Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Chums Day Nursery

Court Farm
Llanvihangel
Pontypool
NP4 0JB



Date Inspection Completed

28/05/2021

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About Little Chums Day Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Little Chums Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	51
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	9 January 2017
Is this a Flying Start 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. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service.'*

Summary

This is an inspection undertaken during the Covid 19 pandemic; therefore, we have focused on the priority areas for this setting and not the full quality framework.

Children are happy and have lots of fun. They flourish at the nursery through good quality care and strong attachments with staff. Children progress well in their development through skilful support from staff and a broad range of stimulating activities. There is a wealth of good quality resources and equipment, both inside and outside to enrich children's experiences. Children benefit from extensive outdoor facilities that encourage their love of nature and support their learning.

The manager and staff prioritise safeguarding and work hard to implement the nursery's policies and procedures, to keep children safe. Overall, Infection control methods and health and safety measures are suitable. They have addressed most improvements following the last inspection. There are more cosy areas and comfortable chairs for children to relax on and reconstruction of most toilets are complete. Renovation of the farmhouse has resulted in significant improvements to play areas and resources. Work to complete the new preschool and afterschool unit is ongoing.

Leadership and management is strong and their calm, professional and approachable manner is creating a positive environment that nurtures staff development and their well-being. The whole team work well together to support the smooth running of the nursery, provide high quality care for children and establish close partnerships with parents.

Well-being

Children are confident communicators because they know staff listen to their ideas, wishes and needs. We heard the younger children use gestures, babbling and emerging language to express themselves and saw staff respond immediately. They choose what they want to do and know their requests receive a positive response. For example, preschool children chose if they wanted to paint a flower or if they wanted to move rooms. Good questioning throughout the day encourages all children to express themselves and make decisions.

Children feel safe and settle quickly on arrival. Parents told us their children love coming to nursery and often do not want to leave. They show delight on seeing familiar staff and play happily with them to demonstrate their strong bonds. Staff's soft tones and careful nurturing manner help reassure children when they get upset. We saw this instantly calm a child, giving them the support and confidence to continue their play. Children cope well with transitions to the next age group.

Children confidently participate in activities and show high self-esteem and pride in their achievements. In toddlers, they eagerly showed how clever they were at building towers and preschool children excitedly talked about their chalk pictures. Children appreciate the notice and reminders given by staff that a task or new routine is beginning. This gives them an opportunity to prepare themselves for the change. For example, "*Can I put your bib on*?" or gentle reminders they are going home soon.

Children thrive, have lots of fun and show great enjoyment in their play. As a result, they make good progress in their learning and development. Children in toddlers had great fun dancing to their favourite tunes and showed good concentration when completing peg puzzles. They confidently named shapes, colours or animals and used their imagination to create different scenes. Children develop a range of skills including some Welsh language at circle time.

Most children have good opportunities to develop their independence. We saw a child in babies feed themselves their lunch for the first time. However, preschool children are not always encouraged to write their names on their pictures. Children in Tots are inquisitive and happily explore the various toys. They investigated how the wheels went down the helter skelter, exclaiming "*Wow*", clapping and cheering their successes.

Care and Development

Staff understand and implement the nursery's health and safety policies. They promote healthy lifestyles, physical activities and personal safety daily. Staff follow good nappy changing practices and promote regular hand washing with children. Parents praise the management and staff's commitment to their children. Children benefit from a good variety of nutritious, home-cooked meals and we saw the children really enjoy their food.

Staff prioritise safeguarding and have good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. They understand child protection issues and the need to report any child welfare concerns. The nursery has effective procedures for safeguarding children. All staff hold up-to-date first aid and safeguarding training to enhance their knowledge and keep children safe. Although staff were unclear of what the Prevent Duty was, they all completed training following the inspection to increase their understanding. We saw good quality risk assessments in place for the environment and records show regular fire drills take place. Discussions about the importance of wearing seat belts in the vehicles and talking about the dangers around them, helps increase children's understanding. A child's comment, "*Rachel makes sure we are tucked into our seats mummy*" when travelling to and from school, helps reassure parents that their children are safeguarded.

Staff are very loving and friendly in their approach and listen well to the children. They show enthusiasm and kindness in their interactions and place children's needs at the heart of all they do. For example, we saw the staff in toddlers offer frequent praise and encouragement and have lots of fun with the children when dancing and singing.

Staff know their key children well, helping them to provide the right level of support and encouragement to learn. We noted staff in tots skilfully model language and talk to the children as they play to provide a language rich environment. Staff follow the children's interests and know when to step back to allow children to explore and develop their own play. Management plan suitable activities with expected learning outcomes for each group and staff tailor these to the children's needs. The methods to assess children's development, identify the next steps in their learning and to link these to the activity planning needs improving.

Environment

Overall, the management and staff team provide an inviting, rich environment that nurtures children's needs and gives them many opportunities to play, develop and reach their full potential. The renovated farmhouse provides three spacious, bright and stimulating rooms for the younger children to play and learn. A room for messy play, sensory room, dining hall and dedicated sleep room provides additional space. These meet children's needs well. Improvements to the bathrooms in the farmhouse were made following the previous inspection. Following the inspection, a shower curtain has been replaced with a folding door to improve privacy. Children and staff in preschool are looking forward to moving into their new building in the summer. This will provide a more inviting, bright and spacious playroom and a dedicated room for after school and holiday club children.

The manager and staff team ensure that security measures are rigorous. The farmhouse has closed circuit television, an intercom on the main door and fingerprint recognition on the internal door preventing any unsupervised access to the playrooms. All staff follow the most up to date government guidance meticulously to promote good health. They wear face shields at handover with parents and implement thorough cleaning schedules of their rooms daily. Parents praise the comprehensive measures in place in regards to the coronavirus and feel reassured that their children are safe.

The leader and manager ensure there are a broad range of good quality toys, resources and equipment both inside and outside. The nursery is set on an old farm with two acres of land. The extensive outdoor play facilities provide endless opportunities for children to follow their interests, explore nature and observe the animals. Children enjoy regular walks across the fields and artificial grass in both gardens allow outdoor play all year round. A mud kitchen, a new bug hotel and planting area, further enhances children's experiences and their love of outdoors. There is more comfortable seating for children to relax and wipe able cushions have been introduced. Individually named coat pegs for children's bags and personal belongings help them feel a valued member of the nursery. However, these do block the hallway outside the baby room, minimising the space available for staff and babies to exit in an emergency.

Leadership and Management

The leader employs a highly skilled manager and a great staff team. They are motivated, enthusiastic and continually strive to provide a high quality service for children and their parents. Parents are impressed with how the nursery is run and particularly how they have guided and supported staff throughout the pandemic. They praise the quality of care provided for their children and how the nursery is "…*like a family*". Parents told us staff are very supportive, approachable, "*treat children like their own… and provide endless opportunities for them to grow as individuals*." Parents and children have formed close relationships with staff. A member of staff is assigned to each child to act as a key person. For example, staff do all aspects of the children's care, liaise with parents and occasionally move with their key children to the next age group.

The manager is well organised, friendly and places excellent emphasis on supporting and promoting staff's wellbeing. As a result, all staff value the support they receive, love their job and stay for many years. Thorough recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and all new staff undertake a detailed induction. Staff have good access to training and the manager undertakes regular peer observations to monitor staff performance, activities and daily routines. The statement of purpose and necessary policies and procedures are in place to support the smooth running of the nursery.

Management and staff have good relationships with parents. All parents receive copies of the nursery's statement of purpose and policies and procedures and any amendments that are made. Although information about children's ongoing progress is not formally shared, parents value the photographs and daily handovers.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

R1. Provide more opportunities throughout the day for children to hear, use and practice their Welsh language skills.

R2. Ensure children's assessments are completed routinely to help identify their next steps across all areas of learning and ensure these are shared with parents throughout the year.

R3. Ensure hallways are clear and free from hazards.

Areas for improvement and action at, or since, the previous inspection. Achieved

Areas for improvement and action at, or since, the previous inspection. Not Achieved	
None	

Areas where priority action is required	
None	

Areas where improvement is required	
None	

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