Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Weir Holm Adventures

Melrose, Abergavenny, NP7 8UH

07956338010

www.weirholm.co.uk

The inspection visit took place on 11/08/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Rose (Lottie) Jones
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	12
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	Good
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children demonstrate exceptionally high levels of wellbeing. They confidently make choices, express their views and influence their experiences. Children form strong friendships and trusting relationships with staff, helping them feel safe, valued and secure. They cooperate well, remain highly engaged and show excellent levels of independence, confidence and resilience.

Staff promote children's safety, health and wellbeing effectively. They encourage positive hygiene practices, provide consistent guidance and act as positive role models. Staff engage purposefully with children, using praise and questioning to support learning and development. They know children well and create worthwhile experiences that encourage curiosity, confidence and enjoyment.

Leaders provide an outstanding forest school environment where children benefit from continuous access to nature and natural resources. Children confidently explore the extensive outdoor space and develop an understanding of risk through meaningful experiences. High-quality resources, stimulating surroundings and opportunities for discovery support children's curiosity, creativity, independence and overall wellbeing exceptionally well.

Leaders promote a positive forest school ethos and maintain effective relationships with staff and families. They reflect on practice and seek to improve children's experiences through ongoing discussion and review. Staff feel valued and communication with parents is clear. However, some aspects of leadership and management require improvement to ensure positive outcomes for children are consistently supported.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children have an exceptionally strong voice and confidently influence their experiences throughout the session. They make meaningful choices about their play and learning and freely express their ideas and preferences. For example, children voted on whether they would like to take part in whittling or fire activities. When they chose whittling, the forest school leader arranged the activity for the afternoon, showing that staff value and act on children's views.
Children are settled, relaxed and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging. They arrive enthusiastically and warmly greet familiar friends with cheers, cuddles and hand holding before moving off together to play. Children confidently seek support from staff when needed and receive kind, sensitive responses. Strong relationships with both staff and peers help children feel exceptionally safe, valued and emotionally secure. Children clearly trust the adults who care for them and they display high levels of confidence throughout the session.

Children interact exceptionally well and form highly positive relationships. They cooperate enthusiastically, share ideas and work together to solve problems. During a clay activity, children encouraged one another, saying, *"We need a team to do this together."* Older children willingly support those who are less experienced, helping them understand routines and expectations. Children demonstrate empathy, patience and respect for others, creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels valued.

Children are highly motivated, animated and fully engaged in their play and learning. They enthusiastically participate in activities that reflect their interests and sustain concentration for extended periods. We saw children carefully making willow wands and experimenting with bubble mixtures. Their enjoyment was evident as they proudly exclaimed, *"Wow, look, I've just made a huge bubble!"* and *"Mine's as big as the shed!"* Children solve problems, think creatively and lead aspects of their own learning. During an observational activity, children observed the environment before confidently sharing their findings. One group described hearing *"the birds flying by, bees buzzing and the wind rustling."*

Children demonstrate outstanding independence, confidence and resilience, which strongly supports their well-being. Older children confidently explain forest school routines and boundary markers to newer children, helping them understand how to keep themselves safe. Children independently use tools such as knives and peelers when whittling, showing care, concentration and confidence in managing age-appropriate risks.

Care & Development — Good

Staff promote children's health and safety well throughout the session. They encourage children to follow good hygiene routines and ensure children wash their hands at the outdoor water station before eating and after using the toilet. Staff support children to enjoy regular fresh air and exercise through extensive outdoor play opportunities. They maintain suitable first aid arrangements across the site, with fully stocked first aid kits available in key locations. Staff record accidents and incidents appropriately however, they do not currently record pre-existing injuries. Staff we spoke with demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and know the procedures to follow should concerns arise.

Staff manage interactions well and provide clear, consistent guidance to support children's behaviour. They act as positive role models and speak to one another with kindness and respect, creating a calm and welcoming atmosphere. Staff engage purposefully in children's play and learning, using praise effectively to build confidence and encourage participation. For example, when children shared facts about water during group discussions, staff responded positively, saying, *"Wow! You guys know so much about water, you're so knowledgeable!"* Staff reinforce expectations sensitively and help children listen respectfully to one another. We heard a member of staff remind children, *"Let's listen to our friends and take turns to speak."* As a result, children cooperate well, interact positively and develop respectful relationships with both staff and their peers.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development effectively through purposeful interactions and well-planned experiences. They encourage children to think, question and explore by extending discussions and asking open-ended questions. For example, staff talked to children about the history of the land, previous flooding and the construction of the round house, helping children develop curiosity and a deeper understanding of their environment. Staff also extended learning by asking questions such as, *"How can you block up more holes in the pot?"* and *"What kinds of sounds did you hear when you were listening and still?"* Staff plan activities carefully and create valuable opportunities for children to share ideas, solve problems and build on their existing knowledge. These positive interactions help children become confident learners who enjoy exploring, discovering and developing new skills.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders provide an outstanding environment that fully supports children's wellbeing, play and development. As this is a forest school, children spend their entire session outdoors and have continuous access to nature, natural materials and open spaces. Leaders create a versatile space that children can explore confidently while developing an excellent understanding of risk. They establish clear forest school rules and discuss these at the start of every session, ensuring children understand how to use the space safely. For example, they discuss how to use the compost toilets, play safely with sticks and remain within agreed boundaries. Leaders maintain secure arrival and departure procedures by supervising handovers carefully. However, they do not currently record the times children arrive and leave the sessions. Staff actively involve children in identifying boundaries by placing red marker flags around the site and explaining their purpose. They also provide detailed safety briefings before higher-risk activities. For example, before whittling, leaders explain how to maintain a safety bubble, wear suitable clothing and store tools safely when not in use. Leaders check the site before each session and remove hazards such as fallen branches and animal waste. They do not currently record these daily checks.

Staff use the extensive site exceptionally well, offering children opportunities to explore woodland areas, gather around the roundhouse, create in the mud kitchen, take part in craft activities and relax in sheltered spaces. They involve children in understanding and caring for their environment by walking the site boundaries with them and encouraging them to position boundary markers. This approach helps children develop confidence, ownership and responsibility. Older children proudly talk about trees they planted when they first attended and enjoy seeing how they have grown over time. Leaders provide quiet spaces where children can rest in a hammock, read quietly and observe the natural world around them. The environment promotes a strong sense of belonging and provides extensive opportunities for exploration, discovery and connection with nature.

Leaders provide an extensive variety of high-quality resources that complement the forest school ethos and enrich children's experiences. Children have daily access to natural resources and real-life equipment that promote curiosity, creativity and problem-solving. Leaders provide whittling tools, clay equipment, natural materials, mud kitchen utensils and a library containing books and identification guides about plants, animals and the natural world. Children access resources independently and use them purposefully to follow their interests and develop new skills. Leaders display natural artefacts within the barn such as animal coats, feathers and bunting, creating an inviting space that reflects the surroundings.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders provide appropriate leadership guided by a clear vision for outdoor learning, child-led experiences and the forest school ethos. They maintain a statement of purpose that includes most required information, helping families understand the service, and have mandatory policies in place. However, leaders do not currently have a written policy that outlines the disciplinary process for staff. Leaders collect details about most children who attend the setting however, outcomes for children require improvement as, since moving over to a new way of collecting data, leaders currently do not collect all necessary information about the new children who attend the setting. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Leaders show a reflective approach to evaluating the quality of care and identifying opportunities for improvement. Leaders complete a quality of care review that highlights strengths and considers future developments. Leaders regularly reflect with staff and children, using their views to support the setting's ongoing development.

Leaders manage staff appropriately and maintain systems that support the day-to-day operation of the setting. Staff told us they feel valued and benefit from regular communication with leaders. Leaders hold daily discussions with staff, providing opportunities to reflect on practice and discuss children's experiences and any follow-up actions. However, they do not formally record staff supervisions or appraisals. Outcomes for children require improvement because staff have not completed the safeguarding training required by the National Minimum Standards. We expect the provider to address this. Leaders gather required information about staff and ensure staff have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates prior to them starting their roles to ensure safe recruitment. However, not all staff have other paperwork in place such as job descriptions or health declarations.

Leaders develop positive relationships with parents and maintain clear communication about children's experiences. Parents receive useful information before sessions and benefit from friendly daily handovers which help them feel informed and prepared. Parents who gave us feedback commented on how their children enjoy learning many new skills at the *'nature led adventure sessions.'*

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 are potentially at risk as the responsible individual is unable to demonstrate they have gathered the required information to ensure the service can meet its safeguarding responsibilities and respond appropriately to children's health, welfare and emergency needs.	11/08/26
Outcomes for children are potentially at risk because leaders have not ensured staff receive safeguarding training in line with the National Minimum Standards, potentially reducing their ability to safeguard children effectively.	11/08/26

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 5 - Records	Record accurate times when children attend.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure relevant documentation is in place for all staff, to promote safe recruitment.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Develop a way to formally record staff supervisions and appraisals.

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)
Record pre-existing injuries.
Consider formally recording daily site checks.
Ensure the staff disciplinary process is clearly outlined, recorded, and shared with staff.

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