Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Acorns House, Park Grove

Acorns Nurseries Ltd
3-7
Park Grove
Cardiff
CF10 3BJ



Date Inspection Completed

10/01/2025

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About Acorns House, Park Grove

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Acorns Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	147
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	17 January 2020
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Excellent**
Care and Development	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and Management	**Excellent**

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

Summary

Children are extremely happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the setting. They have exceptional opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. Children develop positive, healthy relationships with their friends and staff. They have outstanding opportunities which encourage their curiosity, extend their learning and enable them to follow their own interests.

Staff have a thorough knowledge of how to keep children safe and healthy. They have an extensive range of policies, procedures and documentation in place which effectively support them when undertaking their roles. Staff are kind, patient, caring and offer reassurance to children when needed. They know the children very well which enables them to cater to children's individual needs and their development.

The environment is secure, clean, welcoming, and very well organised to support children's play and learning. There is a broad range of equipment and resources both indoors and outdoors to encourage children to play and learn. The environment provides children with excellent opportunities to make independent choices in their play and develop their self-help skills.

Leaders have an excellent vision which is shared with staff. They have a strong sense of purpose which sustains improvement and promotes outstanding outcomes for children. Leaders value staff and provide effective and regular support. They have excellent partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals, ensuring they work collectively to support children's learning and development.

Well-being Excellent

Children communicate effectively and have many opportunities to make choices and decisions about what affects them. We heard children confidently request different songs to sing and dance to with staff and their friends. Children who chose not to participate, preferring to sit and observe, were sensitively acknowledged and respected by staff. Children's opinions and interests are highly valued and acted upon. Children enthusiastically told staff they'd like to see the birds outside before running over to the secluded bird watch area to spot them with binoculars.

Children feel safe and secure as they benefit from thoughtful staff who know them very well. Nearly all children are content, settled and show enjoyment. Those who are new to the nursery seek comfort and reassurance from staff who respond with warmth and kindness. Children know the effective routines very well, allowing for extremely smooth transitions throughout the day. For example, older children line up ready to go for lunch whilst others were keen to tell us they were going to have a nap after they had eaten.

Children effectively interact with each other and staff. For example, children share and cooperate with one another when trying to create a ramp for their balls to slide down on the patio area outside. We heard children confidently call their friends and staff names and enthusiastically invite them to play. Children happily and freely explore the environment and successfully engage in individual and group activities. They show respect towards their environment and each other. We heard older children use manners effectively, with a little prompting from staff.

Children are extremely interested and self-motivated in their play and learning. They access a wide range of exceptional opportunities within the setting which promote their all-round development. Children follow their own interests and become absorbed in activities which are both child and adult led. They focus on activities for extended periods of time, appropriate for the age and stage of development. Older children concentrate for sustained periods of time whilst completing puzzles, building towers and when using the large digital screen. Whilst younger children use different utensils during a messy play activity, laughing together and thoroughly enjoying raking the birds seed and filling and emptying their pots.

Children are developing a wide range of skills as they play and engage in routines. They have many valuable opportunities to become independent, enabling them to do things for themselves. At mealtime, children use real utensils to serve themselves food and pour their own drinks. This promotes children's self-help skills and builds their self-esteem.

Care and Development Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. The setting has an extensive range of policies, procedures and documentation in place which staff consistently follow when carrying out their roles. There is a comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedure in place. Staff confidently told us what they would do if they dealt with a concern. This demonstrates an excellent understanding of their responsibilities and commitment to deal with safeguarding matters. Staff follow and promote strong hygiene practices. For example, they actively encourage children to independently wash their hands, before eating and following outdoor play and messy activities, instilling good hygiene practices from an early age. Staff are confident when recording, maintaining, and reviewing a range of records including, accident, incident, existing injuries and medication logs.

Staff offer a variety of healthy and well-balanced meals and snacks which are freshly prepared each day. There are thorough procedures in place for dealing with children with allergies, intolerances, and dietary preferences. At mealtimes staff promote worthwhile opportunities for children to talk about their day, ensuring it is a relaxed, social and an enjoyable experience. Staff promote children's physical development through daily access to the outdoor play environment.

Staff form trusting relationships with the children and interact with them in a calm and caring manner. They act as excellent role models; staff genuinely listen and respect the children's views and prompt manners when appropriate. They consistently offer praise and encouragement and implement the behaviour management policy effectively by using positive reinforcement. Staff ensure children know what is expected of them by clearly explaining instructions and consequences. They praise children when they share and take turns, "*Great job! Well done!"*

Staff support children's curiosity and consistently allow them opportunities to explore and experiment independently. This ensures children are at the centre of their own learning and development by enabling them to follow their own interests. Staff make observations of children during activities and support children to further develop their skills. For example, during outside water play, staff extend the activity by encouraging children to write their names and other letters and numbers on the wall with paintbrushes. Staff create a relaxed and friendly feel in the nursery where children can confidently play energetically or quietly. They are committed to providing a wide range of play and learning activities through planning in the moment, which ensures they successfully follow the children's lead. Staff have exemplary procedures in place to support children with additional needs and promote positive outcomes for children. They support children's language skills, including some basic Welsh words and phrases.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders have highly effective measures in place to ensure the environment is a welcoming and secure place for children, staff and visitors. They ensure there is plenty of room for children to play and learn with well-designed play spaces both indoors and outside. The environment is safe, secure and extremely well maintained. The doors are always locked and supervised by a member of staff. Children, staff and visitors are routinely and accurately signed in and out of the building. Leaders complete comprehensive risk assessments that cover every aspect of the environment and are of a very high standard. They review them regularly and take appropriate action if needed. They ensure staff supervise children well and they understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable risks for the ages, needs and abilities of children they are caring for. Leaders practice fire drills frequently and maintain detailed records to ensure all staff and children can evacuate the building safely in the event of an emergency. Leaders complete daily checks of the premises and all maintenance checks for the building and appliances are up to date.

The environment is extremely welcoming and very child friendly. It provides light, bright, spacious, and very exciting areas for children to explore and develop their awe and wonder. Calming neutral décor creates a cosy home from home atmosphere. Staff ensure each playroom is very well organised to promote all areas of children's development. A purposeful range of resources, including real life and natural resources are stored at child height to ensure easy access for children of all ages. Leaders provide younger babies with opportunities to develop their physical skills by providing low level climbing apparatus and indoor soft play equipment for them to explore. Staff ensure resources in the outdoor area are of excellent quality and are set up to promote children's curiosity and exploration. For example, children have access to water play, balancing and climbing apparatus and a selection of wheeled toys. Children also benefit from having access to a natural grassed area where they learn forest school skills.

Leaders create an extremely stimulating and exciting play environment for the children with an abundance of resources available. They provide quality furniture and resources that are suitable for the developmental needs of all the children. For example, there is appropriate furniture for children to sit at ease to undertake tabletop activities and eat their snacks. The toilets are child-sized and support children to develop their independence skills. Leaders ensure the environment provides excellent and challenging opportunities for children to explore and develop their creativity, physical skills and independence.

Leadership and Management — Excellent

Leaders have a clear vision for the nursery which they communicate successfully to all staff, creating a strong work ethic. Staff work well together as a team, and they speak highly of each other. Leaders ensure the provision achieves very high standards. They deliver high quality care and provide learning and development opportunities for staff as well as children. They have an effective statement of purpose that accurately reflects the service, and they ensure staff embed the relevant policies and procedures within the setting. Leaders collect, record and maintain all the required information in relation to staff and children. They record children's preferences in detail, and they have the appropriate parental permissions in place.

Leaders implement effective systems to support meaningful self-evaluation and plan for improvement, which they use to support their quality-of-care review. They are extremely approachable and welcome any ideas or suggestions to improve their practice. Leaders collect feedback from children, parents, staff, other professionals and outside agencies to inform their review, which supports an effective action plan for improvements to the service. For example, they have identified the need for providing continued support and mentoring to staff in the implementation of the curriculum for Wales. Leaders purposefully evaluate day to day records, for example accident and incident records, to identify any trends, and monitor where and how these are happening throughout the setting.

Leaders are enthusiastic and motivated. They follow robust recruitment procedures to safeguard children and ensure staff have the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively care for children. Leaders set high expectations and lead staff effectively, supporting them in understanding their roles and responsibilities. They undertake regular appraisals and supervisions that are integral to their practice and drive improvement. The key worker system enables children to settle with familiar staff who are sensitive to children's individual needs.

Leaders deploy staff effectively to ensure they meet staffing ratios, and as a result fully meet children's needs. Leaders have developed excellent partnerships with parents and carers, as well as other professionals and outside agencies. Leaders have very strong links with a wide range of professionals. They ensure when there are concerns about children's progress or development there are clear and effective procedures in place for sharing information. Parents we spoke with expressed how staff are "*extremely approachable,"* very good at updating parents throughout the day whilst their children are eager to attend nursery in the mornings.

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.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	

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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