Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

The Learning Tree Explorers

St. Peters Church
Llandevaud
Newport
NP18 2AA



Date Inspection Completed

17/09/2024

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About The Learning Tree Explorers

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Out of School Care
Registered Provider	Little Darlings Nursery Wales Ltd
Registered places	19
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	18 April 2023
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
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	**Good**
Care and Development	**Adequate**
Environment	**Adequate**
Leadership and Management	**Adequate**

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

Summary

Children make choices about how they spend their time and show real enjoyment in their play and learning. They develop good relationships with their peers and are learning social skills such as sharing and turn taking. They are confident to voice their likes and dislikes.

Staff are nurturing and caring towards the children and facilitate suitable opportunities for children to play and learn. They engage with children well and build good relationships and are understanding of children's individual needs. They implement procedures to keep children safe and healthy and manage behaviour in a calm and consistent manner.

The environment is spacious, safe, clean and has a good range of resources to engage children in play. Leaders ensure that mandatory maintenance checks have been completed and emerging risks minimised. As it is a shared community space, resources often need to be stored away or set up. Staff manage this well given the time constraints upon them.

Leadership and management of the service is effective. The new Responsible Individual (RI) is motivated to further develop the setting and keen to make improvements to benefit children and their families, this includes improvements to record keeping, paperwork and supervisions.

Well-being — Good

Children have good opportunities to choose how they wish to play and confidently speak, express themselves and communicate their needs. Children approach staff confidently knowing their views are listened to. Children's interests are reflected in the choice of resources and play equipment available to them.

Children behave very kindly and considerately towards their peers. They are learning to take turns and share during games. They readily follow instructions from staff and respectfully say 'please' and 'thank you' to their friends. Children play happily alongside others or on their own. Older children interact well with each other and develop friendships. They help younger children and are thoughtful of their needs. For example, an older child saw a younger child was leaving to go home but had forgotten to take their artwork. Of their own accord, they collected the child's colouring and kindly handed it over to them. Children build good relationships with staff and chat to them with ease. Children clearly understand and appreciate the routines established by staff. For example, they sit at tables and chat sociably to one another whilst waiting for their meals.

Children enjoy the play opportunities available to them. They are free to explore their environment and spend time on activities that interest them. They can relax and have quiet time in the book corner or choose more creative activities. Children really enjoy constructing with magnetic building pieces or making up games with the small world items and dolls. They concentrate well for good periods of time and show real satisfaction in their play choices. For example, one child enthusiastically explained about their favourite books they enjoy reading in the book corner. Another child made swooping noises as they played with a large toy aeroplane 'flying' it through the air.

Children have suitable opportunities to gain independence in line with their age and stage of development. They hang their own coats on pegs and organise their bags in the hall. They choose where to sit at mealtimes by placing their water bottles at the table and independently wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet.

Care and Development — Adequate

Staff are appropriately qualified. They implement the service's policies and procedures well, with a good understanding of how to keep children safe. They have training in paediatric first aid and are confident to promptly respond to minor accidents, injuries or medical conditions, ensuring the well-being of children in their care. They implement procedures, such as recording accidents and incidents and respond to them appropriately. Staff knowledge of safeguarding is sufficient, and they are clear about signs of abuse and their own responsibilities to report a concern themselves, should the need arise. They undertake checks in all areas to make sure the environment is safe, clean and they follow good hygiene practices. They complete daily records as required, such as registers so they have a clear understanding of the children they are caring for. They have a good understanding of how to manage children's dietary needs or allergies. They encourage children to remain hydrated with water. Children enjoy the food provided although some of this is highly processed.

Staff are kind and patient when interacting with children. They promote good manners and ensure children say 'please' and 'thank you' acting as good role models. They praise and encourage children using positive incentives, such as acknowledging kind behaviour in children's interactions and when sharing. They communicate well with their colleagues so that children are supervised properly, and children's needs are met. When children request particular resources, they listen and respond speaking respectfully to children. They encourage children to develop confidence in their decision making and this supports children's independence skills.

As all children attend school, staff do not keep developmental records of them. However, they know children well and are familiar with their individual needs and family backgrounds. Due to the services rural location sessions are condensed, as there is some distance between the schools and the service. However, children arrive happy, relaxed and eager to play. Staff consult with children and create a relaxed play environment that suits the children's needs. Although some children attend the local Welsh speaking school, no Welsh was used to support children in developing their Welsh language skills.

Environment — Adequate

Leaders have systems and procedures in place to provide guidance to staff on how to keep the environment safe and secure for children. Staff ensure only authorised entry to the service and keep a log of any visitors. The building is owned by the local church council who ensure electrical certificates are up to date, and that all maintenance of the community hall is undertaken. Leaders of the service liaise with the council to verify all necessary checks are in place and to report any maintenance issues to satisfy themselves the building is safe. They undertake daily visual safety checks to identify any emerging risks, and none were identified during the inspection. Fire drills are conducted with children monthly to ensure all children know how to respond in an emergency.

The club is spacious and equipped with suitable furniture and equipment to meet children's needs. The hall is used by the community when not in use by the service. This means that often during the week staff need to pack away all resources and set them up again at the next session. Staff manage these occasions well, asking children at the beginning of the session what resources they want so that they can be accessed quickly to minimise any interruptions to children's play. All children have easy access to toileting facilities and storage of their coats and bags, to support their independence. They have direct access to a small outside play space, however this was not used during the inspection. Transport used for school transitions is appropriate and staff follow safe procedures with a specific bus register when collecting children. Risk assessments for any outings were seen to be very thorough, for example, undertaking and recording head counts every thirty minutes.

There is enough play equipment to keep children engaged and interested. The resources available are suitable for the age range attending, reflect children's interests and spark their imagination, creativity and enthusiasm. Resources and equipment are clean and of a good standard. The service is under new management. considering ways in which improvements can be made to the service. They discussed that consultation with children would be key to these developments. For example, discussing with children about ways to make the small outside space more appealing to them. Resources are monitored and replaced as needed to reflect the interests of children.

Leadership and Management — Adequate

Leadership and management of the service is effective and enables the service to operate smoothly. A new Responsible Individual (RI) has taken over management of the provision and has appointed a new Person in Charge (PIC) to oversee the day-to-day operation of the service. Some improvements need to be made to record keeping, but overall paperwork is completed appropriately. The Statement of Purpose reflects the new management structure and clearly describes how the service operates so that parents can make an informed choice in choosing care for their children. Therefore, the area for improvement issued previously has been removed. Additionally, the priority action notice issued at the previous inspection has also been addressed and registers are completed effectively. Leaders are highly motivated and demonstrate a willingness and ability to continue to develop the service and further improve standards of care and the experiences of children.

The annual quality of care review had been completed and the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) was submitted as required. Most recommendations from the previous Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection have been addressed, showing commitment to making positive improvements. The RI and PIC told us about their plans to consult more with children. These discussions assured us that they reflect on how the service operates and how best it can meet children's needs and develop the service.

Leaders ensure appropriate levels of staff have a childcare and/or play work qualification and current paediatric first aid training, food hygiene and safeguarding knowledge to care for children. Staffing ratios are maintained, and they supervise children appropriately. Regular staff meetings are conducted to share information. Records demonstrate that annual appraisals with staff and regular reflective one to one supervision have not been consistently undertaken. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. Staff report they are happy in their role, receive the support they need to feel confident in delivering good care and are well supported by leaders who are approachable and available when needed.

Staff understand the importance of building good relationships with parents. They communicate verbally with parents at the beginning or end of sessions to ensure they are kept up to date with any issues about caring for individual children.

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
30	The provider must maintain a daily record of the names of the relevant children, their hours of attendance and the names of the persons who looked after them at all times.	Achieved

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.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
29	The provider must ensure that all staff members receive formal regular supervision and annual appraisals and a record of these be maintained in the files .	New
15	The provider must make sure that they update the statement of purpose, ensure information is accurate and specific to the out of school service provided and that care is provided in a manner which is consistent with the statement of purpose to safeguard and protect children's well-being.	Achieved

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)
Standard 4 - Meeting individual needs	Improve use of the Welsh language.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Extend opportunities for children to be active and play outdoors and ensure the garden is organised and equipment safely stored.

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)
Review meal plans so that healthier snack options are available for children.
Ensure all paperwork relates specifically to this setting and that policies and procedures are reviewed as required and dated.

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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