Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Ducklings Playgroup Garnteg

Garnteg Primary School, Hillcrest Garndiffaith, Pontypool, NP4 7SJ

07940792823

The inspection visit took place on 17/09/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Torfaen County Borough Council Child Care and Play Services
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	20
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 anticipates, identifies, and meets the Welsh language and culture needs of people.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Excellent
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at Little Ducklings. They have an exceptionally strong voice as their needs and interests are fully considered and valued. Children are safe and happy and have many excellent opportunities to learn and develop.

Staff are extremely well qualified, experienced and motivated. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy, implementing the setting's policies and procedures effectively. Staff are kind and caring in their interactions with children and support their learning and development extremely well.

Leaders have effective measures in place to ensure the environment is secure, safe and clean. It is welcoming and very well organised enabling children to access a rich range of resources independently. Staff ensure the environment fully meets the needs of children and provides high quality play experiences.

Leaders have a strong vision for the setting which they share well with staff. Self-evaluation is

effective. They have robust procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and safeguarding is prioritised. Leaders and staff develop excellent relationships with parents and external agencies who they work closely with to provide effective care and support to children.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They have an exceptionally strong voice and make many choices and decisions about what they do during each session. For example, they choose what they play with, whether they want to play outside or when they want snack. Children become confident communicators as they know all their attempts at communication are listened and responded to.

Nearly all children settle happily on arrival and cope well with separation from parents and carers. One or two who become a little upset receive prompt and gentle support from staff with whom they have formed a close bond. Children move around and explore freely showing they feel safe. They know their ideas are valued as staff respond with praise and enthusiasm to their efforts and achievements. Children are familiar with the routines of the day which helps them develop a sense of belonging.

Children behave very well in line with their ages and stages of development. They receive consistent, caring support from staff to help them develop positive behaviour. As a result, children play contentedly alone or alongside each other, and some are beginning to play together. For example, several children played next to each other at the mud kitchen happily sustaining interest and concentration whilst two children worked together to share a ride on a wheeled toy.

Children are active and engaged in their play and learning. They are always busy and have great fun exploring the activities on offer. For example, some children returned several times to the craft area to explore glue, paint and relevant tools. Whilst others looked at books, played in the home corner or balanced on stepping stones outside.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through access to a wide range of resources that enrich their learning and promote their all-round development. They have further opportunities to develop independence skills and learn to do things for themselves. For example, children receive support and encouragement to put on their coats, wash their hands and pour drinks.

Care & Development — Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. Leaders and staff prioritise safeguarding and have a thorough knowledge of the actions they need to take should they have concerns about a child. Staff accurately record accidents, incidents, any injuries a child may have when they arrive and any medication they administer. They consistently share these with parents and ensure they obtain relevant information and signatures. They record their own and children's attendance to ensure they always know who is on the premises. Staff implement robust cleaning and hygiene practice effectively. For example, they sanitise tables before using them for food, use personal protect equipment appropriately for tasks and ensure they and children wash their hands such as before eating or after a nappy change. Staff are fully aware of children's dietary or medical needs, and care plans are in place for children who need them. Staff encourage a healthy lifestyle. They provide a healthy and substantial snack ensuring children have plenty of time and are not rushed. Staff implement daily toothbrushing and ensure children have plenty of opportunities to spend time outside in the fresh air.

Interactions between staff and children are exemplary. Staff are kind, caring and relaxed. They are sensitive to children's needs and skilfully use explanation, distraction and patience to help children learn appropriate behaviour. As a result, children behave very well, especially considering their ages. Staff demonstrate genuine interest in what children do and use praise to celebrate achievements and encourage perseverance. They speak respectfully to each other and children, acting as excellent role models.

Staff support children's play and learning extremely well. They play alongside children and take opportunities to extend learning in all areas of development. For example, they comment on what children are doing to help language development and sing rhymes and songs throughout the session as they fit with activities. We did not, however, hear staff use much Welsh. Staff organise the session to give children the maximum time to play and learn with no unnecessary interruptions. For example, snack is available in small groups with children choosing when they wish to join. Parents are admitted in small groups to drop off and pick up to avoid overwhelming numbers and eliminate the need to gather children in a large group. Staff know the children well, they are well qualified and very knowledgeable about child development. Their observations of children and areas of provision feed effectively into planning and help ensure individual and group needs are met. They track children's progress carefully and keep parents informed. Staff are well trained and confident when working with children with additional learning needs (ALN). The provision for children with ALN is a particular strength of the setting.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders effectively ensure the premises are secure, safe, clean and very well maintained both inside and outside. They ensure external and playroom doors are locked but easily opened by staff when children are present and consistently record visitors. The setting is based on school grounds in its own building and leaders work closely with school staff to ensure routine maintenance is carried out. They have access to records which confirm all necessary building safety checks are carried out in a timely manner. Leaders have comprehensive risk assessments in place which they review regularly, these include individual risk assessments for children and staff who may need them. Staff carry out and record fire drills and school lockdown procedures regularly.

Leaders ensure the setting is welcoming and meets the needs of children and families. The playroom is light and extremely well organised with different areas offering rich opportunities for play and learning. Staff monitor these areas to ensure they continue to support children's interests and needs. Displays include children's artwork which fosters a sense of achievement and belonging and images which help children become aware of diversity in the world around. Labels and signs include pictures to help children understand what they mean alongside Welsh and English words. Children can access the outdoor play area directly from the playroom. Although this area is small it is well thought out and offers further opportunities for children to learn new skills, explore elements of the natural world and take part in more physical activities. Staff told us they also use some of the wider school grounds on occasions. Children can access toilet facilities directly from the playroom, supporting developing independence for some. There is a suitable nappy changing area within the bathroom which ensures staff can maintain the privacy of children. Additionally, parents and carers benefit from a comfortable family room which is used for a variety of purposes such as one to one meetings, introduction days or by visiting outside agencies.

Leaders provide high-quality furniture, toys and resources which are suitable for the children using them and stimulate their play and learning successfully. Resources and equipment are clean and easily accessible to children enabling them to independently access and choose what they want to play with. Many of the resources are made of natural materials and can be used flexibly and with imagination. There are plentiful resources which promote diversity and cultural awareness. The outdoor area is set up and available every day, leaders provide waterproof suits for the children which means they can play outside in most weathers if they choose to.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leadership and management are fully effective. Leaders have a strong vision for the setting and are extremely well organised. They are knowledgeable about their roles and regulatory responsibilities. Leaders keep all required documentation to a high standard. They have excellent policies and procedures in place which they review regularly, and which they ensure staff understand and implement successfully. Their statement of purpose is detailed and useful for parents. Leaders keep the well-being of children and families at the heart of everything they do.

There are very good arrangements in place to review the quality of their care annually. Leaders draw on feedback from parents, staff and other professionals along with observations of children to evaluate their service and identify relevant areas for development. We saw evidence of previous targets being progressed and achieved.

Leaders follow robust recruitment procedures and have all required checks and documentation in place to evidence staff are suitable to work with children. They work with and support their staff extremely well coming together effectively as a team to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. Staff retention is high and most of the staff have been with the setting for many years. However, there is a well-established induction process for new staff and an effective system for regular supervision and appraisal. Leaders ensure all staff complete and update mandatory training such as safeguarding of the correct level, paediatric first aid and food hygiene. They also provide extensive training opportunities for staff to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills in ways that benefit the children in their care. All the staff we spoke to said they thoroughly enjoy working at the setting, find it very rewarding and feel very well supported by leaders.

Leaders and staff work extremely well with parents and develop excellent partnership working with a wide range of outside agencies. They collect all the information they need before children start with them to ensure they can meet their individual needs. Staff work closely with other professionals should this be needed to meet those individual needs. Leaders keep parents informed about their children and the setting through a variety of ways such as daily verbal feedback, termly informal meetings and newsletters. They also hold a termly stay and play session. Parents give very positive feedback about the setting, and we saw some lovely comments in thank you cards.

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

Best Practice

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.

Recommendation(s)
Further develop the use of Welsh.

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