

Group work

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Script

Emma

Thank you for attending in preparation for the upcoming inspection. As a Flying Start setting registered with the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW), we must meet the National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare. The Welsh Government's Flying Start programme improves outcomes for disadvantaged children under four and their families, supporting Articles 6 and 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2022; Welsh Government, 2025a). The initiative provides targeted support including parenting help, enhanced health visitor services, and 12.5 hours of funded childcare per week for 2–3-year-olds (Welsh Government, 2024e). Our role is to provide high-quality childcare.

Natasha

As the Policy Lead, I am motivated to bring up policy matters in our team meeting since it has a direct impact on our work and objectives. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), every child has the right to receive extraordinary care that develops their potential. It is fundamental to respect children's individuality and cultural heritage (Welsh Government, 2025b). Effective early education helps parents balance their job and personal lives, encourages safe childcare and advances the development of children (Children Alliance, 2021). In line with the UNCRC, we value children's individual characteristics, cultural variety and opinions when making decisions (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2019).

Eliesha

As the curriculum lead our Flying Start setting is funded and non-maintained, a set of guidelines have been provided for the purpose of creating a suitable curriculum for us to use. This was created by colleagues, including management committees, practitioners, and leaders of nurseries. (Donaldson 2016; Welsh Government 2024a).

Governing bodies, practitioners and leaders of childcare facilities such as Flying Start are required by the National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare to follow the statutory curriculum standards. According to Shuey *et al.* (2019), from early childhood education and care to primary education, curriculum is important in encouraging continuity and advancement. Children's early interactions with educational settings are shaped by high quality standards and curriculum that are consistently maintained throughout multiple settings (National day nurseries association, [NDNA] 2023).

Emma

CIW ensures the safety and quality of care, and all registered settings must complete an annual online Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS). This form, as noted by Clybiau Plant Cymru (2024) and Play Wales (2024), is essential for inspection planning, advising the Welsh Government on current sector performance, and collecting data on settings and service users (Care Inspectorate for Wales, 2025; National Day Nurseries Association, 2024a).

Julie

I fully support this Emma, at our setting, we are committed to providing high-quality, inclusive childcare that meets the needs of all children, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). As a registered provider under Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), we ensure that our service is fully compliant with regulatory requirements while fostering a nurturing and supportive environment where every child can thrive (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2024).

Emma

As staffing lead, I note that our setting currently has 12 children aged 2-3 years. This is likely to increase with the expansion. Welsh Government (2023c) states in standard 15 of the National Minimum Standards that the staffing ratio for this age is 1:4. In recent updates, it is stated that the rule requiring an extra staff member in childcare settings with more than 20 children has been removed. New standards ensure there are sufficient staff to handle emergencies, unexpected absences, breaks, training and parent meetings.

Julie

Thank you, Emma. As the ALN lead I would like to mention that we uphold appropriate staff-to-child ratios for individualised care and encourage ongoing professional development in inclusive education and ALN support. This commitment ensures a nurturing, responsive, and well-informed environment for all children (Social Care Wales, 2025).

Emma

According to the Welsh Government (2025b) and Pacey (2024), three key measures for high-quality, successful flying start childcare setting are enabling adults, engaging experiences, and effective environments.

Eliesha

Absolutely Emma as Tolman (2022) states that 'Instead of training children to meet the expectations of adults, we should be training adults to meet the psychological, emotional and developmental needs of children'.

Stephanie

As the environment lead, I would like to emphasise the significance of the environment on children's learning and development drawing attention to Strong-Wilson and Ellis's (2007) article on the Reggio Emilia Approach referring to it as the "third teacher". They add how thoughtfully arranged and well organised environments fosters development.

As you all know children are unique with varying developmental progress and interests, we use observations to assess children's growth, therefore, inform our planning, organisation and the adjust the environment accordingly (Welsh Government, 2023c). Reflecting and evaluating the observations can enhance and support children's wellbeing (Reed and Canning, 2012). This aligns with Section 4.3 of the National Minimum Standards (Welsh Government, 2023c), and Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, UNICEF, 1989), which ensures that all decisions are in the best interest of the child.

To assess the engagement of the environment and quality of provision, since the last inspection we have introduced the Leuven Scale. This observational scale evaluates children's wellbeing and involvement on a scale from 1-5, on reflection most children are engaged and scoring high in wellbeing. However, Reynolds (2018) highlights the difficulty of 'measuring' children's learning in the outdoors.

Natasha

Our goal is to provide all children with complete access to our nursery services to promote their development. Our mission is to provide the extra support children require to overcome obstacles (Flying Start, no date). Through actively considering the opinions of children and their families, a child-focused approach to planning fosters the welfare and development of all children in line with national minimum standard 4.3 (Welsh Government, 2016).

Eliesha

We need to recognise that the inspectors will be checking that we fully meet the Flying Start requirements for the curriculum. This must be well-balanced and broad, suitable for children of this age range, skill sets and capabilities, and it must offer appropriate progress for every child. I am confident that our setting will meet the inspection criteria due to the high quality of our staff and setting (NDNA, 2023, Boyd and Hirst, 2016).

However, Evans (2023) notes that the fundamental issue appears to be that the professional development currently available is of varying quality and, similar to curriculum documentation it lacks specification. This has resulted in conflicting

messages, misunderstandings and in certain situations, the adoption of methods that are not consistent with Curriculum for Wales' principles.

Emma

Thank you, this is very important.

It is my role to ensure staff can act as enabling adults, one of the three key measures to ensure a high-quality flying start setting, creating a supportive, enriching environment for the children. Freud (2024) suggests that staff well-being should lie at the heart of the setting. Supporting staff wellbeing can improve overall job satisfaction and enhance children's development, thus having a direct impact on performance and quality of care provided (Sisera,2021; Public Health Wales, no date).

Natasha

I agree Emma, our wellbeing strategy prioritises the needs of staff, children and their families, allowing us to provide interventions that promote developmental growth. Assisting children in realising their full potential while making sure their families can offer a supportive atmosphere is the aim (Welsh Government, 2017a). Our approach prioritises child safety and wellbeing, positive ties between practitioners and families improve our support services (Children's Commissioners, 2022). As Ysgol Penrhyn (2020) highlights keeping children safe and protected is our number one concern. Butler and Hardy (2020) suggest that developing trust with parents is fundamental for providing successful experiences for children.

Stephanie

This has also brought my attention to the recent family engagement day, which aimed to foster stronger connections between home and our setting, while promoting a sense of belonging (Adams and Short, 2025). As highlighted in our most recent inspection, this is an area we excel in. However, feedback from the suggestion box and verbal comments from parents during the event, indicated that improvements could be made to the outdoor area. Although we are meeting the requirements of NMS 22.1, which ensures the environment offers children a variety of activities to support their development. Tonge, Jones and Okely (2016) emphasise the role

outdoor environments play in influencing children's behaviour, wellbeing and cognitive development.

Julie

Steph, under your leadership our indoor setting provides a safe, stimulating, and inclusive environment focused on individual development and well-being. Registered with CIW, we adhere to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, working closely with families and professionals to support each child's unique needs (Welsh Government, 2024c).

Stephanie

Thank you, Julie. Reed and Canning (2012) highlight the importances of listening, acknowledging internal strengths and taking proactive steps. Consequently, I intend to act on the feedback promptly.

Drawing from Froebel's (1826, cited in Tovey, 2017) principles, the outdoors should offer children rich, sensory, first-hand experiences and inspire awe and wonder for the natural world. Furthermore, it is essential to provide children with opportunities for challenge, fostering resilience and confidence by incorporating elements of risk (Welsh Government, 2024a; Tovey, 2017). However, for incorporating risky play, safety concerns must be balanced with risk and learning opportunities, Standard 24 National Minimum Standards (2023c) A benefit to risk assessment supports opportunities to promote enjoyment, wellbeing and interaction (Sando, Kleppe and Hansen Sandseter, 2021).

Moreover, when enhancing these areas, collaboration with children and parents can encourage their ownership and involvement into the life of our setting (Welsh Government, 2025a). Additionally, Article 12 of UNCRC (UNICEF, 1989) the importance of respecting children's views.

Emma

An anonymous staff questionnaire analysis has raised concerns about inadequate staffing levels to meet children's evolving needs, highlighting the need for further investigation and review of staffing arrangements to prioritise staff and child wellbeing.

Cleave (2023) suggests that surveys and questionnaires combining quantitative and qualitative methods can assess staff well-being and identify areas requiring attention. Hammond and Wellington (2021) suggest that quantitative data can support qualitative data, ensuring reliability through deeper analysis and triangulation.

Murdoch et al. (2014) found that anonymity encourages disclosure of sensitive issues. This is supported by Bright Horse (2022), who states it reduces fear of repercussions. However, Lindemann (2023) warns of social desirability bias, and David (2025) states that there can be challenges in analysing diverse qualitative data. Despite these limitations, I believe the responses were open and honest, providing reliable insights and this issue will be explored further.

Eliesha

Department for Education (2024) and Boyd and Hirst (2016) maintain that all educational environments need to take measures to ensure children grow and learn successfully. This needs to be demonstrated throughout our inspection.

According to the Welsh government (2025b), Robinson (2022) and Equal (2023) our Flying Start curriculum must seek to cultivate in children a lifelong love of learning and the solid foundation that they need. I am sure you are all aware of the six learning and experience categories that we cover in our curriculum. By keeping up with these standards, we are giving our children high quality education and care. Upon inspection I would like to look at our curriculum to make sure that we incorporate both the necessary academic components and the necessary cross-curricular skills. To ensure the highest quality of curriculum we must provide high quality teaching and learning that will help the children thrive (NDNA,2023, Sinnema *et al.* 2020, Thorburn, 2018 and Welsh Government 2016) section 8 of the national minimum standards.

Care Inspectorate Wales (2025) declare that during the inspection they will be looking at how we observe in addition to how we cater to the children's needs and learning experiences. Our setting does in fact cater and modify learning experiences in response to the interests and needs of the child. This is due to our high-quality staff and our ongoing observations and monitoring of the children and their interests.

This is in regulation of standards 4 and 18 in the national minimum standards (Welsh Government 2016).

Julie

Thank you, Eliesha, our highly trained staff provide tailored support for children with ALN, prioritising ongoing professional development. They engage in specialised training, including Autism Awareness and Speech and Language Development, ensuring the latest best practices are applied (Care Council for Wales, 2016; Social Care Wales, 2025; Welsh Government, 2024a).

Emma

I agree, Julie. However, through recent professional development meetings, it is clear there is a need for updated training opportunities. Several staff members have expressed they would benefit from additional training to enhance confidence and ensure compliance with the latest changes to the early years and care curriculum for children aged 2 to 3 years. Welsh Government (2023a) states that staff need to have a great knowledge and understanding of how children learn and develop. Nursery in a Box (2024) suggests that staff training is important for maintaining high standards of care, further adding that highly trained staff can better provide quality care and contribute to a positive environment. This supports standard 13.3 of the National minimum standards (Welsh Government, 2023c). Providing relevant training will support professional growth and contribute to maintaining high-quality care and education. Equally, continuous professional development is key for gaining new knowledge which may assist in new situations (Care Council for Wales, 2016).

Eliesha

May I add our children have more independence since they make decisions and play with purpose, which helps them develop their abilities and confidence. They are also eager to explore and try new things. Our setting sets out diverse materials that the children can choose or add to improve their play and is all in accordance with The Curriculum for Wales. We apply early childhood education funds to maximise and embrace this curriculum in this setting (NDNA, 2023, Welsh Government 2016). This falls in line with section 22 of the National minimum standards (Welsh Government 2023c).

Julie

Thank you, Emma and Eliesha. We are committed to continually improving our provision, ensuring all children, including those with ALN, receive high quality support. Regular observations and assessments help us adapt support plans to meet each child's evolving needs (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2024).

Stephanie

I agree, it is important to reflect and respond to observations, enabling us to plan and organise purposeful opportunities in our environment to meet children's individual needs. Children are influenced by their surroundings, therefore, impacts on their well-being and sense of Cynefin (Welsh Government, 2023a).

Emma

Thank you, I agree, whilst it is important to reflect on practise when supporting the children, it is equally important to reflect on our own development. Reflective practice is important in early years education to enable staff to continuously improve skills to provide high-quality care. According to Newcastle University (2025) this corresponds with Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984) and Gibbs' reflective cycle (1988) in which both highlight learning through experience, reflection and action. This shows we can identify areas that need improvement and address them by seeking further training so we can understand and implement these changes, striving for high-quality childcare for the children we care for.

One-to-one continuous professional development meetings offer personalised discussion and feedback, allowing for open communication and building positive relationships between staff and those in leadership roles (Test, 2023). Similarly, Olive Recruit (2023) suggest that one-to-one professional development meetings can empower individuals and promote a culture of professional growth, helping staff to feel valued and engaged in what they do.

However, Qlearsite (2021) suggests there can be an element of mistrust with those in leadership roles, leading to a more closed-off and dishonest discussion.

Furthermore, the University of Waterloo (2024) states that a lack of confidence could be a barrier to face-to-face communication, leading to difficulty in expressing needs and thoughts effectively. Those in leadership roles must build positive relationships

so staff feel comfortable in sharing strengths and weaknesses. This will support the staff in developing trust and confidence to share areas they need to develop or those they feel they are confident. These reflective practices will promote high-quality care.

Julie

Early identification and intervention are integral for supporting children with ALN. We conduct thorough observations and assessments upon entry to identify needs early and implement tailored support strategies promptly (Welsh Government, 2014).

Our commitment to individualised learning is reflected in our use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs), developed in alignment with the ALN Act. These plans ensure that each child's learning journey is personalised, with specific goals and interventions designed to support their progress (Snap Cymru, 2024 and Welsh Government, 2021).

We adapt our space, resources and curriculum to support all children, including sensory-friendly areas, alternative communication tools, and specialised learning resources. Our goal is to ensure every child feels comfortable, valued, and included (National Day Nurseries Association, 2024b).

Collaboration is central to our approach. We work with parents, schools, and multi-agency specialists to ensure consistent learning and well-being support across environments (Estyn, 2024; Welsh Government, 2024b). Setting shared goals with families and professionals allows for tailored support, ensuring every child thrives (Gross, Lewing & Molloy, 2022).

Stephanie

In relation to collaboration, from regular meetings with a parent, of a child with a milk and nut allergies, expressed gratitude for our efforts in providing a safe and inclusive environment, acknowledging the care and attention given to their specific needs, section 4, NMS (2023c).

We regularly review the allergy management plan (NHS, 2022), to ensure the child's needs are met fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. With parental agreement, the child is not segregate from their peers during snack time, Section 11,

NMS (2023c). Instead, an adult alongside her, providing constant supervision, while promoting cynefin and peers benefit through the shared experiences (WG, 2024a).

Following protocol and adhering to Section 11 National Minimum Standards (Welsh Government, 2023c) medication administered is recorded and medication is stored out of reach. Additionally, staff members have received EpiPen training.

Julie

As per Standard 4 of the National Minimum Standards, children's needs, including ALN and disabilities, must be identified, planned for, and supported. Staff must have the skills to meet these needs while respecting language, education preferences, and cultural practices.

ALN should be addressed in partnership with parents and professionals, following the Welsh ALN Code of Practice. Settings must have a compliant ALN policy, with staffing and environments adapted for accessibility where reasonable (Welsh Government, 2016).

Inclusivity is at the heart of our setting, ensuring every child feels valued, supported, and empowered. Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion shapes our interactions, fostering respect among our children, families, and staff (Moses, 2021; UNICEF, no date).

Natasha

In addition to this we received feedback from our stay and play sessions that highlights the significance of parents' who have worries about their children's experiences. To guarantee that everyone involved feels supported and accepted, we are revising our equal opportunity policy. Our nursery's mission is centred on valuing each child's individuality, which is consistent with our dedication to inclusion and equal opportunity (Small World Nursery, 2019).

We maintain an updated equal opportunities policy and inform parents to guarantee compliance with national minimum standard 16.2. Since a well-structured environment has a major impact on children's learning and development, our staff

members receive professional training on how to prioritise each child's requirements in an inclusive setting (Welsh Government, 2016).

Our policy improvements include improving inclusivity and fostering a friendly environment for all staff and children. We shall designate an equal opportunities coordinator in our room to assure compliance with the Equalities Act and encourage inclusive behavior (Stepping Stones Nurseries, 2015).

High-quality nursery experiences improve children's play, concentration, social skills, and overall wellbeing, which contributes to their future academic performance (Welsh Government, 2024d). Our mission is to improve skills, resilience, friendships and self-esteem through family collaboration. This collaboration promotes personal development and strengthens community relationships (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, no date).

Eliesha

Thank you, Natasha I must state, that children's growth depends on high-quality early education. In the early years, every encounter develops understanding, abilities and all stages of development. Our curriculum recognises that each child is unique and that their development happens rapidly. Understanding each individual child requires a comprehensive awareness of the child's background. This helps us to encourage holistic progress by putting our children's developmental requirements at the forefront of our teaching methods (Welsh Government 2022, Tinney, 2023, Manning-Morton and Thorp, 2015, Greaves and Bahous, 2021).

Julie

Recognising each child's uniqueness, we tailor strategies, particularly for those with ALN, using positive reinforcement and emotional regulation to create a safe, supportive environment (Child Mind Institute, 2023).

Mental wellbeing is central to our practice, with mindfulness and social-emotional learning fostering resilience and confidence. Embedding these approaches daily ensures every child feels valued, supported and secure (Weare, 2015).

We prioritise strong family relationships through open communication, regular meetings, and progress updates, keeping parents engaged in their child's development (Education Endowment Foundation, 2021).

Eliesha

May I expand on this many parents are unaware of the non-maintained Curriculum for Wales and its results. We understand that communicating with families can be difficult due to the limited time that parents have and their job commitments, we have an open-door policy in our setting where parents can ask questions about any topic. We also hold drop-in sessions where we inform parents of any changes to the curriculum and how we use it in our setting. By doing this we are increasing parental involvement in their children's education and raising their awareness of the curriculum for Wales (Oke *et al.* 2021, Schneider and Coleman, 2018).

Natasha

We discovered during our most recent inspection that parents were unable to read our policies online, which is essential for informing them of our nursery's protocols. All policy documents are available to parents through our website, in the nursery office, or upon request from the nursery staff (Little Learners, 2023). This guarantees that all parents have access to policies and is in line with the National Minimum Standard 6.4 (Welsh Government, 2016). Each year, we ensure our policies are up to date by reviewing and updating them (Bristol City Council, 2024). Our setting places a strong focus on encouraging policies and ongoing development to provide young children with high-quality experiences (Early Years Wales, 2023).

Julie

We actively involve parents in their child's learning journey, valuing their input in IDP reviews and decision-making. Regular communication and strong multi-agency partnerships with professionals ensure holistic support for each child (Newport City Council, 2024; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, 2024).

At a recent engagement meeting, parents voiced concerns about their child's transition to a maintained school. To ease this process, continuity of care must be discussed with the receiving setting to support the child's well-being.

Eliesha

Issues with the transitions from our Flying Start setting to school were flagged during our most recent inspection. These were caused by increased group numbers in class, requiring a greater focus on structure for the setting and accompanying changes in the curriculum's focus. By making gradual changes towards this similar but developed curriculum, this maintains a gentler familiarisation, to ensure that the children's school transfer and learning go smoothly (Freud 2020, Thomas and Lewis, 2016).

Furthermore O'Kane (2016) and O'Connor (2018) state, regarding transitions, that there must be a shared responsibility between our setting and the school setting. To assist with this, teachers may visit our setting and dedicate time getting to know the children. The children will recognise a familiar face, and this will help ease their anxiety when they face the uncertainty of change during transition.

Natasha

We have revised our policy in consideration of this feedback to meet transition concerns raised by parents acknowledging that children may find these changes difficult and upsetting. Children have an easier transition to school because to our solid connections with the local school staff, who frequently visit our nursery (Welsh Government, 2024e).

Our transition policy describes how professionals will work together, share information and help parents and children. We will provide scrapbooks of memories to help children cope with anxiety during times of change (Welsh Government, 2017b). According to research, these transitions can create anxiety and have an influence on children's mental and intellectual wellbeing. As a result, we focus on developing strong relationships with schools and enabling smooth transitions through providing helpful assistance (The Saints Federation, 2024).

Julie

To ensure inclusivity, alternative communication methods should be offered for families who missed the engagement meeting. Telephone or video consultations, such as FaceTime, can enhance accessibility and support discussions on transition and continuity of care.

The safety and well-being of all children, especially those with ALN, is our priority. We uphold robust safeguarding policies, regularly updated to reflect best practices (Wales Safeguarding Procedures, 2025; Welsh Government, 2021). Staff receive ongoing training in child protection and emergency response, adapting strategies to support sensory and communication needs in a secure, inclusive environment (Atwell, 2025; Hookway, 2023; Skill Point Therapy, 2024).

Collaboration is central to our approach. We use feedback, self-evaluations, and external reviews to uphold high standards and inclusivity (Welsh Government, 2024b). Our Flying Start setting ensures accessible, high-quality care, supporting all children, especially those with ALN, to thrive (Welsh Government, 2023b; Senedd Wales, 2024).

Natasha

In response to parental concerns raised in recent meetings, we are thrilled to present a pupil's voice policy that enables children to participate in their educational journeys. Through hands-on activities and child-led play, our nursery is dedicated to creating an atmosphere where children can actively participate, express themselves and make choices (West Lodge School, 2024). Please can everyone examine the amended policies, which has been shared with you. There is a page for you to sign in the staff room. Additionally, I have provided a feedback form for anyone who would like to suggest further changes to policies.

According to Knives Primary School (2024) personalising role-play spaces and classroom displays promotes community involvement and ownership. We are committed to offering chances in a diversified setting to children with additional learning needs (Rhiwbeina Primary, 2022). A supportive environment that develops children's connections, safety and confidence is highlighted in National Minimum Standard 8.2, which is in line with these practices that support diversity, community involvement and empowerment (Welsh Government, 2016).

I appreciate all your contributions. Are there any queries or topics we should discuss?

Stephanie

Can I please add, our fire safety plans comply with the Fire and Rescue Service and Section 24, NMS (Welsh Government, 2023c) Routine, plans and fire drills remain unchanged and are properly recorded.

Additionally, food hygiene records are up to date, training has been booked for June 2025. We have retained our mandatory level 5 food hygiene rating, reflecting excellent standards (Food Standards Agency, 2024).

Natasha

We appreciate your participation in this important work! Together, let us keep working together to provide our children and their families the highest quality environment possible. Thank you!

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