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I have not presented AI work as work of my own.

Presentation

ALN	Jo
Parents / Stakeholders	Caitlin
Progress Monitoring	Rhydian
Quality Assurance / Policies	Liz
Staff	Julie
FS Curriculum	Debbie

Jo

Good evening, everyone,

Thank you for joining today's meeting to discuss the upcoming joint inspection by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Estyn. This inspection aims to ensure our Flying Start Setting Service complies with the National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare, as outlined by the Welsh Government (2023b).

As part of this process, we are required to complete a Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), mandated by CIW prior to the inspection (Play Wales, 2021). The inspection will review the quality of care we provide and assess areas for potential improvement. Additionally, the Quality-of-Care Report will serve to evaluate our current standards (CIW, 2023) and highlight how our service has progressed since the previous inspection. It will also guide us in identifying future enhancements. The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010.

Does anybody have any questions? **ALL RESPOND - No**

We recently collated parent feedback to understand their views, expectations, and levels of satisfaction with the Flying Start service. The responses received will help identify areas requiring improvement, enabling us to enhance care quality and achieve better outcomes for children. This approach not only involves parents in the process but also strengthens communication and collaboration between families and us as childcare providers. Regularly collating feedback allows us to monitor the effectiveness of implemented changes and track progress over time.

Caitlin, as our family and stakeholder engagement officer, can you elaborate on the work you are doing?

Caitlin

Good evening, my role is to ensure strong, meaningful partnerships between families, the wider community, and our setting. These relationships are vital for providing quality care and education. I will discuss how we engage with families, the policies guiding us, and areas for improvement based on feedback and observations.

It's crucial to actively seek and respond to feedback from parents, children, and stakeholders to support continual improvement. The Welsh Government's *School Improvement Guidance: Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability* (2020) emphasizes the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation and improvement processes of settings. Effective planning and implementation of strategies are key to ensuring ongoing high quality educational development.

Jo

Thank you, Caitlin moving on from this, Liz would you like to share your thoughts on our Self-Assessment of Service? (SASS)

Liz

In preparation to our inspection, I've been reviewing the Statutory and non-statutory policies. Firstly, I've checked that all DBS's are up to date and there are none due for renewal for several months.

Policies serve as a foundational guide, outlining clear principles and direction for decision-making and actions within an organization or government. They promote consistency, accountability, and fairness across various processes. Within the Welsh Government, policies are instrumental in shaping public services, driving economic growth, and advancing education and healthcare. (Petrasova, 2023) They provide a structured framework to achieve strategic objectives while ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. By establishing clear expectations, policies enhance administrative efficiency and strengthen public confidence in government institutions. (UK Gov, 2016)

Quality assurance in early years education involves structured processes and standards designed to ensure children receive the highest quality care, learning, and development opportunities. It includes policies, procedures, and ongoing assessments to uphold and enhance the standards of childcare services. By addressing children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs, quality assurance fosters an environment where they can grow and flourish. In a Flying Start setting, which supports children from disadvantaged backgrounds, quality assurance plays a vital role. It guarantees that every child has access to high-quality early education, providing a nurturing and stimulating environment where they feel safe, valued, and encouraged to explore and learn. (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2022)

Delivering a high-quality service in a Flying Start setting requires a structured approach, with a strong focus on staff development, curriculum delivery, safety, inclusivity, and parental engagement. Ensuring that all aspects of early years education meet high standards is essential for providing children with the best possible start in life. (Welsh Government, 2023b) A key element of quality assurance is the continuous professional development of early years practitioners. Staff must hold relevant qualifications, such as

Level 3 Childcare Diplomas, and participate in ongoing training and workshops to enhance their skills. Regular supervision and appraisals help maintain high standards, while observations and feedback sessions ensure best practices in child development, safeguarding, and inclusive education. (Department for Education, 2014)

Julie

Well-qualified staff, as outlined in the Social Care Wales Qualification Framework (2025a) and National Minimum Standards (2023), provide higher-quality care and education, using evidence-based approaches to support children's development (National Day Nurseries Association Cymru, 2023; Welsh Government, 2023b). Ongoing training keeps practitioners updated with best practices and legislation, ensuring they can deliver the best possible care (Dallimore, 2017; Welsh Government, 2024a).

However, not all staff may have the required qualifications, creating disparities in knowledge and practice. Continuous professional development requires funding and time, which can be difficult for some settings to accommodate (Sibieta, 2024; DfE, no date). Offering incentives like funded training opportunities can encourage staff to upskill. By upskilling our staff, we will ensure that children receive high-quality care, in line with statutory requirements, and improve staff retention and professional development. We will set up mentorship programs within the setting to assist less-qualified staff and allow them to learn from experienced practitioners (DfE, 2025). Additionally, as some staff have shared, they lack confidence when talking with parents. Mentoring can allow for observations of experienced staff liaising with parents promoting best practice and maintaining our high standards. This training will help practitioners and parents build mutual respect, facilitate the sharing of relevant information, and improve communication between parents and staff. This, in turn, will foster collaborative support and improve the overall quality of services in our setting (ESTYN, 2024a; Epstein 2018).

Liz

The curriculum must be engaging, inclusive, and tailored to meet the needs of all children. In a Flying Start setting, it should align with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, emphasizing play-based learning. Activities should support all areas of child development, including the Communication and Language, This encourages verbal interactions, storytelling, and songs. Physical Development provides fine and gross motor skill activities such as climbing, running, and arts and crafts. And Personal, Social, and Emotional Development helps children manage emotions, build relationships, and develop independence. (Cleare, 2021)

Deb

It has become increasingly more understood that high quality early education and childcare significantly benefits children's physical and cognitive outcomes and is now seen as crucial for children's success in school and later life (Schoch *et al*, 2023). This is of particular relevance for children from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing access to resources and experiences they might not have at home. High-quality early education can help close developmental gaps, ensuring all children start school with a strong foundation (Donoghue *et al*, 2017; Early Years careers, no date).

As we aim to provide an inclusive, holistic program, working in partnership with our parents to deliver an engaging curriculum it is therefore essential we review the content and include the thoughts of the parents and children to ensure we continually strive to improve the quality of provision. Even more importantly, as the children make their own decisions about how they spend their time here, they need resources and activities tailored to their interests and needs, but ones that will enhance their learning and development (Kids Included Together, 2023; WG, 2016a). With this in mind, I would like to suggest some circle time with the children to collect some feedback about what provisions we could improve on, to see if they have any suggestions or ideas of things they'd like to play with and any particular interests they have that could be incorporated into our different areas. This complies with standards 6, 7, 8 and 18 of the National Minimum Standards Guidance (WG, 2023b).

Liz

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in delivering high-quality early years education. In a Flying Start setting, fostering strong partnerships with parents ensures continuity in children's learning and development. This can be achieved through regular communication via newsletters, parent meetings, and digital platforms, as well as encouraging parental participation in home activities and workshops. Providing guidance on child development, behaviour management, and healthy lifestyles further supports parents in their role. Actively involving parents in decision-making not only makes them feel valued but also reinforces the significance of early education at home, creating a consistent and supportive learning environment for children.(UK Gov, 2016)

Deb

Could I ask if there has been any feedback from parents about the curriculum content as the importance of the relationship between child practitioners and parents is highlighted by Welsh Government (2017).

Caitlin

We use several strategies to collect feedback from parents, children, and stakeholders. One key method is through parents' evenings and stay-and-play sessions for our new families.

Parents' evenings foster in-depth discussions about children's progress, helping establish a partnership between parents and educators. Engaging families early, as emphasized by the Welsh Government (2017), contributes to a more collaborative learning environment. However, not all families can attend due to work or childcare commitments, limiting engagement and creating barriers to involvement (Parentkind, n.d.). To overcome this, we can offer virtual meetings, written reports, or alternative times to ensure broader participation (Education Endowment Foundation, n.d.).

We also integrate feedback into our commitment to the Flying Start programme. Engaging parents in the programme helps build trust and strengthens their role in the community (Nesta, n.d.).

In our stay-and-play sessions, parents have expressed interest in learning more about our curriculum, its content, and how it supports their children's development. By fostering parental understanding of the curriculum, we ensure a more consistent and supportive learning environment both at home and in our setting (Lillio, n.d.; Education Policy Institute, 2024). To further support this engagement, I suggest organizing a curriculum workshop for new parents.

Deb

Thanks Caitlin, yes, I agree this would be beneficial. Additionally, parental feedback underscores the significance of engaging and communicating with parents and carers as part of the Foundation Phase pedagogy. Furthermore, by including parents' thoughts and feelings around what activities and learning opportunities their children have, we will be following the Flying Start Childcare guidance by Welsh Government (2025). Additionally, Kirkwood (2016) emphasises that a strong partnership between parents and childcare practitioners' nurtures children's growth and development, and advocates for their education. Vygotsky's (1978) theory also supports this, highlighting the critical role of social interaction and collaboration in children's cognitive development.

We also need to ensure we align our provisions to the Foundation Phase philosophy and pedagogy and adapt to the development and ability of the children, in order to build a foundation for lifelong learning and a seamless transition into school (WG, 2016a).

According to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (No date) learning and play activities for children should be tailored to their interests and needs, offering opportunities to build their confidence and self-esteem, while developing early skills, knowledge, and concepts suitable for their developmental stage.

After reviewing our continuous provision, I believe we are providing a good range of activities and resources which the children can access independently, and their play is usually self-directed. There are enabling adults on hand to facilitate the children's learning choices, ensuring that learning is through play-based activities.

Our outdoor provision has improved dramatically since the last inspection which highlighted the need for a better use of the space and range of materials available which must be accessible to all children at all times. The introduction of the mud kitchen and sensory garden has become a firm favourite among the children, and we are continuing to monitor the use and engagement in this area. Outdoor learning is a core component of the Foundation Phase curriculum in Wales and needs to be a seamless flow between the indoor and outdoor environments (Estyn, 2024a; Bilton and Waters, 2016).

Rhydian

One method we use to monitor progress is observational assessment, where practitioners observe children in natural play settings. This approach allows us as educators to document behaviours, social interactions, and language use.

Observational assessment encourages continuous and formative evaluation, where we can adjust teaching strategies in real-time, ensuring that learning remains targeted to each child's needs (Black and Wiliam, 2018).

During an observation of a child in the mud kitchen outdoor play area, they demonstrated notable improvements in their social skills, including collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. The child was engaging in open-ended play scenarios and participated in pretend cooking, assigning roles to peers, and exchanged ideas, reflecting enhanced cooperative play (Parten, 1932; Whitebread *et al.*, 2017). This child has been struggling to socialise and play with others, so it was great to see the improvements.

The child's use of imaginative language and expressive gestures provided effective interactions, supporting their language development and emotional regulation (Vygotsky, 1978; Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2019). They took part in activities such as taking turns and negotiating for resources, sharing utensils and agreeing on recipes. This showcased improved conflict resolution and their empathetic understanding.

According to Broadhead (2003), environments like the mud kitchen promote skills such as pretend play and fostering deeper peer relationships and collaboration. This type of

play encourages children to practice social norms and develop confidence in interpersonal relationships. The observation highlights how outdoor, sensory-rich settings contribute significantly to the child's social and emotional growth. It was a wonderful experience to monitor the child's progress and see many improvements.

Julie

To ensure we keep up with changes in the Flying Start childcare guidance (WG 2025) and avoid the danger of not meeting the latest requirements for health and safety for the new outdoor facilities, and therefore leading to non-compliance during an inspection, we are following WG (2024b) guidelines and investing in compliance officers and designated staff members to ensure adherence to policies and regulations.

Caitlin

Recent feedback from staff questionnaires highlighted praise for our newly refurbished outdoor area, but some staff felt they lacked training in its use. Several requested forest schools training to enhance the learning experience in this space.

We employ various methods to collect feedback from staff. Engaging staff in feedback is vital for fostering a reflective and improvement-driven culture. Paper-based surveys ensure accessibility for all staff but can be time-consuming to distribute and analyze (RWorld, n.d). Digital surveys are more efficient but can exclude those less familiar with technology, affecting response accuracy (RWorld,n.d)

Gathering staff feedback is essential to improve workplace practices, professional development, and the quality of early years education. I have collected the data and will share it with you today, aligning with the need for continuous improvement (UK Government, 2023).

Julie

I can certainly look into forest schools training for the staff that have showed interest. That brings me to the staff questionnaires which highlighted that some staff felt there

was a lack of feedback for staff resulting in some staff members feel disconnected from their professional development and unclear on how they can improve in their roles, therefore impacting their motivation and the overall quality of the setting.

To address these challenges, we will be implementing meaningful appraisals with clear goals and a support system to enhance job satisfaction. With regular and well-structured appraisals to help staff understand their progress and areas for development, leading to increased motivation and performance (Social Care Wales, 2025a).

Deb

Our arts and crafts area is very popular with the children and we have a wide range of materials and equipment available in our “creation station” from paints, clay, junk modelling and so on. Play Wales (no date) explains that arts and crafts supports fine motor skills, from painting, drawing, and building and provide opportunities for self-expression, emotional well-being, and social interaction, helping children develop communication skills and build relationships.

However following the feedback from parents evening and from my own review of provision, we have very little role-play equipment, and no designated area set up. We need to give this careful consideration as role-play is a great way for children to develop skills of empathy, communication, problem solving, cooperation and collaboration (Whizzkids, 2024).

Caitlin

Yes, during our recent parents’ evening, many parents expressed interest in enhancing our role-play provision, specifically requesting more resources. Parents indicated that the current provision was insufficient to fully support children’s imaginative and social development. We are committed to addressing these concerns by reviewing and revamping the role-play areas to better meet children’s educational needs.

This feedback aligns with our commitment to the Flying Start programme. By enhancing the role-play areas, we will provide a more supportive learning environment for all children. I will also engage with Sally, Chair of our Parent Teacher Association (PTA), about opportunities for fundraising to support this initiative. Involving the PTA and parents directly in improving the space ensures cost-effectiveness and strengthens our community ties (Parentkind, n.d.).

The PTA plays a key role in fostering collaboration between parents, staff, and the wider community. Active participation in PTA meetings and parent forums enhances decision-making, creating opportunities for families to influence school policies and resources. The Welsh Government (2018) highlights the importance of involving families in school life to improve educational outcomes for children.

Deb

That sounds like a great idea Caitlin.

I would also like to gain your thoughts on how we improve the quality of provisions and curriculum by introducing regular feature days, such as “Make believe Mondays” where we have a focus on storytelling and dressing up to re-enact parts of the story, further activities linked to the chosen story such as story sequencing cards or making puppets of characters from the story to support recall.

We could have “Funky Fridays” to support music and movement where we could look at physical movements and coordination using scarf dancing, follow the leader dances and action songs. We could develop movement and rhythm with basic instruments like shakers, bells and tambourines

We need to continue to monitor and rearrange the activities and resources in order to follow and respond to the children's interests to promote firsthand, individualised learning experiences to cater to each child's unique interests and developmental stages. This will enhance engagement and motivation, promote the developmental process, and support responsive teaching (Estyn, 2017). By offering a variety of activities, educators

encourage exploration and discovery, fostering creativity, problem solving skills, and a lifelong love of learning. This dynamic and adaptive environment ensures that children's holistic development is nurtured effectively (WG, 2016b; National Association for the Education of Young Children, no date b).

Introducing these feature days could significantly enhance the quality of our program by providing structured yet flexible opportunities for children to engage in diverse activities. These activities not only support their cognitive and physical development but also promote social skills and emotional well-being. Regularly incorporating feedback from both children and parents ensures that our curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the needs of our children and wider community (Kids Included Together, 2023; WG, 2016a).

By continuously striving to improve and adapt our provision based on this feedback, we can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. This approach aligns with best practices in early childhood education, which emphasise the importance of individualised learning and the active involvement of children in their own educational journey (Varthana, 2023).

Liz

A high-quality early year's environment is essential for children's well-being and learning. In a Flying Start setting, the space must be safe, clean, and well-equipped with age-appropriate resources. Health and safety procedures play a crucial role, including regular risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential hazards, ensuring staff are trained in first aid and safeguarding policies, and maintaining appropriate child-to-staff ratios for adequate supervision.(Clifton,2024) Additionally, the environment should be rich in learning opportunities, incorporating sensory play, outdoor exploration, and role-playing areas that encourage creativity and problem-solving skills.(Baldwig,2016)

Ensuring quality education means that all children, regardless of background or ability, have equal access to learning opportunities. In a Flying Start setting, practitioners should embrace diversity and promote inclusivity by offering resources that reflect various cultures, languages, and abilities. Adapting teaching methods to support children with disabilities or additional needs are embedded in anti-discriminatory practices, in daily activities to help create an inclusive environment. (Welsh Government, 2023) Encouraging children to respect and appreciate diversity fosters a positive learning community where every child feels valued and supported.

Jo

We are committed to ensuring individuals feel heard, have choices in their care, and access opportunities as per the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. The Care Inspectorate Wales Statutory Framework (2023) – National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children under 12, Standard 4, requires settings to ‘meet individual needs, including any children with disabilities or additional needs (including additional learning needs), are planned for and provided for. Welsh Government (2023a)

To comply with current legislation, we have updated our ALN policy based on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Act (2018), Education Act (1996), and Equality Act (2010). The Equality Act (2010) emphasises equality of opportunity, prohibits discrimination, and requires reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities or learning difficulties. These adjustments, such as changes to practices or routines, often enhance development and wellbeing without significant costs (Estyn 2024b).

Consequently, we have revised our Flying Start Service ALN Policy to ‘Educating Children with Additional Learning Needs Policy.’

The Early Years Teaching and the Social and Emotional Needs of Young Children Study (Sammons *et al.*, 2003) highlights the importance of high-quality early years care for children with or at risk of ALN. It found that children facing multiple disadvantages, such

as family or environmental challenges, are more likely to develop such needs. Early care can reduce cognitive, social, and behavioral challenges, particularly for disadvantaged children (WG 2023c).

The updated policy aligns with the ALN Code of Practice for Wales (2021), addressing four ALN areas: Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Sensory or Physical, and Behavioural, Emotional, and Social Development. Our inclusive approach ensures all children with emerging or identified needs are part of our community, with person-centred care and their involvement in learning decisions.

We use child-centred methods to gather feedback from children, including interactive surveys, visual questionnaires, group discussions, and observations during play. Children with ALN receive tailored opportunities to express their views with staff attuned to their communication needs.

The UNCRC (Article 23) addresses the rights of children with disabilities, including ALN, emphasising non-discrimination (Article 2) and prioritising their best interests (Article 3) (UNICEF, n.d). We believe ALN and inclusion are shared responsibilities.

Our Responsible Individual ensures compliance with the ALN Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and Code of Practice (2021). The Setting ALNCO works with parents, carers, and professionals like Flying Start officers, Early Years ALN teams, Health Visitors, and Educational Psychologists. Stakeholder feedback is gathered through meetings, care plan reviews, and annual audits to enhance service delivery.

We implement tailored interventions for each child with emerging needs or identified ALN, monitoring their progress regularly.

Rhydian

Monitoring the progress of a young child with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in a Flying Start setting is essential for ensuring early identification of developmental delays and providing targeted support. Flying Start is a Welsh Government initiative, it aims to

enhance the well-being of children from disadvantaged backgrounds through early intervention (Welsh Government, 2021).

Regular assessment and tracking ensure that developmental milestones in language, social skills, and physical development are being met. Early intervention is most effective when children's progress is systematically monitored, allowing for targeted and personalised support. Direct assessments allows us as educators to tailor learning experiences to individual needs (Sylva *et al.*, 2009).

ALN pupils need continuous progress monitoring that involves regular assessments using developmental milestones and individualized goals. Methods such as the Early Years Developmental Journal and observational checklists provide a comprehensive understanding of a child's progress in areas like communication, cognitive skills, and social-emotional development (Hulme and Snowling, 2009).

Multi-agency collaboration involving educators, health professionals, and parents ensures a holistic approach to monitoring (Rix, 2020). Frequent assessments allow practitioners to adjust Individual Development Plans and provide interventions like speech and language therapy or introduce play-based learning. Formative evaluations such as observations during free play enable practitioners to track how ALN pupils apply newly acquired skills in social interactions (Dockrell *et al.*, 2019).

Also, parental involvement in progress reviews fosters a collaborative learning environment, promoting consistent support at home and in the setting. Research shows that early, targeted interventions lead to improved long-term outcomes for children with ALN (Melhuish *et al.*, 2019).

It is important to us as a setting to ensure that everyone feels involved in the progress of the child. fostering parental engagement through open communication and shared goal setting will provide valuable insights from the home environment, further supporting tailored interventions (Andrade, 2016).

Collaboration is a key component of quality monitoring. Multi-agency partnerships involving health visitors, speech and language therapists, and early years educators ensure a very specific and fair view of a child's development (Hargreaves, 2021). We

conduct regular interdisciplinary meetings to review progress and promote consistency within early intervention, preventing negative effect from delays.

Another essential tool is the use of developmental checklists and screening tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaires. These structured tools offer an approach to track milestones across communication, different types of motor skills, problem-solving, and personal-social development (Singh *et al.*, 2017). Data from these assessments provide evidence for us as practitioners to offer interventions and support learning (Glascoe and Sturner, 2017).

Jo

Currently, two children in our care have identified ALN resulting in significantly greater challenges in learning compared to the majority of their peers of the same age (ESTYN 2023). Both children have Autism Spectrum Condition and require additional learning provision. "Additional learning provision" for individuals aged three and above refers to educational or training support that goes beyond or differs from what is typically provided to peers of the same age group in a standard setting. This aims to address specific needs that may not be met by general provisions (Estyn 2023). As a result, two staff will attend upcoming 'Attention Autism' training. Some children with language difficulties participate in a language group intervention as part of universal learning provision. Following on from our last inspection, we will enhance communication by introducing Makaton and a visual timetable. Makaton enables individuals with communication difficulties to express themselves and understand others effectively (Makaton Charity, 2024). Additionally, intensive interaction, a flexible and responsive communication method, fosters meaningful connections (Intensive Interaction Institute, no date). These measures promote inclusion and a sense of belonging for children with communication needs.

Julie

Our staff, guided by the Social Care Wales Qualification Framework, are highly qualified and committed to providing exceptional care (Flying Start Guidance, 2025). Ongoing

professional development (CPD) ensures stability, continuity, and improved service quality. The Effective Pre-School and Primary Education (EPPE) (2003) study links higher staff qualifications to better child development outcomes. Training includes EY ALN Team and Speech and Language Therapy Team training sessions. With limited dates, 40% of staff will train in the first term, as a result, leadership has arranged bi-weekly visits from Flying Start Learning and Development Officers and the Early Years ALN outreach team to upskill all staff.

We aim to achieve the Autism Friendly Setting Award, accredited by the National Autistic Society, and two staff members will complete the Elklan 10-week course initially. As a Flying Start setting, we comply with CIW and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) but aim to exceed them as models of best practice. We collaborate with the Local Authority and align with initiatives like the Childcare Offer for Wales, Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, and Welsh Education Strategic Plans (WG, 2023d).

We regularly assess Universal Learning Provision (ULP) to identify needs and equip staff to support vulnerable pupils effectively. Care for children with ALN is central to staff performance and professional development.

Due to the upcoming inspection staff members have reported feeling emotionally drained due to high workloads and feel there is a lack of emotional support. They are concerned this will affect the quality of care provided to children, as stressed staff may struggle to offer the nurturing and responsive care young children need. To overcome this and prepare everyone for the inspection and the rigorous workload of a Flying Start setting we will implement a wellbeing program with the opportunity for regular check-ins with staff. Also encourage a supportive team environment and where possible review workloads to provide manageable caseloads and realistic expectations. This will lead to better quality care for the children, as staff will be more engaged and able to focus on the needs of the children.

Jo

We are committed to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and fostering good relationships. Children with ALN participate fully alongside their peers in the setting and wider community. Diversity is celebrated through displays, newsletters, book corners, and community involvement.

Our setting prioritises emotional safety, enabling children to express and manage their feelings positively. Staff model compassion and consistency, supporting transitions and uncertainty. Wellbeing initiatives include Theraplay, trauma-informed approaches, and Incredible Beginnings which are evidence-based techniques with proven benefits for supporting children thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. Children facing multiple adversities, such as deprivation, are at a higher risk of encountering Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Similarly, adults living in poverty are more likely to have endured childhood adversity. Families residing in areas of deprivation are particularly vulnerable to experiencing trauma and its effects, National Children's Bureau (2023). As a Flying Start Setting, our goal is to achieve the trauma informed award, allowing us to embed trauma-informed practices into our delivery and become a fully trauma-informed setting. Feedback from children, parents, and professionals informs our quality-of-care report, driving action plans for improvement through training, new resources, or activity adjustments. Gradual changes are reviewed to assess their impact. Early parental involvement significantly influences long-term academic success (Department for Schools, Children and Families, 2008).

Ongoing professional development ensures responsiveness to feedback, with regular reflections incorporated into evaluation processes. This inclusive approach fosters trust and collaboration, achieving the best outcomes for children with ALN.

Rhydian

As practitioners our continuous professional development supports us in maintaining high-quality assessments of our pupils. Our knowledge in child development theories

and the latest assessment and monitoring methodologies ensures consistency and reduces bias in evaluations. Reflective practice further enhances quality by encouraging practitioners to critically analyse our observations and adapt teaching strategies accordingly (Mathew *et al.*, 2017). Establishing data review cycles allows educators to analyse trends and identify gaps in learning. Using this information, early years settings can adjust teaching approaches and implement targeted interventions to ensure continued progress (Black & Wiliam, 2018).

Caitlin

Following feedback from informal parent conversations during drop-off and pick-up times, we recognized a need for more information on Additional Learning Needs (ALN). These informal interactions provide valuable opportunities to discuss children's progress and address concerns in a relaxed setting. Effective communication with parents is crucial for supporting children's well-being and development (Raising Children Network, 2024). In response to the feedback, our setting will provide parents of children with emerging or identified ALN with the Welsh Government's guide on their rights under the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) framework. We will also recommend SNAP Cymru for impartial advice and guidance on early years support for families.

Liz

Ongoing evaluation is essential for maintaining and improving service quality. Regular inspections, self-assessment reports, and peer reviews help identify areas for growth and uphold high standards. In a Flying Start setting, quality assurance measures include observing staff interactions with children to ensure best practices, gathering feedback through parental and staff surveys to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and implementing action plans to address gaps and enhance service delivery. External inspections by regulatory bodies, such as Ofsted, also play a crucial role in assessing quality, ensuring compliance with national standards, and driving continuous improvement. (Ofsted, 2025)

Research suggests that High-quality Early Childhood Play Learning and Care (formerly Early Childhood Education and Care) positively impacts children's long-term development. It improves language skills, performance in math and reading, and fosters positive behaviours. Children in quality settings are more self-reliant, focused during play, and better prepared for school, showing improved cooperation and resilience. The EPPE study (2003), Schweinhart *et al.* (1993), and Love *et al.* (2005) highlight links between quality pre-school care, intellectual growth, and social skills. (Welsh Government 2023)

Jo

Does anyone have any further questions or anything to add before we close the meeting?

Caitlin

Yes.

Before we conclude, I would like to suggest exploring the use of parental communication apps to improve engagement. This was an initiative that was suggested in the recent forum I attended. The forum promoted sharing quality within settings, and this stood out to me as a way we could enhance our provisions here. While we currently use social media platforms, tools like Seesaw could further enhance our communication. Seesaw allows educators to share updates on children's activities, progress, and achievements in real-time, creating a deeper connection between home and school.

The Chartered College of Teaching (2024) emphasizes the role of digital tools in fostering family involvement, as they provide meaningful opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. By integrating Seesaw alongside our existing communication methods, we can ensure continuous, high-quality communication with parents, supporting their active participation in their children's educational journey.

Jo - Thank you Caitlin that sounds like a great initiative to use to further improve the quality of our setting. Is everyone happy to explore the potential of Seesaw as a method of Communication?

Jo - Is there anything else to add

Everyone NO

Before we conclude, I would like to thank you all for your valuable insights and contributions during today's meeting.

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