



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Lafs (Lixwm After School) Club**

**Lixwm C P School  
Ffordd Gledlom  
Lixwm  
CH8 8NF**



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## **Description of the service**

Mrs Kathryn Allen and Ms Joanna Woolley are registered to provide thirty two children aged three to 11 years with after school care at Lixwm After School Club (also known as LAFs). The service is operated from Lixwm C P School within the rural village of Lixwm. Care is available Monday to Thursday between 15:15 -17:30 and between 15:30 – 17:00 on a Friday, school term time only. Care is provided in English; this is not a service which provides an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh Language.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children's wellbeing is promoted well as they are offered choice and clearly enjoy their time at this service. They are cared for by consistent and qualified staff who manage interactions with the children positively and who, overall, ensure that policies and procedures are followed effectively to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. Leaders ensure the premises are safe, suitable and well maintained to meet the children's needs and that resources and equipment are stored safely. Leaders are mostly organised and are an active part of the service they are registered to provide. They have developed an effective team however, some elements of leadership require development.

### **2. Improvements**

Since the last inspection, the two non-compliances identified have been satisfactorily addressed. During this inspection a new kitchenette, with fridge-freezer and hot and cold water facilities has been installed. Staff are utilising this well and plan to use this effectively to benefit activities planned for children. There have been no other significant changes to how this service is operated or managed.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We found that the service did not meet legal requirements in relation to leadership and management in respect of the supervision and appraisal of staff. We have not issued a formal notice on this occasion however, these matters will need to be addressed.

We also made recommendations in relation to Care and Development in respect of some staff practices and activity planning and in relation to the Environment in particular handwashing facilities.

# 1. Well-being

## Summary

Children are given choice over how they spend their time, they feel safe, are happy and interact positively. They enjoy their time at the service and are provided with opportunities to learn new skills and develop their independence.

## Our findings

### 1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children speak confidently and are listened to.

Children knew that when they spoke to staff, they would be listened and responded to appropriately. For example, children politely asked staff for specific toys from the cupboard and these were provided to the children. Children were given choice and encouraged to make independent decisions during snack time. For example, they decided what fillings they would like in their snack wraps. Children had some opportunities to contribute their ideas to themes and topics however this could be further developed.

Children have sufficient voice and control within the service.

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

Children are happy because they are made to feel safe and are valued.

Children arrived and settled in to the service with ease. They were familiar with the routine and were relaxed in the care of the staff who know them well. For example, they chatted happily to staff about their elder siblings. They had a space to hang their belongings and expressed enjoyment when playing with their friends. Children were confident to speak to us as visitors and to tell us about what toys they enjoyed playing with whilst at the service. They knew the names of staff caring for them and were confident to talk to staff about their likes and dislikes. For example, we heard a child telling a member of staff that they did not like the type of cheese available for snack that day.

Children are secure and confident because they feel safe.

### 1.3 How well do children interact?

Children have fun and behave well.

Children interacted well with each other. They shared and took turns fairly which ensured they were happy in their play together. For example, when it was time for a child to go home they cheerily offered for someone to 'step in!' and take over their game on the games console. Children were polite and used their manners without

prompt. For example, we heard children asking 'please may I leave the table?' before leaving the snack table to embark with play.

Children cooperate appropriately with each other which ensures they are happy and relaxed.

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

Children show interest in the play opportunities available to them.

Children engaged positively in their play and had fun together. They played co-operatively with the games console and thoroughly enjoyed dressing up with the large array of dressing up clothes available. Children expressed their preferences to us saying *'I like being the Queen and X likes being the princess!'* Children explored the environment freely, directed their play and had extended periods of uninterrupted play alongside their friends. They showed interest in adult led activities and followed instructions carefully when creating an intricate friendship bracelet. Children were happy to talk to us and told us what toys and activities were available to them within the cupboard and were confident to follow their own interests. For example, drawing circles and colouring them to represent the planets, before skilfully re-calling facts about the solar system which they had learnt in school.

Children join in enthusiastically and show considerable enjoyment in their play.

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

Children acquire the skills to become independent and develop confidence.

Children were given opportunities throughout the session to develop age appropriate independent skills. For example, we heard children enthusiastically offering to wash up the plates after snack and negotiating roles and responsibilities thoughtfully saying *'I'll wash one and you can dry one.'* Children independently hung their coats up on arrival and independently got the toys and resources they wished to use out of the cupboard.

Children are encouraged to take responsibility and develop their independence well.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are trained to understand how to keep children safe and healthy. They interact positively with the children in their care and ensure their expectations for behaviour are clear. Staff ensure children are offered a range of toys and resources which keep them positively occupied, however, a wider variety of planned activities would benefit children.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

The majority of staff are relevantly trained and as a result understand how to keep children safe and healthy.

Overall, staff implemented the service's policies and procedures well in order to keep children safe. For example, by offering children healthy and nutritious food and drinks. However, staff did not always follow best practice guidance for the preparation of the children's snack as we found staff did not always use the correct Personal Protective equipment (PPE). For example, gloves and an apron. All staff had recently completed their food hygiene training and the majority had completed paediatric first aid training within the last 12 months. Staff had a secure understanding of the service's child protection policy and they knew who was the designated lead should they have any concerns. All staff had completed child protection training with the designated leads for child protection having completed more comprehensive training. Staff ensured children were offered drinks throughout the session and that healthy life styles were promoted through regular outdoor play. Parents' commented that they liked the children going to the nearby park during the summer months. Staff encouraged the children to cleanse their hands before snack, however, rather than using the recommended soap and water, antibacterial gel was used. Staff explained the difficulties of not having access to warm water within the main playroom. Recent improvements and the inclusion of a sink within the main playroom with hot and cold running water will assist staff with this. Staff understood the importance of fire safety and conducted regular fire evacuation drills to ensure everyone was familiar with the procedure. We noted however that all drills had been conducted during day light hours, leaders and staff should plan for an evacuation during darker evenings to ensure the same process can still be followed with ease.

Staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding to keep children safe and healthy.

## **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff are good role models and ensure children receive positive adult interactions.

Staff were confident and respectful when speaking to the children. They were consistent in their approach and children were clear about the rules and expectations of the staff. Staff were heard to encourage children to use their manners and children co-operated and behaved well. Staff greeted the children warmly with smiles, which ensured the children felt welcome and at ease. They spoke proudly of how well the children behaved and had a secure understanding of how to support any child having behavioural difficulties, such as, by having a behaviour plan in place. Staff displayed the 'Do's and Don't' rules so that all attending were clear of the expectations for behaviour. For example, 'Do – talk and have fun, Don't – scream and shout'. Staff were successful at facilitating children's play and allowing them to have control over their time and play.

Staff manage interactions with children effectively to ensure positive outcomes.

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

Staff provide opportunities to play but few planned opportunities to learn and develop.

Whilst staff were respectful of children's views, they did not capture their views in order to help them plan for themes and activities which the children would enjoy. Staff supported children well, showing patience and nurturing support. However, there were no planned activities for the children attending the service. Staff told us they used to offer more planned and structured activities however, this had ceased over recent years. Children would benefit from sitting with staff to plan a variety of activities around specific themes. Staff knew the children well and chatted warmly to them about their siblings and families. There was a relaxed and friendly atmosphere throughout the setting. Staff understood what play was appropriate for the ages of the children they cared for and one had completed their playwork qualification.

Staff need a more consistent approach to considering the children's voice when planning for themes and activities.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Leaders have procedures in place to ensure the safety of the environment is maintained. They provide care in rooms which are suitable for the ages of children they care for and which sufficiently meet their needs. They work supportively with staff to ensure that children have an array of quality resources and equipment.

#### **Our findings**

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

Leaders have processes in place to ensure the environment is safe for children to use.

Leaders work co-operatively with the provider of the premises to ensure that safety checks are carried out and that the environment remains safe for the children.

Generic risk assessments for the premises were in place and gave suitable consideration to all areas used by the children. In relation to the preparation of the children's snack, leaders must ensure staff practices promote good hygiene and that they provide staff with suitable equipment to enable them to do so. For example, plastic aprons and gloves. All areas used by the children were clean and clear of hazards. Toys were packed away when not in use and children were encouraged to walk indoors. Sufficient and current insurance is in place for the service.

Leaders have reasonable procedures in place to ensure the environment remains safe for use.

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

Leaders ensure the overall environment is suitable to meet the children's needs.

Leaders care for children either in the main playroom (hall) or in one of the nearby classrooms. The large hall offers ample space for the children to move around and play freely. We observed children collecting their chosen game, finding a quiet space and playing contentedly alone, the ample space facilitating this option. The environment is well maintained, freshly decorated and a large skylight ensures there is plenty of natural light within the room. Whereby the classrooms have suitably sized tables and chairs to meet the children's needs. Procedures are in place to ensure the environment remains secure. For example, access can only be gained with authority of a member of staff, however, leaders must remind staff of the procedure of asking visitors to sign in and out of the service.

Leaders ensure the environment is used effectively to meet the children's needs.



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

Leaders provide children with resources and equipment which is of a good quality and which appeal to the children.

We found all equipment used by the children was well maintained and in suitable condition. Equal opportunities were promoted with girls and boys being allowed to dress up in which ever dressing up outfit they chose. Resources donated to the service were gratefully received and helped to replenish those already available. Electronic games consoles were available and staff monitored the amount of time these were used to ensure the games console were not used every evening. Resources were stored safely and were in sufficient quantity to enable children to play together if they chose.

Leaders ensure children have access to resources and equipment appropriate for their age and stage of development.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Overall, leadership is effective. Leaders have a vision for their service which they communicate well. They have procedures in place for assessing the quality of the service they provide, however, they do not always use this information effectively to plan for improvements. Leaders follow safe recruitment procedures and ensure that there is always sufficient staff to meet the children's needs. Leaders nurture effective partnerships with parents and the provider of the premises.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Overall, leaders are organised to ensure that compliance with the regulations is achieved and the service is operated effectively.

Leaders had a vision for the service which was shared effectively with staff. The statement of purpose was kept up to date and provided an accurate picture of the service offered. Leaders have built an effective team with consistent staff who understand their roles and responsibilities fully.

Leaders are aware of their responsibilities and meet these appropriately.

#### **4.2 How effective is self-evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Leaders have suitable process in place for assessing the quality of service they provide.

Leaders understood the requirement for continual self-evaluation and reflective practice. They sent questionnaires to parents in order to capture their opinions of the service, and also seek the children's views. Leaders used this information to assist in the formulation of the annual quality of care review. However, leaders should consider how this information could be used better to plan for tangible improvements to the service. For example, feedback from children shows that they would like '*a baby doll's bed*' leaders should include in their quality of care review how this could be accommodated or if it is not possible why it has not been so. Leaders were open to suggestions and listened to staff's ideas when considering improvements for the service.

Leaders have basic means for assessing the quality of the service they deliver and planning for improvements.

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

Leaders overall, manage staff effectively.

Leaders ensured staff had clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They ensured they were appropriately qualified and that all mandatory training was kept up to date. All staff had a current enhance criminal record check and leaders had compiled sufficient information about the staff to evidence that they were suitable to work with children. Leaders had a regular staff rota, to provide consistency of care to children and suitable contingency plans were in place should a member of staff be absent. Leaders valued outcomes for children and ensured these were central to the work the staff did. Leaders commented in their latest quality of care review that *'The children come first and our daily routine is managed and worked around their needs.'* Whilst we found that staff did not currently have opportunities for supervision and appraisal, leaders do communicate high expectations of staff well and model their expectations by attending training alongside the staff. Leaders did not have an effective system in place for the regular supervision and appraisal of staff and this needs addressing.

Leadership is stable and effective.

### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Leaders understand the local community well and build effective partnerships.

Leaders and staff know the local community and parents well. They build nurturing relationships with parents through open and honest communication during collection of their child. Returned parent questionnaires as part of the service's quality of care process showed that parents were highly satisfied with the service they received. They commented that the staff are *'friendly and approachable'* and that they like the variety of opportunities their children are offered. Leaders worked co-operatively with the school from which the service runs, making the hall available to the school when they required it and ensuring that beneficial improvements to the environment were clearly communicated to the provider of the premises. For example, the benefits to the service of having a convenient kitchenette within the main playroom.

Leaders promote partnerships effectively.

## 5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

### 5.1 Areas of non-compliance from previous inspections

Technical non-compliances which did not impact directly on the care of the children were brought to the attention of the registered person. These were in relation to:

- **Regulation 28, schedule 2, 34(l)(i)** – and the requirement for the registered person to ensure that two references are sought for each member of staff to evidence their suitability to work with children; and
- **Regulation 28, schedule 2, 34 (e)** – and the requirement for the registered person to provide information as to each employee's qualifications, experience and skills in so far as is relevant to the work that the person is to perform.

Both non compliances have since been satisfactorily addressed.

### 5.2 Areas of non-compliance from this inspection

We informed the Registered Persons that they were non-compliant with the following regulations:

**Regulation 29(3)(a) of the Child minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010** and the requirement for the Registered Person to ensure that all employees who look after relevant children – (a) receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal;

This is because during the inspections on 07 February 2019 and 21 February 2019 we found that the most recent recorded supervision was 22 February 2016 and there was no written record of staff appraisals. We asked one of the Registered Persons, present during both inspections, whether this information was stored elsewhere however, she confirmed that whilst she was on hand for staff to speak to regularly, she had not completed formal supervisions or appraisals for any of the staff in her employment.

The evidence suggests that staff are not having the correct opportunities for supervision or appraisal, 1:1 support from their employee or the opportunity to express any concerns or training needs they may have.

We did not issue a non-compliance notice as we did not find evidence, on this occasion, that this had an impact on the wellbeing of children. These matters however, must be addressed.

### 5.3 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the Registered Persons should;

- Ensure that where water and soap are available children use this to cleanse their hands before snack in preference to the antibacterial gel currently used;

- ensure that suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), namely gloves and aprons, are available for staff to use during the preparation of snack. We would also recommend that PPE of an alternative colour also be available should staff be required to clean up any other spillages for example, bodily fluids so that the two do not get confused or contaminated;
- consider the timings of the fire drills and ensure children and staff have the opportunity at least once per year of evacuating the premises in the winter months so that they are familiar with the procedure to follow and where to congregate on dark evenings;
- consider ways of extending the variety of experiences, activities and themes the children participate in and,
- consider how information gathered from parent and children's questionnaires could better used to plan for tangible improvements to the service.

## **6 How we undertook this inspection**

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 07 February 2019 between the hours of 15:15 and 17:40 and the same inspector visited the service again on 21 February 2019 between the hours of 15:15 and 16:30.

We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice and completed observations to capture evidence of the children's engagement;
- spoke to the children, staff and Registered Person present during the inspection and,
- considered the safety and suitability of the environment for the children.

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

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Out of School Care
Registered Person	Joanna Woolley Kathryn Allen
Person in charge	Zillah Davies
Registered maximum number of places	32
Age range of children	3 – 11 years
Opening hours	15:15 – 17:30 Monday to Thursday and 15:15 – 17:00 Friday during Term time.
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	10 February 2016
Dates of this inspection visits	07 February 2019 and 21 February 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Not applicable
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Not applicable
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. We recommend that the Registered Persons should consider Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.'</i>
Additional Information:	