Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

St Mellons Hyb Flying Start

Cardiff County Council, Trowbridge & St. Mellons Library, 30 Crickhowell Road, Cardiff, CF3 0EF

07586321176

The inspection visit took place on 09/12/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Darling Buds FS Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	20
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	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children are happy at the setting and can make choices and decisions independently. They develop strong relationships and express their views openly, knowing they will be listened to. They enjoy a range of interesting opportunities indoors and outdoors, which spark curiosity and engagement. Children are confident in their communication with each other and with care staff.

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the setting's policies and actively promote healthy lifestyles and children's well-being. They are good role models and build the confidence and self-esteem of the children in their care. Staff plan effectively and monitor children's developmental progress, ensuring they cater for the needs of every child.

The environment is clean, welcoming, and child friendly. It is well organised to stimulate and support children's play and learning. Leaders ensure risk assessments are in place and regularly updated. A good range of indoor and outdoor resources promote children's independence and development.

Leaders have made effective improvements since the last inspection, prioritising safeguarding and ensuring children are consistently supervised effectively. Leaders have a strong vision for the future, managing their team through effective support and continuous training. Parents speak highly of the setting and the care their children receive.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children are happy, settled and relaxed at the setting. They have a strong voice, and their needs and preferences are considered and respected. Children are confident to express themselves, asking members of staff for support with activities. They know that staff will come and help, and are comfortable inviting them, and us, into their play. Children decide which direction they wish to take their play, from the wide range of activities and resources on offer.

Children form warm relationships with staff and readily approach them for guidance or comfort. They settle quickly, some with gentle reassurance and distraction from staff. Children are calm as they play and very happy to get started with activities of their choosing as soon as they arrive at the setting. They are very familiar with the daily routines and join in excitedly, in both Welsh and English, with the ‘stop and tidy up’ countdown.

Children interact well for their ages and stages of development and are learning to behave appropriately. We saw children respecting and listening to others during circle time. They are learning to share when playing with toys. For example, we saw children sharing out paintbrushes with friends and helping each other find dinosaurs buried in the sand pit. They are becoming sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others, checking in on friends who are alone and inviting them to come and play.

Children enjoy their play and learning opportunities and the resources at the setting. During circle time, children smile and have lots of fun joining in with actions alongside staff. They laugh when singing a variety of songs and enjoy taking turns choosing song sticks from the pot. Children enjoy a good balance between freely chosen and adult led play, exploring the environment freely and accessing resources to help them take their play in the direction they wish. They express delight while working with an adult on a recognising and preparing fruit activity and enjoy eating the results!

Children are becoming more confident and have many opportunities to develop their independence skills. This enables them to do things for themselves successfully. For example, children enjoy pouring their own drinks during snack time. They are able to wash their hands independently and put their coats on with support if needed. Children are motivated and make good progress and are confident to try new activities.

Care & Development — Good

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. Staff spoken to respond confidently to safeguarding procedures and scenarios discussed during the inspection. They show secure knowledge of the safeguarding policy and have a clear understanding of the actions they need to take should they have any concerns. Staff ensure they accurately record accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries and inform parents. They promote children's health and well-being and apply good hygiene practices throughout the setting. Staff ensure children receive healthy snacks and either water or milk to drink.

Staff know children well and have a warm, friendly, and caring approach. They speak to the children affectionately, developing a positive rapport. We saw children readily go to staff for a cuddle or happily ask them to join in with their play. Staff use everyday routines, such as snack time and nappy changing as opportunities to engage warmly with children, supporting their comfort and well-being. Although children only attend morning or afternoon sessions and do not need a designated sleep area, staff offer a quiet, comfortable space where they can relax or rest if they choose. Staff consistently offer positive reinforcement to children, acknowledging their efforts and achievements by giving lots of praise and gestures such as 'high fives'. They act as positive role models, fostering respectful and nurturing relationships that encourage confidence and cooperation. Staff manage interactions and behaviour well. They are patient, calm and clear when supporting children to manage their feelings and emotions.

Staff plan activities according to the areas of play that children enjoy. They have started to look at how observations can inform children's next steps play, learning, and development. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting children's individual needs and promote inclusion for all. They provide effective support for children with additional learning needs (ALN), maintaining detailed records to ensure children receive appropriate care. The setting works closely with external agencies, enabling staff to access specialist guidance and resources that enhance children's experiences. Staff are committed to offering a broad range of play and learning activities and create spaces where children can explore, play, and develop confidently.

Environment — Good

Leaders ensure the environment is safe, secure, and very well maintained indoors and outdoors. There is ample space for children to play and learn. They effectively organise consistent cleaning routines that reflect good hygiene practices. Leaders have effective infection control procedures, which successfully minimise the risk to children's health and safety. Staff ensure the doors and gates are kept locked at all times. They have successfully embedded a robust routine for greeting and dismissing the children safely through the gates. Staff complete daily reviews of the premises and all maintenance checks for the building and appliances are up to date. Leaders complete effective and accurate general and fire safety checks as well as specific risk assessments, which they review regularly and take appropriate action if needed. They ensure insurance, gas, and electrical safety certificates are up to date. Leaders practise and record emergency evacuation procedures regularly to ensure all staff and children can safely evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

The premises are warm, inviting, and accessible to all. There is a relaxed, home from home atmosphere where children feel a sense of belonging. Leaders organise the environment to allow children to explore the extensive indoor play space freely. They ensure the environment meets children's needs and helps them to develop their skills. For example, we saw staff working with children to practice and develop their food preparation skills, as part of an enhanced provision activity. Leaders extend children's knowledge and development by offering an extensive range of resources and interesting spaces which challenge and consistently stimulate their curiosity and interest. The outside area provides sufficient room for children to experience a variety of outdoor play experiences. This includes a mud kitchen, wooden planters, and a range of resources for outdoor games. However, the outdoor area does not currently offer the same level of stimulating and engaging activities as the indoor play space.

Leaders ensure children can access a good variety of suitable resources and equipment. There is appropriate furniture for children to sit comfortably to undertake tabletop activities and eat their snacks. Leaders provide suitable toileting and handwashing facilities which allow children to develop their independence skills, as well as a private nappy change area. Staff provide some multi-cultural resources which reflect the wider society, championing diversity and cultural awareness, including dolls, books, and clothes. Leaders use some sustainable and natural materials, for example wooden furniture and real-life kitchen equipment and food packaging. Staff offer authentic learning experiences using real plates and cups at snack time, supporting children to develop their independence.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders have made significant effort to address issues identified at their last inspection. They have made safeguarding children a priority, by embedding effective measures to ensure children are closely supervised during transition times. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, which has greatly improved both children's outcomes and their safety. All staff have completed the necessary safeguarding training. Leaders have a clear range of policies and procedures that reflect good practice within the setting. They review and revise polices regularly and ensure staff have read and understand them. Leaders keep accurate daily records for attendance and staff rotas, showing there are always enough staff for the numbers of children attending. They ensure all required records are up to date and well organised.

Leaders have a detailed and effective statement of purpose that accurately reflects the service provided and meets the national minimum standards. They engage positively with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and inform us of any changes and updates at the setting. Leaders regularly self-evaluate, gathering feedback from parents, children, and staff to plan improvements and produce an annual Quality of Care report. Leaders also regularly analyse accident and incident data to identify trends and required actions.

Leaders undertake timely and robust recruitment processes to safeguard children and follow the setting's policy and procedures. There is a detailed induction process for staff. Regular supervision and appraisals are complete to ensure staff understand their role and responsibilities. Records and conversations with staff members demonstrate these processes are meaningful and supportive. The staff we spoke to said they feel very well supported by leaders who offer *"care, guidance and opportunities for development".*

Leaders have built strong, positive relationships with parents and carers. Effective systems ensure that parents receive regular updates about their child's experiences at the setting. Parents mentioned that staff are *"approachable, polite, friendly, and informative".* They also appreciate how staff consistently keep them updated on relevant matters.

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 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Use observations to effectively plan the next steps for the children's play, learning and development.

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)
Further develop the outdoor area to create an engaging space for children to explore.

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