



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Little Trees St Arvans

**St. Arvans
Chepstow
NP16 6DN**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and
Training in Wales**

About Little Trees St Arvans

Name of setting	Little Trees Nursery St Arvans
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Dean Close Nurseries Limited
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Adrian Bowcher
Person in charge	Nicola Morgan / Charlene Burgess
Number of places	92
Age range of children	3 months to 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	37
Number of children who receive funding for early education	29
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8:00am-6:00pm
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	6 October 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	December 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03/05/2024
The setting has shown determination and commitment in resolving previously identified PANs and are capable of achieving the recommendations given.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	Good
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Care and development	Adequate
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Environment	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate

Non-compliance

We notified the provider that the setting was not compliant with the Regulations, a notice was not issued, but these are identified as areas for improvement, and the RP/RI must address these. Information on all non-compliance will be included in an Action Improvement Summary, which will be published on CIW's website only.

Recommendations

- R1 Enhance opportunities for children to make choices independently
- R2 Improve practitioners' use of Welsh to provide consistent and effective opportunities to develop children's Welsh language skills
- R3 Address the areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection
- R4 Ensure that inductions and supervisions are conducted in a timely manner

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children are confident to make choices about how they spend their time at the setting and are happy to express their likes and dislikes. They choose freely from the resources available to them and have good opportunities to follow their own interests. For example, they transport toys and resources between the areas of provision as part of their play and make decisions to whether they wish to participate in practitioner led activities or follow their own play ideas.

Nearly all children are happy and settled and enjoy attending the setting. They cope well with separation from their parents and carers. For example, babies arrive with smiles on their faces, reaching out to be held by staff, eager to go inside and play. Nearly all children form positive emotional attachments with staff who know them well and meet their needs. For example, when tired, babies reach out to practitioners for comfort, cuddles, and reassurance. Nearly all children are familiar with routines and expectations at the setting, and this adds to their strong sense of belonging helping them to feel secure and safe.

Nearly all children are starting to form friendships according to their age and stage of development. They play alongside each other happily and are learning to co-operate and share. For example, they chat with their friends as they model and shape dough and share rollers and cutters with one another. Nearly all children are curious, and eager explore the play environment. They enjoy both adult led and free play activities. For example, babies love to explore the contents of sensory baskets, and older children enjoy playing in the outdoors where, they skip around the garden calling for their friends to join in with their play.

Children have good opportunities to develop their independent and social skills through the wide range of opportunities provided to them. For example, during snack time older children wash their hands, pour their own water from small jugs, and begin to feed themselves using knives and forks independently.

Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points during their time at the setting. They are happy and curious and actively explore the learning opportunities available to them. They engage well with peers and adults and play purposefully for extended periods of time.

Many children are developing their communication and literacy skills effectively. They talk confidently with each other during periods of creative play. For example, when hunting for worms in the garden outside, they adeptly use walkie talkies to communicate with each other. Many children listen well and ask questions that help them to develop their understanding. For example, they ask practitioners for the meaning of unknown words when exploring the outdoor environment and enjoy sharing their newfound knowledge with their friends. A majority of children develop their mark making skills appropriately. They use a variety of small tools such as pencils and crayons with increasing control to make meaningful marks. In addition, most children listen to stories attentively and handle books appropriately, retelling their favourite stories using illustrations as a guide.

Most children explore mathematical concepts and use mathematical language during their play and exploration well. For example, when playing in the mud kitchen they use weighing scales to measure ingredients to make their cake. Many children are interested in number and count reliably to ten when role playing in the coffee shop. Around half the children record numbers using marks, for example when counting how many worms they find when digging outdoors.

Most children develop their coordination, balance, and agility suitably. For example, they use ropes to pull themselves up sloped ramps and balance along beams when travelling across an obstacle course. They roll, pinch, cut and decorate dough with small items like lentils and buttons. As they progress, they gain confidence in handling small equipment, such as scooping pasta with spoons and pouring water from jugs accurately.

Most children are developing suitable digital skills. They are familiar with using digital tools in their everyday play and activities and do so confidently. For example, they use small metal detectors to search for pipe cleaners hidden in the outdoor area and use an electronic tablet to take photographs of their art made with loose parts. Many children use digital devices to develop their communication and problem-solving skills appropriately. For example, they work co-operatively to direct a programmable robot around an obstacle course.

Many children's creative skills are developing well. They express themselves creatively and present their ideas confidently. For example, when creating Mother's Day cards in the writing area, they request additional resources such as paint and glitter to enhance their creations.

Care and development: Adequate

Practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They are caring and motivated to provide children with the support they need to grow and develop within a nurturing environment. Leaders have suitable systems to record accidents and incidents and share these with parents appropriately. They have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and follow the setting's procedures well. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners promote healthy eating appropriately and have suitable systems in place to ensure children's safety when managing food allergies. They provide children with regular access to outdoor play experiences promoting their physical development and wellbeing.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour well and are good role models. They are responsive to children's views and are kind, gentle, nurturing and patient in their interactions. They use distraction techniques successfully to calm children when upset, and use praise and encouragement to explain the importance of positive behaviours. They gently remind children of how to treat each other with kindness and respect.

Practitioners demonstrate sensitivity and attentiveness to the needs of children in their care. They regularly observe children and incorporate their interests and preferences into their planning appropriately. While practitioners generally support children's independence well, they do not always provide enough opportunities for older children to make choices, such as during snack or lunchtime.

The settings designated practitioner who supports those children with emerging and existing additional learning needs (ALN) is skilled and knowledgeable in their role and provides valuable support to staff. Practitioners have a good understanding of the children's individual needs and adapt their practices accordingly to make the curriculum accessible to all. For example, symbols are used to support pre-verbal children to communicate, and visual timetables are used to help children to understand what comes next, which in turn helps them to regulate their behaviours.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners have high expectations of all. They foster positive values, such as kindness and respect, and promote principles that help children distinguish right from wrong. As a result, children learn how to relate positively to others and take responsibility for their actions. Practitioners have a good understanding how to support and challenge children, including those with additional learning needs.

Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of how young children learn and develop through play. They are beginning to explore approaches that promote the principles of Curriculum for Wales, for example allowing time for children to follow their own interests and providing open access to the outdoors. However, children's learning and play is often interrupted by the timetable of the daily routines, such as queuing for the toilet or waiting for snack to arrive. As a result, this limits the time that children have to follow through on their play ideas.

A particular strength of the setting is the way in which practitioners document and monitor the planning, observation, and assessment cycle. Practitioners capture children's interests and fascinations and respond to these in a meaningful way. For example, after observing children play in the outdoor area, they provide resources for them to make perfume and bath bombs. Practitioners are skilled at identifying teachable moments during their interactions with children and make good use of these to extend children's learning. For example, they prompt children to consider items that a bird may need to collect to make a nest after noticing a bird carrying sticks in the outdoor area.

Practitioners are effective language role models and introduce new vocabulary skilfully. They engage in conversations with children and listen to their responses attentively. They use questions during play to provoke children's curiosity and learning effectively. Practitioners plan engaging opportunities to develop children's literacy skills. For example, they read stories enthusiastically, illustrating the story using puppets and props, and encourage the use of non-fiction books to find answers to children's questions.

Practitioners model Welsh language songs and rhymes during whole-group activities appropriately and help children to develop suitable awareness of Welsh culture through celebrating events such as St David's Day. However, practitioners do not model well enough simple vocabulary and phrases throughout the session and as a result children do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough.

Practitioners develop children's spiritual, moral, and social skills appropriately. Practitioners show high levels of care and respect for everyone. They have a calm approach and, as a result, children treat each other with care and respect.

The setting has clear methods for recording observation and assessment of children and uses these successfully to report on progress to parents and outside agencies. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through an online App and

personal letters addressed to their child. These letters share the successes of their learning and development and are highly valued by parents.

Environment: Adequate

Leaders have effective measures in place to ensure that the environment is safe, secure, and well maintained, both indoors and outdoors. They ensure that areas requiring improvements are identified and are scheduled to be addressed in a timely manner. External doors are always locked, and practitioners allow only authorised access to the setting. They ensure that a record of all visitors is maintained and that all staff and visitors wear lanyards to identify themselves. They follow procedures to reduce the risk of fire and conduct regular fire drills, which helps all to understand what to do in an emergency.

Practitioners implement health and hygiene procedures well, maintaining a clean and hygienic environment for children. Useful risk assessments for areas of provision and activities at the setting are in place. However, leaders do not have robust enough procedures to identify all risks or follow their risk assessments well enough to ensure the safety of all children.

The setting has sufficient facilities and good quality, appropriately sized furniture to meet the children's needs. The play environment is light and spacious and allows children to move around freely and develop their independent skills well. Practitioners consider the use of the environment to meet children's personal needs appropriately. For example, nappy changing takes place in an area that allows children privacy and dignity, rest areas are readily available to children for quieter activities and babies have a quiet, comfortable cot room, which is well monitored by practitioners.

Leaders ensure that resources and equipment are of good quality and suitable to the developmental needs of the children. Practitioners keep indoor play resources at a low level, ensuring that children have independent access and can follow their own play ideas. The resources in the outdoor area provide children with appropriate risk and challenge and opportunities to spark their curiosity.

Leadership and management: Adequate

The setting has a clear statement of purpose, which keeps parents well informed about what the setting has to offer. There is a range of useful policies and procedures, which practitioners follow well. There is a positive ethos among staff and there is a strong commitment to teamwork. Practitioners feel valued and supported in their roles. Despite challenging staffing circumstances, leaders ensure that they are meeting the required ratios of adult to child within each room. Practitioners cope well with these staffing changes and work diligently to minimise the impact on children.

Overall, leaders make good use of practitioners and resources to support children's well-being, learning and play. They ensure that practitioners are suitably qualified and have relevant experience of working with young children. The setting has appropriate procedures for supervision and appraisals; however, these are not always carried out in a timely manner. Leaders provide time for practitioners to participate in beneficial professional development opportunities, such as attending

training courses recommended by the local authority. Leaders have safe and appropriate processes for recruitment. However, they do not always make sure that new or temporary members of staff are fully informed of the settings expectations, for example the effectiveness of the daily routines.

Leaders have suitable procedures to evaluate the work of the setting and identify the strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. They consider the views of all stakeholders when planning for improvement. The setting's quality of care review provides useful actions to help improve important areas of provision, for example the need to develop practitioners' use of Welsh language skills.

Leaders make good use of the funding it receives to make investments in quality resources that provide children with a stimulating, challenging and exciting environment, for example the purchase of a large outdoor mud kitchen and sand pit for the older children.

Leaders have developed a number of valuable partnerships. They work with parents, the community, and external agencies to improve provision and to enrich children's experiences successfully. For example, they organise visits to the local church to view Christmas tree displays and take part in events like 'Art on the Railings', where children's artwork is displayed around the town for the community to enjoy.

Leaders engage well with parents and carers to ensure that they are involved in the life of the nursery. For example, they run regular 'stay and play' sessions where children and their families engage in activities at the setting. There are effective systems in place to share the latest information with parents and carers about their child's progress. Most parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and value regular exchange of information from the setting.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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