



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Childcare Inspection Report on

Smarties

**Mount Street Infant School
Rhosferig Road
Brecon
LD3 7NG**



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Description of the service

Smarties was registered in October 2009 and provides care for a maximum of 16 children aged three to four years of age. The service operates from an annex within Mount Street County Primary School, Brecon. The service is overseen by the responsible individual on behalf of Powys County Council, namely head teacher Sian Kenchington. The person in charge is Elizabeth Stephens. The service operates Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 11.00am and 1.30pm to 3.30pm for children attending sessional care between three to four years of age. The service is an English language provision, however, actively promotes the use of the Welsh language.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Overall, we, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), found that children benefit from a service that is child centred and children are well settled and comfortable at the service. Staff have warm and caring relationships with the children and are knowledgeable, nurturing and consistent and work effectively as a team. Children experience a wide range of educational activities and play opportunities that successfully promote their learning and development. Children are cared for in a safe, clean and child friendly environment. Leaders manage the business well.

2. Improvements

During the course of the inspection the provider:

- updated the statement of purpose for the service;
- provided evidence that all staff files have been completed in line with regulatory requirements;
- instigated the use of a separate visitors' book;
- developed a new preventing extremism and radicalisation policy and
- completed and forwarded a copy of the quality of care report for 2016/17 to CSSIW.

3. Requirements and recommendations

None

1. Well-being

Summary

Children feel safe and happy within their environment and with their carers. They settle quickly and have opportunities to make decisions. They thoroughly enjoy their play and have an excellent choice of activities that are designed to promote their development. Children make good age-appropriate choices and are developing their self help skills very well. They enjoy the play opportunities and experiences available and are becoming independent.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are able to express themselves. They have a strong voice and they are listened to.

Children's verbal and non-verbal communication was listened to. Their views were valued. For example children had free choice of play activities and where they wanted to play. Children expressed their preferences when they did not wish to take part in sand play or puzzles with a clear 'no' and opting to go and play with the large trucks outdoors. The request was met by staff members. Children also chose to play with the discovery area, construction play, role play outdoors as well as sand play indoors. They thoroughly enjoyed turning one of the outdoor tough spots into an ice cream shop using play dough and scoops. Several of the children had individual play plans in place and these were promoted throughout the sessions with a mix of free play and focused tasks. We saw children choose where they wanted to sit at the table at snack time; they also chose what they wanted to eat and drink and asked for more.

Children have a very positive voice at the service.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children feel safe and happy and have a sense of belonging; they have positive bonds with their carers and their peers.

Children arrived at the service happily and settled quickly and they moved around with confidence and went to staff or their preferred play area. They had developed very good bonds of affection with the staff and we saw children having plenty of cuddles and reassurance. Children were observed playing and communicating with staff in a relaxed and comfortable manner. We saw children approaching staff for cuddles throughout our visits and observed children playing independently and with others. Parents and carers told us that their children were extremely happy and settled at the service and were developing well. Children were happy and content and smiled and laughed as they took part in activities and followed the daily routine. Children knew the routines very well; they participated in tidy up time as well as circle time and story time and knew where items were stored

Children feel fully valued, safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children play well together, they co-operate and are beginning to be considerate to each other and are learning the importance of sharing and turn taking.

Children interacted well with each other and they were beginning to take turns and share items. They were learning to cooperate and responded well to praise. For example they waited for their turn on the outdoor equipment such as the sit on and ride on toys and shared play dough cutters during an outdoor play dough activity. Younger children began to demonstrate their feelings and consideration for others. For example one child fell to the floor whilst playing outdoors and another child went to assist the child and check if the child was ok and needed help. Another child assisted one of his friends to open the top of the rabbit hutch so that they could feed the rabbits the dandelion leave they had collected whilst at the forest school. The child smiled and soon resumed playing. Children's behaviour was good; we heard them say "please" and "thank you" without being prompted especially at snack time. They confidently approached staff for comfort and support for example to help tie their laces or to put on their shoes and coats.

Children interact very well with each other with staff.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children are engaged and are interested in their play. Children benefit from a range of play opportunities designed to support their development.

The children at the service looked forward to circle time and were motivated and eager to get seated for the activity. They showed the excitement in their facial expressions. They thoroughly enjoyed the 'Tap the Box' session and pulled out prompt characters related to nursery rhyme songs and were bubbling with enthusiasm to join in and sing the songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle' and 'Five in a Bed'. The children were also seen to be thoroughly enjoying and engaged in the outdoor forest school activity in the afternoon. They had the opportunity to explore their environment, listen to various bird calls and play hide and seek. The children shrieked with delight and a sense of achievement as they hid themselves and some soft toy birds and discovered their friends and hidden birds again. Children were provided with plenty of opportunity for planned and free play activities to select from both indoors and outdoors. The role play dough ice cream shop was a particular favourite activity outdoors.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children are developing their individual skills and are provided with good opportunities to learn and become independent.

Children were developing their physical skills and they had many opportunities to develop these. Children independently negotiated and explored the outdoor play areas well and experimented using different play stations including gardening, the discovery area, construction, role play, large trucks and vehicles and the wooden Wendy House. They were also given the opportunity to partake in the forest school and community garden and

take measured risks take safely. The children were able to access outdoor play as an integral part of their daily routine

Children were seen to enjoy snack time with this being a sociable time with the children sat around a small table happily chatting to one another. One child was appointed 'helpwr y dydd' and embraced this role proudly, offering children "llaeth" (milk) or "dwr" (water) to drink as well as issuing cups and plates. Children's independence was well nurtured and encouraged as they poured their own water into their plastic beakers from small jugs and individual milk bottles. Children's social and language skills were developing well. They communicated confidently with each other, with staff and with us. All the children attending helped to tidy up toys. Children who were able also used the toilet and washed their hands independently with minimum support.

Children are developing well and becoming independent learners

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are kind, caring and motivated. They interact well with children and provide and show genuine affection towards them. They work effectively with them to promote their learning and development. They have an excellent understanding of the children's individual needs and work together effectively. Staff have undertaken appropriate training and keep children safe. They understand and follow the service's procedures to safeguard children and work well to promote children's health.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff work effectively to keep children healthy and safe.

Staff provided well balanced and varied snacks. Staff provided the children with a healthy fruit option for both their morning and afternoon snack accompanied with a choice of milk or water. Staff ensured that all children washed their hands prior to food and had individual wipes to wipe their hands and faces following snack and lunch.

Staff provided us with their safeguarding policy and when questioned staff were clear about their child protection responsibilities and who they should report any concerns to with regards to keeping children safe. Most of the staff had up to date training in child protection and there was a plan in place to ensure that the others attended training in the near future. The person in charge confirmed that she had received Prevent Duty and Radicalisation training and that the safeguarding policy had been updated to include this information. Medication records demonstrated that the staff were following the medication policy which included a record of when the last dose of medication had been given should the issuing of medication be required.

Staff took children to play in the outdoor play area, community school garden, the forest school area and for walks in the local area on a regular basis. A sample of accident and incident records seen confirmed that staff had been maintaining and completing regular accident and incident records for all accidents. We saw that staff kept records of children's health needs and any allergies up to date.

Staff consistently and successfully to keep children safe and their health is promoted.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff know the children very well and provide a nurturing and caring environment. They are good role models and are consistent in their approach when managing behavioural issues.

Staff employed effective positive behaviour management techniques. They rewarded good behaviour by giving specific praise, such as "good sharing" and "well done". Staff gave the children plenty of praise for their achievements at circle time. Such as 'nice sharing', 'good listening', 'excellent story telling' and 'good job tidying up'. Staff supervised the children well and were responsive to their needs. Staff followed the service's positive behaviour policy, which promoted reinforcement of good behaviour and encouraged them to think

about the reasons behind children's behaviour and their stage of development. We saw several examples where staff resolved potential behavioural issues through distraction or discussion with the children. One such incident was staff negotiated with children and supported them to take turns to take photographs with the digital camera whilst out in the forest school session. Additionally, when two children both wanted the same play dough cutter; a staff member offered the choice of different pieces which resolved the issue. All staff modelled appropriate behaviour by speaking positively and kindly to each other and to children. They managed behaviour consistently throughout the sections with all staff using, "No thank you" as a reminder when behaviour was inappropriate or children were not sharing.

Staff are excellent role models; they interact positively with children and promote good behaviour.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff know the children well and promote their development to ensure that they meet their potential. They provide the appropriate level of support for the children to be able to achieve this.

Staff knew the children very well and were aware of the children's individual needs and preferences. Staff enthusiastically played with the children, sang songs and counted numbers. Staff promoted children's language development by repeating words and numbers. The current theme at the setting was the sea shore and fish. There was plenty of evidence to support this theme in the base room in the form of the children's work and wall mounted display as well as a pretend beach created inside a tent in the outdoor play area. Welsh was introduced into the setting such as numbers, colours, the weather, weeks, months of the year, greetings as well as simple sentences. Staff had also labelled many items in the base room bilingually. This was evident at snack time when the staff used prompt cards that were on display to encourage the children to ask for water, milk fruits at snack time in Welsh. For example, "ga i llaeth?" "ga i dwr?" and this was followed by "os gwelwch yn dda" and "diolch". They also named the fruits of the day in Welsh and talked about the colours of the fruits bilingually. Children were also excited and animated to share with us that they had enjoyed the story of 'Hooray to Fish' and 'Elvis yr Octopws'. Children's imagination was also encouraged and developed. One child in particular thoroughly motivated and enjoyed playing the game of drawing an image in the glittery sand tray and then getting each player to take turns to draw and guess what the image was.

Staff ensured that children were physically active by taking part in regular outdoor play. They regularly asked children what they wanted to do next and offered activities such as paint, water play or free play. Staff provided the children with an array of different and stimulating activities and play opportunities. They had established a clear routine which the children were familiar with. For example, they knew when to sit at the table for snack.

Staff observed children regularly and kept records of their progress. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of this. Staff had observed and assessed children within focused tasks, made observational notes and completed Foundation Phase Profiles for the children. Staff

had also developed and completed developmental records; and where applicable these had been turned into individual play plans.

Staff were effective at identifying individual children's developmental achievements and what they hoped they would progress to achieve in the short term. Staff had developed some photographic evidence which captured and showed photographs of the children involved in various activities in line with the seven areas of learning.

Staff are excellent in promoting children's play, learning and all round development.

3. Environment

Summary

Leaders provide a suitable and safe, warm, nurturing environment for children. There is a stimulating supply of resources and equipment to meet the children's needs and leaders ensure that they check the environment and resources regularly

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

Leaders ensure that the environment is safe, clean and secure. Leaders identify any risks to children and so far as is possible, eliminate or reduce them.

The indoor and outdoor play areas were very welcoming and provided a rich environment for play, learning and development. Leaders ensured that the environment was safe and secure at all times. Leaders completed comprehensive risk assessments and reviewed them regularly. They ensured that the environment was suitably free from potential risks to health and safety at all times. Tests on heating appliances and PAT tests had been undertaken and were up to date. Leaders had last received a food hygiene rating of five in 2014. Leaders practised and completed fire drills on a regular basis and records were in place.

Leaders effectively ensure the safety of the environment.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

Leaders provide suitable premises, which are child friendly and stimulating. The layout promotes children's independence and the ethos of the Foundation Phase.

Leaders ensured that the premises both indoors and outdoors were warm, welcoming and friendly. The main base room vibrantly displayed the current themes of the sea shore and fish and there were many colourful and bright wall mounted displays. Each area provided a good environment for play and learning with the main base room and outdoor area providing plenty of choice in the form of rotational work stations. The enclosed play area located directly outside the main base room enabled children to safely explore the range of play opportunities on offer. The children benefitted greatly from also having regular access to the school's community garden and forest school area. There was sufficient space and facilities to meet the children's needs. Leaders ensured that the premises promoted independence and allowed children to undertake suitable risks.

Leaders ensure the suitability of the premises effectively.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Leaders provide children with an extensive range of toys, equipment and furniture that are appropriate for their needs.

Leaders ensured that children had access to furniture, equipment and toys that were appropriate for their age, needs and developmental stage both indoors and outdoors. For example, books, dolls, cars, jigsaws, water play, sand play, table top play, craft, role play

and dressing up, blocks, soft toys and educational toys were accessible. Leaders had created a stimulating outdoor area, which provided good opportunities in line with the Foundation Phase. The section for physical free play included outdoor painting, gardening, home corner, construction and sand area, an array of tough spot activities, a tent beach in line with the current theme and a pet corner. Daily risk assessments included the checking of toys and resources. There was evidence of cultural awareness, celebration of various festivals as well as the promotion of the Welsh language and many bilingual labels and displays were very apparent throughout the service

Leaders successfully ensure that there is a wide range of toys, resources and equipment available.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders have a clear vision for the service. Leaders are committed to monitoring and improving the service. There are effective partnerships in place with parents and the local community. Leaders manage the service well.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders comply with the relevant regulations and national minimum standards. They maintain up to date policies, procedures and records sufficiently and overall these translate into sound practice.

Leaders had an informative statement of purpose which was compliant with the regulations. There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures which had been reviewed and updated. Leaders informed us that the safeguarding policy had been updated to include information in respect of prevent duty and radicalisation. Leaders maintained the required records in relation to children's personal information, contracts, accidents, emergency medical consent, incidents and attendance.

Leadership is good.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders have an ongoing system in place for reviewing the service and planning and making ongoing improvements.

Leaders had implemented a process for reviewing their service and making improvements, which included issuing questionnaires to parents and carers. Leaders were aware that a report on the quality of the service was required annually. In discussion the leaders told us that they were keen to improve the service and would listen to the views received. During the course of the inspection, leaders provided CSSIW with the copy of the completed quality of care report for 2016/2017 which had been completed in June 2017. Parental questionnaires returned included comments such as ; 'wonderful environment, great activities', 'superb care', 'she talks about going to school at the weekend' and 'my child is very happy'.

Leaders are continually striving to make improvements to their service.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

Leaders implement an induction process and contingency arrangements are in place for staff absences. Leaders also have a good recruitment programme in place.

We looked at a sample of staff files which showed that leaders had completed most checks on staff. However, of the sample of files seen and held at the service some were not fully compliant with the regulations as they were missing the information as required by the regulations in respect of:

- Curriculum vitae;

- proof of identity;
- two references per staff member and
- medical declarations of health in relation to each staff member

However, during the second visit leaders confirmed that all staff files and been completed and were in line with regulatory requirements. Leaders also confirmed that in collaboration with staff members a two years development plan had been produced which included regular team meetings, half termly supervision reviews, termly staff observations and annual appraisals to be completed at the end of each academic year.

Leaders appropriately manage staff.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders have good relationships with the parents and external agencies. They share information with parents, and receive support from various agencies. Leaders promote children's experiences and learning via local community resources.

Leaders had effective partnerships with parents. The service had a 'partners with parents' policy, and they organised open days as well as transition meetings with parents. The leaders and staff kept parents regularly informed about their child via a range of methods including monthly newsletters and verbal feedback. Parents had the opportunity to speak to staff when they collected their child. During the inspection, we saw staff telling parents about their child's day. We spoke to five parents/ carers who had come to collect their children from the service and they all said how highly they valued the service and how well their children had come on. Leaders also used the 'Schoop' school instant messaging system on smart phones and tablets to improve communication between parent and carers and the school. In order to improve communication between the service and home the service had a bear called Caradog which each child got to take home for a period of time. Leaders confirmed the Caradog the bear had been involved in an array of activities including school sports day and more recently a trip to the USA to visit a child's family. Parents are also involved in providing additional language support at the services for children of varying cultures.

Leaders also have very good link and partnership working with external agencies such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, Team Around the Family (TAF), special needs specialists, community nurses, nutritionists and social services.

Leaders have effective partnerships.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Areas of non compliance identified at this inspection

None

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

None

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 12 and 14 July 2017 for approximately ten hours. We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice during the visit and completed observations on one child using the SOFI 2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by staff and
- spoke to children, parents/carers and staff.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website www.cssiw.org.uk

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Shan Kenchington
Person in charge	Elizabeth Stephens
Registered maximum number of places	16
Age range of children	Three to four years of age
Opening hours	The service operates 9.00am to 11.00am and 1.30pm to 15.30pm Monday to Friday only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	2 May 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	12 and 14 July 2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Additional Information:	

