



Little Stars Nursery



Strand Annealing Lane, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6AN



01495 369527



none

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): 8 July 2025

Service Information:

Operated by: Little Stars Nursery LLP

Care Type: Children's Day Care

Registered places: 73

Main language(s): English

Flying Start service: Yes

Receive funding to provide early years part time education: No

Promotion of Welsh language and culture: The service provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture, or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:



Well-being

Excellent



Care & Development

Excellent



Environment

Excellent



Leadership & Management

Excellent

Summary:

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at Little Stars Nursery. They are excellent communicators and curious learners, consistently making choices about what they do and how they spend their time at the setting. Children engage in purposeful play-based activities and are confident staff will listen to them.

Staff promote children's wellbeing efficiently, building affectionate bonds of attachment with them and ensuring safeguarding underpins all practice. Staff are well qualified, experienced, and knowledgeable. They promote positive outcomes for children through their current knowledge and skills and their nurturing and caring attitudes.

Staff care for children in a unique environment which is calming, spacious and clean. The play areas are welcoming and friendly and provide a rich environment for children to play and learn. There are excellent resources and equipment which meet the needs of the children and staff

identify any unnecessary risks to children and eliminate them as much as possible.

Leaders have an excellent vision which is shared with staff. They have a strong sense of purpose which sustains improvement and promotes outstanding outcomes for children. Leaders value staff and provide effective and regular support. They have excellent partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals, ensuring they work collectively to support children's learning and development.

Findings:



Well-being

Excellent

Children are strong communicators and have excellent opportunities to make choices and decisions about what affects them. They express themselves with confidence, proudly sharing their pictures and favourite toys with staff and visitors as they exclaim, “*Look what I’ve got!*” Children often make independent decisions about their activities and preferred play locations. Their opinions and interests are highly valued and acted upon by attentive staff. Children eagerly asked staff for watering cans, which staff quickly supplied, before happily watering the plants, flowers, and produce growing outside.

Children feel safe and secure as they benefit from thoughtful staff who know them very well. Nearly all children are content, settled and show enjoyment. Those who are new to the nursery seek comfort and reassurance from staff who respond with warmth and kindness. Children know the effective routines very well, allowing for extremely smooth transitions throughout the day. For example, children wash their hands before eating and help tidy up at the end of the sessions.

Children demonstrate effective interactions with both their friends and staff members. For instance, they exhibit patience as they wait their turn to use the slide, allowing others to proceed before climbing the steps. Additionally, some children collaborate in a small group while building a train track together. We heard children confidently call their friends and staff names and enthusiastically invite them to play. Children happily and freely explore the environment and successfully engage in individual and group activities. They show respect towards their environment and each other. Older children use manners effectively, with a little prompting from staff.

Children are very curious learners. They are highly motivated and fully engaged in their play and learning, concentrating for extended periods of time. For example, some children delighted in water play, shrieking with excitement as they splashed. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of real-life opportunities and experiences; confidently exploring the resources and using their imaginations. Children are motivated to direct their own play and take part in activities they choose. For example, children enjoy adding water to the mud to make it a different consistency.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills; enabling them to do things for themselves successfully and to problem solve effectively. Children enjoy cutting fruit and vegetables in preparation for snack time before choosing where they want to sit to eat. They serve themselves food and pour their own drinks before wiping their mouths afterwards. This promotes children’s self-help skills and builds their self-esteem.



Staff demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Leaders have produced an extensive range of policies, procedures and documentation which staff consistently follow when carrying out their roles. Staff clearly outlined how they would react to a concern, reflecting a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and a strong commitment to addressing safeguarding matters appropriately. Staff follow and promote strong hygiene practices. For example, they actively encourage children to independently wash their hands, before eating and following messy activities, instilling good hygiene practices from an early age. Staff are confident when recording, maintaining, and reviewing a range of records including, accident, incident, existing injuries and medication logs.

Staff create extremely positive relationships with the children. They interact with them in a warm, caring, and relaxed manner. Staff frequently offer praise and encouragement, and they are excellent role models to the children; prompting “please” and “thank you” when appropriate. Staff fully understand the behaviour management policy and consistently implement positive behaviour management strategies. For example, staff regularly remind children why it is important to share and take turns during their play, explaining to younger children “*sharing is caring*”. Staff are highly responsive and genuinely respect and listen to the children’s views. They speak softly to the children and use positive reinforcement. Staff regularly praise children for their effort and achievements. For instance, they commend a child for using a new style cup by saying, “*Well done, we’re so proud of you drinking like that.*”

Staff support children’s curiosity and consistently allow them opportunities to explore and experiment independently. This ensures children are at the centre of their own learning and development by enabling them to follow their own interests. Staff make observations of children during activities and support children to further develop their skills. For example, when reading a story with a child, staff enhance learning by posing thoughtful questions, providing related activities that reflect those in the book, and subsequently engaging the child in follow-up tasks connected to the story. Staff create a relaxed and friendly feel in the nursery where children can confidently play energetically or quietly. They are committed to providing a wide range of play and learning activities through planning in the moment, which ensures they successfully follow the children’s lead. Staff provide children with opportunities to engage in play and learn about diverse multicultural figures and religions by offering access to story bags and musical instruments from various cultures. They support children’s language skills, including some basic Welsh words and phrases.



Environment

Excellent

Leaders have highly effective measures in place to ensure the environment is a welcoming and secure place for children, staff and visitors. They ensure there is plenty of room for children to play and learn with well-designed play spaces both indoors and outside. The environment is safe, secure and extremely well maintained. Staff ensure the doors are always locked and only authorised access to the nursery is permitted. Children, staff and visitors are routinely and accurately signed in and out of the building. Leaders conduct thorough risk assessments covering all aspects of the environment and related activities. They review them regularly and take appropriate action if needed. They ensure staff supervise children well and cater for all the needs and abilities of children they are caring for. Leaders practice fire drills frequently and maintain relevant records to ensure all staff and children can evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency. Leaders complete daily checks of the premises and all maintenance checks for the building and appliances are up to date.

Leaders ensure the environment is highly accommodating and designed to be child friendly. It features well-lit, open, and thoughtfully arranged spaces that encourage exploration and foster curiosity in children. Calming, neutral décor contributes to a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Staff maintain each playroom with a high degree of organisation, supporting all aspects of children's development. A purposeful range of resources, including real life and natural resources are stored at child height to ensure easy access for children of all ages. Leaders provide younger babies with opportunities to enjoy sensory items as well as explore messy play. The outdoor area has been designed so that both babies and older children can develop physical skills and engage in activities such as planting and growing, to learn about the natural environment. Older children have excellent opportunities to develop their curiosity and exploration. For example, children have access to water play, balancing and climbing apparatus and a selection of wheeled toys.

Leaders create an extremely stimulating and exciting play environment for the children with an abundance of resources available. They provide quality furniture and resources that are suitable for the developmental needs of all the children. For example, there is appropriate furniture for children to sit at ease to undertake tabletop activities and eat their snacks. The toilets are child-sized and support children to develop their independence skills. Leaders ensure the environment provides excellent and challenging opportunities for children to explore and develop their creativity, physical skills and independence.



Leaders have a clear vision for the nursery which they communicate successfully to all staff, creating a strong work ethic. Staff work well together as a team, and they speak highly of each other. Leaders ensure the provision achieves very high standards. They deliver high quality care and provide learning and development opportunities for staff as well as children. They have an effective statement of purpose that accurately reflects the service, and they ensure staff embed the relevant policies and procedures within the setting. Leaders collect, record and maintain all the required information in relation to staff and children. They record children's preferences in detail, and they have the appropriate parental permissions in place.

Leaders implement effective systems to support meaningful self-evaluation and plan for improvement, which they use to support their quality-of-care review. They are extremely approachable and welcome any ideas or suggestions to improve their practice. Leaders collect feedback from children, parents, staff, other professionals and outside agencies to inform their review, which supports an effective action plan for improvements to the service. Leaders purposefully evaluate day to day records, for example accident and incident records, to identify any trends, and monitor where and how these are happening throughout the setting.

Leaders are enthusiastic and motivated. They deploy staff effectively to ensure they meet staffing ratios, and as a result fully meet children's needs. Leaders follow robust recruitment procedures to safeguard children and ensure staff have the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively care for children. They set high expectations and lead staff effectively, supporting them in understanding their roles and responsibilities. Leaders undertake regular appraisals and supervisions that are integral to their practice and drive improvement. The key worker system enables children to settle with familiar staff who are sensitive to children's individual needs.

Leaders have developed excellent partnerships with parents, carers, professionals, and external agencies. They engage collaboratively with leaders from other settings and participate actively in a group dedicated to sharing best practices, fostering professional discourse, and supporting leadership wellbeing. Parents who gave feedback expressed how they are impressed with *"The dedication by each staff member. The rapport they build with your child and the educating fun lessons they learn daily."* Whilst others stated that staff *"go above and beyond to care for your children"*.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

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.

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

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