Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Ladybirds Childcare

Ladybirds Childcare, Elm Community Church, Waterloo Terrace, Pontlottyn, Bargoed, CF81 9RG

07460249144

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The inspection visit took place on 29/07/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Ladybirds Childcare Ltd
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	19
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
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	Adequate
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children are happy, settled and confident. They make choices, express themselves freely, enjoy positive relationships and play experiences, interact well with others and are developing independence and learning skills effectively.

Staff provide good care and support for safeguarding children and their learning and development. They build positive relationships, manage interactions effectively and know children well. Staff promote inclusive, child-centred experiences which focuses on children's achievements.

Leaders provide an engaging environment with homely, welcoming playrooms, authentic resources, and purposeful outdoor play opportunities. However, weaknesses in site security reduce its overall effectiveness.

Leaders maintain key records and partnerships, but inconsistencies in oversight, staff supervision, policies and regulatory notifications limit the overall effectiveness of the service. Leaders have acted promptly to action recommendations as part of the inspection. Feedback from staff and parents has been positive.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have opportunities to express their views and make choices throughout the day. They freely select activities and decide where they would like to play. Children choose where they would like to sit at the table and select their preferred fruit at snack time. They also choose between "*Llaeth"* and "*Dŵr"* (milk and water) and, at times, pour their own drinks. However, children do not currently have continuous access to drinking water throughout the sessions. Children are involved in making decisions about their day, such as choosing whether to wear an apron during messy play and they contribute to discussions about the day's lunch option. These opportunities support the development of their confidence, independence and sense of control over their play and routines.

Most children are happy, settled and confident within the setting. They form positive relationships with staff, demonstrating that they feel safe and valued. Children were observed seeking comfort and reassurance from familiar adults, enjoying cuddles and positive interactions. Their needs were responded to warmly and sensitively. Children communicate their thoughts, ideas and achievements with confidence. For example, children proudly called staff members over to share and discuss their work.

Children interact positively with their peers and develop strong social skills. They cooperate well during play, negotiating turns and working together successfully. For example, children collaborated to build a "*Fire"* outdoors and demonstrated consideration for one another's ideas and interests. Children celebrate each other's successes and enjoyment, with one child excitedly encouraging a friend pouring water down a slide by saying, *"Tip it on the slide. Yes, that's it!"* They also showed respect for one another when sharing resources, asking, *"Can I go on it?"* to which their friend agreed. Children readily invited both peers and staff into their play, showing that they feel comfortable and have a strong sense of belonging.

Children enjoy their play and learning experiences and engage enthusiastically with the opportunities available to them, particularly when accessing the outdoor environment, where they explored activities with excitement and curiosity. Children engaged purposefully in imaginative play, such as making mud tea and coffee, and proudly shared their discoveries with others. They showed interest in what their friends were doing and actively joined in, supporting sustained engagement and enjoyment.

Children are developing a range of skills that support their learning and growing independence. They have opportunities to progress at their own pace through experiences that promote early mathematical skills, language development and problem-solving. Independence is developing, with some children confidently accessing the toilet facilities without assistance.

Care & Development — Good

Staff support children's safety, health and development effectively. They maintain suitable medication, accident and incident records which are signed by parents and are reviewed by leaders. They monitor accident/incident records for patterns. They demonstrate appropriate safeguarding knowledge and understand the procedures to follow should concerns arise about a child's welfare. However, records relating to safeguarding were not provided for inspection. Staff implement safe nappy changing practices and usually ensure children wash their hands. However, practice does not consistently align with Public Health Wales infection prevention and control guidance. All staff hold appropriate paediatric first aid and food hygiene training. The setting promotes healthy lifestyles effectively through the provision of home-cooked meals, nutritious snacks and regular opportunities for outdoor play and physical activity. They carry out regular checks on sleeping children and demonstrate some awareness of safe sleep practices. However, children's sleep arrangements do not consistently support effective monitoring between checks.

Staff develop positive and meaningful relationships with children. They engage warmly and use conversations effectively to build on children's interests, experiences and ideas. For example, discussions about children's recent outings encouraged them to share their thoughts and experiences, while fostering a genuine interest in others. Staff consistently recognise and celebrate children's achievements through praise and encouragement, helping to build confidence, self-esteem and positive behaviour. We heard staff say "*Well done", "Waw", "Yay, da iawn,"* and "*Watch now, he can do it super fast."* Staff provide gentle safety reminders which develop children's risk assessment skills, for example asking, *"is that a safe choice?"*

Staff manage interactions well, helping children develop social skills. They use gentle guidance to encourage children to think about their actions and consider the needs of others. For example, when a child was initially reluctant to share resources, staff allowed them time to reflect and make their own decision, resulting in positive cooperation with their peer. Staff are effective role models and show kindness and respect, for example stating 'It's okay' when a child expressed they hadn't yet finished their meal. Staff support children to understand expectations and boundaries appropriately. They respond promptly to concerns raised by children and help them understand why certain behaviours may be unsafe.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development successfully. They show enthusiasm for children's ideas and actively participate in their play, captivating children's interest, creating enjoyable and engaging experiences. Staff follow children's lead effectively, enabling children to explore their own ideas and extend their learning through play. They know children well, including their interests, routines, likes and dislikes, allowing them to respond purposefully to individual needs. Staff promote Welsh language, culture and heritage through planned experiences and provide some resources that help children develop an awareness of diversity and inclusion.

Environment

Adequate

Leaders ensure the main play room environments and outside areas are suitably free from hazards. However children may be at risk of harm due to the potential for unauthorised access to the setting as well as incomplete visitor logs observed on the day of inspection. This is an area for improvement; we expect the provider to take action. Following the inspection the provider has acted promptly to introduce a system to manage access to the setting, including a new fence and a video doorbell. Daily health and safety checks are completed and recorded, helping to support children's safety. There are a range of risk assessments in place for the premises, outings and some specific activities. However, not all identified hazards are reflected in risk assessments, and these are not used consistently to inform day-to-day practice. There is public liability insurance in place. Documentation provided following the inspection indicates that leaders consider the building to be maintained to a safe standard and they confirmed that historical work has been carried out to maintain satisfactory electrical safety arrangements.

Fire evacuation signage is displayed at the premises and checks of fire-fighting equipment are undertaken regularly. On the day of inspection there was no up to date fire risk assessment for the setting, the provider has since initiated the process to obtain a certificate. Fire drills are carried out regularly. However, these are not conducted at different times of the day in accordance with the setting's policy.

The premises provide children with sufficient space to play and learn. Leaders promote a natural and calming environment, which is bright and airy. The main playroom areas are organised appropriately, enabling children to move freely between different areas of play and relaxation. These include, a role play kitchen, cushioned reading area, carpet area, sensory trays and a tuff tray for mark making. Children benefit from suitable toilet facilities within the main playroom. A separate kitchen and baby room is located from a second entrance. The baby room provides a space for younger children to play and rest. Though, it was not observed in full use during the inspection due to lower attendance levels over the summer holidays and was solely being used by sleeping babies. The kitchen area is used to prepare meals and snacks and includes an appropriate nappy-changing area. Displays of children's artwork contribute to a sense of belonging, and bilingual labels around the setting support the promotion of the Welsh language.

Children have access to an appropriate range of play and learning resources. Much of the equipment is easily accessible, such as wooden blocks, musical items and books promoting independent choice and supporting children's interests. Resources such as furniture, cater for different ages and stages of development. The outdoor environment offers a variety of experiences, including opportunities for exploration, problem-solving and appropriate risk-taking through resources such as a mud kitchen, crates, tyres and pipes. Storage arrangements allow resources to be rotated, helping to maintain children's interest and engagement.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders have considered ways to develop the setting in order to improve outcomes for children. However, leadership arrangements are not always effective in ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements. They have not submitted notifiable events, including staff changes and safeguarding referrals, to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as required. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. Leaders have since began to submit notifications, such as a staff matrix. Required records are generally maintained, with a range of consent statements and contracts in place. Policies and procedures have been reviewed recently, however, inconsistencies remain across a number of documents and some do not accurately reflect current practice. Leaders have taken action and began to review policies thoroughly in order to guide their day to day practice.

Leaders recognise the importance of self-evaluation and have appropriate systems in place to effectively plan for improvement. They actively seek feedback from parents, carers and children to inform their quality-of-care review. The report highlights their strengths, as well as areas they would like to improve further. Leaders have recently achieved the Welsh Promise Bronze Award and informed us that they have been shortlisted for a national business award. They have engaged positively with CIW during the inspection and have acted promptly to address recommendations identified during the inspection.

Recruitment processes are generally suitable and support children's safety. Appropriate suitability checks are completed, and most required information was available during the inspection. Additional information was provided promptly following the inspection to ensure staff records were complete. Leaders ensure there are sufficient staff available to meet children's needs and ratios, particularly during key times of the day, such as mealtimes. Staff state they receive support from leaders through supervision and appraisal processes. However, these are not completed effectively, within expected timescales, or retained within staff files.

Leaders have established suitable partnerships with parents and promote effective communication. They engage with external professionals, including Flying Start, to access advice and support. They have developed a successful floor book which aids observation and next steps as a result. Parents receive information about their children's experiences and development through daily discussions and updates on the setting's app. Parents spoken to during the inspection were complimentary about the service and the communication they receive.

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 outcomes may be affected because children are not always safeguarded from potential risks as they may not be protected from unauthorised individuals gaining access to the setting.	29/07/26
Children are at potential risk of harm because the responsible individual does not keep CIW up to date with notifications in line with regulations.	29/07/26

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 12 - Food and drink	Make fresh drinking water freely available to children at all times.
Standard 24 - Safety	Work inline with safe sleep practices outlined by the lullaby trust.
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Work in line with Public Health Wales infection prevention and control and reflect this in your policies and practice.
Standard 24 - Safety	Conduct fire drills at different times of the day, in line with the setting's policy.
Standard 24 - Safety	Maintain current risk assessments that include all identified risks and are consistently implemented in day to day practice.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Conduct supervisions with all staff which encourages them to think about the quality of their practice as well as a formal appraisal at least once a year. Keep a record of all one-to one supervisions in the staff file.
Standard 5 - Records	Maintain records about individual children that are always available for inspection by CIW at their request.

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 policies are used as dynamic working documents that provide consistent guidance, accurately reflect practice within the setting, and are reviewed and updated regularly to maintain relevance and compliance with current requirements.

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