



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**1st Steps Day Care**

**Whitbread Enterprise Centre  
Rhymney Walk  
Rhymney  
Tredegar  
NP22 5XE**



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## **Description of the service**

1<sup>st</sup> Steps Day Care was registered by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in 2017 to provide care for up to 41 children under the age of 12 years. It is a family owned business located in the Whitbread Enterprise Centre. The Registered Persons (RP), Bethan Evans-Conway and Linda Evans have overall responsibility for the service. Linda Evans is also the Person in Charge (PiC) who together with another PiC is responsible for the day to day running of the service. It is an English speaking service with some incidental Welsh used through play.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

This is the first inspection post registration. We found that outcomes for children are good in relation to their well-being. They have a variety of play and learning experiences to promote their all –round development which makes their time at the nursery enjoyable and suitably challenging. Care practice is responsive and interactions are managed effectively by the team but records of children’s progress and development could be stronger. The nursery is well maintained, welcoming, and safe. As a relatively new service systems and processes are still being embedded and tested and we found that in most areas leadership is effective. However, to date quality assurance processes have not been fully implemented and improvements are required in relation to the organisation of staff files and the deployment of staff within the service.

### **2. Improvements**

This is the first inspection since the service was registered with CIW. Following our first inspection visit the provider:

- Re-located a storage unit which was in the nappy changing area;
- updated the medication form and the process for administering medication;
- updated staff files and
- cut back overgrown weeds in the outdoor play area.

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

We notified the provider that they were not meeting their legal responsibilities in relation to their quality assurance processes as an annual review of their service has not been completed. However, as this did not impact on children and the RP’s agreed to review their service immediately and forward a copy of their review report to CIW within two months we have not issued a non compliance notice on this occasion.

We further notified the provider that they were not meeting their legal responsibilities in relation to medication records. However, immediate action was taken to address this matter; as a result we have not issued a non compliance notice.

Additionally recommendations have been made in relation to care practice, the environment and leadership and these are outlined in the report and summarised at the end.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children are meaningfully occupied and activities are suitably challenging and appropriate for the age and abilities of children who attend the service. Their social development and independence skills are promoted and they are becoming self reliant and confident in preparation for more formal education.

## **Our findings**

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

Children are confident to speak out and make their needs known. They readily approached staff to engage in conversations with them and to request specific resources. They were encouraged to make decisions regarding their play, for example, at circle time they chose stories which interested them. A child had a particular interest in dancing and a Busy Feet activity was included in the morning session which all the children enjoyed. Children who attend after school were able to direct and make independent decisions regarding their play. At meal times children were confident enough to ask for drinks. For example, we heard a child ask for milk as well as water and this was promptly provided.

Children have a voice in the service and this promotes their confidence and self esteem.

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

Children are secure, settled and are developing strong relationships with their carers. Most children were happy, familiar with the routines of the nursery and comfortable in their surroundings approaching staff for cuddles and to play alongside them. On the second day of our inspection we noticed two babies were unsettled for a period of time. Both were very new to the nursery and appropriate support and comfort was given to reassure them. We spoke to a parent who was collecting their child as part of the settling in process. They were very happy with the arrangements and the nursery's flexibility and willingness to offer short sessions over a period of time. Basic Polish words were displayed on a wall to make children whose first language is not English feel more welcome and practice of this kind gives children a sense of belonging and self worth.

Children feel safe and valued in the nursery which promotes their well-being

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

Children are beginning to learn important social skills such as turn taking and co-operating with others. We witnessed no unwanted behaviour and children played happily alongside each other. We observed children chasing one another and laughing, they took turns to use outdoor play equipment and happily sat together at meal times. At circle time they sat nicely in a group and happily joined in singing and dancing activities.

Children are learning important social skills through play and older children are becoming sensitive to the needs of others.

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

Children enjoy a range of organised and free play opportunities which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. The weather was very good during both inspection days and the children had regular opportunities for outdoor play, as well as a variety of indoor activities. They enjoyed pointing to pictures in the books held up by staff during circle time and a Busy Feet activity was very successful with children enthusiastically joining in with the music and jumping up and down. There were quieter times when children followed their own interests spending time in the home corner and playing with small toys. Older children who attend the after school club were able to direct their play. A child was keen to 'put on a show' and for a short time sat behind a TV made from cardboard. Children showed us some of their favourite resources such as board games and told us that there was enough for them to do.

Children have a range of play and learning activities to promote their all round development and they enjoy the variety of play experiences offered to them.

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

Children are learning new skills. They washed their hands without the need for adult assistance and were given appropriate cutlery to enable them to feed themselves and suitable beakers to drink from. We saw children direct their own play and pick out their own resources without the need for support from their carers.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence in preparation for more formal education.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff practice is good in relation to supporting children and promoting their play and learning. Staff also manage children's interactions well. However, we found inconsistent practice in relation to medication records. We notified the provider that they were not meeting the legal responsibilities in this area and they took immediate action to address it.

### **Our findings**

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

Overall, the staff team is aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. We saw that the child protection policy was sufficiently detailed in relation to the recording and reporting of concerns; although there was no mention of Prevent in the policy. Prevent is a government strategy which places a responsibility on providers to identify children who may be at risk of radicalisation. The RP told us that staff training on Prevent is imminent and changes to the child protection policy would be made.

There was a medication policy in place but medication records showed that some staff had not signed the records after they had administered medication to children. We notified the RP's that this was a non compliance matter. We have not issue a non compliance notice because the RP's revised the medication form and on our second visit we viewed more recent medication records and saw that staff had followed the correct procedure. We saw that accident and incident records had been completed and these records are audited to ensure that any patterns of accidents are identified and issues addressed; which is good practice.

Appropriate infection control measures were implemented by staff, although we spoke to the RP's about using the Public Health Wales Infection Control Audit Tool to identify good practice in this area. We saw that children's dietary requirements and preferences were recorded, although key allergens in food products have not been identified and this should be considered. The service is actively involved in a number of schemes including the Healthy Snack Award for which they have a gold award, Phase 1 of the Designed to Smile programme and Phase 1 of the Healthy Early Years (HEYS) scheme which is run by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Staff ensure that children are safe in their care.

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

The staff team manage children's social behaviour effectively to promote their social development. The behaviour management policy provides them with clear guidance on how to support children and the strategies outlined in it focus on distraction and positive reinforcement. In the after school room 'house rules' were displayed on the wall and included: 'listen to each other,' 'use good manners,' and 'we will share.'

Management of children's interactions is effective and the support and strategies identified are appropriate for the age and stage of development of children who use the service.

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

Staff support children well, although a review of how children's progress is recorded would be beneficial. We observed care practice and found staff to be responsive, warm and approachable. They supported babies well, giving them individual care and comfort. Older children were encouraged to play independently and follow their areas of interest. Children's participation at circle time was promoted by staff, for example, they were asked to choose their favourite stories and they enjoyed being given this responsibility. There was regular outdoor play and this meant children had the opportunity to use large play equipment and catch and throw balls to promote their balance and co-ordination. Welsh was used productively during play and circle time with some children confident enough to shout out basic Welsh words. We saw evidence of planning and evaluation of its effectiveness which is good practice. There were records identifying where children were in relation to their developmental milestones, but how staff captured this evidence was not clearly recorded. We spoke to the RP's about how these records could be developed further to fully capture children's progress and plan for their next steps.

Staff promote children's play and learning appropriately and offer them a good range of play experiences.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

The nursery is welcoming, safe and well maintained. Appropriate safety measures have been implemented and there is sufficient space for play and learning activities with an outdoor area for physical play. Resources and equipment is maintained to a good standard, but the range of multi cultural and natural resources available could be expanded to give children more choice.

#### **Our findings**

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

The nursery offers a safe environment for children. CCTV has been installed and appropriate safety measures have been implemented. The enterprise centre has a general reception which is open to all visitors. The nursery has its own dedicated entry system and reception area. We saw that safety certificates and insurance certificates were up to date and that daily checks of the nursery were completed and recorded. Risk assessments were sufficiently detailed and records showed that fire evacuation drills had been completed and recorded.

Leaders have good safety measures in place. The nursery is safe for children and appropriate safety checks have been undertaken.

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

The nursery is bright, well maintained and clean. The reception is welcoming, with a parent noticeboard. Base rooms, of which there are three, offer sufficient space for children to play and there are displays of children's art work and colourful wall displays. Currently there is no dedicated messy play area in the Butterflies room. We spoke to the RP's about undertaking a review of this room to consider the practicalities of allocating an area for sand and water play. We saw that floors and tables were cleaned regularly and toilet facilities were clean and well maintained. In the nappy changing area off the Caterpillar base room we noted that a plastic storage unit for clothing was located next to the nappy bin. Once made aware of this the RP removed the storage unit to a more appropriate location. The kitchen, although small was well equipped and surfaces were clean and well maintained. The outdoor space was maintained to a good condition, with large planters for the growing of vegetables and flowers, although there was a small area where there were some overgrown prickly weeds. Once brought to the attention of the RP's the weeds were cut back.

The nursery provides well maintained indoor and outdoor spaces for play and learning activities.

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

Leaders provide sufficient toys and equipment for children across the age ranges which are maintained to a good standard, although additional multi cultural resources

and natural materials would be beneficial. There were puzzles, small activity toys, construction toys, some dressing up costumes and books for children to play with. Older children had their own dedicated base room and they enjoyed playing with a 'TV' made from a cardboard box but there was little evidence of natural resources in the other base rooms. There were some cultural resources provided but we spoke to the RP's about introducing more of these types of resources to extend children's curiosity and understanding of the world around them.

Resources and equipment is maintained to a good standard and there is a sufficient supply of toys to maintain children's interest.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

This is the first inspection for the nursery and procedures and processes are still being embedded. Overall, we found that the service is run to a satisfactory level and some good processes have been introduced. However, we also found that provider was not meeting their legal responsibilities in relation to reviewing and monitoring their service. We also found that a more systematic approach is needed in relation to the organisation of staff files and the deployment of staff.

### **Our findings**

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

The leaders have a vision for the service which is still in its infancy and are keen to develop their business and improve the service they offer. They have recently won a tender to offer supported and assisted places to children in collaboration with Caerphilly County Borough Council. In most areas effective systems have been implemented although some information has not been gathered as part of the pre-admission process. We saw that the Statement of Purpose offered parents enough information so that they could make an informed choice about its suitability for their child. The policy file was organised and the policies contained within it were sufficiently detailed. We saw that documents were stored securely and contracts and children's records contained all the necessary information aside from parent consent for emergency medical treatment. The RP's agreed to address this matter as soon as possible

Overall, leaders run an effective service but they need to ensure that permission for emergency medical treatment is recorded as part of the pre-admission process.

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

Leaders have not yet fully established an effective mechanism to self evaluate and plan for improvements. The service has been operating for just over a year and regulations require that providers review their service within this timeframe and consult with parents and children as part of this process. We notified the RP that this was a non compliance matter as an annual review had not been completed but we have not issued a non compliance notice on this occasion. The RP told us that they were in the process of consulting with the staff team but had yet to consult with parents and children. They understood their responsibility to review and evaluate the service to plan for developments and agreed to address this matter immediately and forward a copy of the annual review of quality of care report to CIW within two months.

Self evaluation and planning for improvements have not been fully established within the service. An annual review must be undertaken and a copy of the report forwarded to CIW.

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

Management of the service could be more effective with regard to the organisation of staff files and the role of the PiC within the nursery. When we viewed staff files not all the necessary documentation in relation to pre-employment checks were initially available for us to view. The RP's subsequently updated the files; however, it is important that staff files are kept up to date in readiness for inspection. Roles within the service need to be more clearly defined as on the first day of our inspection the PiC was covering for a member of staff for a short period of time. The nursery is registered with CIW to provide care for up to 41 children. This means the PiC must be supernumerary and cannot be included in the adult :child ratio, even when the number of children attending the nursery is low. We spoke to the RP's about ensuring the PiC remains supernumerary at all times and that the staff ratio/records reflect this. Team meetings are held to discuss issues pertinent to the service and we saw evidence of this, as well as evidence of formal one to one supervision meetings.

A more systematic approach is required to ensure that the PiC is deployed effectively at all times and to ensure that staff files are kept up to date.

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

Partnership with parents is developing well and parents have a number of ways to receive information about the service and their children's routines. There is a closed face book page, parent evenings are scheduled twice a year and monthly newsletters are produced to keep parents up to date with changes and developments. We spoke to four parents all of whom stated they were very satisfied with the service provided. One described the service as '*awesome*.' Another parent was very happy with the level of flexibility of the service, and in particular the settling in process available.

Leaders are beginning to develop positive partnerships with parents.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- Ensure that staff files are audited so that all necessary information is contained within them;
- review the deployment of staff to ensure that the PiC remains supernumerary within the service;
- update staff training on Prevent and revise the child protection policy to include information on the Prevent strategy;
- ensure that parent permission for emergency medical treatment is gathered as part of the pre-admission process;
- consider implementing the Public Health Wales Infection Control Audit Tool for Early Years setting to establish good practice in this area;
- identify the fourteen key allergens in food products;
- provide more detailed records of observations and assessments of children in order to plan for the next stage in their development and
- expand on the range of cultural resources and natural materials available for children to extend their play experiences.

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

This was a full inspection conducted as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service over two days totalling approximately nine hours. The following methodology was used to gather evidence for this report:

- We spoke to the RP's, staff, children and four parents;
- completed a visual inspection of the premises;
- looked at a selection of service documents and records including health and safety checks and policies;
- observed care practice and interactions between staff and children. This included completing a Short Observational for Inspection Tool (SOFI) to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided and
- considered information held by CIW.

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

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

## 7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Bethan Evans-Conway Linda Evans
Person in charge	Stacy Challenger Linda Evans
Registered maximum number of places	41
Age range of children	0 – 8 years
Opening hours	7.00am – 5.30pm, Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	Post registration – first inspection
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	4 July 2018 and 6 July 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years 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 does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow up strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.'</i>
Additional Information: None	