



Inspection Report

Little Ferns Maerdy

**Ferndale Community School
Excelsior Terrace
Ferndale
CF43 4AR**



Date Inspection Completed

18/10/2021

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About Little Ferns Maerdy

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	The Fern Partnership
Registered places	26
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	This is the first inspection since registration.
Is this a Flying Start service?	Manual Insert Yes
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.

Summary

Children are very happy at Little Ferns Maerdy. They are developing good, positive relationships and learning to make decisions and express themselves clearly. Staff at the nursery are kind and experienced. They ensure they listen to children and protect them from harm. They create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, which helps children feel comfortable to learn about their own individual likes and dislikes. The leader and staff ensure the setting is clean, bright and airy with suitable toys and resources for the age and stage of the children that attend. The leader sets clear expectations and manages her nursery well; taking into consideration the opinions of children, staff, parents and other professionals, to make improvements that benefit the well-being of the children.

Well-being

Children are happy, express enthusiasm and enjoy their time at the setting. All children entered the setting confidently and full of energy, ready to engage in play and learning. They show delight and chatted animatedly whilst playing with friends and staff. Children cope well with separation because they have strong bonds of affection with staff and they seek out familiar people who they know will help them. Children approach care staff for comfort and they immediately felt relaxed and at ease. Several other children play cooking in the home corner, shrieked with delight as they placed play food into a colander.

Children have consistently good interactions with each other and the care staff. The children are encouraged to interact with one another and share their enthusiasm in what they do. Children co-operate by taking turns, sharing toys and being respectful of each other. Children are polite and are sensitive to the needs of others. We saw one child including another child in their play because the other was feeling a little sad.

Children enjoy their play and are curious, excited learners who participate very well and concentrate for appropriate periods. Children have many varied opportunities to make choices and decisions for themselves. The children have freedom to explore their playroom and choose from an excellent range of interesting toys and resources or alternatively they can relax and have quiet times. We saw some choose to play with the various play stations set up for them whilst others were eager to help staff cut pumpkins with proper knives, assisted by staff members to make pumpkin soup. A child, who did not want to participate in the focus task of making pumpkin soup, excused themselves and was able to choose independently to play with construction bricks.

The children are confident communicators as their wants, needs, and moods are considered. Most children speak or express themselves confidently, communicating their needs in a variety of ways and know that staff will listen and respond appropriately.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence skills enabling them to do things for themselves successfully and to problem solve well. All children are encouraged to reach toys for themselves and move freely in order to select items they wish to play with. We saw one child spend a long time thoroughly enjoying cutting the pumpkin with a proper knife for pumpkin soup. At play time, most children tried to dress themselves in their wet weather gear with staff closely observing but only intervening when they could see children needed additional help, before the children become frustrated or upset. Children know the routines well, even with the added cleaning and hygiene practices linked to Covid-19. They wash their hands at appropriate times and help tidy toys away after use. They use the tissue station to collect clean tissues and wipe their own nose before putting the tissues in the bin. Children are beginning to learn about sharing and taking turns and we saw children pass toys on to one another and share painting colours.

Care and Development

Care staff are experienced and well qualified; They care for children effectively by meeting their individual needs. Care staff fully understand and consistently implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and promote healthy lifestyles. Care staff confirmed they have current training in child protection, up to date first aid and only staff who have food hygiene certificates handle food items. They confidently discussed safeguarding scenarios and assured us that they contact relevant agencies when they believe children have been, or are at risk of, harm. Care staff keep relevant developmental and personal records relating to children and log accidents, incidents and medication administered which they then share with the relevant parent / carer.

Additional policies have been created during the Covid-19 pandemic and care staff follow and implement the protective measures guidance, policies and risk assessments very well. They follow cleaning routines and hand washing practices thoroughly and frequently, encouraging children or supporting them to do the same at appropriate times. Care staff give reminders to children to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing and they clean and rotate toys between every session.

Care staff have relevant understanding and knowledge of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. The care staff understand the behaviour policy and consistently implement positive behaviour management strategies, so children know what the expectations upon them are. Care staff use praise to reinforce good behaviour, sharing words of support and encouragement with children for example, "*well done*" and "*Lovely sharing*". Staff use distraction techniques for unwanted behaviour such as, intervening appropriately and calmly when there is conflict between children.

Care staff are warm, friendly and are positive role models to the children. They listen and respect the children's views. Care staff contribute ideas for activity planning that meet children's individual needs because they know the children well and can focus on developing and progressing each child's own range of skills. We saw care staff observing children's skills and ability and developing their individual understanding of ideas and concepts through appropriate questioning for example, discussing shapes and counting with children as they participated in a cooking activity.

Care staff confidently identify children's additional needs and use the support services available when required. They are fully aware of children with allergies and a list was displayed within the kitchen area along with the picture of the relevant child of the individual children's needs, allergies, symptoms and dietary requirements. The care staff explained to us they complete training to identify symptoms of allergic reactions and the procedures to follow when administering an EPIPEN. Snacks are provided to children during the session and alternative snack option are available for children who do not like what's on offer. Although, plates and bowls are provided for the main meal individual plates are not always provided to children at snack time for additional food items. This should be considered in order to teach them about hygiene and appropriate daily living skills.

Care staff tell us they are proud to be a part of the team. They are thanked and feel appreciated for their work by management. Staff feel that their wellbeing is paramount to the people who run the setting, which means so much to them, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Environment

The environment is very secure and well maintained indoors and outdoors. Thorough safety measures ensure access to and from the setting is secure and no one can enter or exit the setting without being admitted by a nursery member of staff. People who run the setting ensure there are thorough cleaning routines to maintain good hygiene practices and infection control methods. There are daily nursery cleaning rotas in place as well as daily toilet cleaning and disinfection rotas in place, which the staff are responsible for undertaking.

New and revised policies are in place to reduce the spread of infection due to Covid-19 such as the visitors' policy. Visitors are now required to ring a buzzer on the front door and the people who run the setting will go outside to speak to them. At present, the provider explained due to their specific COVID protocols no parents were allowed them entry into the setting.

The premises is warm and inviting and is decorated with the children's work, giving the children a sense of belonging. The various sections within the main playrooms benefit from large windows and a lot of natural lighting. The care staff organise regular cleaning routines that reflect good hygiene practices.

People who run the setting identify and minimise risks to children's safety very well. They conduct thorough maintenance checks and work with the premises owner to maintain the upkeep of the property and equipment to ensure it is safe and suitable for children. Fire drills are carried out regularly; details of these are recorded, and filed safely.

People who run the setting organise the environment well so that it provides a good range of play opportunities suitable for all the age ranges cared for. We saw age appropriate equipment and the children have access to toys, which are stored at an appropriate level and accessed independently. People who run the setting provide excellent resources to promote children's curiosity about the wider society, promoting equality and learning about cultural awareness. Many real and natural resources were available for children's use in the home corner. The people who run the setting explained to us that the children enjoy celebrating cultures through learning about festivals. We saw a variety of multicultural dolls available to the children. The current focussed task activities this week are based on Halloween. They explained that they have lots of books and stories with reflect positive role models. People who run the setting ensure all children can access good quality and a broad variety of appropriate toys and equipment to develop their interests and learning. Children play with loose parts to encourage imaginative play. Some activities and resources have been suspended during the pandemic but the care staff are gradually and safely re-introducing some resources such as providing a choice of dressing up clothes. The outdoor environment was very well equipped providing a good range of opportunities for children to develop their skills.

Leadership and Management

People who run the setting have an innovative vision for the future of their setting, which they share with children, staff, parents and carers of children. They consistently review and share their policies and statement of purpose with parents and welcome ideas on how to make improvements, responding instantly if changes are needed within the setting to ensure children's safety. For example, we recommended bins with lids in accordance with COSH guidance and they were ordered immediately. People who run the setting fully comply with regulations and exceed the National Minimum Standards. They successfully embed their policies in the running of the setting and this is very evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. People who run the setting manage care staff and ensure that they are deployed in an organised way, so that staffing ratios and children's needs are fully met.

People who run the setting follow thorough recruitment processes to safeguard children. They ensure all staff have up to date suitability checks, provide a good induction procedure for new staff and promote ongoing training for professional development of all staff. Performance management is good and staff receive regular one-to-one supervision and annual appraisals, encouraging them to think about the quality of their work and consistency in their practice. They also identify training development for all staff. The self-evaluation and operational plan is purposeful and is a tool for creating an action plan for the year ahead. People who run the setting consider the views of parents, staff and children. They take account any issues raised, record and respond appropriately. Partnership working with parents, carers, local school and wider community is very effective. For example, under normal circumstances pre COVID-19 the local community were invited to partake in activities within the setting as well as the providing activities in a local care home.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

R1. Develop children's independence by ensuring plates are always used at snack time for all food items and not place food directly on the table.

R2. Ensure all bins have lids and are foot operated.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

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