



## **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**

### **Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 Child Minding and Day Care (Inspection and Information for Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2010 The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010**

#### **Inspection Report**

#### **Alphabet Playgroup**

Pennyfarthing Lane  
Undy  
Caldicot  
NP26 3LZ

**Type of Inspection – Focussed  
Date of inspection – 7 July 2014  
Date of publication – 24 July 2014**

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## Summary

### About the service

Alphabet Playgroup is registered to provide day care for up to 19 children under 8 years of age. It is located in a demountable building in the grounds of Undy Primary School, with whom they have forged close links, and has an adjacent outdoor play area. The group currently provides either morning or afternoon sessions for children between the ages of 2½ and 5 years, with a lunch club and wrap-a-round service for the children who also attend the school nursery. The group is managed by two Registered Persons (RPs), Louisa Sutton and Tracey Millard. Ms Sutton and one member of staff are currently in the process of completing suitability checks with CSSIW in order to become new Persons in Charge (PiCs) of the setting and manage the service on a day to day basis. The setting is a registered provider of Early Years Education for Monmouthshire County Council.

### What type of inspection was carried out?

This was an unannounced, scheduled, focussed inspection. The inspection looked mainly at the quality of life theme.

Evidence for this report came from:

- observation of child care practices, activities and routines of the session
- observation of the interactions between staff and children
- conversations with the children
- discussion with the RI and other staff
- a brief visual check of the premises
- a review of the three parent questionnaires and five staff questionnaires returned to CSSIW prior to inspection.

### What does the service do well?

The setting has forged good links with the adjacent primary school in order to aid the transition process for the children. The setting takes part in and attends a number of activities and events with the school such as the school Eisteddfod, sports day, school fetes and trips. The head also visits children at the setting.

### What has improved since the last inspection?

- the outside play area has been developed to provide an interesting and stimulating area for children to enjoy a good range of activities even in more inclement weather
- parents are provided with weekly newsletters via email outlining activities the children have enjoyed during the week
- some re-organisation and 'de-cluttering' of the resources has been undertaken in order to provide more space for the children as recommended in the previous inspection
- the book corner and home corner have been developed to create more cosy and welcoming play spaces for the children

### What needs to be done to improve the service?

There were no areas of non compliance identified at this inspection.

Some good practice recommendations were made which would help develop the service and improve outcomes for the children and parents using the setting:

review the complaints procedure so that it reflects the new practice by CSSIW with regard to dealing with concerns  
consider developing the nappy area to provide a more suitable facility  
promote children's independence and self help skills further by encouraging them to pour their own drinks and providing an element of self service at snack times  
ensure that staff sit with the children during snack and lunch times more regularly in order to create a more 'family feel' and promote children's social skills further  
develop the key worker system in order to help promote children's well being further and establish strong attachments so that children can feel as confident and secure as possible  
continue with the process of 'de-cluttering' the play room so the room feels as spacious as possible and children's access to toys and resources is maximised.

## Quality of life

Overall, we (CSSIW) found that the setting provided a good range of activities, both indoors and outside, which followed children's interests. Staff engaged naturally with the children and responded sensitively to their needs. Children appeared confident, happy and relaxed with staff and in their environment.

Children have choice and are encouraged to express themselves. There is a good range of easily accessible resources, the majority of play is child-led and personal preferences are respected. We saw children had access to a range of toys, play materials and activities. Children were able to move around freely to access the activities both indoors and outside. Adult-led and group activities were provided and we heard staff inviting children to take part in these, whilst respecting their wishes. We heard one member of staff inviting children to come and listen to a story but told children they could also carry on reading their own stories if they preferred. We observed that children did generally join in of their own choice. We saw children being invited to join in with snack time but were able to carry on playing if they preferred, although we noted that most children chose to enjoy their snack together. At snack time children were able to choose where they sat, the colour of their utensils and which cereal and drink they preferred. We saw two children enjoying the computers and noted that the RP helped them to choose their favourite game which they told us that the 'jigsaw game'. The RPs told us that children's views were regularly sought and used to influence activities and ideas. They affirmed that the children had been involved in the planning of the snack menu. They also stated that children had helped choose the theme for the book corner and their views were sought about what topics they would like to learn about.

Children are able to develop skills, access opportunities to learn and experience time out of doors. Activities are planned which follow the Foundation Phase framework and which incorporate the seven areas of learning. We saw a good balance of free play, focused and adult-led activities. Areas of continuous provision including mark making, construction, computers and craft were set out in designated areas, both indoors and outside. We noted that additional resources and play equipment were easily accessible to the children so that they could easily extend their own play. We saw children enjoying making birthday cakes in the sand, water play, playing on bikes, building with lego, cutting and sticking and role play in the mark making area. We observed staff becoming involved in their play where this was helpful, but standing back and allowing children space when they were absorbed with their own play ideas. Staff told us that they regularly took part in the role play in the home corner to help children learn how to play in this area. We saw that children particularly enjoyed a circle time session talking about the life cycle of the butterfly. Counting and colour recognition was interwoven naturally into daily routines and activities. The RPs told us that observations of certain activities were recorded and used to help plan children's next steps for learning. Snack and lunch times were used as an opportunity to promote children's social and language skills and encourage politeness. However, we noted that staff did not generally sit or eat with the children in order to further enhance these skills. This was discussed with the RPs. We heard staff using Welsh regularly with the children to encourage their understanding and use of the language. We saw photographs of children celebrating a variety of religious and cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year and St David's Day through activities such as crafts and cooking. The RPs told us that they regularly took children to the Forest School in the school grounds. One parent told us in their questionnaire returned to CSSIW prior to the inspection that they chose the setting due to the *"attitude to outdoor playing – the fact that they have rain protection for all kids and there is a school*

*forest which they visit. My child is very outdoorsy and the fact that they would accommodate for those types of activities.”*

Children are generally encouraged to gain independence and self-help skills because staff are keen to promote these skills with the children. We saw children hanging up their own bags and putting on sun hats. Children could access the washrooms independently and were supported where appropriate. We saw that children were helped to independently manage their own lunch boxes. We observed children being helped to pour their own water during the session. However, we noted that children did not serve themselves during snack time, clear away, or pour their own drinks which would extend children's opportunities to develop their self help skills and independence. This was discussed with the RPs.

Children remain healthy because good health and hygiene is practised and promoted. Observations showed that the kitchen was hygienically maintained and well organised. We saw certificates evidencing that all staff had received training in food hygiene. We observed children being encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through simple routines such as appropriate times to wash hands. The RPs told us they regularly chatted with the children about oral health and affirmed that the children were being given toothbrushes and toothpaste in their 'leaving bag' at the end of the term. The RPs told us that the setting had been awarded the Gold Healthy Snack Award. We saw a snack menu displayed showing that children were provided with a good variety of healthy snacks such as fruit, breadsticks, toast and celery. Children enjoyed a choice of low sugar cereals with a choice of milk or water to drink for their snack. They brought lunchboxes from home for their midday meal and staff told us that they promoted health options with parents. We noted that children were happy to eat their sandwiches and fruit before their 'treat'.

## Quality of staffing

This inspection focussed on the quality of life. CSSIW did not consider it necessary to look at the quality of staffing in detail on this occasion as there were no issues evident prior to the inspection.

We did note that children experience good interactions with staff because staff ensure they are familiar with the children's needs and family backgrounds. Through discussion with the RPs it was evident that staff took steps to settle children into the setting, get to know their families, the children's likes and dislikes, their friends and understood the importance of comforters for children. We noted that the staff worked well as a team which created a relaxed, calm atmosphere. We saw staff spending time with the children and engaging with them in their activities where appropriate. We observed children approaching staff confidently and were proud to show them their work. The setting operated a 'sticker card' as a reward system and staff encouraged children to show their sticker cards to their parents when they came to collect them. We heard staff praise the children for their efforts and contributions. We spoke with staff who knew the children well. The RPs affirmed that they worked closely with the parents and nursery to provide appropriate support for children with more particular needs. We saw certificates evidencing that one member of staff had completed a course in Providing Early Support for Children with Additional Needs and their Families. Discussion with the RPs highlighted that the setting deploys a key worker system but that the key worker's main role was record keeping and observations of their key children. In order to promote children's sense of attachment and provide an even smoother transition into the setting for the children, the key worker system should be developed. The RP agreed that the system would be reviewed. One parent told us in their questionnaire returned to CSSIW prior to the inspection: "*Staff are very helpful and forthcoming. All kids are made to feel welcome. They also take note of personal circumstances...My[child] is bi-lingual and what I found really useful and thoughtful was that fact that I was asked to write words she uses in her other language – just to make sure that they understand. I found it heart warming that they actually learn them – not just ask for them and forget all about it.*"

This theme will be considered in more detail in future inspections.

## **Quality of leadership and management**

This inspection focussed on the quality of life. CSSIW did not consider it necessary to look at the quality of leadership and management in detail on this occasion no issues were identified prior to the inspection.

This theme will be looked at in more detail in future inspections.

## Quality of environment

This inspection focussed on the quality of life. CSSIW did not consider it necessary to look at the quality of the environment in detail on this occasion. We noted that the RPs had begun to address the issue identified in the previous inspection report and had made some progress in 'de-cluttering' the room. The RPs affirmed that that there was still work to be done in this area and told us that work to create more useable space for the children was ongoing.

We noted that the environment was bright and welcoming and the setting benefitted from an adjacent outdoor play area. The RPs told us that much work had been done to develop this area in recent months: Bark had been placed on a previously muddy area to provide a space which children could use all year round; a bug world with spider frame had been set up; the bike area had been made more interesting for the children; a craft and mark making area had been set up under cover; an enclosed construction area had been organised; a variety of vegetables and flowers had been planted by the children; a recycled music centre had been organised; the shed had been covered with a bamboo screen to create a more 'natural' feel to the environment. We observed children really enjoying this environment and were happy and engaged in the outdoor activities. Finger guards had been fitted to the internal doors as discussed in the previous inspection. The RPs told us that the setting will be fitting new flooring to the kitchen and craft area and hopefully the washrooms to improve the environment for the children. The nappy change area had been made more private by covering the glass in the entrance door. We discussed the possibility of improving this area further and the RPs agreed that this would be looked into. No safety issues were identified at this inspection.



**How we inspect and report on services** We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focussed. Both consider the experience of people using services.

**Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

**Focussed inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focussed inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focussed inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under 'Quality Themes'. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet 'Improving Care and Social Services in Wales'. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by telephoning your local CSSIW regional office.