Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Cwmlai After School Club

28 Penygarreg Road, Tonyrefail, Porth, CF39 8AS

07496356386

The inspection visit took place on 22/01/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Cwmlai After School Club Ltd
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	35
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 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 happy and settle well. They are listened to and their views are considered. Children are able to engage in activities of their choosing and are free to develop their play in collaboration with their peers. They have opportunities to develop independence and other skills through a wide range of activities. Children form close bonds with each other and staff, making them feel safe and secure.

Staff provide a caring, safe and supportive environment where children can freely explore the range of age-appropriate play opportunities available. They are consistent in their approach and model positive behaviour. Staff ensure the setting is clean and accessible for all children, completing daily health and safety checks; however, annual risk assessments are not currently in place. Staff are clear and confident about the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures to ensure children are safe.

Leaders ensure the setting is well maintained, safe and secure. The environment is light and welcoming and designed to offer a good range of play opportunities. Children have access to furniture, equipment, and a wide selection of age-appropriate toys and resources that meet their needs and interests.

Leaders are committed to providing a club where children are happy and enjoy their play. However, they have not fulfilled all regulatory requirements, and we have identified some areas for improvement. Leaders ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Parents and carers speak highly of the setting and the care their children receive.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have plenty of choice, and a strong voice at the setting. They move freely around their play space, making choices and decisions about the activities they want to join in or the resources they wish to play with. Children are given good opportunities to express themselves and talk about the things that are important to them. They are confident to express their opinions because they know staff will listen to them. Children's likes and requests influence the activities and resources that are provided.

Children feel safe, happy and valued at the setting. They develop warm relationships with other children and staff. Children approach staff spontaneously to seek reassurance or support and enjoy receiving praise and recognition for their efforts. We saw children laughing and smiling as they chatted with staff. Children are comfortable in the familiar routines and activities of the setting, for example we saw how they enjoyed choosing what snack they would have from the 'menu'.

Children co-operate well, take turns and share. They show an awareness of the feelings of others and a clear understanding of what is expected of them while at the setting. Overall, children behave well and play collaboratively with peers of different ages. Their interactions with staff demonstrate respect, and they respond positively to direction and behaviour guidance. Children have developed a strong sense of right and wrong and, for the most part, manage their behaviour independently.

Children are enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities for child led free play both on their own and in groups. For example, we saw children sitting together keeping each other company whilst individually colouring, and another group of children animatedly played a game of role playing 'house'.

Children are encouraged to be independent in the setting, and they develop skills as a natural part of the routine of the day. They can freely access what is already set out in the room and know they can ask for additional resources. Children extend and develop their play themselves asking for further items to be brought out when needed. We saw children happily playing independently of staff, who allowed them the space to explore and progress their own play, as well as supporting them when needed.

Care & Development — Good

Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of children. They proactively monitor the safety of the environment by completing comprehensive daily checks; however, an annual risk assessment of the setting has not been completed. Staff record children's accidents in detail and notify parents on each occasion, and there is a first aid kit available at the setting. Staff undertake effective cleaning procedures, sanitising surfaces before and after meals and adhering to safe food preparation practices. They promote healthy eating and hydration, fresh drinking water is always accessible, and staff encourage children to wash their hands before snack time. Staff are aware of children's dietary and allergy needs and adapt snack menus accordingly. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and confidently describe the actions they take in a child protection scenario. Information posters displayed in the setting outline the appropriate steps to follow when a concern occurs.

Staff have positive and friendly relationships with the children, and as a result children approach them with ease. They act as polite and friendly role models, and their consistent approach supports children to behave well. Staff guide children in a supportive and encouraging manner. For example, when children play with toys in an unsuitable area, staff gently redirect them and suggest a more appropriate place to continue their play. Staff implement the setting's behaviour management policy and help children to resolve simple conflicts. They praise children frequently and implement positive behaviour management strategies. Staff regularly update parents on behavioural matters and record more serious incidents formally.

Staff know the children well and understand their individual needs. They provide a range of age-appropriate play opportunities that reflect children's interests, for example, creative, imaginative and problem-solving activities. Children select resources and toys that support the direction of their own play. Staff respond to children's ideas and actively engage in child-led play. They interact positively during activities to enhance children's experiences without interrupting the flow of their play. They offer guidance and support where needed while maintaining children's freedom and independence, encouraging children to explore, experiment and develop confidence in their abilities.

Environment — Good

Leaders have effective measures in place to ensure the environment is safe and secure. They complete and record daily checks to ensure play spaces, equipment and resources remain in good condition and are safe for children to access. Leaders ensure entry to and exit from the setting are well controlled. They maintain a visitor book that records the details of all adults entering the setting, and children's attendance is recorded on arrival and departure. Leaders follow regular cleaning routines that reflect good hygiene practices, and hazardous substances are stored in a secure, locked cupboard.

The service operates within a primary school and uses a large, designated play space that children access through internal doors. The indoor room is warm, welcoming and well lit, with multiple windows providing natural light. There are two secure external doors; one leads to a collection point for parents/carers and the other provides access to a secure outdoor play space where children can engage in physical activity. The setting offers carefully arranged areas that stimulate children's interests, including role play, a reading area and ample table-top space for activities and self-directed play. Leaders provide a quiet area with sofas and soft furnishings where children can relax or play calmly. There is an additional small room that offers a space for confidential conversations when needed. Staff display children's work around the room to promote a sense of belonging. One display is titled 'My Heart is Forever in Wales' showcasing what Wales means to individual children.

Leaders ensure children have access to good quality, age-appropriate furniture that promotes their independence within a well-designed play space. They consider the needs of children of all ages by providing tables and chairs of different heights and arranging toys and resources around the room so children can access them easily. Leaders provide a broad range of good quality toys and resources that cater for the interests and developmental needs of all children at the setting. Children confidently select from the wide range of provision available that stimulates their curiosity and supports their own interests. For example, some younger children choose role play equipment, and explore the car garage and figures, while older children select stationary to draw collaboratively, explore magnetic toys and choose books to read and relax. Children access the bathroom directly from the main playroom. The toilets and sinks are provided at different heights to cater for all children, fostering their independence.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders have a strong sense of purpose. They are well qualified, experienced, and committed to providing children with positive, high-quality play experiences and a setting where they can feel at home and valued after school. Leaders organise their setting suitably and keep insurances up to date and there are a suitable range of policies and procedures. However, they do not make all required notifications to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and the statement of purpose needed a few alterations to ensure it's accuracy. Outcomes for children require improvement as leaders do not carry out regular fire drills and we expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders carry out satisfactory self-evaluation. They obtain feedback from parents and children through questionnaires. They use this information and staff observations to produce a quality of care report.

Leaders undertake required pre-employment checks of staff prior to them starting, ensuring that only suitable persons are employed to work with children. Leaders work closely with staff communicating frequently about their work on an informal basis and working well as a team. However, outcomes for children require improvement as leaders have not been meeting their regulatory requirements to carry out formal supervision sessions and annual appraisals with staff. Additionally, staff's safeguarding certificates had just expired at the time of inspection, and some staff's first aid training certificates were not at the correct level of training as stipulated in the National Minimum Standards. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders and staff have built strong, positive connections with parents. Those we spoke with shared how their children love coming to the setting and expressed their confidence in the staff providing their children with high quality care. Parents expressed their gratitude to the setting and the contribution it makes to supporting them to be able to work.

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 may be at risk if staff have not had the correct training in safeguarding and paediatric first aid and if staff do not have regular formal supervision and appraisals.	22/01/26
Children may be at risk in an emergency situation as they have not had regular opportunities to practise how to evacuate the setting safely.	22/01/26

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)
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure a risk assessment of the premises is completed at least annually and is reviewed when there are any changes to the premises or the needs of the children.
Standard 21 - Notifications of significant events	Ensure the required notifications are made to Care Inspectorate Wales
Standard 1 - Information	Ensure the Statement of Purpose is kept up to date and Care Inspectorate Wales are always provided with the most up to date version.

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2026.
You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.