Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Seedlings

Woodlands Infant School
Thornhill Road
Upper Cwmbran
Cwmbran
NP44 5UA



Date Inspection Completed

01/07/2024

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About Little Seedlings

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Judith Baker
Registered places	18
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	10 December 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Excellent**
Care and Development	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children's choices and opinions are highly respected with all play being child led and of real interest and meaning to the children. Children develop nurturing relationships and a sense of security. They are motivated, excited and fully engage in the play opportunities they discover. This leads to confidence and development in their independence skills.

Staff implement the service's procedures very well and create a safe and nurturing environment in which children thrive. They manage children's behaviour exceptionally well and foster kind and caring relationships. Children are celebrated and their individual needs are very well met.

The environment is child centred and set up so that it is safe and stimulating and somewhere children can develop to their full potential. There is easy access to resources and children can choose where and how they play. Children have easy access to toileting facilities which help them develop good independence skills.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff are recruited safely and given the support they need to perform their responsibilities to a high standard. Leaders are focused on continually improving the service and providing high standards of care.

Well-being Excellent

Children have a strong voice as all play is child led and staff encourage children to voice their opinions and act upon their wishes. For example, children can play inside or outside depending upon their play choices and we saw children planting outside whilst others remained inside mark making. Children choose when they wish to participate in snack, with some choosing to delay their snack so it did not interrupt their play with the play dough.

Children are happy, relaxed and quickly settle to play. They are supported by staff to explore the setting safely and become comfortable in their surroundings. Children are developing social skills so that they can share resources and be kind to their friends. We saw a group of older children playing independently with playdough as a tabletop activity. They were able to share and problem solve so that when there was a disagreement they resolved this themselves without staff intervention.

Children thoroughly engage in their play, planting, mark making, playing with water and sand. We saw children planting seeds and discussing the strawberries they had grown and sometimes eat at snack. When the child realised they needed water for their seeds, they independently filled their watering can from the water container. Later, they used the watering can, to make marks on the ground with the water, thoroughly absorbed by their play. Other children thoroughly enjoyed playing with small world figures with their friends. All play is child led and because of this, children are able to follow their interests and totally invest in their play and learning.

Children are given lots of time and encouragement to do things for themselves, build confidence in their own abilities and problem solve. Children develop and learn new skills as they complete tasks. For example, changing into and out of their wellies and waterproofs and hanging their coats and bags up on their pegs. They are encouraged to learn good hygiene and wash and dry their hands at appropriate times. After snack children scrape any remaining food into a bin and put their plates and mugs into a bowl. Children spontaneously asked ‘Is it time to tidy up yet?’ and then proceeded to tidy toys away before the end of the session, showing they understand the routines. They learn to attend to their own toilet needs in line with their age and stage of development and this helps ease their transition into the school environment.

Care and Development — Excellent

Staff are highly motivated and passionate about their work. They have a full understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They have thorough settling in procedures so that they can gather information and properly assess children's capabilities whilst in their care. They know children's allergies, dietary requirements and medical needs. Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding procedures. Staff complete appropriate records relating to accidents, incidents, pre-existing injury and medication and promptly share these with parents. Staff promote healthy eating, emotional well-being and children's physical and social development. Staff have excellent relationships with their colleagues and communicate very well with each other; this ensures they supervise and support children appropriately.

Staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs and how to promote positive behaviours. They treat children kindly and with a great deal of dignity and respect. They act as good role models. For example, they sit and eat their lunch with children to model appropriate behaviours, discuss healthy eating and instil good manners, encouraging children to say 'Please' and 'Thank you'. They have undertaken a wide range of additional training to understand children's development and allow them to provide appropriate support appropriately support them. For example, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Attachment, Circle of Security and Five Ways to Well-being.

Staff observe children and complete individual baseline assessments and group observations of how children are using the learning zones, to identify and evaluate children's learning. These observations are well recorded and assist staff in meeting children's play, learning and developmental needs. Children's specific needs are identified and any additional help or advice from outside agencies is sought as necessary. Support for Additional Learning Needs is a strength of the service. For example, funding for 1:1 support is accessed and specific staff identified to take on this role without causing stress on staff ratios. Staff promote the use of the Welsh language very well and lots of Welsh is used by staff and children, especially during snack time. There is some promotion of children's understanding about diverse cultures, in order to make them aware and accepting of the multi-cultural society in which we live.

Environment — Excellent

The setting is safe and well managed. Staff oversee the safe handover of children by greeting them at the door of the setting and ensuring all visitors identify themselves and sign into the register. Staff complete daily, weekly and monthly checks of all areas and comprehensive risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. All activities and equipment are risk assessed. The benefits of risky play are managed well. For example, older children are allowed to access the school's climbing frame with a fireman's pole only when closely supervised by staff. All annual maintenance checks for gas and electricity are carried out as required. Leaders ensure effective infection control practices are implemented to successfully minimise any risks to children's health and safety. Fire drills are completed with children so that they know what to do in an emergency.

The setting is light and spacious, providing children with ample space to play and learn. Toilets are clean and easily accessible for children which supports their independence. Leaders ensure the environment is well organised so that children can move freely and explore. They ensure the environment always meets the children's needs and enables them to reach their full potential. Staff ensure there is free flow to the outdoor play space and that it is used as a natural extension to the learning experience. They extend children's knowledge and development in the outdoors by offering an extensive range of resources which challenges and consistently stimulates their curiosity and interest, for example, water play, planting, music wall, reading area and a mud kitchen.

Leaders ensure all children can easily access an extensive variety of age-appropriate furniture, toys and equipment both indoors and outdoors to stimulate their interest and imagination. Toys and play equipment are plentiful and of a high quality. For example, there are wooden and natural play resources. There are some resources, which encourage children to have an understanding and value of other cultures. Systems for monitoring resources ensures they are of a high standard. Leaders monitor accidents and incidents to ensure that any emerging risks within the environment are identified quickly and addressed.

Leadership and Management — Good

Leadership is effective and managers are motivated and passionate about the provision of care, and development of the service. They communicate and share their vision with the staff, who embrace the aims and values of the service. Leaders are supportive and committed to ensuring the whole workforce implements good working practices. Policies, procedures and guidance are of a satisfactory standard and reviewed regularly although some information was not up to date and could cause confusion

Leaders undertake a thorough annual review of the service and consult with parents, staff and children. They consider and reflect upon this information very well. This informs priorities for development of the service over the forthcoming year. Improvements to the service are tangible and have a positive impact upon children's experiences. For example, funding had been obtained to develop the cloakroom area to make more space for children's coats, bags and possessions. Parent feedback was very positive, particularly regarding their child's speech development which they stated had 'improved dramatically'.

Recruitment and induction procedures are thorough and equip staff to do their job well. Staff files evidenced all checks are completed in a thorough and timely manner, however, some information had not been recorded and kept on file. Staff are suitably qualified and have updated paediatric first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding training. All staff have a current Disclosure and Barring Safety (DBS) check. Regular supervision is given to ensure staff understand their role and responsibilities and records demonstrate these are meaningful and support professional development. Staff access supplementary training regarding additional learning needs, gold standard healthy snack award, speech and language and developmental pathways. This ensures staff can meet the needs of children in line with current childcare practices. At present staff meetings are informal and not record.

Staff understand the importance of building good relationships with parents and the local community. Communication with parents and carers is well maintained and supported with technology. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the service and the care their children receive. Multi agency working is a strength of the service for both additional learning needs children and transitions to schools and nurseries.

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice
Recommendation(s)
Make staff meetings more formal so agenda items discussed can be recorded.
Ensure that policies and procedures are thoroughly reviewed to reflect current practice and legislation.
Ensure that a record is kept on staff files of the means of identification seen during recruitment.

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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