



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Little Songbirds Playgroup**

**Parc Lewis Primary School**

**Broadway**

**Treforest**

**Pontypridd**

**CF37 1BE**



**Date Inspection Completed**

31/01/2020

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<b>Ratings</b>	<b>What the ratings mean</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being
<b>Good</b>	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
<b>Adequate</b>	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
<b>Poor</b>	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice

## Description of the service

Little Songbirds Playgroup was registered in June 2019 and is located in Parc Lewis Primary School. The service provides sessional care for up to 28 children aged two to five years and is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am until 11.30am and 12pm to 3pm. Jodi Heath is the registered person and she also manages the service on a day to day basis. Care is provided through the English language with incidental Welsh.

## Summary

Theme	Rating
<a href="#">Well-being</a>	Good
<a href="#">Care and Development</a>	Good
<a href="#">Environment</a>	Good
<a href="#">Leadership and Management</a>	Good

### 1. Overall assessment

Children enjoy their time and settle quickly at Little Songbirds. They have access to a good supply of resources and they experience a variety of interesting activities to support their play and learning. Staff are consistent, caring and responsive. They know the children well and try to ensure that all children have suitable opportunities to learn and develop. The environment is safe and well maintained, with a good range of equipment indoors and outdoors. The service is run smoothly and is compliant with regulations and national minimum standards.

### 2. Improvements

This was the first inspection following registration.

### 3. Requirements and recommendations

We (Care Inspectorate Wales) made six good practice recommendations which are summarised in section 5.

# 1. Well-being

Good

## Summary

Children have many opportunities to express themselves and make choices about play and activities. Children have strong relationships with each other and with staff. Children are very happy and have lots of fun in their play; they are developing well and are becoming independent.

## Our findings

Children have a strong voice and communicate their needs and wishes confidently. All children can contribute ideas and make decisions about how they spend their time at the service. They move freely between the two adjoining playrooms and choose what to do and who to play with. We saw children readily approach staff for assistance or to join in with their play. Staff always listened carefully, showed interest in what the children had to say and responded positively. Children express themselves well and we heard them choose activities, songs and stories.

Children experience very warm relationships with each other and staff. Most children arrived very happily, greeted others with smiles and went to their favourite areas. Children's individual needs are fully acknowledged. For example, we saw that a family member stayed with a child until they were settled. Children clearly enjoy routines; they self-registered by finding their name cards; eagerly answered questions during circle time; brushed their teeth to music and fervently joined in singing familiar songs. Children feel a sense of belonging because staff know them well and their work and photos are displayed in the playroom. Children feel very safe and happy.

Children interact well with their friends and with staff. They are learning to manage their behaviour, share and play together. We saw that some children liked to play alone but most children relished the opportunity to play with others. Children sat quietly when asked and they listened attentively during circle time. They received consistent praise for cooperative and kind behaviour. We heard children say 'please' and 'thank you' without being prompted; we saw them build a tower of blocks and engage in imaginative play together. We saw several children show concern for a new attendee who was upset and they encouraged the child to join their play and singing to very good effect.

Children are active learners and happily engage in free play as well as staff led activities such as craft work and singalong. They engaged in their activities for a good length of time and some were eager to talk about what they were doing. A child told how they enjoyed dressing up; another proudly told us the colours as they rolled and cut playdough shapes. Children squealed with laughter as they sang 'Row the boat' and 'Incy Wincy Spider'. Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

Children become increasingly independent because they have many opportunities to explore, develop and learn. Children follow their own interests and develop skills such as creativity, dexterity and language as they play. They help themselves to water and receive support to choose their own snack items and to pour milk during snack time. Children are prompted to wash and dry their hands before they eat and to tidy up after playing. We saw that children gain a sense of fulfilment from completing these tasks independently. However, some opportunities were missed as children could not independently hang up or fetch their coats because the coat hooks were mounted too high on the wall. Welsh is used incidentally during the sessions and children sing songs such as 'Hwyl Fawr Ffrindiau' (Goodbye Friends) with enthusiasm at the end of each session.

## 2. Care and Development

Good

### Summary

Staff work very well together and are responsive to children's needs and preferences. They have a good knowledge of how to keep children safe and promote good health. Staff are good role models. They consistently manage interactions in a positive way, with a strong focus on celebrating children's achievements to promote their self-esteem and confidence. Staff know each child's needs and preferences and provide a wide range of appropriate activities to encourage children to learn and develop.

### Our findings

Staff have a good knowledge of the service's policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy. They were all aware of the procedures for reporting concerns about children to an appropriate agency. Staff had attended training in paediatric first aid, food hygiene, safeguarding and the Prevent Duty, which relates to terrorism and radicalisation. Staff follow the Welsh Government's best practice guidance on Food and Nutrition for Childcare Settings and they promote healthy lifestyles. We saw them encourage children to eat a good range of healthy items such as fresh fruit, vegetables, oily fish and cereals. Staff were well informed about any child with allergies, dietary or medication needs. We saw that staff promoted good hygiene as they ensured children wash their hands thoroughly before eating and after going to the toilet. Children also learn about good oral health by brushing their teeth during each session.

Staff work in line with the behaviour policy and have a consistent approach. They are good role models, always polite and valuing children as individuals. Staff listened attentively; they were relaxed and interested in what children had to say, which promoted confidence and social skills. We heard lots of praise and encouragement, including, "*Excellent*", "*Good listening*", "*Thank you! Da lawn!*" and "*You've done really well*". Staff are consistent and fair when reinforcing boundaries. A staff member supported two children to share blocks and encouraged them to work together and take turns to build a tower. The children counted excitedly and placed the blocks higher and higher and burst out laughing when a child toppled the tower. Staff effectively encouraged children to sit together and be attentive for stories and songs, to prepare them for their transition to school and more formal education.

Staff promote children's play, learning and all round development well. They assess children's needs using Foundation Phase profiles and routinely observe and update their key children's development plans and yearbooks to track their progress. Staff plan appropriate, exciting activities, to ensure that all children can engage, have fun and learn. We heard staff promote children's knowledge of Welsh language through some Welsh words, phrases and songs. We heard staff facilitate and extend children's learning by encouraging them to count, describe colours, shapes and sounds.

### **3. Environment**

**Good**

#### **Summary**

Children experience a good variety of play and learning opportunities because the leader creates an inviting and stimulating environment indoors and outdoors. The environment is safe, secure and well maintained. The premises and resources are easily accessible and suitable for the age range of the children. Resources and equipment are good quality and enrich children's all round learning and development.

#### **Our findings**

The leader ensures the environment is safe, secure and well maintained indoors and outdoors. The playrooms and the outside play area are secure from unauthorised visitors; there are suitable risk assessments for the premises and activities; and the service is covered by public liability insurance. All accidents and incidents are recorded and we saw that they were typical for the age range and did not raise any concerns about the safety of the environment. Good hygiene practices minimise risks to children. We saw staff clean tables with anti-bacterial solution; toys and equipment were clean and in good condition and we did not see any hazards during the visit. We noted that only a partially completed infection control audit tool was on file and we pointed this out to the leader. Inspections for heating, fire alarm and portable appliances were up to date. Records showed that the playgroup undertakes regular fire drills with the whole school as well as separate drills to ensure children know what to do when they hear the alarm.

The leader ensures the premises are very suitable, child friendly, stimulating and promote the Foundation Phase of learning. The playrooms are bright and airy with sufficient space for a good range of activities as well as areas for children to relax. Play areas were well set out with resources within children's reach for choice and independence. The furniture and equipment is age appropriate and child sized. Areas with a washable floor surface allow for messy activities and carpeted areas with comfy seats, cushions and cosy corners provide for reading, relaxation and reflection. There is a large, well equipped outdoor, playground with a play house and small slide. However, this was not used during the inspection as it rained all day and there was no covered area for all weather play.

The leader provides a wide variety of good quality resources to encourage children's curiosity and imagination and support their learning and development. This included using everyday items such as jugs to support independence and recycled items for crafts to raise children's awareness of environmental issues. We saw a few books and multicultural resources that reflect the wider society and promote equality. We saw photos, art-work and records to evidence that children enjoyed learning about other countries, through stories, songs, art and crafts and food tastings. The Welsh language is promoted with some bi-lingual signs and books.



## **4. Leadership and Management**

**Good**

### **Summary**

The playgroup has registered as a new service because of a change in the registered person. Little Songbirds is a family business and previously operated on the same site for many years. Nearly all staff are long serving, including the registered person (leader) who has worked in the service for nine years. The leader runs and manages the playgroup well run and ensures it is correctly staffed. Policies and procedures are clear and effective; and staff are supported through supervision and training opportunities. The leader strives to ensure they meet national minimum standards and comply with regulations.

### **Our findings**

The day to day running of the service is effective and it runs smoothly. The statement of purpose provides a clear description of the service and what it sets out to provide, so that parents can make an informed decision about its suitability for their children. All the records and documents we looked at were detailed, well organised and kept securely. We saw that parents had signed their contracts, confirmed that they were aware of the policies and procedures; and signed permission forms and accident records. Policies and procedures are well written and we were told they will be reviewed at least annually. Electronic records allow the leader to have an overview of planning, training, supervision, accidents etc for monitor and review purposes.

Self-evaluation procedures are in place and the leader consults with parents, children and staff as part of the process. Staff gain children's views about activities through asking them or recording what they enjoy doing and how they react. We saw that staff evaluated activities and made changes when necessary. This evidenced that staff consider children's needs and preferences and as a result children remained engaged and enjoyed their learning activities. The leader is aware that they need to involve children, parents, staff and professionals in a formal annual review of the quality of care and compile a report on that review. There is a suitable complaints policy in place should parents want to make a complaint. No complaints have been received by the service or CIW.

Staff are deployed effectively and are clear about their responsibilities. We found that staff ratios always met or exceeded the national minimum standards of one staff to every four children under three years and one staff to eight children aged three and over. The leader follows safe recruitment processes and staff records contained all the required information. However, we found that staff files also contained a lot of information from the previous registration that needed to be reviewed, revised or archived. Staff held appropriate qualifications in child care, learning and development; paediatric first aid and child protection; and there were records of regular staff meetings, supervision and appraisals carried out by the registered person. Staff said they were very happy in their work and they felt valued and supported. The leader manages staff and resources effectively.

The leader and staff have excellent relationships with parents and with the wider school, which benefits children. Staff talk to parents and use a 'Getting to Know You' questionnaire to record children's needs, preferences and routines and use the Foundation Phase Profile to map each child's stage of development. The leader recognises the lasting benefit of parental involvement in their child's development and welcome parents to stay for initial sessions to help children to settle. There is established and effective communication with parents through daily chats, parent evenings, a Facebook page and newsletters. The parents we spoke to were very happy with the service; they praised staff, communication and the flexibility of the service. Staff have good links with other professionals such as speech and language therapists, health visitors and community nurses to help meet children's needs. There are excellent links with school. A final 'moving on' assessment is shared with teachers and children attend regular events in the wider school, which supports easier transitions for the children. Partnerships are effective and successful.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

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

N/A – first inspection.

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

We made the following good practice recommendations:

- Provide more toys and resources to promote positive role images, diversity and a multi-cultural society;
- provide a covered outside area for all weather play;
- ensure that children have opportunities for energetic, physical play indoors when the weather is too bad for outside play;
- consider repositioning children's coat hooks to a lower level to promote independence;
- complete the Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings Audit Tool to support good working practices; and
- review and archive old records relating to the previous registered service including staff records.

## 6. How we undertook this inspection

This was an unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited during the morning session and stayed until after the end of the second session. There were eight children aged between two and three years in the morning session and sixteen children aged between two and five years in the afternoon session.

- We spoke to children, two parents, three playgroup staff and the registered person;
- we observed children and staff in the playroom;
- we observed children using the SOFI-2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff;
- we inspected the premises;
- we looked at a sample of records, documentation and policies; and
- we gave feedback to the registered person at the end of the inspection.

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

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

## 7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Registered Person	Jodi Heath
Person in charge	Jodi Heath
Registered maximum number of places	28
Age range of children	2 – 5 years
Opening hours	8.45am - 11.30am and 12pm - 3pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	N/A First Inspection
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	31 January 2020
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
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, or intend to use their service. This is because the service is located in a mainly English speaking area. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government’s “More Than just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.”
Additional Information:	

Date Published 26/03/2020