



Childcare Inspection Report on

Little Stars Nursery LLP

**Monmouth House
Mamhilad Park Estate
Mamhilad
Pontypool
NP4 0HZ**



Date of Publication

6 March 2019

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2019.

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 Stars Nursery LLP is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide day care for up to 65 children under 12 years of age. The nursery currently provides care for children between the ages of six weeks and five years. Full day care is offered from 7.45 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday. The service operates from leased premises on the Mamhilad Park Estate on the outskirts of Pontypool. The nursery is privately owned and registered as a limited company. It is managed by two Responsible Individuals (RIs) who are early years' teachers. Two persons in charge are employed to run the service on a day to day basis, together with one of the RIs. This is an English language service. The Welsh language is used well as part of the daily routine.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Leaders and staff at Little Stars Nursery work very effectively together to ensure children's well-being is at the core of their service. Staff show great levels of respect for each other and the children; this creates a very caring and positive atmosphere which harbours children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff engage exceptionally well with children and implement robust systems to ensure each child reaches their full potential. They plan activities which follow the 'voice of the learner' so children are very engaged and excited to take part in the excellent range of activities provided. There is an extremely strong ethos of self-evaluation and strategic planning in relation to all aspects of the service. This ensures the nursery continually develops to provide the best possible outcomes for children. Parents' comments show the nursery has exceeded their expectations.

2. Improvements

The nursery has made a number of improvements since the previous inspection:

- Outside, a large forest school area has been created for the preschool children, and a mud kitchen has been set up for the toddlers;
- planning for the preschool children has been reviewed and now follows their interests more closely;
- the nursery has been involved in projects to develop children's ICT and oracy skills;
- new books to record the activities and 'work' of the preschool children have been introduced;

- staff have continued to attend training both in house and externally to develop their professional knowledge;
- new resources have been introduced such as 'loose parts' for the preschool children, and
- the premises continues to undergo continued redecoration and improvement. Recent changes have included a new staffroom and new office/training room. The sleep room, conservatory and preschool quiet room have been redecorated.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no non compliance matters identified at this inspection.

We made one recommendation to develop the service regarding sharing some additional information with parents so they can easily see how the service successfully provides interesting activities which follow the children's interests.

Well-being

Summary

Children's voice is valued at Little Stars and, through skilful interactions from staff, children are able to follow their interests. This means children are very involved in their play and are excited to take part in the very good range of activities. They develop excellent self-help skills and benefit from the robust systems in place to help them progress.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Staff actively encourage children to make choices and decisions and they listen to their views. For example, during a singing session with the younger children, staff asked children what songs they would like to sing and if they would like a story. If children are reluctant to join in with circle time activities, staff respect their wishes and they can take part in their own time. Staff know the children very well and respond sensitively to their non-verbal cues. For example, when one of the babies showed signs they did not want to sit in the highchair for their lunch, the member of staff responded straight away, and they sat happily in the low level chair instead. Older children are very confident to choose their own activities and will ask for help if they need assistance, assured they will be supported. In the preschool room staff actively follow the children's ideas and provide activities that build on their interests. For example, when children were 'washing their bikes' using leaves, staff found some buckets of soapy water and sponges to enhance their play and engage their interest and sense of fun.

Children have a strong voice and are actively encouraged to express their views.

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

Children are very relaxed and comfortable with the staff. They know the routine very well which helps them feel secure. For example, the younger children know to put their shoes on before they go and wash their hands ready for snack. They are confident to move around their play areas and between activities. Children have formed very strong bonds with their key member of staff, which helps them feel safe. They approach staff easily and staff offer lots of cuddles, comfort and support readily. Staff take time to talk with children and listen to what they have to say. For example, during a table top game in the preschool room, the member of staff welcomed children's views about the different animals on their cards; when a child was going home, their key worker took time to help them get their belongings together and chatted unhurriedly with them and their carer about their day before they left. There are excellent systems in place to help children settle at the nursery and when they

move base room, which promotes their sense of security. Children in the preschool are very proud of their development books which contain photographs of their activities and examples of their 'work'. These clearly allow them to feel very valued and give them a strong sense of achievement and self-worth. Parents feel their child is welcomed warmly into the nursery.

Children are valued, confident and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Staff show exceptional levels of respect for children and each other. This creates a positive ethos and very effectively helps children learn about how to consider each other. As a result, children show care and concern for each other. For example, when one child was feeling a little unwell, a child put their arm around them to help them feel better. Children enjoy social occasions such as meal times and enjoy talking with each other and the staff. They are able to take turns and listen to each other. For example, younger children enjoyed a circle time activity, taking it in turns to push their car to each other; the preschool children worked very well together during a lotto game, listening to instructions from the member of staff and letting each other share their ideas. Children listen well to staff and are happy to help, for example with tidying up or putting their coats on their pegs.

Children are kind and caring towards each other and cooperate very well with staff.

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

Children are extremely involved in their play. They are excited to take part in the activities and have lots of fun both indoors and outside. For example, a group of preschool children were laughing and squealing as they used the small trampoline to bounce their puppet up in the air and catch him. They joined in eagerly with the songs and sang loudly to Mr Swnllyd! Children are very involved in their play and they are proud of their 'work'. For example, one child took a great deal of time to paint patterns and was very keen to talk about it with the member of staff. Younger children were very absorbed in their play, enjoying the playdough, paint and shaving foam for example. One child laughed excitedly when they put the shaving foam on their face, sharing their enjoyment with the staff.

Children really enjoy themselves and are excited to take part in the activities.

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

There are excellent systems in place to ensure children develop skills and make good progress. Children are becoming increasingly independent and by the time they reach preschool they have developed excellent self-help skills. Younger children are learning to, for example, manage their own food and wash their hands with support from staff.

Older children pour their own drinks and help themselves to their snack. They pour out their own paints and manage their personal needs confidently. Children are happy to explore and make decisions about their play.

Activities are very well planned to help children progress. They are developing excellent self-help skills which gives them confidence and self-assurance.

1. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are very clear of their roles and responsibilities in promoting children's health and welfare. They work very closely together and use positive, consistent strategies to help children develop their social skills. There is an exceptionally strong ethos of respect and staff show high levels of consideration for each other and the children. There are excellent systems in place to help children develop. Staff use their skills effectively to interact with children and plan interesting and varied activities which follow children's interests and support their learning.

Our findings

1.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote children's health and well-being very effectively. They are confident of the procedures they would follow if they had any concerns about a child's welfare and are well supported by leaders to ensure they are up to date with current practice. Staff understand the importance of following good hygiene procedures and follow suitable routines to protect children's health. For example, they support children well to wash their hands correctly and follow the appropriate procedures when attending to children's personal needs. Staff are very aware of children with allergies and/or specific dietary requirements and understand the robust procedures in place to ensure children are safe. Nearly all staff have up-to-date training in paediatric first aid. They can confidently deal with minor accidents and follow the appropriate procedure to ensure parents are notified. Staff understand the rules around safely administering medication and record parental permission and the administration of medicines appropriately.

The nursery helps children learn about healthy life styles and uses schemes well to support them with this. Children are encouraged to clean their teeth to help them learn about good oral hygiene. The menu has been revised and staff encourage children to learn about healthy eating. Staff ensure children enjoy a great deal of play outside both in the nursery play areas and the local grounds. Appropriate wet weather gear supplied by parents and the nursery ensures children can enjoy the outdoors even in inclement weather.

Fire drills and drills to come inside are practised regularly so children know what to do in the event of an emergency. Staff monitor babies and sleeping children well and logs are kept of room temperatures.

The nursery effectively ensures children are kept safe and their health is promoted.

1.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff promote children's positive interactions extremely well. Staff treat each other very kindly and respectfully and this creates a positive and happy atmosphere. Staff use very gentle tones to remind children what to do such as use '*kind hands*', or to '*be gentle with our friends*'. Staff use praise and encouragement to support children. For example, staff with the younger children applauded them for their efforts at singing, telling them they were "*fab*", and giving high fives and stickers to promote their confidence. Staff give older children responsibilities such as 'helpwr heddiw' to promote their self-esteem. Staff treat children as individuals and work together to implement consistent strategies to support children who need extra support.

Staff lead by example and effectively use positive, consistent strategies to help children develop their social skills successfully.

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

There are exemplary systems in place for monitoring and promoting children's progress and development. Staff are therefore able to plan an excellent range of activities which promote children's learning and follow their interests. Staff know the children very well and have a clear understanding of their individual preferences and routines. This allows them to provide very responsive and sensitive care in line with each child's needs. For example, babies sleep according to their routine and in a way that is suitable for them. Those children who need extra reassurance are cuddled and given lots of support. Staff show very high levels of respect for children and always ask them for their view before offering to help to, for example, assist them to take off their apron or wipe their face. Staff help children learn by using language very effectively. They provide running commentaries with the children, ask questions skilfully and sing nursery rhymes with them as they play. They foster children's sense of wonder and excitement and provide suitable challenges to extend their play. For example, a member of staff engaged with children at the playdough table chatted to them about the "*glittery*" playdough, encouraging them to look at the "*sparkles*" and talked about the shapes they were making. They challenged them to "*see if they could make a snowman*" whilst offering very good levels of support. Staff interweave Welsh effectively into the sessions, both through incidental phrases and through songs and stories. They naturally reinforce children's knowledge of colours and numbers during the day by for example, asking children which colour cup they would like or encouraging the children to count how many of them are lined up ready to go inside. Parents' comments in their questionnaires show they are very happy with how their children are progressing. One parent stated: "*[My child's] confidence and independence has come on leaps and bounds since starting nursery.*"

Staff provide very respectful, responsive and individual care. They use extremely effective systems to promote children's learning and development.

2. Environment

Summary

The nursery is bright, welcoming and child friendly. The play areas are well set out to encourage children to explore and develop their independence, with cosy areas for them to rest and relax. Leaders and staff implement very robust procedures to ensure the nursery is safe, clean and well-maintained. There is an excellent range of play resources and equipment that promote children's development both indoors and outside.

Our findings

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

There are very robust systems in place to ensure the environment is safe for children. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and work very well together to ensure the areas used by the children are safe. For example, staff ensure any spilt water is mopped up immediately and alert children and other staff to the hazard. Entrance to the building is via a finger print recognition system. This allows staff to enter freely but allows the nursery to control who else enters the building. A log of visitors is kept so there is a record of who is on the premises. Staff follow effective procedures to ensure children arrive and leave safely. Risk assessments are thorough, reviewed regularly, and cover all aspects of the service. Leaders ensure full maintenance and safety checks for the building are carried out regularly and detailed logs are kept. Any issues with the building are addressed straight away. Annual infection control audits ensure staff follow appropriate procedures when cleaning the facilities. The kitchen has been awarded a level 5 food safety rating so parents can be assured appropriate procedures are in place to maintain a suitable environment for food preparation. Parents' questionnaires show they are happy with the levels of health and safety in the nursery.

Leaders and staff ensure very thorough procedures are followed to ensure the safety of the environment.

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

The nursery provides a child friendly and welcoming environment for children. The rooms for the younger children and babies are cosy and inviting. There are soft furnishings for them to relax and sofas so staff can bottle feed and cuddle the babies easily. There are good facilities for children to sleep. Staff make very good use of the shared messy play area for the younger children, so children benefit from an excellent range of activities. The preschool room is exciting and stimulating with different play areas set out so children can enjoy an excellent variety of activities such as role play, messy play and mark making. Outdoors provides an excellent space for children to explore and take risks in their play. Staff use the areas very well and children benefit

from lots of time outside. The preschool children particularly enjoy their new forest school which is set out with a range of areas including a log circle, book corner and music wall. Good use is also made of the grounds, where all children enjoy regular walks. Resources in all the base rooms are visible and easily accessible which promotes children's independence. There is a planned programme of development and redecoration which ensures the environment is very well maintained and continually improving.

Leaders ensure the environment is comfortable, child friendly and welcoming and promotes children's well-being, learning and independence.

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

There is an extensive range of excellent quality resources and equipment throughout the nursery both indoors and outside. Leaders ensure these are reviewed and updated regularly to maintain children's interest and extend their play. For example, a mud kitchen has been set up for the younger children and a very good range of resources for mark making, block play and a bug hotel are set out in the preschool forest area so children can develop skills outside as well as indoors. There are a sufficient number of buggies so babies can enjoy regular walks outside. Tables and chairs are a suitable size for the different age ranges and babies can use highchairs or very low level chairs depending on their preference. Staff check resources daily to ensure they are safe and follow good cleaning routines to minimise the risk of cross infection.

Resources and equipment are of very good quality and help promote children's learning and development.

3. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leadership is exceptionally strong. Leaders ensure staff are very well supported, are able to develop professionally, and can therefore provide very good levels of care to promote children's well-being being effectively. Leaders work very effectively with a range of partners, including parents. They welcome their views and include their ideas in their firmly established and very effective system of self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

The service is compliant with the relevant regulations and exceeds the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare. Leaders have an exceptionally clear vision to develop the nursery which is shared effectively with staff, and staff contribute to the values and culture of the setting. Systems to develop staff and improve the service are extremely well set out, effective and detailed. Leaders assess and review the impact of staff training regularly and this is used to inform strategies for improving performance the following year. The nursery has a clear statement of purpose which outlines the setting's aims and objectives, and parents receive additional information in relation to their child's particular base room. Leaders ensure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and know and understand the setting's policies and procedures. This ensures children are safe and their well-being is promoted. Leaders strive to motivate and support staff and provide a positive ethos where staff feel valued. Staff told us they feel extremely well supported and motivated to do their best. Leadership is highly effective.

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

There is a strong ethos of self-evaluation in order to ensure the service develops and to secure the best possible outcomes for children. Outcomes from individual staff appraisals and support meetings inform the training plan for the year. Strategies for improvement are identified which clearly set out who is responsible, timescales, success criteria and evaluation. This ensures sustained and worthwhile improvements are planned and implemented. An annual review setting out what the service is doing well, new developments that have been implemented and future plans is provided and a summary review is shared with parents. For example, this year's review highlighted how leaders visited a nursery in Bristol and have now adapted the planning to follow the children's interests more closely. Future plans include the embedding of the new curriculum for three year olds, the development of which the leaders have been involved with. As part of these changes, staff have attended relevant training to support their practice. The nursery welcomes the views of parents, staff and

professionals and there is a clear link between suggestions put forward and improvements made. For example, following suggestions from parents, more information is now included in the newsletter about what children are learning. Children's views are also sought and the service places a strong emphasis on the voice of the child. We discussed ways this practice could be shared with parents so they can see easily how this is being so successfully implemented. Leaders also use a number of local authority and other schemes to support their own assessment of the service and plan for improvement.

The ethos of self-evaluation is firmly embedded and is highly effective in bringing about valuable improvements which enhance experiences for children.

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

Leaders support staff very effectively and implement sound strategies to help them develop professionally. This has resulted in very low staff turnover and long serving, experienced staff. Each base room has their own training plan which is reviewed by the team leader monthly. Each member of staff has clear room and individual objectives to support them in their role. A comprehensive cycle of supervisions, appraisals and individual observations of practice, ensures staff are well supported and helps identify training needs. Staff feel they can access the training they need to develop their professional skills and keep up to date with areas such as first aid. Leaders regularly deliver in house training to develop staff's professional knowledge. For example, one of the RIs recently trained staff on attachment theory to develop their understanding of the importance of the key worker system. Training matrices for staff also identify training needs and whether staff are receiving training, are competent in that area or are able to mentor other staff. Leaders ensure new staff receive very comprehensive induction in their role and new staff feel welcomed and very well supported. Staff new to leadership roles are given very good support to develop their leadership skills so they can take on new responsibilities confidently. Recruitment procedures are rigorous to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff registers show that staff levels are always over and above those required by the NMS. However, staff cover when staff take their lunch was not recorded so it was not clear who was looking after the different groups of children for certain parts of the day. This was addressed immediately following the inspection.

Leaders support staff extremely well to create a positive and safe environment.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders have very strong relationships with parents, the local authority and local primary schools. These contribute to children's well-being. Communication between parents and the setting is very good. For example, during the initial settling in procedure, staff work closely with parents to seek information about their child's

preferences and routines so staff can effectively meet their child's needs. Transition times, when children move to the next stage in the nursery, are managed extremely well and in conjunction with parents. This ensures staff in the child's new base room are well informed about the child and their individual needs, and reduces any anxiety for the child. Notice boards within the nursery and blackboards outside, newsletters and social media keep parents up to date with current events. Staff share information with parents when they collect and drop off their child, both verbally, and through daily diaries for younger children. These are valued by parents. The feedback is unhurried so parents have a clear understanding of how their child has been and staff know of any concerns a parent may have. Parents' comments show they appreciate the "*approachable*", "*friendly*" and "*professional*" staff. Developmental books for preschool children with photographs of their activities and examples of their work are displayed at child height near the entrance so children can share these with their parents and talk about what they have been doing at nursery. The nursery actively involves parents in their child's learning. For example, books are sent home with each child every week and children are asked to bring items in for the current topic which staff can talk about with the children. The nursery has excellent links with the local schools to help children make a smooth transition into mainstream education. For example, the nursery teachers visit the preschool children to read them stories, and the leaders facilitate several visits to the main primary school so they are familiar with their new environment and some of the routines. Staff and leaders have very good relationships with the local authority and work closely with professionals such as the educational psychologist to support children successfully. A recent project in conjunction with the local authority has seen the staff working with children to develop their ICT and oracy skills.

Leaders and staff value their strong links with a range of partners in order to promote children's well-being and learning experiences.

4. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendation for improvement

- Consider ways of documenting how activities provided are led by children's interests, so that parents can see how the nursery implements the 'voice of the child' approach.

5. 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 the children undertaking their activities and the care provided by the staff;
- we spoke with some of the children and reviewed a sample of their questionnaires returned to the nursery to obtain their views;
- we used the Short Observation Framework for Inspection (SOFI) tool to assess the quality of interactions;
- we spoke with one parent and reviewed a sample of the nursery's parent questionnaires to ascertain their views;
- we looked at an extensive range of records and documents including staff files, accident records, policies and procedures and children's records;
- 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 RIs and staff to obtain their views and clarify information about the running of the nursery and future plans and
- our findings were fed back to the RIs and all recommendations were discussed.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

6. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Marie Ellis-Jones Emma Matthews
Person in charge	Falan Butcher Victoria Williams Marie Ellis-Jones
Registered maximum number of places	65
Age range of children	6 weeks to 5 years
Opening hours	7:45 am to 6 pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	25, 26 May and 1 June 2016
Dates of this inspection visit	16 and 17 January 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes. The most recent inspection was October 2018
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. However, we recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's "More Than Just words" strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information: None	