



Childcare Inspection Report on

Little Seedlings

**Woodlands Infant School
Thornhill Road
Upper Cwmbran
Cwmbran
NP44 5UA**



Date of Publication

Wednesday 30 January 2019

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2018.

You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.

Description of the service

Little Seedlings is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide day care for up to 18 children aged between two and four years. The service is based in the Integrated Children's Centre within Woodlands Primary School. Care is provided weekdays, term time only. A wrap around service is offered in the mornings for children attending the school nursery class and a Flying Start service is provided for children aged between two and three years in the afternoons. The group is managed by the Registered Person (RP), who also runs the setting on a day to day basis. English is the main language of the group, with some use of incidental Welsh to promote children's learning.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children enjoy their time at this setting. They come in happily and are excited to take part in the very good range of interesting and engaging activities, both indoors and outside. The environment inspires children to explore and play freely, and encourages their independence and self-help skills. Observations of children's activities and individual planning for younger children ensures their development is effectively promoted. These strategies also need to be implemented with wrap around children to evidence that activities provided are promoting their progress. Children are able to form very warm and secure relationships with the staff who know them well and provide skilful support to promote their development. Staff are motivated, keen to develop their professional skills and well supported by the RP. The service is well managed and the RP works closely with the Flying Start team and other professionals to ensure the setting continues to develop and outcomes for children are positive.

2. Improvements

Since the previous inspection, a number of improvements have been made. For example:

- staff have continued to attend relevant training to develop their professional knowledge and skills;
- resources and furniture have been added, including wooden furniture, a 'roof' for the book corner to create a cosy space for children, a new sand and water table, a low level painting easel and a small covered area outside.

3. Requirements and recommendations

The playgroup is compliant with the relevant regulations so there are no requirements following this inspection. We made some recommendations to develop the service; these are discussed in the body of the report and highlighted towards the end.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children enjoy their time at this group and are confident and very active. They are able to build warm and nurturing relationships with staff and their views and feelings are valued. They are excited to take part in the activities provided, as well as create their own games, and can make lots of choices about what they do.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children can make choices and decisions about their play. The majority of each session consists of free play, where children can initiate their own activities and choose their own resources. Children are confident to ask for additional resources and staff respond quickly to their requests. For example, one child asked for a brush to paint the fence and the member of staff went to find one straight away; another child asked to put the music on and the member of staff responded, joining in with the child as they danced to the music. Adult-led activities are of an appropriate length and, although children are encouraged to take part, they can choose not to if they prefer. The door to the outside play area is open for a large part of the session and children can choose where they play. A 'rolling snack' means children can choose whether to stop and eat or carry on playing. During snack and lunch, children like being able to choose where they sit, and are able to make choices about what they eat and drink.

Children can make choices and decisions about their play and resources, and these are valued by staff.

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

Children are happy and excited to take part in the activities. They come into the group keen to explore their environment and are all greeted individually by staff. Children are supported to settle into the group at their own pace and parents we spoke with said they felt their children enjoyed their time at the service and had become more confident since starting. Children are able to build very close relationships with their key worker and the very small, consistent staff group. They approach staff easily and chat to them confidently, keen to involve them in their play, ask for help, or show them their 'work'. Parents told us their children love telling them what they have done with the staff and their friends each day. Children know where the different resources are kept, where to find their drinks and put their belongings. They excitedly told us about what they like doing, and were proud to show us their pictures and photographs displayed. This shows they have a strong sense of belonging and that they feel valued and secure.

Children feel safe and confident at the service, and have formed very positive relationships with staff.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour successfully with very sensitive guidance and support from staff. Older children are learning to play together and create their own games, seeking help from staff if conflict arises. They are learning to share resources and consider the needs of others in line with their age and stage of development. For example, children playing with the playdough were able to share out the dough so they each had some to make their cakes. Children are learning about the need to follow rules, such as to stay seated whilst eating their food. They respond well to the staff who explain things to them positively, respectfully and clearly if, for example, they are struggling to share or take turns. Children follow the staff's lead, who model the appropriate behaviour. For example, they are happy to help with tidying up their activities before their lunch and know where to put things; they enjoy sitting together at snack and lunch times, with staff eating with them, helping them develop their social skills.

Children are well supported to develop good social skills and they respond positively to the staff.

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

Children are keen to take part in the very good range of activities provided and enjoy developing their own play with the good range of resources available. Children were really eager to go outside and 'play in the mud' and were very engaged making pies in the mud kitchen, adding leaves and water to improve their creation. They were excited to go on the bikes, jump in muddy puddles, and enjoyed rinsing themselves off with the hose pipe! Inside, children had great fun decorating their Christmas tree, wrapping up presents, giving them to us to unwrap. A small group of children were having great fun singing the songs they had learned for their Christmas show, and using the instruments in the newly set up music area. Children are engaged and enjoy the group activities as these are differentiated, varied, focused and of an appropriate length to suit the needs of the children.

Children are very engaged, interested and eager to take part in the activities provided, and use the resources available to create their own play.

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

Children have access to a wide range of varied play opportunities and resources, which promote their learning and engage their interests. They spend time on activities that interest them and enjoy creating games with their peers. They are able to take

measured risks such as exploring the climbing frame, riding bikes and getting stuck in the mud. Children are well supported and encouraged to be independent. For example, they are helped to put on their own wet weather gear to play outside, access the bathroom independently and pour their own drinks.

Children are able to take part in activities that promote their learning, acquisition of skills and independence.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Overall, staff promote children's learning and development effectively. For the Flying Start children, there are very good recording systems in place to help them progress; these need to be extended to the wrap around children. Staff provide very sensitive, warm care and are very responsive to children's needs and feelings. They support children to manage their behaviour and promote positive interactions very well. Staff implement the setting's policies successfully to ensure children are kept safe and their health and welfare is promoted.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote children's welfare and health effectively. They have a clear understanding of their role in protecting children because they attend relevant training regularly, and safeguarding is discussed as part of their staff meetings. They are all familiar with Prevent duty, which is Government legislation designed to protect children from radicalisation. The playgroup is taking part in the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme, which is a scheme designed to promote and protect all aspects of children's health. Staff ensure children benefit from healthy snacks, with milk or water to drink, and parents we spoke with told us they welcome the advice from staff regarding healthy lunch boxes. Activities are provided which encourage children to learn about the importance of dental hygiene including organised visits to the dental van. Suitable systems are in place to ensure staff are aware of children with allergies. Allergens in the food are currently not recorded and we discussed this with the RP. Staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures and have all attended suitable training to ensure children's health. They support children to wash their hands at appropriate times and to embed good hand washing techniques with them. Staff are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow in relation to the administration of medication; they work closely with the Flying Start health staff and attend relevant training to ensure children with particular health needs can be supported appropriately. An active play policy is effectively implemented to ensure children experience very good levels of physical play. Children can spend a great deal of their time outside. Appropriate wet weather clothing means they can enjoy the outdoors even in inclement weather and good equipment such as bikes, climbing frames and balancing apparatus inspire children to be active. All staff are first aid trained and records show they follow appropriate procedures in response to any accidents. Staff implement effective measures to ensure they know how many children are present and to maintain good oversight of all children. Fire drills are practised regularly with the children so they would know what to do in an emergency.

All staff are appropriately trained and implement the required policies and procedures effectively to ensure that children's health and welfare is promoted.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff have realistic expectations of children and are consistent in their approach to managing interactions. They have attended relevant training to help them support children effectively and promote their emotional health and well-being. We saw the high levels of interaction from staff and very good range of interesting activities help children stay involved and interested. If children were finding it difficult to manage their emotions, staff intervened respectfully and skilfully and helped them understand the appropriate way to behave, explaining what they needed to do as opposed to not do. Staff created opportunities for children to practise taking turns and listen to each other through activities such as circle times, and gave good support to those children who were finding this more difficult. They show respect for the children, inviting them to take part in activities and asking them if they would like help. Children are encouraged to take part in group activities but staff have a good understanding of each child's developmental needs and those children who do not want to can choose other activities. Acting as good role models, staff encourage children to undertake tasks such as tidying up, and sit and eat with them for their snacks and meals to promote their social skills, supporting them to enjoy the interactions. Parents we spoke with said they felt their child had made good progress in relation to their social skills.

Staff work closely together to promote positive interactions between the children using consistent and appropriate strategies.

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

Staff work very well together to support children, and overall there are good systems in place to help them progress. For the Flying Start children, observations are made of their play, and targets to support their learning are identified. Activities are planned to support each child's development in relation to these targets. However, formal observations and assessments of the wrap around children are not undertaken and any next steps which may be identified or activities planned are not recorded. Observations are made of how children play with the resources available and play areas are adapted to ensure they meet the children's needs and interests. For the Flying Start children, these changes are reflected within the planning. However, records are not kept to show how the play areas are adapted for the older children. Younger children who need additional support are provided with detailed play plans and staff work closely with the Flying Start professionals and school nursery staff to ensure children receive effective support. Staff have attended training in language development and organise themselves to work with individuals and groups of children to help develop their learning across a range of activities. For example, circle time activities are differentiated and of an appropriate length so that children's different levels of ability can be successfully met and they are able fully engage in the activity. "Chatterbox" sessions are carefully designed and skilfully led to help children acquire

language skills. Staff ask children well-structured questions in line with the children's level of understanding and development and give them time to respond. They support children's well-being by responding to their moods, having fun with them and following their interests. For example, a small group of children outside were fascinated by the worms; the member of staff encouraged them to feel the worm and talk about how to treat it with care which extended their learning and enhanced their sense of curiosity. Inside, some children were having a great time wrapping presents and the member of staff supported them to engage with each other and promoted their imagination and conversation. Staff have attended relevant training to help them support children's understanding of issues such as anger using puppets and books. Staff use some incidental Welsh within the sessions to help children become familiar with the Welsh language. Staff we spoke with are keen to develop their use of Welsh with the children, and are attending relevant training to support them with this. The key worker system, where one member of staff works closely with their key children, supports staff to focus on their key children and work with each child's parents/carers so they are aware of how their child is progressing. Parents we spoke with felt their children were making good progress.

Staff engage with children effectively and overall, implement appropriate systems to successfully promote their learning and development.

3. Environment

Summary

The RP and staff implement good systems to ensure the environment is safe and secure. The playroom is welcoming and bright and different play areas and resources are thoughtfully set out so children are excited to come into the group and play. The outside area is easily accessible to the children, well resourced, interesting and spacious. It inspires children to play, use their imaginations and be active.

Our findings

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

Suitable procedures are in place and followed by staff to ensure the safety of the environment. The playgroup has sole use of a room within the Integrated Children's Centre and there is a Service Level Agreement in place so the RP can be assured the appropriate safety checks for the building are carried out. To improve this further we discussed ensuring copies of these checks are kept by the group; the RP organised this following our visit. Part of the outside play area is shared with the nursery class but there are suitable systems to ensure this is managed appropriately. There are good measures in place to ensure the outside area and playroom are secure. Staff carry out visual daily checks of the premises to ensure children's safety and records are kept so that any issues identified can be addresses quickly. We noted that all play areas were clean and free from observable hazards and risk assessments for the premises and specific activities are followed. An audit of infection control has been carried out and no issues were raised. However, this was some time ago. We discussed the importance of carrying out the audit annually in order to ensure appropriate and up to date hygiene procedures continue to be followed. The kitchen has been awarded a level 5 food safety rating, which shows suitable procedures are in place to maintain a safe environment and protect children's health.

The RP and staff take appropriate steps to ensure children can play in a safe and secure environment.

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

The RP and staff are committed to providing an engaging and interesting environment. The room is welcoming and child centred, with different areas for children to explore and enjoy different types of play, such as role play, messy play and construction. Toys and resources are clearly visible, within easy reach and labelled with photographs so children can find what they need and know where to put things when they have finished with them. This encourages their self-help skills and allows them to make their own decisions. A quiet area is set up with books and cushions and staff have added a wooden roof, which makes it cosy and inviting. There is sufficient space for children to

comfortably take part in group circle times, enjoy physical activities or play with the construction resources. Children's 'work' is thoughtfully displayed at their height. Photographs of children are used to create interactive displays or show them enjoying recent activities; these form relevant talking and learning points and help them feel a sense of value. Staff monitor the play areas to ensure they are meeting the children's needs and interests and encourage their involvement. There are a suitable number of toilets for the numbers of children attending and the additional toilet is used as a nappy change area or for children to change if they are wet or muddy. However, this area is not particularly child friendly or practical for staff, and we discussed improvements which would make this area more suitable. The washrooms are located so children can access them by themselves and coat hooks and drawers are at child height and individually labelled with each child's photograph and name, which gives children independence and a sense of belonging.

The outside area is easily accessible for children from the playroom so they can move between the inside and outdoors as they wish. Outdoors is very well resourced and organised, with different surfaces and interesting play areas so children can enjoy a very good range of activities and are inspired to create their own play. These include a large construction area, grassy areas, space for ride on toys and a small covered area where children can sit away from all the other activities.

The RP and staff strive to ensure that the environment is interesting and exciting, and is continually adapted and varied so children's needs are met.

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

There is a very good range of age appropriate, high quality resources, furniture and equipment both indoors and outside. The play resources encourage children's imaginations and allow them to explore and develop their own play. The staff ensure children have access to many natural and real resources such as leaves, mud, grass, wood, tyres and planks. The water station is made from recycled materials and children are able to use household materials within their play. For example, they had decorations to put on their Christmas tree. Staff use the playgroup stick insect to encourage children to learn about caring for animals. There is a range of resources, pictures and books, which are intertwined naturally within the setting, to help children learn about diversity and promote their cultural awareness. The RP ensures any specialist equipment is provided for children with identified additional learning needs.

The RP and staff ensure the resources and equipment of are of a very high standard, are interesting, and promote children's learning, engagement and sense of fun.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The RP and staff strive to provide a very good service, which promotes children's well-being and development. There are effective systems in place to ensure the continued development of the setting. Staff are well supported and keen to develop their professional practice and the RP welcomes new approaches in childcare practice, and recommendations from CIW and other professionals to help improve outcomes for children.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The RP ensures the service is well run, complies with the relevant regulations and effectively promotes children's safety, development and well-being. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff told us they feel very well supported and work very closely with each other and the RP to help ensure the service runs successfully. Identified goals are set out in the Setting Development Plan, which also outlines how staff will be supported to implement any improvements identified. This demonstrates there is a clear and achievable plan for the service. We discussed sharing this document with parents so they can see the improvements planned. There is an ethos of continual professional development and staff are very keen to undertake training and apply their knowledge to improve children's well-being. Policies are detailed and logs kept to show when they are updated; these are shared with staff through the induction process and there are good procedures in place to ensure staff maintain a sound knowledge of their contents and keep up to date with any changes. Policies are also shared with parents before their child starts at the group, together with a comprehensive statement of purpose, so they have a clear picture of how the service runs.

Leadership is effective to ensure positive outcomes for children.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The RP is committed to evaluating and developing the service. A thorough and comprehensive review of the service is undertaken annually that includes the views of parents and professionals, and shows clearly any developments made. For example, this year's review shows staff have attended an excellent range of courses and resources such as wooden furniture, different sized chairs and a low level painting easel have been provided. Together with various quality assurance schemes, the review helps the RP identify points for future development. Some areas for improvement outlined for this year have already been addressed, such as the development of a music area and the provision of a small outdoor sheltered area, and the group are working towards other areas. In response to observations of children's play, changes are made to the activities and the environment, and staff views are

welcomed and used to implement improvements. However, the views of staff and children, and subsequent changes made, are not reflected in the annual review.

The RP has a clear vision for the group, effectively evaluates the service and identifies well-planned improvements to ensure the continued development of the setting.

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

Management of staff and resources is good and the playgroup runs smoothly and efficiently. There are robust recruitment procedures in place for staff, which ensure they have relevant qualifications and experience and all required checks are completed. The RP undertakes a comprehensive induction with staff prior to them starting their roles and ensures they are continually supported through regular supervisions and appraisals. Staff are keen to attend relevant training to develop their professional knowledge and practice and bring about improvements in the service. They work very well as a team, sharing roles and responsibilities such as taking circle times, and this allows the sessions to run smoothly. The RP has regular meetings with the local authority childcare manager to ensure she is supported in her role. There are suitable systems in place to support students at the setting and documentation is completed. Much of this documentation is kept by the students and/or college. We recommended that the documentation kept by the playgroup is more detailed to evidence good practice in this area. The student placement policy does not fully reflect the processes in place to successfully support students. We discussed that this will be reviewed. The RP told us students receive a suitable induction so they can be confident in their role. However, this is not recorded. Registers include the times of attendance of staff and children and show ratios of staff to children are in line with those required by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS). Good systems are in place to cover staff absence so that children are cared for by consistent staff.

There are effective procedures in place to support staff well and promote their professional development in order to ensure good outcomes for children.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

The RP works closely with parents and other professionals to benefit children at the setting. Parents are able to share information with the group about their child before they start, which, together with input from other professionals within the Flying Start team, ensures appropriate plans to support their child are put in place. Parents are given good information about how the group runs and there are suitable systems in place to ensure they are kept well informed about their child's progress. For example, discussions are held between staff and parents when they bring and collect their children and individual parent meetings are held for parents of the Flying Start children. To improve this good practice we discussed extending this opportunity to the

parents of the wrap around children. There is a very well set out notice board within the main room, and information in the foyer to support parents and keep them informed about developments within the service. Staff told us they work very closely with the school nursery and there are very good systems in place so children benefit from a smooth transition into maintained education.

The service works effectively with other professionals and parents in order to promote children's well-being.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Areas of non compliance from this inspection

None

5.3 Recommendations for improvement

- Develop more formal systems for recording observations, assessments and next steps for wrap around children;
- record allergens in the food provided;
- develop the nappy change/ clothes change area so it provides a more suitable space to attend to children's personal needs;
- undertake an audit of infection control annually;
- include children's and staff views in the quality of care review report and Setting Improvement Plan to show how their views are responded to, and share the Setting Improvement Plan with parents;
- ensure the complaint procedure reflects how CIW deal with concerns and
- strengthen documentation in relation to students.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector undertook two visits to the service.

- We observed children undertaking their activities and the care provided by the staff;
- we spoke with three parents at the service and reviewed three CIW parent questionnaires to obtain their views;
- we looked at an extensive range of records and documents including staff files, policies and procedures, children's records and planning;
- we looked at the premises, risk assessments and other documentation relating to safety measures and took account of the security measures in place;
- we spoke with the RP and staff present during the inspection and reviewed three CIW questionnaires received following the inspection, to obtain their views, and clarify information about the running of the playgroup and future plans and
- our findings were fed back to the RP, and all recommendations were discussed.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:
www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Judith Baker
Person in charge	Judith Baker
Registered maximum number of places	18
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Opening hours	Wrap around: 9:15am to 12:45pm Flying Start: 12:45 to 3:15pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	13 May 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	10 and 11 December 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Ten places are allocated for Flying Start children
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
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, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use the service. This is because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area. We recommend that the service provider consider the Welsh Government's "More Than Just words" strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care. However, some documentation is provided in Welsh.