Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

The Learning Tree Day Nursery (Newport)

Little Darlings Nursery, Chepstow Road Langstone, Newport, NP18 2LU

01633411043

https://newport.thelearningtreedaynursery.co.uk/

The inspection visits for this service took place between 08/12/2025 and 09/12/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Little Darlings Nursery Wales Ltd
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	46
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 provider is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

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

Summary:

Children make some choices to influence the direction of their play. Most children are relaxed within the setting and learning to develop their relationships with others. Children new to the setting become familiar with their surroundings and settle over time. Older children transition well between base rooms. Children behave kindly and communicate effectively with adults and their peers. They have some opportunities to develop their independence and become more confident in their own abilities.

Staff mostly have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe, healthy and promote their development. They are relaxed and patient with the children, giving praise for the children's achievements and efforts. They observe and record children's learning and development and identify their next steps. They facilitate a suitable variety of activities, but some opportunities to enrich children's learning is missed.

Leaders ensure the environment is safe, secure and well maintained indoors and outdoors, investing in its continued development. They identify and manage risks appropriately. Managers provide varied resources to promote children's curiosity, imagination and creativity. They do not fully consider effective use of the base rooms and continuous access to resources which impacts upon play, especially for children playing on the ground floor.

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

Findings:

Well-being — Adequate

Children are mostly settled and show enjoyment when playing. They make some choices freely and put requests to adults through verbal and non-verbal methods. Their likes and dislikes are reflected within staff evaluations and planning, so that activities cater to children's interests.

Children comfortably approach staff for guidance or comfort. Older children transition well between base rooms settling quickly, whilst younger children, new to the setting, need more time and support to relax and feel comfortable. They receive praise from staff, which helps them gain confidence and begin to learn appropriate social interactions.

Children are learning to respect each other and the resources through learning to share and use equipment appropriately. Older children show some interest in the things their friends are doing and sometimes join in or play alongside them. During child led play one child was heard to say to their friend, *" I can help you because you helped me!"* and proceeded to lay the train track out on the ground. Children of all ages and stages of development respond positively to staff members' reminders and are becoming aware of the needs of others around them.

When making their own play choices children are visibly happy and play well alongside their friends. Children's play choices are sometimes curtailed. For example, we saw gates closed preventing children's access to some activities and resources and adult led group activities dominated older children's play with some free play disrupted as children were called to practice letter formation. Babies can explore their environment freely and spend time on activities that interest them, for example exploring the sensory area or painting at the table. Most children concentrate on most activities for an appropriate length of time.

Children have reasonable opportunities to develop their independence. Children are encouraged to wash their own hands and feed themselves which they do with increasing competence. We saw some children pouring their own drinks with support. They are learning to tidy resources after use and listen to instructions. Some opportunities to develop independence were missed during mealtimes.

Care & Development — Adequate

Staff implement effective hygiene control procedures with regular handwashing, cleaning tables and changing areas. They supervise children suitably and communicate and record who is looking after which children in each base room updating this information if staff need to cover in a different room. They maintain accurate records of children' s attendance. They serve healthy meals and have a good knowledge of children's food preferences and follow clear procedures to manage allergies and individual dietary requirements. Children always have access to bottles of water to remain hydrated. Staff carry out nappy changes sensitively and record regular checks on sleeping children. Safeguarding procedures are in place to promote the welfare of children. Staff understand their duty to report and record concerns and are confident in their abilities to implement the nursery's safeguarding procedures. Almost all staff have attended paediatric first aid training to deal with minor accidents or injuries. Staff implement procedures for the recording of accident, incident, administration of medicine and pre-existing injuries. Staff carry out fire drills regularly with children.

Staff develop good relationships with children and offer praise and encouragement as children complete tasks. For example, they tell children *'Well done!'* when they successfully copy over their name. They demonstrate politeness and good manners to model expectations of appropriate social behaviours and acknowledge when children use good manners themselves. Younger children were heard to say *"Ta!"* when given a toy they wanted.

Staff track children's development and progress, and plan for their next steps. However, some staff were unsure of children's next steps or how adult led activities could support children in meeting their goals. Many activities are adult led, even for pre-school children, and this overly structured approach means that some children's play choices are not met, are interrupted or delayed. For example, one child was eager to paint and decorate Christmas baubles but was told that they had to play with the tuff tray instead, other children were happily pretending to cook in the home corner but were called into an adult set activity. When children were allowed free play, they really enjoyed lying on the floor playing with small world figures constructing the train track together. This gave them opportunity to properly practice and build upon their social and problem-solving skills. Very little Welsh language was used by staff throughout the inspection. Staff keep parents fully informed through daily entries and photographs on a communications app and conversations at the end of the day. Parents we spoke to were very happy with communication they receive, their child's progress and the standard of care given to their children.

Environment — Good

Leaders have invested a great deal into the setting both internally and externally since new ownership in 2023. They have systems in place to ensure the environment is safe and secure for children. They record visitors to the setting, lock entry doors, and staff monitor the front door throughout the day. Safety gates are in place in the play areas and hallways. The nursery is suitably clean, tidy, well maintained and welcoming. Leaders ensure regular maintenance checks are completed for gas and electrical installations and have risk assessments in place for the premises and school transitions. Leaders carry out regular checks on fire equipment and record these checks appropriately. Staff complete daily checks and record these to ensure the play environment is safe for children.

The nursery is organised into separate base rooms dependent upon the ages of children. There is a large enclosed outside area with safety flooring to help keep children safe during more robust, risky play. Whilst we did not see this area used during the inspection due to stormy weather, staff and leaders confirmed that this area is regularly accessed. The pre-school base room has easy access to toilet and wash hand facilities which supports children's growing independence. Other base rooms have nappy and toilet facilities which are clean and easily accessible so that staff can support children's needs. There are two baby sleep rooms which are well monitored by staff and enable babies to sleep and rest and a separate dining area. Base rooms are spacious and bright and provide enough space for children to move around and play. The baby base rooms consist of two large rooms with plenty of room to explore, and a well-resourced sensory area where babies clearly enjoy the light up table and mood lighting. Toddler and pre-school base rooms each have well-resourced zoned areas of age-appropriate play, such as messy play and role play.

There has clearly been investment in good quality, stimulating, age-appropriate resources and an improvement in the maintenance and décor of the building. Going forward, leaders intend to further consider how to use the full potential of the space available so that it is a rich learning environment for all children. For example, maximising the potential play benefits of the indoor 'construction area'.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders ensure there are suitable policies and procedures in place which they review regularly to provide clear guidance on how the nursery needs to operate. They ensure record keeping is effective and of a good standard, well organised and accessible. The nursery came under new ownership in 2023, and the Responsible Individual has invested time and money into the nursery and built good relationships with the management team.

Self-evaluation is undertaken and the feedback from parents, staff and children is used to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement and development of the nursery. 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 the person in charge (PIC) is established in her role and has developed systems to help her meet her responsibilities.

Leaders follow recruitment procedures to ensure the staff they employ are safely recruited, 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. Staff are suitably trained and qualified and hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. Supervisions and appraisals are undertaken regularly to support the professional development of staff and the safety of children. However, training needs for some staff regarding effectively facilitating child led play, had not been identified. Staff we spoke with said they feel leaders are approachable, inductions are suitable and that they are happy in their work.

Leaders build partnerships and work openly with outside agencies. Staff and leaders build good relationships with parents so that information shared benefits the health, well-being and development of children attending. Parents we spoke with are very happy with the care their children receive, the progress they make and communication with staff. Leaders have developed a complaints policy and procedure although no recent complaints have been received. Partnerships with parents, carers, outside agencies, and other stakeholders benefit children's development. Parents we spoke with were very happy with the service. Leaders had discussed some information openly with Care Inspectorate Wales but had not formally submitted it and this was discussed at the inspection and rectified immediately.

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)
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Ensure children have a range of experiences, including freely chosen, unstructured and self-directed play, that contribute to their overall development and independence.
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Ensure all staff are aware of children's identified next steps and how to use this information to support children’s play, learning and development.

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)
Review how lunch time routines are implemented.
Consider how base rooms can be best organised and used to ensure a rich learning environment for all children.
Develop children's understanding of the Welsh language and culture.

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