Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Oaks Meithrin

5 Pentre Tai Road
Rhiwderin
Newport
NP10 8RL



Date Inspection Completed

22/05/2024

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About Little Oaks Meithrin

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Registered Person	Elizabeth Fletcher Julie Joosten
Registered places	26
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	First inspection since registration with CIW
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	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

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

Summary

Children are happy and settle well. They have opportunities to develop independence and other skills through a wide range of activities. All children are able to engage in activities of their choosing and are free to develop their play in collaboration with their peers. They are listened to and their views are taken into account. Children form close bonds with each other and staff, making them feel safe and secure.

Staff are well qualified, professional and have a very good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They are responsive and respect the children and the decisions they make. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and this helps to ensure those needs are well met.

Managers and staff maintain an environment that is clean, welcoming and well organised. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. Staff follow procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable, completing risk assessments and daily checks. The outdoor play area is secure, well developed and resourced, and children make good use of the space. The indoor environment is welcoming and supports a sense of belonging for the children.

Managers provide sound and pro-active leadership, delivering a reliable, high quality service for children and parents. They are committed to improving outcomes for children, reflecting on practice and are proactive in planning for improvements to the setting and for the continuing professional development of staff.

Well-being Good

Children have ample choice, and a strong voice in this setting. They move freely around their play space, making choices and decisions about what they want to play with. They join in enthusiastically with activities and are confident to express their opinions because they know care staff will listen to them. Children's likes and requests influence the activities that are provided. Children are given good opportunity to express themselves and talk about the things that are important to them. For example, at circle time they have lots of opportunity to contribute to discussion on their current topic, the oceans, and children are clearly excited to join in and share.

Children feel safe, happy and valued at the setting. They develop warm relationships with other children and staff. Children approach staff spontaneously to seek reassurance or support and enjoy receiving praise and recognition for their efforts. We saw children laughing and smiling as staff joined in with their play. Children are comfortable in the familiar routines and activities of the setting. All children arrive very happily and settle quickly; they separate from parents with ease and put their coats and bags on a peg. They are confident to explore the play space, bringing out resources as they wish.

Children co-operate, take turns and share. They are developing sensitivity to the emotions of others. They demonstrate a good understanding of what is expected of them whilst they are at the setting. Children have clearly formed friendships; they talk to their friends by name, negotiate their play, decide on roles and what to do together. Children enjoy the praise they receive for positive behaviour, and interact well with staff and other children. They are developing a sense of right and wrong and are becoming self-disciplined.

Children are active, curious and excited by the play-based activities on offer to them. They are happy and confident to move between activities freely, but also sustain interest in activities of their choosing. Children worked together with a member of staff to retell 'The Gruffalo' in a puppet theatre. They joined in well, negotiated their roles, and were engaged throughout.

Children are encouraged to be independent in the setting, and they develop skills as a natural part of the routine of the day. They can access most resources freely because they are displayed for children attractively, allowing them to extend and develop their play themselves as they wish. We saw children happily playing independently of staff, who allowed them the space to explore and progress their own play. Interactive and well thought out circle-times encourage children to join in and have fun, as well as practice skills.

Care and Development Good

Staff are successful in their roles. They are clear about their responsibilities and they have good knowledge of how to keep children safe and healthy. They speak confidently about safeguarding procedures and know that managers will be responsive to any concerns they raise. There are procedures for recording the administering of medication, accidents, incidents and existing injuries. Managers monitor these monthly to identify any trends in accidents sustained at the nursery, and ways to minimise the risk of these happening again are recorded. Snacks provided are healthy and nutritious. Staff provide access to physical exercise; time outdoors for play is included every day.

Staff work well together to support and promote children's social behaviour. They are good, positive role models for children in their care, treating each other and children with respect and kindness. Staff are very encouraging of children's effort and praise this frequently. Staff have a very calm manner when managing behaviour. No significant issues of behaviour management occurred during the inspection, largely due to the positive approach taken.

Staff provide a nurturing and caring environment in which children's play and well-being are well promoted. All staff have a relaxed, happy and caring nature when interacting with the children. The staff group are keen to ensure they are good facilitators of play and development; all staff spoke passionately about their desire to improve the outcomes for children in their care. They are considerate of the children's views and conscious to give the young children options and choices and to allow them to express themselves. Staff engage well with small groups of children during play, meaning children can interact with them and staff can effectively and sensitively support play and development. Staff plan a selection of themed activities, based on upcoming events and children's interests. Children can access these or child-led activities as they wish. This approach helps to ensure there are sufficient planned activities for children to choose from as well as being reactive to the children's developing interests. Incidental Welsh language is strongly included in the provision through activities and circle times, as well as Welsh language books and signage.

Environment — Good

The environment is safe, secure and welcoming. Staff are vigilant and supervise children closely at all times. The ratios of staff to children meet or exceed those required by National Minimum Standards. Staff complete daily safety checks to identify, and where possible, eliminate any risks to children's safety. Registers of staff and children's attendance are completed appropriately. Managers keep records of all visitors to the setting. There are suitable risk assessments in place for all areas of the setting. Records show regular and routine maintenance checks for the building and appliances are in place. Regular fire drill practices are carried out to ensure staff and children are familiar with the emergency evacuation process. Managers review fire drill records on each occasion to identify potential improvements to the evacuation process.

The premises provides a rich and stimulating environment for children to play and learn. It is well maintained and decorated to a good standard. The indoor play space is interesting and appealing, without being overwhelming to children. Staff value children's efforts by creating lovely displays of their work. They change and update display boards frequently to reflect current play and learning. The outside play space is well utilised and we saw the children enjoy the resources available to them. The children loved playing outside in all weathers.

There is a wide range of good quality resources and the layout of the play space promotes children's independence. Children are free to choose their activities in a calm and well-organised space. There are sufficient resources such as art and craft materials for children to have good variety and free choice. Resources are stored at low level and in plain sight, allowing children to choose easily what they want to play with. Furniture is of suitable size and design for the age range of the children.

Leadership and Management — Good

Managers are skilled and experienced, and in the main, manage the setting to a high standard. They have a clear vision for the setting which is reflected in the statement of purpose. There are clear policies and procedures which reflect the current practice. Staff work consistently in line with these to support the smooth running of the setting. However, policies have not been kept under review and updated as required. Records of children's information are complete. However, operational records, such as accident, incident and existing injury records, lack sufficient information and clarity to ensure they are robust. Managers employ an appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to care for the children. They have high expectations of staff and support and challenge them to do their best.

Children and parents benefit from a setting which is committed to improving outcomes for children and families. Managers compose a thorough quality of care report detailing what the setting does well and an action plan of what they want to improve. They undertake this review annually as required, and take into account the views of children, parents, staff and external professionals involved in the setting.

Managers are effective in overseeing staff, managing their time and prioritising activities responsively to ensure that children's needs are met in a timely manner. Staff are well organised, and the resulting relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. Managers ensure staff's mandatory training is kept up to date and staff benefit from additional development training. Staff confirmed they enjoy working at the setting and feel passionately about the service they provide for children and families. Records of staff pre-employment checks are complete. Managers undertake annual appraisals and regular one to one supervision with staff for them to reflect on their practice.

Managers and staff value positive relationships with the community. Staff told us they value the relationships they have built with parents and are keen to ensure parents feel they can approach them at any time. Parents are very complimentary about the setting and are confident to leave their children there. Managers ensure parents have all the information they need to make an informed choice about using this setting.

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

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. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

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 5 - Records	Ensure 'incident' records are made when the behaviour of a child requires it, such as if a child were to bite

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, and where necessary update, service policies, and ensure they are kept under review going forward
Ensure accident records include the full names of staff involved, and greater detail of the circumstances of the accident and outcomes for audit and safeguarding purposes
Rename 'accident at home' records to 'existing injury' to avoid the assumption that injuries are accidental. Adapt the record to ensure it captures information necessary for safeguarding considerations, such as a record of the setting's decision regarding explanation of injuries

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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