



Childcare Inspection Report on

Ladybirds at OLSM

**Our Lady and St Michaels Roman Catholic Primary School
14 Pen Y Pound
Abergavenny
NP7 5UD**

Mae'r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg



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Description of the service

Ladybirds @ OLSM is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to care for 38 children aged between two and four years. The setting is located in a large demountable on the grounds of Our Lady and St. Michaels RC Primary School in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. The Registered Person (Provider) helps to manage the setting on a part time basis but employs a full time Person in Charge (PiC) and a team of 11 staff. The setting offers morning sessions for two year olds alongside sessional and full day care for preschool children, with the option of a lunch club twice a week. The service is provided in English with some incidental Welsh used daily.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

The children have fun in their play and learning with access to a wide range of stimulating activities and play opportunities inside and outside. They have a strong voice and express themselves confidently, and their interactions and behaviour are managed positively. Children's progress is routinely monitored but the assessment and planning systems currently in place and the key person approach could be strengthened. Children's health and safety is promoted appropriately but some safety records and practices could be improved. Children play in a secure, spacious and inviting environment with easy access to well maintained toys and resources that facilitate and enhance their interests and learning. The experienced management and dedicated staff team work well together and show a strong commitment to improve. Whilst some records need attention, the provider reassured us these will be actioned. Partnerships are well established and parents receive adequate information about the service and their children's learning.

2. Improvements

This is the first inspection since registering as a Limited company.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The service is not compliant with the regulations but a non compliance notice has not been issued on this occasion.

We identified some recommendations to enhance practices and outcomes for children further. These include: assessments and activity planning, communication with parents, key person approach, Statement of Purpose, risk assessments and fire drills.

1. Well-being

Summary

All children are included and have a strong voice in the setting, fully confident that their views are valued and listened to by staff. Children's well-being is skilfully nurtured during daily transitions and when they move onto school. Children happily engage in play based on their interests and have lots of fun. They gain good Welsh language skills and their independence is positively encouraged. Children develop a strong sense of belonging and interact appropriately with their friends.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children have a strong voice. Throughout the two visits we watched children confidently share news, ask for something or initiate conversation with staff or their friends. Children make choices independently. We noted children select which fruit they wanted from the sharing plate on their table and most children chose to play outside. The younger children communicate their needs in a variety of ways to ensure their voice is heard. We saw them use eye contact and tell or show staff what it is they want. Children's home language and cultural backgrounds are given due consideration. The provider told us that children's families have come into the setting to talk about their Italian culture, make pizzas, talk about Eid and learn some key words in the different languages.

Children have time and good support to make choices and strong emphasis is given to promoting children's heritage and home language.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are well supported to help them to feel safe and included. All children have coat pegs with their names on and many wear the setting's logo t-shirts. We also saw children find their name and picture cards to self register. Children are warmly greeted on arrival and any who are upset are swiftly reassured with cuddles. As a result, all the children quickly settle and happily go off to play. We saw children's rights to contribute and express their views and ideas freely are generally respected in line with the Child Participation Policy. Children receive appropriate comfort and support when they find key routines or group times hard, enjoying a hug from staff or having the space to move away. Children take Barnaby Bear home for weekend adventures and share with the group what Barnaby has been up to, helping them to feel special and included. Transitions to school are well established for the children. They benefit from regular visits to the reception class and attend some school assembly's to become more familiar with the classroom, teacher and what is expected. In addition, children who stay on a Wednesday join the main school for lunch club. This gives them good insight and helps them to feel more confident about the move.

Children are settled, well supported and have a strong sense of belonging.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact well and comply with rules appropriately. They show care and respect for the toys and resources by helping to tidy them away when asked. We also saw a younger child being kind and thoughtful towards their friend by fetching their sun hat before going outside. Children smiled in response to positive praise and encouragement for actively joining in song time and showed immense pride when congratulated for their use of Welsh.

Children's self esteem and confidence are positively promoted.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children are interested and enjoy themselves. We watched children revelling in what they were doing and having immense fun outside at their car wash, doctors, mud kitchen and imaginary shopping trip. We also saw a child hardly able to contain their excitement as they threw the grass and rosemary in the air, bouncing up and down saying "*Lets do it again*". The younger children sustained interest moulding with clay at the craft table and both groups of children were animated and totally engrossed at story time. Our observations showed that most children fully engage during the weekly 30 minute music session, readily joining in the different activities. We heard lots of laughter throughout the two visits and parents confirmed that their children are very happy. Children squealed with excitement when watching a slide show of all the different activities they had done throughout the year. They eagerly spoke about what they saw and joyfully recalled the different events.

Children are active, motivated learners who have lots of fun.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children participate in a good range of experiences that interest and help them gain new skills. Children in both rooms were busy and engaged throughout the two visits. The younger children used the mud and different materials to experiment and develop their imaginative play, offering cakes and pies to staff. We observed a child initiate and direct their 'shopping' play and actively encourage staff to choose what fruit and different food they wanted her to buy. The exchange of imaginary money and useful questions from staff, skilfully enriched the child's creativity and play ideas. The older children develop their early reading skills consistently. They find their name card at snack time and recognise their name in print on wall displays and on their coat pegs. We also saw a child find their individual named pouch that contained small labels with their name, and place one on their painting. Children show increasing independence in their personal care and readily contribute during daily routines. For example, we saw the older children empty their plates and place them in the bowl for washing up. Children actively learn to care for the environment and gain good skills on life cycles and caring for living things. We saw children actively recycling and photographs of them litter picking. They also showed children helping to plant and water their flowers and vegetables and watch the frog spawn change and grow in the pond. Children's Welsh language skills are cleverly promoted throughout the session. We heard

younger children repeat instructions “*golchi dwylo*” (wash hands) “*amser snac*” (come and have snack) and count in Welsh at various times throughout the session.

Children make good progress in their learning and show increasing independence.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff implement most health and safety policies and procedures well and supervise the children's play closely. They are good role models and support children to manage their interactions and behaviour positively. Several systems are in place to plan and assess children's progress and development. However, their complexity has meant that assessments fail to identify children's next steps across all areas and activity planning is not linked to children's individual needs.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff know and implement their health and safety roles and responsibilities well. The staff we spoke to demonstrated sound knowledge of key policies and procedures. They understand safeguarding issues and are clear of action to take should a child become sick, have an accident or require medication. Our discussions with staff highlighted their clear knowledge of the fire procedures. The fire log detailed that the escape plan takes place once a term and the provider confirmed she cannot be confident that all children on roll take part. Children wear fluorescent bibs when going on outings or local walks to ensure they are clearly visible. Strong emphasis is given to helping increase children's awareness about the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles. Nutritious snacks, encouraging healthy lunch boxes and being active daily is well established in daily routines. Hand washing is readily encouraged and staff sing the hand washing song to help reinforce appropriate practices. Staff meet children's individual health and medical needs well and visits from Mrs Tufty help alert children to the importance of wearing their helmets or seat belts.

Staff promote children's health and safety appropriately but practise of the fire drill needs to be increased to ensure all children take part.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are consistent and fair in managing children's interactions. At snack time they model good manners and aptly reward children's achievements with positive praise. Consequently, children behave well and engage positively. Staff are vigilant and promptly intervene to prevent any unwanted behaviours from escalating. For example, useful support during lunch club helps the children to resolve their sharing issues in the newly created bug den. There is a celebration wall with each child's name in both rooms to highlight their unprompted use of Welsh. At circle time we saw staff clap and congratulate the children and add a dragon label for each time this was observed during the session to credit their achievement. Certificates are then presented to the children once they have achieved five labels to recognise the progress they have made. Photographs seen of the children receiving their certificates highlight their immense pride.

Staff positively celebrate children's achievements and good behaviour.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff provide a suitable balance of child initiated and planned activities based around a theme that help children to learn and develop. Activity planning for the older children outlines stimulating activities across all areas of learning to encourage their curiosity and learning. Although outdoor planning is not completed some of the inviting activities were reflective of the learning opportunities indoors. A review of children's assessments and profiles found that their initial baseline assessments are not completed consistently. Staff record observations and routinely assess their progress through the Foundation Phase Profile. However, their next steps are not highlighted or used to help inform activity planning to ensure that activities planned are tailored to children's individual learning needs. Nevertheless, staff have high expectations and facilitate children's play and learning appropriately. They use effective questioning and cleverly add resources that develop their ideas further. We saw staff model new skills and play, such as weaving the large spiders and insects through the woollen web. They followed the children's lead when building a complex train track and cleverly introduced the butterfly pod after singing the caterpillar song during music time. They spoke about the butterflies that had hatched and how there was only one left to hatch from the hanging cocoon. Story time is effective in engaging children because gaps are left throughout the story to encourage their participation. As a result, all the children were fully engrossed and avidly took part. Good use is made of the local community and outside agencies to enhance children's experiences. They benefit from visits to the local care home, supermarket and apple orchard at Llanviangel Farm and take part in Physical Literacy and music time weekly.

Staff respond well to the younger children's play, creating a calm atmosphere that helps to nurture and encourage their skills. They model language and use appropriate questioning at circle time to help children recall and talk about what they have done outside, positively encouraging their communication skills. Children spent time making clay spiders and useful questions, such as "*How many legs has the spider got?*" "*How many legs do we have?*" helped to nurture their counting skills. Systems to assess the younger children's progress are limited. The provider confirmed that these are being changed following a review of current procedures. We discussed completing more routine observations and ensuring that all aspects of children's learning be assessed to help identify any gaps and next steps to inform activity planning.

Staff facilitate and promote children's learning well but improvements to assessments are needed to help inform activity planning.

3. Environment

Summary

The welcoming and rich learning environment both inside and out, helps engage the children in purposeful play experiences that enhance their development. Staff implement appropriate safety and security measures but some practices and records could be extended. Extensive toys and equipment are in place and low-level storage encourages children's independent play and learning.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

The provider and staff work well to ensure that play areas inside and out are safe and secure. Staff ensure the external gates and entrances are locked and closely monitor these at the beginning and end of each session. Any issues with the premises are promptly reported to the school and cleaners come in daily to help keep areas clean. The premises is also regularly monitored and maintained through regular visits from Monmouthshire County Council. Recent improvements to the ramp have made it more stable but the material used on the walkway is very rough. The provider has been proactive and put some tyres and rubber matting down to limit any running and falls until a more permanent solution can be found. Risk assessments in place for some areas and activities were updated in April 2018 and contained some useful information about the hazards, risks and safety measures taken. However, these failed to include new equipment or identify all hazards inside and outside. Staff implement good hygiene and infection control measures daily. They wear aprons and gloves when preparing and serving food and use different cloths for different types of cleaning.

The provider takes appropriate measures to ensure that the environment is safe but risk assessments need developing further.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

The environment both indoors and outdoors is inviting and welcoming. There is sufficient indoor space and facilities for children and the layout of the rooms readily encourage their independence. Strong emphasis is placed on providing a more eco friendly, natural environment. We observed recycling actively taking place, posters to promote it and raised beds with beans, onions, potatoes and wild flowers. The provider confirmed that following several reviews and assessments, changes had been made to the environment to reflect the new ways of working. These included, rearranging the rooms to cater for more open ended crafts and loose parts, block play and working with clay. Strong emphasis is placed on promoting children's outdoor play. The flexible and stimulating outdoor play area is used well to enhance children's experiences. An inviting water play area, car wash, theatre, allotment and pond with a dedicated space for children to use ride on toys, help promote their learning. We saw garden umbrellas used to protect children from the sun and a large covered area to allow children access all year round.

The provider and staff offer a rich learning environment for children.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children play with high quality toys and resources that help facilitate and enhance their skills, independence and cultural awareness. These are available in good quantities to enable children to fulfil their play ideas, such as creating a railway that spans several rooms. We saw a wide range of electronic resources suitable for the children attending, including torches that the children used in their bug den. Eco children's books, recyclable materials and natural resources are used daily. For example, the mud kitchen and activities with real grass, herbs, bark, pine cones and twigs with bugs, insects and water mirrors help create wonderful natural, sensory play experiences. Photographs and labels on toy boxes drawers help children to see what is available and wall displays celebrated children's work and included labelling in both English and Welsh. The provider confirmed that the toys are regularly rotated and termly rotas are in place to ensure resources are clean and in good condition.

There are extensive, well maintained, age-appropriate toys and resources that promote children's interests and learning effectively.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The provider and staff team are welcoming and friendly and show a strong commitment to provide a high quality service for children and their families. The service is well run on a daily basis and all operational records are in place. However, not all these contain the necessary information in line with regulations and National Minimum Standards. There are clear systems in place to identify areas for improvement and the provider is motivated to address any weaknesses. Staff have good access to training and have clearly defined roles that they implement well but the key person system needs to be strengthened. The provider and staff work closely with parents to establish trust and basic communication and there are strong links with the school and local community to enhance the children's needs.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The provider is motivated to provide a quality service but needs to take steps to ensure the service is compliant with regulations and National Minimum Standards (NMS). The process for interviewing new staff is robust. However, we examined six staff files and found that not all checks and information was in place to confirm their suitability. At the second visit we saw information to confirm staff's identity and following the inspection, the provider confirmed that references, emergency contacts and relevant job descriptions were now in place. Staff are experienced and they told us they thoroughly enjoy their work and time with the children and their families, "*I love it*" "*we've got an excellent team*". The provider has high expectations and shares these through regular team meetings. We also observed both the provider and PiC offer purposeful support and encouragement to staff throughout the visits, helping them feel valued and an important member of the team. The provider takes the lead in managing the service, including maintaining operational records and the settings policies and procedures. The policies observed are thorough and regularly reviewed by staff and most records contain the necessary information. The new Statement of Purpose is informative and reflects recent changes to the service. However, the attendance register did not show children's times of arrival and departure in line with regulations. The provider agreed to address this straight away.

The leadership and management team are driven and motivated to provide a quality service and agreed to make necessary improvements to the attendance register.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The provider is proactive and prioritises matters for improvement appropriately. She confirmed they had recently introduced the STEW assessment tool to evaluate and target improvements in key areas. A Successful Futures Action Plan, completed in March 2018, was also seen. One particular area highlighted in the review as needing improvement was reading stories. As a result, the team are now making story sacks for regular, favourite stories that have links to the activity planning. The provider was

eager to complete more assessments of practice to help secure further improvements, demonstrating a strong commitment and high expectations. The PiC and staff confirmed that they were confident to share ideas with the provider to help influence change and extend children's experiences. As a result, the Intergenerational Project was started and children visited Avenue Road Care Home. We observed the settings previous annual report completed in June 2017. This looked at three questions, including how good are outcomes, the provision and leadership and management and identified quality indicators to look for and priorities for improvement.

The provider and staff team are open to new ways of working and prioritise matters that bring about sustained improvements for children.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The management of staff is suitable and high staff to child ratios are always maintained. We saw staff implement their roles well to help the session run smoothly and keep the children safe. However, an appropriate key person system needs to be implemented to help nurture children's emotional wellbeing and the details shared with parents. Staff told us that they felt well supported by the provider and PiC and all confirmed they had good access to training and regular meetings to discuss their performance and development. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable and committed to continue their professional development to enhance the quality of the service further. An online chat group is used daily by the provider, PiC and staff to communicate and share useful information, ensuring they are all kept up to date.

The provider encourages staff to be the best they can be to create a strong team but a suitable key person system needs to be implemented.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The provider maintains strong partnerships. There are strong links with the school and local community and these partnerships are used effectively to enhance the quality of children's experiences and transitions. Parents receive good information about the setting to help them make informed decisions, including the Statement of Purpose, Operational plan and policies and procedures. However, feedback from discussions and CIW parent questionnaires indicated they were not clear about the procedures should they have a concern about the setting or their children's care. In addition, over half of parents indicated they would like more information about their children's next steps and ongoing progress. Parents we spoke to were positive in their praise "*Staff really care*", "*Excellent service*", "*Enthusiastic staff*" and confirmed their children were "*Extremely happy*". Parents receive useful ongoing information and updates about the setting through newsletters and the setting's closed Facebook page. The large whiteboard outside is also used well to inform parents of daily activities and updates. The provider is receptive and responsive to local needs by extending the service to include a lunch club and afternoon session for preschool aged children.

Partnerships with parents and other professionals are effective but more information about complaints and children's ongoing progress could be shared with parents.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from this inspection

The provider is not compliant with regulation 28 (2)(b) Schedule 2, Part 2, 33 and 34: Suitability of workers and regulation 30 (1)(a) Schedule 3.1: Keeping of records. This is because staff files did not contain all the necessary information and documentation to confirm their roles, identity and suitability. We did not issue non compliance on this occasion because the provider was taking steps to obtain this information.

The provider is not compliant with regulation 30 (1)(a) Schedule 3.6: Keeping of records. This is because children and staff's times of arrival and departure are not recorded. We did not issue non compliance on this occasion as the provider and PiC confirmed this would be actioned straight away.

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

The following recommendations were agreed to help develop the practice further. These included:

- Ensure baseline assessments are completed consistently to evaluate children's starting points. Assess children's on-going progress and learning to help identify their individual next steps across all seven areas of learning. Use the information gained to help plan and tailor activities;
- routinely inform parents about their children's ongoing progress and next steps;
- implement a key person system that meets each child's needs and supports their emotional well-being;
- update the Statement of Purpose to show recent changes to the services offered;
- extend the risk assessments; and
- practise the fire and emergency escape plan more frequently so that all children learn safe action to take.

6. How we undertook this inspection

One inspector carried out an unannounced, scheduled inspection over two visits totalling 11 hours. Evidence for this report was gathered using the following methodology:

- Scrutiny of information held by CIW, including the registration report and Statement of Purpose. We also looked at documents submitted prior to the setting becoming a limited company, including the SASS and last inspection report;
- observation of children's play both indoors and outdoors and music time;
- a Short Observation Framework for Inspection (SOFI) observation was completed to assess children's engagement and staff interactions;
- visual inspection of play areas;
- feedback from 18 CIW parent questionnaires and 8 staff questionnaires;
- discussion with children, staff, the provider and parents; and
- scrutiny of staff files, policies and procedures, children's information and service records, including the Quality of Care Review report.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Sessional Day Care
Responsible Individual	Caroline Miles
Person in charge	Caroline Miles Melanie Stromberg
Registered maximum number of places	38
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Opening hours	09.15 to 11.45 each week day. Monday and Wednesday 11.45 – 12.45 lunch club and 12.45 – 15.00 for preschool children only.
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	N/A
Dates of this inspection visits	9 and 14 May 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate providing a full service in Welsh as the provider operates in an area where Welsh is not the dominant language. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care</i> '.
Additional Information:	

No noncompliance records found in Open status.