Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Gems

Durand Junior & Infants School, Alianore Road, Caldicot, NP26 5DF

07368263579

The inspection visits for this service took place between 14/07/2026 and 16/07/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Monmouth Day Nursery Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	40
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	Yes
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	Good
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children have many opportunities to make choices. They are happy and settled and thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They feel safe and secure in the care of responsive staff who know them well. Children benefit from a good range of opportunities for play and learning and develop good independence skills.

Staff promote children's health, safety and wellbeing effectively through sound safeguarding knowledge. However, staff confidence in knowing how to raise referrals needs to be robust. Staff are confident with clear routines, and consistent hygiene practices. Interactions between children and staff are calm, positive and nurturing. Staff use praise, guidance and teamwork to support children's social and emotional development. Children benefit from a wide range of engaging learning experiences. Staff monitor progress through regular observations and respond appropriately to individual needs, including additional learning needs (ALN). Staff use incidental

Welsh naturally throughout the day.

The management team ensure the nursery is welcoming, safe and secure. Furniture, equipment and resources are of good quality, clean and accessible to children. There are outdoor play areas suitable for the age ranges cared for.

Leadership is good, with the manager providing clear direction and supportive guidance for staff. There is a clear plan for imminent change to the layout of the indoor and outdoor play. Records, staff files and training are well maintained, and improvements have been made through ongoing self-evaluation. Partnerships with parents, external agencies and the local community are very positive.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children feel safe and secure. Children are content, settled and show enjoyment. They have a strong voice and make choices and decisions about what they do and how they spend their time. For example, a young child stood by the door and stated they wanted to go outdoors. A member of staff explained that once they had finished their activity indoor then they can choose to play outside. Children make purposeful choices from a good selection of toys, resources and activities. For example, older children used the role play area to make cups of tea which were later taken outside, adapting their role play from indoors by turning the activity from the table to having a leisurely picnic outside on the grass. Children's needs and preferences are considered and respected. Children who are a little shy, seek comfort and reassurance from staff who respond with warmth and kindness. Children make decisions about their play, moving freely between activities which capture their interest. Children know the routines well, allowing for smooth transitions throughout the day. For example, they know to wash their hands before eating and when returning from outdoor play.

Children interact well for their ages and stages of development. They are learning to share and take turns when playing with toys. We heard an older child comfort a younger child by saying *'Don't worry you can sit by me, I'll be your friend, okay?'* as they sat down for snack time. We saw older children taking turns running through the willow den outside. Interactions between children and staff are positive. They know staff well and actively invite them to join in with their play. For example, a group of older children called out to a member of staff asking them to join in with counting how many children can sit on the grassed mount. "*Do you want to come and see what we are doing, its really fun*". The member of staff extended their counting by saying "*Well done that was really good counting shall we try it in Welsh, who can start us off? Un, dau, tri…*".

Children confidently explore the environment and engage in child led activities. For example, some choose to look at books, whilst others run around clutching small world toys. There are a wide range of resources and activities available to them, and they freely decide which activities they would like to play with. Children interacted positively with visitors, chatting happily and showing their toys and resources. Children are interested and enjoy their play and learning activities. There are a variety of resources on offer indoors and outdoors. Children freely choose which activities they engage with and take part in adult initiated play as well are free choice. Adult led activates vary. For example, singing, dancing and counting at group times.

Children are learning to strengthen their independence skills. Older children wash their hands, access the toilet, wipe their nose and put on their hats and staff help with applying sunblock before going out to play. During snack time, staff encourage children to serve themselves and choose how

much they want to eat. Water is available throughout the day from individual bottles that children can access independently.

Care & Development — Good

Staff show a clear commitment to keeping children safe and healthy. They demonstrate a positive understanding of safeguarding procedures. All staff spoken to explained what actions they would take to escalate safeguarding concerns. However, on discussion about how they would raise a referral, staff were over reliant on the manager to make any referrals to the safeguarding board. Ratios were appropriate throughout the visit. Daily routines promote children's hygiene and independence well. Staff encourage children to blow their noses and wash their hands independently according to their age and stage of development.

Staff maintain good hygiene by cleaning food areas and using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). They consistently use apron and gloves for toileting and nappy changing. Although the nappy changing policy is followed well, observations showed that there was limited privacy as younger children were changed in the toilet area where other children were present.

Staff manage interactions warmly and positively. They engage fully with children across a range of activities. Children readily share their experiences with staff and visitors. Staff support smooth transitions by encouraging children to tidy up before moving to a new activity. They manage behaviour sensitively. For example, when minor conflict occurs between children, staff redirect the situation calmly and guide children to alternative resources. Outdoors, staff supervise children very well. They interact with them individually and in small groups, joining in with singing games and offer gentle assistance when needed.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development well. Children choose activities freely, and staff respond flexibly to their interests. Planning and observation systems are clearly displayed. Staff use Welsh naturally throughout the environment. Observations link to the Curriculum for Wales pathways and include identified progress well. Children with ALN receive extra monitoring and support. Staff encourage independence throughout the day. Staff respond sensitively to individual needs. For example, they recognise nonverbal cues for communication. Staff are kind and sit with the children role modelling good listening.

Environment — Good

The management team have effective measures in place to ensure the environment is a welcoming and safe place for children and families. They ensure there is plenty of room for children to play and learn with well-designed play spaces both indoors and outdoors. The environment is secure and well maintained. The external doors are always locked and the managers complete detailed risk assessments and take appropriate action if needed. The team of staff have created comfortable and suitable areas to play and rest. Fire drills are regularly practised with detailed records to ensure all staff and children can evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency. Staff carry out daily checks of the premises. Maintenance checks for the building and annual safety checks are completed, and certificates were made available during the inspection process. Daily registers record actual time of arrival and departures. However, the total numbers of staff and children present during each session was inconsistent.

The environment provides homely and stimulating areas for children to explore and develop their skills. Calming neutral décor creates a cosy home from home atmosphere. For example, wicker baskets, artificial plants and real furniture that is used in homes are adapted in the role play area to reflect a real home environment. The management team supply a variety of good resources, including real life and natural items, which are stored at child height to ensure accessibility for children of different ages. For example, stainless steel pots, pans and utensils along with a case of clothes and accessories for role play. Within the main entrance there are notice boards available to parents and visitors, which include general information and updates.

The management team ensure the indoor environment is organised to provide children with space to freely move within their rooms. Children have base rooms to explore as well outdoor areas which are suitable for the age and stage of development. The outside area is well organised and includes a sheltered area offering sensory activities as well as a grassed area. The area accessible to all children. The manager told us they are planning to further develop the provision both indoors and outdoors. Children have access to wet weather clothing, allowing them to access outdoor play in all weathers.

There is a good range of furniture, resources and equipment that are of sound quality and suitable for the children using them. Overall, they are clean and well maintained. Furniture and many resources are made of natural materials such as wood which creates a neutral and calm environment. Leaders provide open-ended and authentic resources which children can use flexibly and with imagination to effectively support their curiosity and exploratory play. Some resources and activities promote cultural awareness and diversity. For example, books, dolls and dressing up clothes. This helps children gain an appropriate understanding of the world they live in.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leadership at the setting is good. The management team provide a clear vision and continue to develop systems that support staff and children. Policies and procedures are in place. The Statement of Purpose sets out the aims of the setting and includes arrangements for regular review. The manager provides clear direction and places a strong focus on staff wellbeing. The management team gathers parents' feedback and collates these for the purpose of the annual quality of care review . Experienced senior team members take on additional responsibilities, creating a reflective, supportive and consistent team structure.

Self-evaluation processes are effective. Staff discuss improvements and provide clear examples of their vision for the coming year. The setting plans to make changes to the setting during the school holiday while children are not present. The team have also reviewed to further promote free-flow play.

Management ensures all paperwork is organised. Children's records are thorough, and all files checked contained the required documents, including contracts, permissions, emergency consent and 'all about me' forms. Staff files are well maintained and include required checks such as identification, references and health declarations. Newer staff have completed induction, and established staff have evidence of good, well documented supervision and annual appraisals. Staff training is up to date, and newer team members are supported to work towards relevant qualifications. DBS checks and rotas are clear and easy to follow.

Staff build very good partnerships with parents and the wider community. They keep families informed through the online 'Family app' and electronic updates. This includes newsletters and dates for meetings and a graduation ceremony. Staff work closely with external agencies, to support children's needs. They also engage with the community through regular visits to the local community settings. Parents spoken to during the inspection told us that they are delighted with the setting and in their first year they have already established excellent relationships with parents and carers, they feel well informed and included. Parents of older children who will start primary school all attended a graduation ceremony and they felt proud to be included.

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 5 - Records	Ensure daily registers include total numbers of the children and staff who are present in each session.
Standard 4 - Meeting individual needs	Plan an area for nappy changing that protects children's privacy and dignity .
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Improve safeguarding knowledge so that all staff feel confident in knowing and understanding the process of raising a referral.

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