



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Footsteps Day Nursery**

**Howell Drive  
Welshpool  
SY21 7AT**



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## **Description of the service**

Footsteps Day Nursery provides full day care and out of school provision from its leased premises within the Youth and Community Centre in Welshpool, Powys. The nursery operates in a single story building comprising of a reception area, toilet facilities and a separate base room for children under two to years of age with direct access to the outside play area. It has a large play room with a sloped access and steps to a messy play room. There is a quiet area for sensory play and story time, which also leads to the outside play area. The nursery is currently registered for 45 children aged from 0 months to 12 years of age. The registered provider is J & L Childcare Ltd; Ms Louise Macken, holds the post of Responsible Individual (RI). She also undertakes the Person in Charge (PiC) position at the nursery.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

We, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW) found that the children attending this service are generally happy and content. We saw that staff responded warmly and in a timely manner to children, demonstrating kindness and reassurance when required. Children are offered a stimulating range of activities for play and learning both indoors and when outside. However, we noted that improvements were needed in relation to health and safety, staff recruitment and record keeping.

This inspection focused on issues raised by concerns received; consequently not all themes were and key areas were looked at.

### **2. Improvements**

During our first visit on the 1 June 2017 we identified that there were a number of improvements needed and found that by the second visit, 7 June 2017 improvements had been made. For example, the baby sleep room had been returned to its original use; the offensive odour in the children's toilet area had diminished and the paper towel dispenser in the children's toilet area had been secured to the wall.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We found that the service was not compliant with regulations relating to:

- Hazards and safety: there were risks to the children's safety that had not been identified;
- The Statement of Purpose: this did not contain all the required information;

- Employment of staff: staff had not received an annual appraisal;
- Record keeping: records of relevant children and staff who look after them are not regularly completed on a daily basis and
- Suitability of workers: two members of staff did not have Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) prior to being employed at the service. However, by our second visit the RI was able to demonstrate that the processes for both staff were well in hand.

We also recommended that:

- The robust recruitment procedures are reviewed to ensure that they comply with regulatory requirements around essential vetting procedures;
- Staff rotas should clearly differentiate between staff and students;
- Supervision of staff needs are recorded;
- Children should be offered greater choice over what they drink and when for example, both milk and water should be offered and
- Older children should have more choice over their food selections at lunchtime.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

We found that children have a voice and are listened to. The children are settled and secure. They interact well with each other and respond positively to staff. They enjoy their time at the nursery.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children have a voice, are listened to and make decisions.

We saw that children were chatty, comfortable and relaxed with the staff caring for them. We heard children ask to use the toilet and for more food at snack time. Children chose who and what they wanted to play with; moving freely to a new activity when ready. They expressed their likes and dislikes, for example, one child did not want to go outside to play. The member of staff reassured the child and provided a nursery fleece so the child would not feel cold outside. This resulted in the child skipping out into the playground confidently. Younger children's attempts at communicating were recognised and understood. However, there was not much choice for older children in relation to what they ate and drank. For example, children were offered tuna pasta bake for lunch, some children expressed their preference to have only pasta and cheese and this was eventually provided. We heard children asking for more food, which was provided.

Children are listened to and make limited choices.

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

Children are settled, feel secure and are happy.

The children responded to us confidently, saying 'hi' or doing a 'high five' with their hands. They were curious about us but felt safe enough to approach us and engage in conversation. Children in the older, out of school care club were very settled and familiar with their surroundings. They chatted confidently about their holiday, home life and what they considered important to them. We saw many positive emotional attachments with children laughing and giggling with members of staff. During the second visit, children were very responsive and vocal. Children reacted positively when comforted, cuddled and reassured. We heard lots of praise and encouragement across both visits, which children responded to confidently.

Children enjoy positive emotional attachments and feel valued.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children interact well with each other and confidently approach staff.

Children across the age range in the nursery were relaxed and at ease with each other. We saw children cuddling one another and showing concern if their friends were upset, for example, in the out of school provision we saw a child, who didn't want to eat the lunch provided, being comforted and encouraged by a friend who said 'come on try it, it's really nice'. At one point we heard a lovely conversation between two children, 'I love sweetcorn and peas' said one child, 'yeah they go pop in my mouth' responded another, which was quickly followed by giggling. One charming observation saw children using 'stilts' outside. The children helped each other by holding hands to aid balance whilst using the equipment. Just before going out to the nearby park to play football children eagerly told us what they were going to do. 'I'm going to play football' one said' and 'I'm going to smash the ball in the goals, like Gareth Bale' said another. Children listened intently to staff as they told the children to remember the 'ground rules'. The children left the nursery in an orderly manner holding hands and engaged in discussing their play. When the younger children played outside in the play area, they cooperated and played alongside each other. Much younger children were content to share their play space with others when playing in the sand tray. However, we saw some squashing and shoving as children lined up to use the toilet facilities and after snack time as they waited to go outside.

Children are developing good friendships and interact well according to their individual developmental ability.

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

Children enjoy a range of age appropriate activities

We saw that children were actively participating in their chosen activity. During snack time, we heard children discuss their play and what they were going to do after their snack. They enjoyed playing with the wheeled toys, pushing them back and forth along the length of the outside play space. Children played enthusiastically with materials such as sand and water, using chinks to draw on the outside floor and joining in a music and movement activity with energy and enthusiasm. We noted that children moved freely from one activity to another and that many children spent a considerable period of time at their chosen activity. During a 'busy little feet' music and movement activity, children joined hands and danced enthusiastically around the room; stomping their feet and clapping their hands as they listened to the music. Younger children under two years of age played with floor toys and clearly enjoyed practising their crawling and walking. One child was busy toddling up and down the room chuckling as a member of staff tried to 'catch' him but always missed!

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

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

Children are encouraged to enhance their independence and are learning self help skills but there is scope for improvement.

We saw that very young children, the babies, were encouraged to develop their self help skills. We observed a delightful lunch session with children under two years of age. For example, we saw the children use cutlery to feed themselves. Those children whose self help skills were developing had support and assistance from staff. For example, they used proper cutlery, such as spoons and forks when eating and many of them could feed themselves independently; whilst others had help from staff. Older children were very independent, putting their own shoes on to go and play outside and their own coats before going out to the park to play football. We observed children pouring their own drinks from small jugs of water placed on the tables at snack and lunchtime. Some children helped lay the table with placemats and others put out cutlery. Children do not access the toilet area independently but are taken in age related groups. We saw that this resulted in the children having to wait to use the facilities and this, at times, reduced the opportunity for children to develop personal hygiene skills.

Children are developing confidently.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are well qualified and experienced and provide children with warm responsive care. Staff manage behaviour in a consistent manner and children are spoken to in soft gentle tones of voice. While staff generally keep children safe and promote their development in an appropriate way there is scope for improvement.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

Staff generally keep children safe and offer them healthy options for meals and refreshments.

We saw that staff made sure the children were offered healthy snacks such as banana with milk to drink. The cook prepared a tuna pasta bake for the children; although some children would have liked to have helped themselves to just plain pasta and cheese. Some of the babies indicated that they wanted more food and this was readily given. Children who had had an accident were responded too appropriately and in a timely fashion. For example a bump on the nose was treated with a cold compress and much reassurance by staff. We saw that children in the younger age range were supported as they toddled around the room and if they toppled over staff responded quickly to comfort and encourage them. We found that safety arrangements for children taken off the registered premises were organised and effective, and that food hygiene matters were in line with expectations of the Food Standards Agency who had recently visited the service. However, we found across both visits that there were significant hygiene issues that needed to be addressed. For example, cleaning rotas were not effectively implemented and not all equipment was thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis.

Staff generally keep children safe and promote healthy lifestyles, but there is scope for improvement.

#### **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff have a consistent approach to managing interactions

We saw staff interacting with children positively. They were responsive and friendly, encouraging children to engage in activities or simply left them to explore their own play ideas. Staff were calm and reassuring in their approach to the children. Children who were getting boisterous were told kindly but firmly that they 'should not throw things' and 'to be gentle'. When younger babies attempted to throw their toys or building blocks around staff gently encouraged them to build a tower instead. We observed staff treating children with respect, care and concern thus providing appropriate role models. We heard staff use praise regularly and provide clear explanations to children about what was and was not acceptable behaviour.

Staff provide appropriate role modelling behaviour and manage interactions well.

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

Staff provide a range of age appropriate play and learning activities.

Throughout the visits we heard lots of language and communication between staff and the children. Conversations were friendly and fluent as staff and children discussed what they were doing or had done. Staff responded to younger children's attempts to point at items or they tuned into the babies body language. For example, one baby spilt water all over her leggings and she started to shuffle on her seat uncomfortably. The staff member noticed this and took appropriate and immediate action with the child being changed into dry clothing. Staff sat with the babies at lunch time encouraging independence, self help skills and providing assistance and reassurance; as babies confidently tucked into their meals using proper cutlery. Staff made sure children had plenty of scope for free play as well as slightly more adult directed activities; such as water play to see what things floated and what things sunk, playing throw and catch with balls or looking at books. We observed a nurturing and caring approach by staff such as when a ball was accidentally thrown onto the roof it was retrieved and returned to the child. Although the setting is predominately English medium, we heard simple Welsh words and phrases being used such as 'diolch' (thank you) and 'os gwelwch yn dda' (please). Children were encouraged to enjoy stories and staff varied the use of their voice to draw the children into the story and make the activity interesting.

Staff adequately promote the children's play learning and development.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Leaders consistently fail to identify unnecessary risks to children attending this nursery. They do not constantly make sure that the care and play environment fully promotes and supports children's health and safety. Cleaning routines are not robust and some hygiene practices were found to be less than satisfactory. In addition the baby sleep room was being used for storage of items, such as prams, boxes of toys and other nursery equipment. We considered this to be a serious matter as we had previously notified the provider about this issue, but we have not issued a non-compliance notice on this occasion. By the second visit on the 7 June the room had been redecorated, new mattresses were in place and it had been reverted to its original purpose and function.

#### **Our findings**

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

Leaders do not always maintain a clean and secure environment and unnecessary risks to children are not always identified.

We found that leaders had not identified and eliminated risks to children using the outside play area or to large parts of the internal play areas. Although improvements were made following our first visit a number of potential risks remained unaddressed. We have therefore issued a non-compliance notice in relation to this. However, entrances to areas containing the boiler and gas supply were securely locked and inaccessible by children. Children's parents signed them into and out of the nursery.

Leaders fail to consistently ensure the safety of the environment.

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

Leaders ensure that there is sufficient suitable play space, however there are an insufficient number of toilets and wash hand basins to support the number of children the service is registered for.

We found that leaders made sure that there was adequate space in the baby play room for the children to enjoy. The leaders had also created a large play area with a messy area and these were generally suitable for use by the children. We noted that leaders had created internal play areas that had a variety of different facilities which were used to support children's needs, such as, a quiet area for stories use of large floor jigsaws, a messy area for painting and craft ,a large playroom with a role play corner, dressing up clothes and some small technology equipment. Leaders had made sure children could access the outside area which was reasonably spacious and contained sufficient resources. However, leaders had used the grassed area where the pet rabbit lives, to store debris, broken

prams, old wooden planks, pots of paint and other items which meant the children were unable to access this part of the outside play area. The RI told us that daily and weekly cleaning rotas were in place. However, these cleaning rotas had not always been filled in completely and showed gaps in the cleaning processes. Some items and areas were not included on the rotas. Likewise the RI was unable to evidence that she regularly checks that the work delegated to staff has been carried out. In addition, we noted that the premises did not have a sufficient number of suitable toilets and wash hand basins to support 45 children or the age range of the children using them. This is because the RI was no longer using the adjoined community youth hall and its facilities.

Leaders do not ensure that all areas of the environment are fully suitable.

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

Leaders do not always ensure that all resources are of a suitable condition.

We found, overall that the range and scope of the resources and equipment available to the children to be satisfactory. We saw that leaders had made sure that equipment, toys and materials were readily accessible to children. For example, there were small tables and chairs for table top activities, a covered area for children to shelter under out of the sun or to enjoy playing outside when the weather is inclement. Resources such as books and jigsaws reflected diversity and promoted cultural awareness. There were sufficient small tables and chairs suitable for use by young children but not for the older out of school aged children who struggled to sit comfortably at times, for example at lunch time. Although the nursery had a wide range of equipment and play materials, many of them looked tired and grubby. Books were not in good repair and footballs were flat, not pumped up fully, so they could not be used properly. We found that soft furnishings were in need of a wash and that some soft seating had ripped outer covers. We were told that high chairs are cleaned after each use but we found that the padded seating is not removed each time, leaving crumbs and food particles under the padded inner seating. High chairs were not on the list of items to be cleaned daily.

Leaders do not constantly ensure furniture, equipment, toys and materials are clean and suitable to meet children's needs.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Some aspects of leadership and management are met satisfactorily. However, matters relating to record keeping, health and safety issues, employment of staff and premises maintenance require attention. However, discussion with staff demonstrated that they do not always feel listened too. Overall Leadership and Management is not robust, does not always comply with regulatory requirements and there is scope for improvement.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Leaders do not always effectively comply with all regulations.

We found that the service maintains a Statement of Purpose (SOP); however, this document did not contain all the required information. We noted that this had also been an issue with a visit carried out in February 2016. For example, the Nursery offers a pick up service and this information was not in the SOP. Information about the rooms used by children, outside play area, activities offered or examples of routines were not referred to in the SOP. Some health and safety matters relating to the premises and staff management demonstrated a lack of engagement with relevant regulations. The service has also made changes that have impacted on children, e.g., the service no longer uses the large youth centre hall, having made the decision to amalgamate the out of school club with the day nursery provision. Consequently the service does not currently meet premises requirements in relation to the number of toilets and wash hand basins.

Leaders have not complied with some regulations and there is scope for improvement.

#### **4.1 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

This inspection did not focus on this key area as the visits carried out were relating to concerns received.

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

Leaders do not consistently make sure that staff caring for children are safe and suitable to do so.

Leaders told us that they had recently renewed their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. However, staff in charge in the RI's absence were unable to provide evidence of this, as they could not access the relevant computer file. We also found that two members of staff who had been employed for about six weeks did not have the required DBS check

in place. However, by our second visit one DBS had been received and the other had these has been applied for, in the meantime, the RI confirmed that these staff would not be left unsupervised with the children. During our second visit to the service the RI told us that staff supervision was being carried out on an ad hoc basis but there were no records kept. We saw that leaders had made sure that equipment, toys and materials were readily accessible to children. For example, there were small tables and chairs for table top activities, a covered area for children to shelter under out of the sun or to enjoy playing outside when the weather is inclement. We noted also that annual appraisals had not been carried out since 2015.

Leader's management of staff is inconsistent.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

This inspection did not focus on this key area as the visits carried out were relating to concerns received. However the RI stated that she will be holding a 'love your nursery day' on the 10 June and that is for parents and nursery staff to come together to undertake several projects relating to nursery maintenance.

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

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

None

### **5.2 Areas of non compliance identified at this inspection**

We found that the service was not compliant with regulations relating to:

- Hazards and safety: there were risks to the children's safety that had not been identified;
- The Statement of Purpose: this did not contain all the required information;
- Employment of staff: staff had not received an annual appraisals;
- Record keeping: records of relevant children and staff who look after them are not regularly completed on a daily basis and
- Suitability of workers: two members of staff did not have Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS) prior to being employed at the service. However, by our second visit the RI was able to demonstrate that the processes for both staff was well in hand.

### **5.3 Recommendations for improvement**

We also recommended that:

- The robust recruitment procedures are reviewed to ensure that they comply with regulatory requirements around essential vetting procedures;
- Staff rotas should clearly differentiate between staff and students;
- Supervision of staff needs are recorded;
- Children should be offered greater choice over what they drink and when for example, both milk and water should be offered and
- Older children should have more choice over their food selections at lunchtime

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

This was a focussed inspection in response to concerns received about the service regarding the well-being and care and development of children. Two inspectors undertook two visits to the service on the 1 and 7 June 2017 lasting eight and a half hours in total. During the visits we;

- observed children and the care they received by using our 'SOFI' tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and care provided by staff;
- spoke to the RI, PIC, staff and children;
- inspected a sample of information about staff;
- scrutinised policies and records about hygiene and
- inspected the premises, equipment and resources.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

## About the service

<b>Type of care provided</b>	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
<b>Responsible Individual</b>	Louise Macken
<b>Person in charge</b>	Louise Macken
<b>Registered maximum number of places</b>	45
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 -12 years
<b>Opening hours</b>	7:30 to 18:00
<b>Operating Language of the service</b>	English
<b>Date of previous CSSIW inspection</b>	16 January 2017
<b>Dates of this inspection visit(s)</b>	1 &7 June 2017
<b>Is this a Flying Start service?</b>	No
<b>Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?</b>	This is a service that does not provide an 'active offer' of the Welsh language. It does not participate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /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'.
<b>Additional Information:</b>	

**Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales**  
**Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010**  
**Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010**  
**Non Compliance Notice**

**Children's Day Care**

This notice sets out where your service is not compliant with the regulations. You, as the registered person, are required to take action to ensure compliance is achieved in the timescales specified.

**The issuing of this notice is a serious matter. Failure to achieve compliance will result in CSSIW taking action in line with its enforcement policy.**

Further advice and information is available on CSSIW's website  
[www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

**Footsteps Day Nursery**

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## Quality of Environment

### Non-compliance identified at this inspection and action to be taken

<b>Description of Non Compliance / Action to be taken</b>	<b>Timescale for completion</b>	<b>Regulation number</b>
The provider has not ensured that all parts of the premises are free from hazards or made sure that children are not exposed to unnecessary risks.	31 July 2017	25 (a) & (c)

Similar issues have been raised in previous inspections; therefore we consider this to be serious systemic failure to keep the premises free from hazards and unnecessary risks.