Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Sunbeams Playgroup

The Scout Hall , The Highway , New Inn , Pontypool , NP4 0PH

07788120998

www.littlesunbeams.co.uk

Date(s) of inspection visit(s):

13/05/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Little Sunbeams Playgroup
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	19
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider is not meeting the Welsh language and culture needs of people and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children are happy, confident and engaged in their activities. They really enjoy the play opportunities available to them. They build good relationships with the staff knowing their decisions and choices will be respected. Children learn to socialise kindly with their friends and have opportunities to develop their independence.

Staff follow policies and procedures to ensure children's health and safety are prioritised. They manage interactions with children positively and are good role models. They know the children well, listen to them and plan play and learning opportunities that will promote children's all round development.

The environment is well organised and well-equipped both inside and outside to meet the needs of children. There are a good range of toys and resources for the ages and stages of children cared for. Leaders monitor the environment well to keep it safe, clean, well-organised and stimulating for

children. They identify and plan developments and improvements to the service which they then successfully complete.

Leaders have good oversight of the service and are very motivated and committed to making improvements and maintaining good standards within the setting. They review their policies and procedures frequently and they maintain the appropriate records effectively. Partnerships with parents and outside agencies are reported as positive, benefitting children.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have a good voice and make choices confidently, communicating well with staff and each other. They know their opinions and interests are acted upon and respected by the staff that care for them. For example, during registration children chose which cushion to sit on, with one child delightedly showing the rainbow cushion they had chosen to their friends.

Children are happy, and quickly settle to play, separating easily and confidently from their care givers/parents. They develop a clear sense of belonging and quickly become familiar with daily routines. For example, a child was able to tell staff that after snack, they brush their teeth and then go out to play. Children move happily and confidently around the environment helping themselves to favourite toys and resources that interest them. Children feel valued seeing their work on display.

Children interact well with staff and ask them for support in their play, go to them if they need reassurance or to celebrate their achievements. For example, one child diligently and with great patience built a multi coloured tower with small construction bricks. Once they could no longer reach the top to add bricks, they beamed as staff congratulated them on building their 'awesome tower!' Interactions between children are positive and they form constructive relationships as they learn to share and socialise with their friends. They enjoy sociable mealtimes, chatting happily with their friends and staff. They wait patiently to wash their hands and share resources when playing with the colourful stacking cups or diggers.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning opportunities. They have great fun as they play together with table-top activities or do the actions to songs they choose to sing. Children have opportunities to play indoors or outside and they demonstrate good concentration and delight in using the trikes, playing musical instruments or exploring the home corner. Children who prefer to play on their own present as comfortable and happy in their play choices, dressing up undertaking alphabet jigsaws.

Children have opportunities to develop their independence. Older children access the toilet facilities freely and wash their hands independently. They help to tidy up after play. They confidently move around the learning areas, accessing resources to support their interests. Some self-serving is promoted at snack times as children pour their chosen drinks of milk or water from small jugs. All children confidently feed themselves and sit sociably at the table for snacks and lunch. Coat pegs are easily accessible and have children's names and photographs on individual pegs to encourage them to organise themselves and use them independently.

Care & Development — Good

Staff are appropriately qualified and understand their roles and responsibility to keep children safe. They have a good understanding of the nature of potential safeguarding concerns, understand the safeguarding policy and their duty to report concerns to the safeguarding officer or outside agencies. They are professional and implement the nursery procedures to a good standard. Staff keep written records of accidents and incidents involving children, and parents are informed. They record the administration of medication and ensure parents sign to acknowledge the information. The persons in charge (PICs) ensure the staff implement good hygiene procedures to help keep children healthy and safe. Allergy procedures are clear and implemented by staff. Staff promote healthy eating habits, and although children bring their own lunches, staff encourage healthy eating and provide wholesome, nutritious food at snack times. Children bring their own water bottles and water is always available so that they remain hydrated. Staff ensure all children spend time outside each day and we saw children play happily outdoors. Staff encourage children to exercise and explore their environment by engaging in lots of outdoor activities that promote their physical development.

Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with the children. They understand the behaviour management policy and consistently use positive reinforcement. They praise and encourage children for good tidying and accomplishing their goals during play. Staff sit with children to eat lunch and act as good role models; they encourage good manners and remind children to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. They create positive relationships with children in their care and celebrate their achievements. Challenging behaviours are dealt with calmly, patiently and with kindness.

Staff ensure children have lots of opportunities to direct their own learning as well as some adult led activities. Staff undertake thorough observations of children’s progress and plan with children’s interests in mind, activities that will engage children and encourage their curiosity. Staff know children and their individual needs well. They naturally adjust the care and the behaviour strategies they use to suit individuals. Children with additional needs are well supported and staff work effectively with outside agencies to ensure good outcomes for children. There is an identified Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator and staff are clear and knowledgeable in their care for children.

Environment — Good

Leaders have procedures in place to ensure the environment is safe and secure. Staff record visitors and check their identity before allowing entry into the building. Staff sign in and out of the building and registers of staff and children are kept, demonstrating who is caring for children and who is present in the building. Leaders organise regular fire drills with children and staff, so that everyone is confident of what to do in an emergency. Staff manage the environment well and leaders monitor accidents and incidents to ensure they can promptly address any emerging risks. Risk assessments for indoor and outside areas are undertaken regularly and daily checks are completed by staff to maintain the safety of the play environment. Leaders regularly review the risk assessments and confidently discussed them with us. Beneficial improvements have been made to the building including new windows, good quality radiator covers and improvements to the kitchen. Leaders ensure the building is maintained to a good standard and servicing of utilities and equipment on the premises is undertaken in a timely manner, with certificates retained for inspection.

Leaders ensure that the environment offers good facilities to meet the needs of the children. There are a suitable number of children's toilets and nappy changing facilities for the children that attend. During the inspection it was noted that these need improvement and leaders were able to discuss with us the action plan and timescales they have set to address them. The indoor area is spacious, light and well organised. Whilst this is a 'pack away' service as they share the facility with other community groups, resources are organised appropriately with interesting play zones that promote children's curiosity, imagination, and development. The outdoor area is being developed and improvements to storage and resources have been made, so children clearly enjoy their play in a safe and stimulating area. The indoor environment is well managed so that children eat their meals in a calm, sociable space and there are rest areas should children tire.

Leaders ensure the quality of the furniture, resources, and toys are appropriate, of a good standard and are well maintained. Indoors they provide stimulating resources for all children attending. Most resources are kept at the children's level and accessible to them with other resources rotated on a regular basis or at the requests of children. The accessibility of outdoor resources enables children to play and learn about the world around them through such activities as planting wildflowers in containers. Recycling was the theme of the week, and we heard stories and songs about this topic, junk modelling activities and the use of toy lorries to collect 'rubbish'. Children's personal and social development is also encouraged well through access to multicultural toys and books and Welsh resources with lots of incidental Welsh used with children.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders are motivated, enthusiastic and operate the service to a good standard. They have a clear vision for the setting and access grant funding using them well to enhance the experiences of the children. There are suitable policies and procedures, many of which have been recently reviewed. Mobile phone procedures had not been effectively reviewed, and these were discussed with leaders to ensure procedures can be followed during school transitions. They maintain good oversight of the service and ensure daily record keeping is effective. They have addressed previous recommendations and work well with outside agencies, open to implementing advice and guidance given.

Self-evaluation is regularly undertaken and feedback from parents, staff and children is sought. Record keeping such as accidents and incidents are regularly reviewed to ensure that any issues are identified and addressed as soon as possible. Monitoring and oversight of the service is generally good as both PIC's are also the designated Responsible Individuals (RIs). They are present at the service each day and support one another in their roles.

Leaders manage staff effectively and follow recruitment procedures to ensure the staff they employ are suitable and able to work in line with current childcare practices. They ensure there are enough qualified staff to care for children and the adult to child ratios are maintained or exceeded. Staff are suitably trained and qualified and hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, however, records of checks on the update service had not been noted. Supervisions and appraisals are undertaken regularly and are meaningful to ensure the professional development of staff and the safety of children. Staff we spoke with said they feel leaders are very approachable, supportive and that they enjoy working at the setting. Whilst all staff have undertaken safeguarding training and have good understanding of procedures, leaders had not understood the need for both PIC's to undertake the Group C (Level 3) Advanced Safeguarding Course and agreed to do this as soon as possible.

Leaders build strong partnerships and work openly and transparently with outside agencies. They have a complaints policy and procedure in place although no complaints have been received. Partnerships with parents, carers, outside agencies, and other stakeholders are reported as good and benefit children's development.

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.

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 20 - Child protection	Ensure all Persons In Charge (PIC) have the appropriate level of safeguarding training Group C (Level 3) Advanced Safeguarding Course.

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)
Ensure that mobile phone procedures can be effectively implemented by all staff during school transitions.
Keep a record of any checks made via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update facility.

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