



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

A report on

Ladybirds at OLSM

**Our Lady and St Michael's Primary
Pen Y Pound Road
Abergavenny
NP7 5UD**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Ladybirds at OLSM

Name of setting	Ladybirds at OLSM
Category of care provided	Sessional and full day care
Registered person(s)	Ladybirds Ltd
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Caroline Miles
Person in charge	Caroline Miles and Alison Newsam
Number of places	38
Age range of children	2-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	31
Number of children who receive funding for early education	28
Opening days / times	08:45-15:15
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
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 children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	May 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	March 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	15/11/2022

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen recording systems to evaluate the progress of children with additional learning needs more effectively
- R2 Provide greater opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills
- R3 Ensure that evaluations of targets in the improvement plan show clearly the impact on children's learning and development

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:

Nearly all children have an extremely strong voice at the setting. They make effective choices and decisions about how they spend their time. For example, they choose which area of the setting they want to play in and whether they want to play inside or outside. Nearly all children express their views clearly, including those who do not rely solely on speech to communicate. They know practitioners will listen to them and respond appropriately. Children use the extensive range of exciting activities and resources to construct their own play and develop their ideas. For example, they see how high they can build Humpty Dumpty's wall, before knocking it down and re-building it again.

Nearly all children arrive happily at the setting and are eager to start their day. They settle easily and most cope very well as they separate from parents and carers. A very few are a little upset on arrival, but practitioners support them well and they settle quickly. Children have warm, close relationships with practitioners, which has a positive effect on their well-being. They know they can speak to practitioners about what they want, for example, when asking to use the bubble machine.

Nearly all children behave well. They play happily together as they imagine going in an aeroplane or work together to make playdough. Children learn to follow rules and respect other people. They accept practitioners' explanations about using good manners or how to use resources safely. They show resilience as they continue to use the climbing frame after a minor bump.

Nearly all children are regularly active and engage continually in their play. They choose from an extensive range of interesting and exciting activities. As a result, children concentrate and persevere well with many of the older children spending extended periods engaged in activities of their choice. For example, they demonstrate good concentration in the woodwork area and when they build with construction bricks. Children enjoy many worthwhile opportunities to join in with adult-led activities such as baking currant buns, making playdough, or gluing and sticking.

Children develop and learn very well in all areas as they engage in the wide-ranging opportunities provided for them. As a result, they develop confidence in making choices and seeking help when they need it. They develop independence and self-help skills well as they move up through the setting. They hang up their coats and bags and put their lunch boxes on a shelf. Older children pour their own drinks, find their names when they arrive and manage their personal needs effectively.

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

Many children make good progress from their starting points during their time at the setting. They are very happy and keen to explore the learning experiences available to them. Most children demonstrate high levels of perseverance and concentration as

they explore their surroundings. For example, they work hard to grab toy spiders with tweezers.

Most children's communication and literacy skills are developing effectively. They speak very confidently and chat freely with their friends, practitioners, and visitors. They listen appropriately to each other and discuss what they are doing well, such as selecting items to go into their shopping bags. Most children have a keen interest in books, turning pages carefully and enjoying the content when practitioners read to them. They retell familiar stories using props and include repetitive phrases successfully. Many children find their names successfully as part of self-registration and on slips of paper to put on their creations. They enjoy mark making in both the indoor and outdoor areas, such as using chalks to make marks on a large board in the garden.

Many children use mathematical language confidently during their play and while exploring. They talk about short and tall towers and the assorted sizes of goats in a favourite story. Most children count reliably to five and a few to ten, such as when playing with blocks and selecting nails when woodworking. They enjoy singing counting songs and rhymes and know the meaning of zero when singing numbers backwards.

Many children develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. They use a digital camera to take photographs of one another at play. They also listen to recorded instructions to encourage them when designing their pictures.

Many children develop thinking skills well and solve issues that occur naturally in their play. For example, they decide where to place pictures to make a floor map and work out the space needed on a nail when adding beads.

A majority of children use Welsh effectively at snack times, responding appropriately when asked what they would like to eat and drink. They count to five in Welsh when handing out plates and cups, but there is little opportunity for them to use incidental Welsh during the rest of a session. As a result, children's Welsh language skills are underdeveloped.

Most children are agile and well-coordinated. They move confidently around the setting and engage with resources readily. For example, they jump in and out of hoops, walk on mini stilts, and stir dough confidently during cooking activities.

Most children's creative skills are developing effectively. They enjoy moulding clay with tools, painting activities and making pictures to go with the nursery rhyme of the week.

Many children are developing their personal and social skills well. They share resources readily and take turns happily. For example, they share hoops and mini stilts in the garden and ensure their friends have the tools they need to explore malleable materials.

Care and development:

Leaders have developed a comprehensive range of relevant policies and procedures to support practitioners to keep children safe. Practitioners have a secure knowledge

of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners work well to keep children safe and healthy. They follow the setting's policies and procedures in relation to hygiene, health, and safety effectively and leaders review them annually. Practitioners supervise children well and complete relevant records in relation to accidents, incidents and administering medication appropriately. Practitioners complete most records using an electronic system that is effective in keeping all records for individual children together. This gives parents instant access to information they need, such as accident reports. Practitioners know what to do in an emergency. They practise and record regular fire evacuation drills with children, so they also know what to do. They promote healthy lifestyles for children who have regular access to outdoors, which ensures that they get plenty of fresh air and exercise. Practitioners provide healthy snacks with milk or water to drink and encourage parents to provide healthy options in lunch boxes. There are suitable systems in place to manage allergies and, if necessary, the specific health needs of individual children.

Practitioners are caring and supportive. They interact with children in a warm and friendly manner, creating a positive, happy, and relaxed atmosphere. There is a suitable behaviour management policy in place, which they use effectively. Practitioners give praise for good behaviour and use positive techniques such as explanations to help children learn when they need to change their behaviour. Practitioners are very good role models and create an atmosphere that fosters and promotes children's self-esteem.

Practitioners are successful in meeting the needs of all children, including those with additional learning needs. Practitioners identify children who may have additional learning needs at an early age and have particularly good systems for supporting them and their families, although they do not always fully record evaluations of children's progress against set targets. Leaders access support from outside agencies such as the local authority, health visitors and educational psychologists. As a result, many children make very good progress in the setting.

Practitioners are very responsive to children, supporting them effectively in their play. For example, they sing rhymes as they play, taking opportunities for counting, talking to them, and playing alongside them. Practitioners plan an exciting range of worthwhile activities and experiences across all areas of learning and development. They consider the children's interests and fascinations as well as their next steps in learning.

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

Nearly all practitioners have a thorough understanding of how children learn through play and exploration. They provide children with access to a wide range of stimulating activities in the indoor and outdoor areas that relate well to children's current interests. Practitioners notice what captures children's interests effectively and they respond by ensuring suitable resources are available to them. For example, in response to a request for a tea party, practitioners provide porcelain cups and

plates and buns for snack time. Practitioners encourage children to make choices of what they want to play with and where they wish to play. They allow children sufficient time to become engrossed in what they are doing. All resources are interesting, encouraging children to find out how things work independently, such as when using hammers to knock nails into wood. Practitioners plan valuable activities that develop children's understanding of the natural world and how to care for it. They grow and harvest fruit and vegetables, care for a wormery and observe changes in the weather regularly. Practitioners also respond skilfully to opportunities as they happen, for example encouraging children to look at and photograph a rainbow that appears overhead.

Practitioners plan worthwhile activities to promote children's communication skills. They encourage children to respond to open-ended questions well and provide thought provoking comments while supporting their learning and development. This has a beneficial effect on children's thinking skills and allows them to share their ideas and opinions readily. Children make choices readily, such as casting votes to select nursery rhymes to sing and the types of cakes to make. Practitioners provide children with cosy, relaxing book areas indoors and outside, where they can enjoy stories alone or with a practitioner. In other areas, they place themed books to encourage children to handle them as readers. There are plenty of opportunities to mark make on a small and large scale, such as using clipboards and paper to draw a large map.

There are beneficial opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills, such as using natural materials for them to count and recognise numerals. Practitioners encourage children to count spoonsful of ingredients when making currant buns.

The setting ensures that children have many opportunities to be physically active, such as running, skipping, climbing, and riding bikes. They pull trucks through a gravel pit and use tools to reduce the size of a block of clay.

Practitioners promote Welsh during snack times well. They encourage children to name the food and drink they want and reward their efforts with regular certificates. However, there are limited opportunities for promoting children's use of Welsh during the rest of a session.

Practitioners are developing effective ways to make regular and useful observations of children. They use the information well to identify what children are doing and how well they are progressing in their learning and development. It also identifies all children's next steps in learning clearly and practitioners record the information on an app and share it with parents and carers successfully. A good range of learning experiences promote children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder through planning around the season. They promote children's understanding of cultural diversity through the celebration of festivals such as Diwali. There are appropriate resources, such as dolls and books, to promote children's understanding of other faiths. Practitioners promote Welsh culture effectively by reading stories, encouraging children to recognise the Welsh flag in their play and celebrating St David's Day.

Environment:

Leaders and practitioners provide children with an extremely rich environment that supports all their learning and development needs and offers them challenge and opportunities for appropriate risk taking. The leaders make excellent use of grants and the talents of practitioners to take opportunities to enhance, develop and add to equipment and resources.

Practitioners ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The premises are secure with suitable arrangements to ensure children cannot leave unsupervised. The leader and practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of relevant safety matters. They undertake daily visual checks of the environment and record checks such as fridge and room temperatures. All areas of the setting are clean and suitably maintained. The leader has suitable risk assessments in place that consider hazards both inside and outside to ensure measures are in place to keep children safe.

The playrooms are welcoming and bright. The leader and practitioners have developed the spaces well to give children plenty of room to move about and to play. They provide children with independent access to an extensive range of interesting and developmentally appropriate activities and resources. They make good use of the area between the two playrooms to provide additional resources such as clay and rechargeable torches as well as a large indoor climbing frame. This ensures that children have opportunities for physical play in even the most adverse weather conditions. Practitioners encourage children to take care of resources and return them to where they belong when they have finished playing with them.

The outdoor space provides further extensive opportunities for learning and development across all areas and is very well used. Children have worthwhile opportunities to explore the natural world through gardening and the provision of a fishpond housed in a large tractor tyre.

The leader provides good quality, age-appropriate furniture, and resources. These include ones that promote cultural awareness, such as books, craft activities and cooking activities. Leaders and practitioners ensure that resources and equipment are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for the children in the setting.

Leadership and management:

The leaders are very dedicated and have a clear vision for the setting. They create an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive environment where children and practitioners feel safe and happy. The leaders convey this vision appropriately and practitioners feel well supported and are comfortable to approach them with concerns and ideas. They work successfully as a team and leaders organise the setting skilfully to meet the needs of all children. As a result, children and their families experience a warm, caring, and nurturing environment, which supports children's learning and well-being well.

There is a clear statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the setting. Leaders have developed an effective range of policies and they share them appropriately with practitioners. There are sufficient and suitably qualified

practitioners. They are fully aware of their roles, and they have appropriate job descriptions. The leaders undertake staff appraisals annually and targets are clear and result in improvements to practice and provision. The leaders take advantage of training opportunities to improve the skills and knowledge of practitioners. Attending training on the implementation of Curriculum for Wales has resulted in practitioners making appropriate changes to the planning and assessment procedures.

Leaders have developed beneficial self-evaluation processes that feed effectively into the setting's improvement plans. The process identifies the setting's strengths and areas for improvement successfully. The leader sets appropriate actions that bring about the desired improvements and uses grants effectively to enhance provision. For example, the setting has developed the outside area to increase the range of learning opportunities for children to further develop their skills and knowledge. Leaders monitor the progress of actions in improvement plans regularly. However, there is no formal evaluation of actions to identify how well they have impacted on children's outcomes, provision, and the skills of practitioners.

Leaders make good use of the beneficial advice and guidance from partners, such as the local authority's advisory teacher. There are strong relationships with parents and carers, and this is a strength of the setting. Practitioners communicate with them daily using an app, sharing photographs, and accompanying explanations of what children have been doing and how they are progressing in their learning and development. The setting also suggests how parents and carers can support learning at home.

The setting is based within a primary school and the leaders use the grounds well to promote children's understanding of the natural world. They ensure that there are effective transition arrangements for children to move on to the next stage of their education.

The setting has beneficial links with the local community. Visitors such as the local priest and a local farmer, and visits to the local supermarket and agriculture shows, enhance the children's learning and sense of belonging.

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)

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