Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Dean Close Little Trees St Arvans Nursery

St Arvans, Chepstow, NP16 6DN

01291624893

http://www.deancloselittletrees.co.uk

The inspection visit took place on 29/09/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Dean Close Nurseries Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	92
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	Yes
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children are happy, settled and confident, making meaningful choices about their play and daily experiences. They form positive relationships with staff and others, engage enthusiastically in activities and show curiosity, resilience and increasing independence. Children develop a strong sense of identity and actively participate in the daily life of the setting.

Staff are good at promoting children's health, safety and well-being effectively through nurturing care, positive interactions and strong safeguarding practice. They provide a broad range of worthwhile experiences and work collaboratively with families and professionals to support children's progress.

The management team provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment that supports children's play and exploration. In the main they maintain effective safety arrangements. However, hazards were identified in the baby sleep room and playroom, therefore this remains an area for

improvement. Children are provided with a good range of accessible resources and the spaces created encourage choice and creativity. Ongoing investment in the provision demonstrates a commitment to enhancing children's experiences.

The manager and room leaders provide good direction and foster a positive culture across the setting. They evaluate their practice, mostly identify priorities for improvement and support staff through training, supervision and professional development. Strong partnerships with parents and external agencies support positive outcomes for children.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have a strong voice within the setting and make good choices about how they spend their time. They select resources and activities and freely move between the indoor environments throughout the sessions. Children choose what they would like to eat and drink at snack time from a range of healthy options and make decisions about how they play and who they play with. They direct their own play, make meaningful choices and influence their daily experiences. For example, a child in the younger toddler group chose not to join a group listening to the 'Gruffalo' story activity and continued playing with blocks and small toy cars, with staff respecting their decision. Children show increasing independence and understand that their views and preferences are valued.

Children feel safe, happy and valued within the setting. They arrive settled and quickly engage in activities of their choice. Children develop secure and trusting relationships with staff and readily seek comfort, support and conversation when required. For example, children approached staff for cuddles, reassurance and assistance throughout the day. They are familiar with daily routines and transitions, which helps them feel secure. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging, supported by photographs and displays celebrating their experiences and achievements. New children settle quickly and become involved in activities and routines.

Children interact positively with one another and with adults. They play cooperatively, share resources and communicate effectively during play and daily routines. Children show kindness and consideration towards their friends, willingly sharing resources and taking turns. For example, children in preschool group, were heard asking, *"Can I have this one?"* and responding, *"here you go."* They collaborate during role-play experiences, negotiating roles and developing friendships. We observed group time with the preschool group where children listened attentively and engaged in counting in English and Welsh. They learn from staff who are experienced and confident for example, the room leader accounted the days of the week with the whole group in Welsh. When they got to the number 29 the leader could not remember 29 in Welsh. Instead of finishing the activity at 28 she demonstrated how she could solve the problem, *'two equals dau and nine equals naw, therefore 29 must be dau ddeg naw'*. This was a great example in showing children how to problem solve. Children socialise well during snack and lunch times and respond positively to gentle reminders about manners and expectations.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning experiences. They engage enthusiastically in a wide range of activities and sustain concentration for extended periods. Children show curiosity, imagination and creativity through construction activities, role play, sensory experiences and planned outdoor play. They express enjoyment through their comments, interactions and enthusiasm for activities. For example, one child told us in the older toddler group when identifying

animal sounds, *“this is so much fun, my dog barks but not my cat,”* while others became excited and animated when talking about their pets. Children remain focused and engaged in both child-led and adult-supported experiences throughout the session.

Children develop a good range of skills that support their learning and independence. They access resources, make decisions about their play and manage their belongings appropriately. Children understand routines and expectations and are increasingly able to attend to their own personal needs. They independently access drinks, retrieve equipment and move safely between learning environments. For example, older babies in the baby unit select their own toys and activities, some enjoyed playing with blocks while others engaged in listening to adults read. Younger babies on the first floor of the unit use their space well. They are settled and welcome visitors with smiles and curiosity. Babies in the playroom move around freely crawling, choosing activities and toys, other babies enjoyed cuddles with staff, and some slept according to their needs. Younger children’s groups across the nursery are nurtured well by caring staff who spend time with the children in a meaningful way. Older children are consulted in what they do throughout the day with a good balance of child initiated and adult led activities.

Care & Development — Good

Staff promote good health, safety and well-being for all the children. They provide healthy snack choices and demonstrate a good awareness of children's dietary requirements and medical needs. For example, staff referred to clearly displayed allergy information and discussed individual dietary needs when snack was delivered to each group. This is to ensure all children received appropriate food choices. Staff support children to develop healthy hygiene habits through regular toileting and handwashing routines. All staff demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and confidently describe reporting pathways with good confidence. Staff followed appropriate hygiene procedures during nappy changing and interacted positively and respectfully with the child throughout. They are knowledgeable about children's individual health needs and have undertaken relevant training to ensure they can respond appropriately in the event of a medical emergency.

Staff manage interactions with children very successfully and create a calm, nurturing atmosphere where children feel valued and respected. They communicate positively with children throughout the day, listen attentively and respond sensitively to individual needs. Staff explain routines and transitions clearly, helping children understand what will happen next and preparing them for changes during the session. For example, staff in older toddlers and preschool groups explained that children would tidy away resources, wash their hands and get ready for lunch before returning to their chosen activities. They use praise and encouragement effectively through comments such as *“da iawn”*. Staff also promote positive behaviour through gentle reminders and consistent expectations. They provide reassurance and comfort when needed, helping children develop trusting relationships and confidence in seeking support from familiar adults.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development well and provide a broad range of worthwhile experiences that support progress across all areas of learning. They make effective use of the indoor and outdoor environments to provide a variety of play opportunities. Staff in preschool use planning systems with photographs of children at play that include long-term themes, celebration calendars and focused activities, and maintain observations and developmental records to support children's learning. They understand children's individual needs to provide consistent support. Staff work effectively with families and external professionals to help meet children's individual needs and support their progress. They promote Welsh language and culture naturally through songs, greetings and daily routines and use children's interests and experiences to extend conversations and support language development. Planning and observation systems support children's learning. The ALN coordinator ensures that children with specific needs are supported well and parents are included at each step.

Environment — Good

The manager and her team have effective arrangements in place to promote children's safety. They maintain secure access arrangements, with entry controlled through locked doors and supervised access to the premises. The management team complete a comprehensive range of risk assessments covering the indoor and outdoor environments, individual children's needs, severe weather conditions, fire safety and emergency situations. Safeguarding information, reporting procedures and key contacts are readily available to staff, helping to protect children. They ensure staff understand emergency evacuation procedures and have arrangements in place to support children who may require additional assistance during an emergency. However, weekly visual check records are not robust enough to identify hazards and safety in a meaningful way. The baby unit on the first-floor risk assessments did not identify trailing blind cords in both the sleep room and playroom. The record could not identify who completed it each week. Therefore, the area for improvement from the previous inspection remains open. This was not escalated to a priority action notice because on reporting the hazard to managers the issues were resolved before the inspection process was completed.

The management team provide a welcoming, stimulating and child-centred environment that supports children's play, learning and development. They organise the setting thoughtfully into purposeful areas, including spaces for reading, construction, imaginative play, water play and creative activities. The manager spoke about her ideas to change some areas within the nursery so that the baby unit feels better connected to the rest of the nursery. Staff celebrate children's experiences, achievements and participation in cultural events through attractive displays in the setting. They provide comfortable areas for relaxation and quieter activities alongside some opportunities for outdoor learning and physical play. However, outdoor play is not currently offered as free flow although most base rooms have adjoining garden space.

The management team and staff provide children with a good range of resources and equipment that support their interests, independence and development. They ensure resources are stored at children's height, clearly organised and easily accessible, enabling children to make independent choices about their play. Leaders provide a variety of construction, role play, creative and sensory resources that encourage curiosity, imagination and problem-solving skills, making effective use of natural, recycled and open-ended materials both indoors and outdoors. They also provide a range of outdoor resources, including a mud kitchen, sand pit and gardening opportunities, which promote physical development and exploration.

Leadership & Management — Good

The management team provide clear and purposeful direction for the setting and promote a positive culture focused on children's well-being and continuous improvement. They have established clear expectations and support staff to understand their roles and responsibilities in delivering good-quality care and support. The manager works closely with an active wider management team that contributes effectively to strategic decision-making and oversight of the setting. They demonstrate ambition for the future development of the provision. They are committed to strengthening links with the local school and enhancing children's experiences through ongoing development opportunities. Leadership arrangements are effective.

The management team actively evaluate the quality of the setting and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. They reflect on practice and use feedback, observations and their knowledge of the provision to identify areas for further enhancement. The manager has identified priorities that include enriching outdoor play opportunities, extending outdoor learning experiences, strengthening systems and developing transition arrangements with the local schools. They demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement through investment in the environment and by exploring new approaches to capturing children's voices and evidencing progress. The manager and room leaders adapt practice to improve outcomes for children and families.

The management team manage staff and resources effectively to promote positive outcomes for children. They provide good supervisions, appraisals and professional development opportunities and foster a culture of ongoing learning. They ensure staff access a broad range of mandatory and specialist training, including safeguarding, paediatric first aid, additional learning needs and allergy management. They hold regular team meetings to discuss children's progress, safeguarding matters and developments within the setting.

The management team have developed strong and effective partnerships that support children and their families. They work closely with parents through daily discussions, electronic communication systems and regular information sharing. Parents provide highly positive feedback and consistently describe staff as caring, supportive and approachable. One parent told us, *“My child loves coming here, the staff are lovely,”* while another described the setting as *“The best childcare setting in the local area.”* Staff work effectively with the local school, additional learning needs services, health professionals and community organisations to support children's development and well-being. They also demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting families through practical initiatives, inviting parents to regular sessions in the community centre to do physical activities with their 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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Children's safety is at risk if trailing cable and blind cords are not removed or restricted and are within reach of children.	03/10/23

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)
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Ensure the outdoor play areas are accessible to the children to enable them to free flow where the garden area is adjacent to the base rooms.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure regular risk assessments are meaningful and when conducted has the named member of staff who completed the record.

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