



Inspection Report

Acorns Whitchurch

**15 Church Road
Whitchurch
Cardiff
CF14 2DX**



Date Inspection Completed

30/10/2023

About Acorns Whitchurch

Type of care provided.	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Acorns Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	84
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	Click or tap here to enter text.
Is this a Flying Start service?	Click or tap here to enter text. No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	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.

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<u>Well-being</u>	Excellent
<u>Care and Development</u>	Excellent
<u>Environment</u>	Excellent
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Excellent

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report.

Summary

Children are very extremely happy and enjoy their time at the setting. They have excellent opportunities for play and learning within an extremely nurturing setting. Children interact well and form close bonds with their peers and staff. They have very many good opportunities to develop skills for independence. Children learn skills through an extensive range of high quality experiences and play.

Staff are professional, well qualified and work seamlessly together as part of a team. They have a very good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. Staff implement robust, in-depth policies and procedures effectively. They plan an excellent variety of interesting and fun activities, to support children's development. Staff keep good records of children's progress.

The environment is clean, warm, very welcoming, and well organised, with best use made of the space available. The outside area is an interesting, stimulating, and safe area. There is an excellent selection of well-maintained and good quality resources both inside and outside. Staff follow procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable, completing risk assessments and daily checks consistently.

The leadership and management of the setting is strong. Leaders are passionate and committed to providing high quality childcare. They have extremely thorough processes in place to ensure that staff are fully involved in working together to provide excellent care for the children. There is a clear culture of continuous improvement and building strong partnerships with parents and others, for the benefit of the children.

Well-being	Excellent
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Children have a strong voice and are given many opportunities to make choices. They decide what they would like to play with from the numerous activities on offer. Younger children choose from an excellent range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating resources. This promotes their all-round development, enabling them to follow their own interests with confidence. For example, a child took out a train set and started putting the wooden track together.

Children are happy, relaxed, and confident. They develop strong attachments with staff in their base rooms and they are comfortable to approach other staff when they need help or reassurance as they are familiar with them. Children feel secure by knowing the daily routines and confidently respond to directions from staff. They have close relationships with staff. On numerous occasions children spontaneously approached staff for cuddles, and babies held up their arms as they displayed signs of wanting a nap. Children playing alone, were content and soon joined by others in their games. Children seek out staff for comfort or to celebrate success, and bonds of trust are evident.

Children are successfully learning to behave very well. We saw children respecting and listening to others during circle time, taking turns to use hand signs to describe how they feel. Children sit happily together and chatted to each other and staff. They naturally use good manners and say please and thank you. They listen to others talking about subjects that were important to them, for example what they were going to do on the weekend or their favourite food. On the rare occasion it is required, children respond positively to instruction such as to listen, slow down or to use kind hands.

Children have extensive opportunities to develop new skills. They are curious and engaged learners who value the chance to explore the environment which support them to play independently. Children also enjoy well organised, more structured activities, supported by staff. For example, they enthusiastically join in circle time, build a long train track and listening attentively to a member of staff read their chosen book. Children really enjoy messy play and most need little encouragement to use their hands to mould different textures, paint pictures and get messy with flour and jelly. Others enjoy building towers out of blocks, learning to balance them in a way to be steadier and laughing as they fall. Babies smile as they clap to music, learning to make sounds and rhythms. Children particularly enjoyed a session of Sing and Sign, joining in actions and hand signs enthusiastically.

Children are developing very well and have opportunities to become independent. They are given time to do things for themselves such as taking off their coats when they arrive and feeding themselves. They enjoy helping to tidy up and are becoming proficient in dressing themselves in aprons for messy play. Babies are becoming increasingly social and independent. They share positive facial expressions with others and happily explore their playroom accessing toys they would like to play with.

Care and Development

Excellent

Staff have a very good understanding of their roles within the setting. They are effective in keeping children safe and healthy because they confidently follow the setting's policies and procedures. These include sleep and nappy changing/toileting procedures. Additionally, care staff are supported by a range of other ancillary staff who do specific roles such as housekeepers, dietary monitors, and cooks. Staff are very confident about their responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns and children's medical needs. They ensure that there are up to date and detailed health-care plans in place for children, where necessary. Staff are aware of the updated Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the revised Additional Learning Needs code of practice. They supervise children very well and implement safe hygiene procedures. They provide healthy meals and snacks with free access to drinking water throughout the nursery. Staff support children to be physically active and this includes a very enthusiastic session of 'Yoga,' which staff and children really enjoyed. Staff complete regular fire drills with the children. Accidents and incidents are recorded clearly and are monitored regularly to identify any trends which need to be addressed.

Staff manage interactions extremely well. Staff deal with children's interactions sensitively and with exceptional skill. They kneel to the children's level and use calm voices to guide them. They have a sound understanding of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. There is a clear behaviour management policy in place. Staff implement the policy well, using positive language and praise, which enhances children's well-being. They offer simple, clear explanations, and encourage kind behaviour such as 'kind hands.' They implement consistent behaviour management strategies in a calm and patient manner. Staff are nurturing and act as good role models. For example, using good manners, apologising if anything negative occurs and listening to other staff. They encourage children to be kind to each other, to help tidy up, and they sit with them for their meals and snacks to promote their social skills.

Staff are motivated, well qualified and keen to promote children's development. They know the children's individual needs very well and monitor children's progress effectively. They carry out regular observations and are using new electronic developmental progress tracking systems well. They communicate with each other consistently and are aware of their individual roles in delivering nurturing, responsive care. Staff attend to children's personal needs promptly and discretely. They treat children with respect and value them as individuals. They plan a very good range of activities, allowing the children a great deal of choice and following their lead when they show interest in a particular activity. Staff have undertaken training courses, which allows them to support the children confidently. Staff regularly use the Welsh language during activities and children engage well with this.

Environment

Excellent

Leaders provide a safe, well-maintained, and very welcoming environment. They have detailed risk assessments for all areas of the environment and many activities, and these are reviewed on a regular basis. They ensure that maintenance safety checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a secure system for entry to the setting and staff ensure that they sign people in and check identification if required. There are health and safety reminders around the setting, such as posters outlining matters such as fire evacuation and hygiene procedures. Staff conduct fire drills regularly and these are recorded well.

Leaders have organised the space to a very high standard and with children's needs at the forefront of the ideas. Areas are light and decorated in neutral colours with many natural materials, providing a calm ambiance. They provide inviting, well-equipped play areas for different aged children, with good sleeping and nappy changing/toileting facilities. Play areas are welcoming and homely, many set up to reflect the real world, such as a large home area. There are numerous, well thought out areas for children to play imaginatively. Walls are adorned with mirrors and objects to stimulate children's thinking and develop their fine motor skills. Staff use designated dining areas on each floor that have suitable furniture according to the age and stage of development of the children. They have designed the environment so that all children have the option to play safely in the outdoors regularly. The outside area has been extensively renovated with separate areas for different activities such as physical play, planting, and creative areas.

Leaders ensure that there are plenty of excellent resources to stimulate the children's interest and imagination. Play resources are varied and highly suitable for the age of the children who have access to them. Staff change learning areas regularly to maintain children's interest and extend their skills. For example, staff decorate the setting to reflect the autumn theme and resources such as pumpkins and orange materials, reflect Halloween. There is an extensive range of good quality, real life resources, such as pots and pans and crockery. It is a very rich environment for play and learning with many resources depicting a diverse society and the Welsh language. The resources are easily accessible to children as they are visible and stored at their level. Leaders invest time and finances in furniture, toys, and equipment in every area of the setting. This ensures that children can always access developmentally appropriate resources that promote their curiosity.

Leadership and Management

Excellent

Leaders are skilled, experienced, and manage the service very well. There is a clear and inspirational vision for the service outlined in the Statement of Purpose. There is a strong ethos of child-centred care which is evident when you speak to the person in charge and staff. There are detailed policies and procedures in place that are reviewed and updated regularly. They give staff the opportunity to familiarise themselves with policies and ensure that parents are kept informed of any changes. Leaders are very aware of national priorities and developments in childcare. Staff maintain daily records well. Leaders have made minor changes to a few policies and records, to further clarify and strengthen some areas.

Leaders have a robust system to review the quality of the service they offer. All relevant parties contribute to an effective self-evaluation process and create a culture of continuous improvement. They fully respond to parent, staff and children's requests and seek out best practice to ensure they implement this at the setting. Leaders set high expectations of themselves and staff. The Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) has been submitted to CIW appropriately. This included a comprehensive report of their quality of care review, including their plans for future improvements.

Leaders have effective systems in place to safely recruit and employ staff. Staff files are well organised and evidence that all the required checks and information required by regulations, is sought prior to staff being employed at the setting. Daily records such as attendance records and staff rotas show that a suitable number of staff are employed for the numbers of children attending. The company employ additional staff centrally to support the setting with matters such as human resources, additional learning needs, safeguarding and implementing the New Curriculum for Wales. Nearly all staff members hold a childcare and first aid qualification. There is a strong culture of continuous development, as the leaders and staff are proactive in identifying any training opportunities that extends their knowledge of childcare. Leaders monitor staffs' professional development and progress through one to one supervision and annual appraisals. Staff told us they felt supported to do their jobs to a high standard. There is a strong team ethos, and they described the setting as a 'family' working and supporting each other personally and professionally. They work seamlessly as a team. The staff's sense of pride in their roles was noticeable throughout the setting.

People who run the setting have established effective systems to enable them to work in close partnerships with parents. They seek detailed information about their children's needs and preferences. They keep parents well informed via detailed newsletters, emails, notices on display in the setting and by regularly updating them through an electronic 'app.' Leaders and staff have established links with a wide variety of external organisations and individuals such as the local authority and childcare support organisations.

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 inspection	N/A
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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.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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