Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Disciples Out of School & Holiday Club

St. John The Baptist V A School, Chester Road Penymynydd, Chester, CH4 0EN

01244478920

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visit took place on 20/08/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Little Disciples Childcare
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	38
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture, or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Excellent
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Nearly all children make choices and help to plan activities. They express themselves confidently and form strong friendships through collaborative play, whilst being supported by initiatives such as the '*Buddy System' and 'Happy Minds'*. Nearly all children have a strong sense of belonging and feel valued and safe. They interact positively with peers and adults, showing respect, empathy, resilience, and growing self-discipline. They thoroughly enjoy their play and display high levels of independence.

Staff are well qualified, skilled and knowledgeable in keeping children safe and healthy. They are fully aware of and understand, the strong safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Staff are very responsive to children's medical and emotional needs. They manage behaviour positively, using calm, inclusive strategies to support all children. They plan and facilitate exciting play and learning activities, specific to children's needs and interests. Such activities inspire creativity and independence, with children confidently experimenting, solving problems, and freely exploring

indoor and outdoor play areas.

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a very safe, clean, and secure environment. They ensure policies and procedures, and risk assessments are detailed and comprehensive. Security systems are effective and prevent unauthorised access to the site. The setting is welcoming and inclusive, with well-maintained indoor and outdoor spaces. Resources support curiosity, independence, and active play. However, the availability of suitable storage and office space is limited at the setting.

Leadership is highly effective and driven by a clear vision for quality and continuous improvement. Leaders exceed National Minimum Standards (NMS). They use audits, and parent and staff feedback to guide development. Leaders have met key improvement targets included in their most recent self-assessment of service, and annual quality review. They support staff extremely well providing opportunities for regular supervision, and training. Leaders celebrate achievements and share best practice. Strong partnerships with parents, professionals, and the community are maintained through inclusive communications, feedback systems, and collaborative projects.

Findings:



Well-being — Excellent

Nearly all children have opportunities to make lots of choices, every day. They decide what games to play such as "*the floor is lava*" or building dens with large loose parts such as parachutes and tyres. They choose what to paint, mix glitter and glue to add sparkle, and solve problems like how to make a curtain stand up. Most children help plan activities through their '*Club Council'* and '*Ideas Post Box'*, and vote for example for party themes. At snack time, children make their own wraps, chat with friends and staff, and share and express how they feel as part of the '*Happy Minds'* initiative in place to promote discussions. Nearly all children know their ideas matter because staff listen and help make them happen.

Nearly all children form strong bonds with their caring staff, because they respond sensitively to their needs, for example when helping a child to find a painting apron. Friendships between the children flourish through collaborative play—for example when building dens, solving problems, and supporting one another. Initiatives like the '*Buddy System'* promote empathy and inclusion and work well. Nearly all parents report their children are settled, happy, and emotionally secure.

Nearly all children interact positively and enthusiastically with their friends and staff and are motivated to engage in group activities, imaginative games, and recent events such as the '*Carnival'* theme week. Nearly all children cooperate well, take turns, and share resources. They often solve problems together, using curtain rings and brush handles for example to extend a parachute den. Younger children are beginning to understand their feelings and show sensitivity to others. Older children demonstrate self-discipline and try hard to resolve conflicts by talking first and sometimes seeking help from staff.

Nearly all children thoroughly enjoy being able to follow their own interests, or to take part in planned play experiences. For example, today they enjoyed completing circuit training, for their own Olympics and Circus races and events. They use imaginary javelins and learn to balance and walk on stilts. Children are often excited when they play, and most keep trying when something is tricky, for example when figuring out how to throw their javelin in the right direction. Children are proud when they show us their rainbows painted with glitter and glue and enjoy learning how to use new tools such as glue sticks. One child told us they like looking for caterpillars in the garden boxes and excitedly told us '*There's always something fun to do'*.

Nearly all children have excellent opportunities to develop independence through play and exploration. They confidently choose activities and use a wide range of materials to experiment and create with. When faced with challenges they problem solve effectively, often working together and if needed asking staff for help. Outdoors, they build on their physical skills and confidence for

example, using climbing equipment, tyres, and tunnels. These experiences allow children to do things for themselves, think creatively, and develop resilience, imagination, and a strong sense of capability.

Care & Development — Excellent

Leaders and staff work hard to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. Entry to the building is secure, with staff operating electronic sign-in systems and magnetic locks on gates. Visitors are given colour-coded lanyards to indicate their level of suitability, and supervision required. Nearly all staff have advanced paediatric first aid, and safeguarding certificates. Accident reporting is completed electronically, with parents notified immediately for serious accidents and incidents. Leaders successfully monitor and review accident reports and update risk assessments promptly if needed. Staff are fully aware of the need to administer medication only when it is necessary and supported by an up-to-date healthcare plan and permission. Children's allergies and medical needs are clearly documented and displayed prominently for staff to see. Healthy snacks and water are available throughout the session, and unlimited outdoor play promotes physical and emotional well-being.

Staff are trained in behaviour management and consistently apply positive strategies safely and effectively. They use tailored approaches to support individual needs, using quiet areas with sensory resources. We saw a child was calmly redirected to a painting activity, helping them to engage and regulate emotions. Intimate care plans support children respectfully and promote independence. Nearly all staff promote kindness, respect, and emotional safety, creating a nurturing and inclusive environment where all children feel valued and supported. Staff are trained and knowledgeable in cultural awareness and diversity. They promote bilingualism and are proud to be working towards the Silver Welsh Promise Award.

Staff follow '*Play-work Principles'* helping children to create their own play spaces and follow their own interests. They are committed to providing an excellent range of play and learning activities. Staff ensure freely chosen play, guided by the children's interests is facilitated alongside adult-led activities. For example, adult led activities on the day included circus skills, painting, and creative collage work. Staff use "All About Me" forms, completed at the point of registration, and updated annually, to guide them in providing suitable activities. Brief developmental records are kept for children, although feedback from parents indicated more information would be appreciated for younger children, and those with specific needs, at the end of each session. Staff support children with additional needs successfully using personalised healthcare plans, 1:1 support, and inclusive play.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a very safe, clean, and secure environment. There are strong and effective policies, procedures and risk assessments in place, so all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Indoor and outdoor spaces are well looked after and cleaned regularly to maintain excellent hygiene standards. Leaders use cameras to monitor the premises and benefit from the secure gate locks, high fences and intercom systems installed. Leaders carry out regular fire and general risk assessments, and act quickly on anything that needs improving. Fire drills and reverse lockdown practices are carried out every term. Emergency plans are clearly shared with staff and visitors as part of the electronic signing in process and through posters indoors. All safety equipment is regularly tested and maintained. Leaders ensure staff supervise children well and understand which risks are acceptable and which are not. Leaders and staff ensure children explore and learn through safe risk-taking, depending on their age and ability. They also work with external agencies to monitor and improve the environment. These steps help them provide a safe and supportive place for children to grow and develop.

Leaders ensure the environment is welcoming, stimulating and inclusive. It supports all children's curiosity, independence, and holistic development. Leaders successfully encourage staff to play a key role in setting up resources daily and maintaining the environment. They ensure resources are safe, engaging, and suitable for all age groups. They provide large indoor spaces such as age-appropriate toilets, hall, library, and classrooms, giving children room to move freely and explore. Staff also set up areas for quiet time, dining, and active play. Outdoor play is a key part of each day, with the school yard, field, and forest school areas being accessible for all children. Toilets are clean and well stocked, with separate facilities for staff and disabled users. Leaders try hard to find enough storage space, and an area they can use as an office. They are raising funds for a new purpose-built building, as they currently must put resources away after each session during the term time to enable the school to use the areas for their main purpose.

Leaders ensure children have access to a wide range of high-quality, age-appropriate furniture, toys, and equipment that meet their needs, spark curiosity and supports learning. Resources are well maintained, clean, and meet safety and infection control standards. There is an abundance of child-sized furniture and equipment for the group size. Leaders promote equality and cultural awareness through inclusive play materials. Forest School sessions encourage children to engage with nature through activities such as fire play, zip-lining, mud kitchen play, and scavenger hunts. These experiences and resources support physical, emotional, and social development. Quiet areas have sensory items and calming resources, to support well-being. Leaders also promote the use of sustainable materials, especially when choosing small and large '*loose parts*' more commonly known as junk or reuseable items, for example wooden planks, tyres, twigs and shells.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leadership at this setting, is highly effective and driven by a clear vision for quality and continuous improvement. For example, there is a committed and supportive board of Trustee and Responsible Individual. They regularly review the settings Statement of Purpose and Parent Handbooks, to ensure they reflect the high standards of care provided. They carry out an audit of the setting using the National Minimum Standards (NMS) to ensure they consistently meet and exceed expectations. Policies and procedures are regularly updated, and staff are kept fully informed of changes. Leaders set high expectations and inspire their team through monthly meetings, continued professional development sessions, and clear communication. Leaders recognise staff achievements and best practice is shared. Leaders confidently and effectively use the Care Inspectorate Wales' (CIW) Inspection Framework, and parent feedback to guide ongoing development at the setting.

Leaders are proud of their strong commitment to continuous improvement. They reflect on events daily and regularly review activities to ensure they meet the needs and interests of all children. Following feedback from the children, leaders have extended activity themes over two weeks, to allow children more time to explore and complete projects. Many improvement targets set at the time of their last self-assessment of service (SASS) have been met. These targets are based on several audits and feedback and include the need to increase the amount of Forest School sessions provided, and to introduce the safe use of tools into children's play. Leaders have stated they will be completing further equality and safer recruitment training and will continue to work with external agencies to focus on cultural awareness and providing a bilingual provision as they work towards the Welsh Promise Silver Award.

Leaders demonstrate that their management of staff and resources is very effective. They follow robust recruitment procedures, including timely suitability checks and the completion of detailed staff files. New staff and volunteers receive thorough inductions to ensure they understand their roles. Regular supervision and appraisals include personalised training plans and wellbeing support. Staff benefit from weekly updates, continued professional development sessions, and non-contact time for planning and development. Leaders celebrate staff achievements and share good practice from other settings. Leaders ensure staff are deployed effectively to meet, and often exceed required adult: child ratios, ensuring children's needs can be fully met. This strong, supportive management creates a safe, well-organised environment where children thrive, and staff feel valued.

Leaders have built excellent partnerships with nearly all parents, professionals they seek support from, and the wider community. They use inclusive and innovative communication tools online in partnership with the school, and secure social media applications to keep parents well informed about activities, permissions, and daily updates. Leaders operate a "Golden Ticket" scheme which

supports local families in need. Newsletters, questionnaire responses, and child-led voting show strong engagement. Leaders respond positively to feedback and advice received, and have initiated networking with similar providers, to improve and share practices.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 22 - Environment	To ensure there is adequate storage space for equipment and a suitable area where staff can talk to parents confidentially.

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2025.
You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.