilities independently. Leaders have developed an outside area that children can easily access. They have facilities such as a covered area and painting hut that provide shelter and shade. Leaders have established an area inside where children under the age of two years can be cared for separately from older children. Staff adapt this area as required and no children under two years are currently attending, so this area is used for quiet activities.

Leaders invest in high quality equipment and ensure there is an extensive range of excellent quality resources to stimulate children's interest and imagination. Staff change learning areas regularly to maintain children's interest and extend their skills. They set up an interesting range of real life resources, such as dressing up, pots and pans and crockery, making it a very rich environment for play and learning. They intersperse many resources from different cultures including the Welsh language, and this provides children with authentic opportunities for play.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders are skilled and experienced and manage the setting extremely well. They are very aware of national priorities and developments in childcare. Leaders share their clear and inspirational vision for the setting in the Statement of Purpose. There is a strong ethos of child-centred care, and this is evident when you speak to leaders and staff. Leaders maintain detailed policies and procedures that clearly show how the setting operates. Staff maintain daily records such as accidents, incidents and existing injuries well. Leaders have good oversight of records which enables them to address any emerging matters effectively.

Leaders have established a robust system to monitor and review the quality of the service they offer. They seek the views of all relevant parties, and these contribute to an effective self-evaluation process and creates a culture of continuous improvement. Leaders act on findings of their evaluation such as providing opportunities for younger children to attend. They complete and submit the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) to CIW as requested. This includes a comprehensive report of their quality of care review, including their plans for future improvements. Leaders have developed a complaint procedure and there is a suggestion box in the foyer for parents to place any thoughts or comments. They consider any information fully.

Leaders have effective systems in place to recruit, induct and employ staff. They have a consistent staff group and there have been minimal changes to staff. Files viewed evidence that all the required checks and information required by regulations is sought prior to staff being employed at the setting. Staff complete daily records such as attendance records and staff rotas show that enough staff are employed for the numbers of children attending. The person in charge is included in adult: child ratios for much of the time. Leaders provide additional support so they can manage the day to day operation of the setting effectively. Staff take responsibility for specific areas such as embedding diversity and anti-racism practices. They have many opportunities to develop their skills and understanding, which they use to strengthen practice at the setting. All staff hold a childcare, safeguarding and first aid qualification. There is a strong culture of continuous development, as the leaders and staff are proactive in identifying any training opportunities that extends their knowledge of childcare. Leaders monitor staffs' professional development and progress through one to one supervision and an annual appraisal. Staff feel supported to do their jobs to a high standard and their sense of pride in their role is evident.

Leaders work in close partnerships with parents and other professionals and agencies. They seek detailed information about their children's needs and preferences, and they keep them well informed. Parents tell CIW that they are very happy with the care their children receive. Leaders have close links with a wide variety of external organisations. For example, they provide education and Flying Start funded places as well as working with speech and language and safeguarding professionals. They have strong links with the community and visit many local areas to nurture

children’s sense of belonging. Leaders have successfully been awarded grants to support them to build a community garden at the entrance to the setting.

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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