



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Castleton Preschool and Nursery**

**Marshfield School  
Marshfield Road  
Marshfield  
Newport  
CF3 2UW**



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## **Description of the service**

Castleton Preschool and Nursery is located on the site of Marshfield Primary School in Marshfield, Newport. Carol McIvor is registered to provide the service and there is a Person in Charge of the nursery on a day to day basis. The nursery is registered to care for up to 19 children and is also an education provider registered with the local authority. The service is provided through the medium of English and includes some incidental Welsh.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

We found that the children who attend this service enjoy attending and are able to engage in a good variety of play which is planned and purposeful. Staff are motivated and clearly want to provide the best experiences for children. Children benefit from access to a large and varied outdoor play space, as well as an indoor play space which has been developed with the children to encourage their learning and development. Leaders have high expectations for the service. However, we found that there are areas where the service does not meet its legal requirements.

### **2. Improvements**

The service has shown that it is dedicated to the ongoing professional development of the staff group and further improvements have been made to the play environment and resources available to children.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We found that the service was not meeting its legal responsibilities in respect of:

- knowledge and understanding of Child Protection and its practical application;
- regular supervision of staff by management;
- safe recruitment; and
- the Statement of Purpose did not contain the ages of children to be cared for.

These are serious matters but we have not issued a Non-Compliance Notice in respect of them because our discussions with the Registered Person gave us assurances that these matters would be addressed.

We have also given recommendation to improve practice in areas relating to managing risk, policies and record keeping, and these are listed in full in section 5 of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children in this service are able to make their own choices about their play and are well supported to do this. They are listened to and their views are taken into account. They have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, their independence is promoted and they enjoy the good range of play opportunities available to them.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children are encouraged to speak and express themselves, and all attempts at communication are valued by staff. We observed the staff to be considerate of the children's views and conscious to give the young children options and choices and to allow them to express themselves. The activities available to the children are planned by staff based on children's interests and how they enjoyed an activity previously. Activities can be extended to allow children to continue to develop their play or changed as the interests of the children change. Staff told us that children are also explicitly asked to contribute to ideas for activities and staff implement these ideas. During times of play, we saw that children were able to choose freely which activities they wanted to engage in and all children were confident to move freely around the play space. At snack time, children are able to choose what snack to have from the selection available.

Children have a strong voice in this service.

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

Children are secure, comfortable, happy and relaxed in the care of staff with whom they have developed relationships. Most children appear to be well settled. A minority of children are new to the service and we observed staff manage this. One child arrived unsettled and we saw them be comforted by staff until they felt confident to move on to play. We also observed that the new children attending were aware of who they could go to for help or comfort. We saw them look to staff for help and to watch what they were doing to help them learn about the service. All children were happy to interact with staff and often include them in their play. The children are happy and they smile and laugh whilst they are playing. Some children are beginning to form friendships with their peers, and we saw them seek out others to play with, asking for each other by name. Staff are polite and respectful to the children and the children are happy to approach staff for assistance.

Children in this service are well settled, happy and confident. They are forming friendships and feel valued.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children are learning to co-operate, take turns and share, as well as becoming sensitive to the emotions of others. Many of the children attending this service were very young at the time of our inspection. They were developing an understanding of the impact they have on others and how to manage their behaviour in a group environment. They were beginning to become considerate of one another when playing. When difficulties occurred, such as a taking a toy away from another child who was already playing with it, staff were on hand to support the children to manage the situation. Some of the children in the service are beginning to be aware of the feelings of others and to manage their own behaviour. They are responsive to gentle reminders from staff such as “Kind hands, please”. Children were very familiar with the routines of the playgroup and this familiarity helped the children anticipate when activities would change (such as snack being available or a short group activity) and minimise any potential for disruption. Some children are beginning to form friendships and play co-operatively. When a relatively new child arrived at the service upset, they were comforted by staff. Once the child had settled a little, an older child approached, smiled, took them by the hand and said “[They] can play with me”.

Children are developing a sense of right and wrong and are working on becoming self disciplined.

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

Children are interested and excited in the play based activities in which they engage. We saw that children were active and curious throughout the inspection. They were happy and confident to move between activities freely, but also held a sustained interest in activities of their choosing as well. We saw children enjoy the water play available, particularly as it was a very warm day. They had water shooters and enjoyed shooting water at each other as well as seeing how far they could make the water go, experimenting with various techniques to improve the distance. They developed this play by role-playing as fire fighters and fighting an imaginary fire on the play house. Painting and printing was also set out. Some children chose to explore the paints with their hands and fingers instead. They mixed the colours together, made hand prints and enjoyed the feel of the paints on their hands. Throughout our visits, we saw staff praising children’s efforts, which they were pleased to receive. When older children arrived at the service for after school care, they enjoyed the purposeful task of watering the plants they had been growing. Staff told us that during the hot weather, this had been a favourite for the older children as they wanted to ensure the plants thrived.

Children at this service enjoy their play and learning, are able to sustain interest in their play and gain a real sense of achievement from it.

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

Children are developing across a range of skills. The service is registered with the local authority as an early years education provider and as such, the education provision is inspected by Estyn. We found that staff appeared to have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and were able to plan activities to meet their next steps in learning. We observed children's independence developing. They were encouraged to help to tidy away activities when they were finished with and, with support, most were happy to help the staff with this and join in with their peers. Children also have a lot of independence in their play. We saw that when children were happy playing independently of staff, staff allowed them the space to explore and progress their own play, rather than always seeking to join in with the play themselves. We saw that children are encouraged to find sun hats themselves if they wanted to play outdoors, as well as having free access to water throughout the day. Children are able to move around the playgroup very independently and make lots of their own decisions. Children are able to follow their own interests because of this and the good range of resources which are easily accessible to them. A rolling snack time has recently been introduced and children are now encouraged to collect their own bowl and cup, pour their own water or milk, choose which items of snack they would like, and wash up their bowl and cup once they are done.

Children in this service are making good progress and are developing independence skills.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Children benefit from staff who have a sound understanding of child development and want to make a positive difference to the children in their care. They also have a sound understanding of children's individual needs and this helps to ensure that those needs are well met. In general, children remain safe and healthy because staff have a suitable understanding of their responsibilities and of the policies and procedures in place to support them in their roles. However, understanding and applying the principles of Child Protection must be improved and a more positive approach to behaviour management should be developed.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

In the main, staff ensure that the service's policies and procedures are well implemented to support the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in their care. Good hygiene is promoted at the service. All children were encouraged to wash their hands before they engaged with the rolling snack and tables were cleaned with antibacterial spray before snack was served. On the day of the inspection, snack was a selection of sliced fruits. The service is registered with Environmental Health as a food business and has been awarded a 5-star food hygiene rating. A sufficient proportion of the staff group hold current paediatric first aid certificates. Records showed that fire drills are practised with the children several times each half term, with different scenarios and routes included.

However, we did not find the application of the principles of Child protection to be effective and consistent in this service. All staff are trained in Child Protection. However, we found several records which did not demonstrate that suitable steps had been taken when there were concerns about a child. We discussed this at length with the Registered Person. The service was not meeting its legal requirements in respect of Child Protection, but we have not issued a Non-Compliance Notice on this occasion because the Registered Person gave assurances that addressing this would be a matter of utmost priority.

Staff have a sound understanding of the policies and procedures to follow to keep children safe and healthy. However, dealing with child protection concerns must be made more effective.

## **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff have unrealistically high expectations of children's behaviour, and their approach to managing behaviour does not sufficiently take into account children's age and understanding, and it is not suitably respectful of children's personal space and autonomy. No significant issues of unwanted behaviour occurred during the inspection, and yet we observed the management of minor behaviour issues to be unnecessarily negative. Staff rely too much on holding or physically guiding children when it is unnecessary. We observed children being taken by the hand back to snack they no longer wanted, or to activities staff wanted them to engage in, but in which children showed little interest. We also saw a member of staff sit directly behind a child during circle time to curtail any minor instances of unwanted behaviour, and when this very young child did not join in the actions to a song, the member of staff took the child by the arms from behind with no warning and moved the child's arms to all the actions. Until this point, we observed this very young child had actually joined in remarkably well with songs they were more familiar with.

The management of children's behaviour is unnecessarily negative and a more positive approach which respects children's rights and wishes must be introduced and implemented consistently.

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

The service is registered with the local authority as an early years education provider and so staff deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum. Records of children's development are used to inform the planning of activities and ensure that they meet the children's next steps in play and learning. Staff are aware of the principles of the Foundation Phase curriculum and were able to speak knowledgeably to us about the different skills they were hoping to develop in the children through the various activities they provided. It was clear through our observations that they take into account children's interest and abilities to plan for the next steps in their learning, because the children responded well to the activities provided and were interested and engaged. Children benefit from the inclusion of some Welsh language in the provision, such as during circle time activities, in songs and greetings.

Staff promote children's development and well-being through the play and care provided.



### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children benefit from an environment which is of a good standard, clean and welcoming, and a play space which has been well developed to ensure it is interesting and engaging for children. They also have access to a very well developed outdoor play space and benefit from a good range of resources which are appropriately maintained.

#### **Our findings**

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

Parents can be confident that the areas used by children are safe and well maintained. We saw that the areas that children access were appropriately maintained and decorated. The building was secure as staff locked the front door, with the keys available for emergencies. The garden was also enclosed. Staff are responsible for cleaning, which they do as necessary in the day and at the end of each day. Risk assessments are in place but we found they were not updated as risks changed or informed by information contained in accident records and this should be addressed. We reviewed safety records and found that the service's Public Liability Insurance, electrical systems safety certificate and annual gas safety certificate were up to date. However, the service did not have copies of the electrical systems safety certificate and gas safety certificate until we requested them for the inspection, and so a system must be established to ensure that they have access to these safety certificates whenever they are renewed so that the Registered Person can establish that she is operating from safe premises.

Children are cared for in a clean and welcoming environment. However, risk assessments must be kept up to date and safety certificates must be sought when they are renewed by the landlord.

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

Children's well-being is promoted within the service because the facilities and equipment provided meet the children's needs and promote their all round development. The space is decorated in a welcoming and friendly manner. Displays are attractive and are mostly made up of children's own work, including free drawings, and photographs of the children engaging in activities. Many of the resources are stored at low levels and in containers which are of a manageable size for children to handle. This means that they can access many of the resources in the service independently, supporting their free choice. Child sized tables and chairs are available for the children to undertake activities, as well as a cosy book corner where they can relax. The indoor play space has been organised into 'areas of nursery' (such as role

play, construction, messy play etc.) to help children find what they want to play with and we found this to be a successful approach. Children are able to access a very interesting and engaging outdoor play space which the Registered Person told us is a focus of development. A very good range of facilities were available outside, including various play houses with activities in, large construction, and a large circular path which children used as a road for their bikes and trikes. There was lots of established planting and trees, as well as evidence of planting activities.

Children benefit from an environment that is well used and thought out by staff, as well as plenty of space to play and learn.

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

Children have access to toys and equipment that are appropriate and suitable to their needs. We saw that the resources at the service covered a wide range of play opportunities. There were books in both English and Welsh, and in general, the resources available were of a good quality and in suitable numbers. However we did note that very few small world resources were available and this provision should be increased. Due to the very good weather during our visits, the children spent much of their time out of doors. The garden is very well developed, with a very large grass mound in the centre which provides some interest. Activities we saw children play with in the garden included a mud kitchen, large chalk boards, crates and tyres, large construction blocks, wheeled toys, a music corner, a large sit-in sand tray, small slides and climbing equipment, a reading hut and a mark making hut. They also especially enjoyed the water play staff made available because of the hot weather.

Children benefit from a very good range of toys and equipment that promote their development.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Parents and children benefit from a reliable service that is well organised. However, there are areas in which the service has not been run with due regard to the regulations and National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

In the main, children and parents benefit from a well run and planned service. The nursery has a Statement of Purpose which is shared with the parents. The Statement of Purpose is clear but does not contain all of the information required by National Minimum Standard 1. This should be addressed and submitted to CIW. We examined the children's attendance register and found that it is maintained appropriately. We examined the service's policies and found them to be appropriate and in most instances, thorough. The Child Protection, Uncollected Child and Lost Child policies would benefit from some additional information and we discussed this with the Registered Person. We examined medication records and found that they included the required information. However, the records were stored in a communal book and this is not appropriate as it compromises confidentiality. Accident and first aid records were also completed, but not all contained the child's full name and the information on some was too brief.

Parents can be confident the provision is well run through sound leadership and management. However, there are elements of the service where insufficient due care and attention has been paid to the requirements of the regulations and National Minimum Standards.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Children and parents using the service are actively involved in defining and measuring the quality of the service. There is a system in place to ensure that a formal self evaluation of the service is undertaken on at least an annual basis. The Quality of Care report demonstrated that the service has consulted with parents, staff, children and relevant external agencies in order to review the quality of the service. It also included an action plan intended to improve the service over the following 12 months.

The service draws on first hand evidence and the views of staff, parents, children and external agencies to evaluate the service and prioritises the matters they wish to improve.

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

Whilst children benefit from competent and confident carers who are able to meet their needs, the management of staff is not sufficiently effective in all areas. We examined a sample of staff files and found that they did not all contain all of the necessary pre-employment checks. This is a serious matter and the service has not met its legal responsibilities in this respect. However, on this occasion we have not issued a Non-Compliance Notice because the Registered Person gave assurances this would be addressed as a matter of urgency. Whilst examining staff records, we also found that, although staff receive an annual appraisal, no formal system of staff supervisions is in place. The service is also failing to meet its legal responsibilities in this respect. Regular, formal supervisions must be undertaken with staff. We recommend that management use the Social Care Wales document "Supervising and Appraising Well" as guidance.

The management of staff is not thorough enough to ensure children's safety and well-being and this must be addressed.

### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Parents and children's expectations about the service are matched by their experience. Parents we spoke to confirmed they were satisfied with the communication in place between the service and themselves. They confirmed they were made aware of the service's policies when their children started and that they are satisfied with the information they receive about their children on a daily basis. We saw a parents' notice board which displayed appropriate useful information. We examined children's records and found that they contained the necessary information to ensure staff can meet children's needs effectively.

The playgroup is clear about its role and responsibilities to establish trust and clear communication with partners.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- A more positive approach to managing behaviour should be developed;
- ensure risk assessments are updated as risks change and that accident records influence the management of risk when relevant;
- 'small world' resourcing should be improved;
- the Child Protection policy should include that accounts given by parents when there are concerns for a child will be recorded, that CIW should be informed of any referrals made to Children's Services, and the procedure to be followed if an accusation was made against the Registered Person;
- the Lost Child policy must include that the parents of the lost child would be notified without delay;
- the Uncollected Child policy must include that Children's Services would be contacted after a reasonable period of time without being able to contact any guardian or emergency contact. It should also state that CIW would be notified after the event;
- a system should be established to ensure that the service has access to gas safety and electrical systems safety certificates/reports whenever they are renewed;
- all accident records should contain the child's name in full; and
- records containing personal information (e.g. medication forms) should not be stored in a communal record.

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook an unannounced visit to the service. We visited the service across two days to observe children and the care they received. The following inspection methods were used:

- we reviewed information held by CIW;
- observations were carried out both indoors and outdoors;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we spoke to a number of children throughout the two days. We also spoke to most staff members who were present and a number of the parents;
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the Statement of Purpose, staff files, health and safety records, children's files, activity planning and developmental records.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Carol Mclver
Person in charge	Kathryn Walker Carol Mclver
Registered maximum number of places	19
Age range of children	2 years of age until the child completes Year 1 in school
Opening hours	7:45 to 5pm Monday to Friday in term time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	13/10/2015
Dates of this inspection visit	28/06/2018 and 24/07/2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	<p>This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's '<i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i>'.</p> <p>The service is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh language service.</p>
Additional Information:	