Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Acorns Oakfield Street

Acorns Nursery
14-16
Oakfield Street
Cardiff
CF24 3RD



Date Inspection Completed

17/11/2023

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About Acorns Oakfield Street

Type of care provided.	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Acorns Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	49
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	2 July 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	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.

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 and really enjoy their time at the setting. Their opinions and interests are valued and acted on. They have very many opportunities for exciting play and learning within a nurturing setting. Children interact well and form close bonds with their peers and staff. They have numerous chances to develop skills for independence.

Staff act in a very professional manner. Nearly all are appropriately qualified and work together effectively as part of a team. They have a particularly good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They plan an excellent variety of interesting and fun activities, to support children's development. Staff maintain all required records well.

The environment is safe, clean, extremely welcoming, and well organised, with best use made of the space available. The outside area is a great strength, providing an interesting and stimulating play space. There is an excellent selection of well-maintained and good quality resources. Staff follow robust procedures to ensure the environment is safe and of a high standard.

The leadership and management of the setting is highly effective. Leaders are passionate and committed to providing high quality childcare. They have extremely thorough processes in place to monitor the quality of the setting. Managers are proactive in keeping up to date with current childcare practice and changes to legislation. They manage the recruitment and employment of staff very well, providing excellent support.

Well-being Excellent

Children have a very strong voice. They speak confidently and have very many opportunities to make choices about what they do. Children happily join in routines that support them to communicate their preferences. For example, choosing a picture of their preferred activity to do next or using marbles to ‘vote’ for their favourite story for staff to read to the group. This promotes their all-round development very well, enabling them to follow their own interests with confidence.

Children are happy, relaxed, and confident. They are developing their social skills exceptionally well. They are developing strong attachments with staff in their base area and are comfortable to approach familiar staff when they need help or reassurance. For example, children spontaneously, and very often approach staff for cuddles. Children feel secure by knowing the daily routines and confidently respond to directions from staff to get ready if they want to go outside to play. Children enjoy their role of ‘helpur heddiw’ proudly wearing their green apron and helping staff to tidy up.

Children are learning to behave very well. They naturally use good manners, respect each other and share. Nearly all enjoy listening to and engaging enthusiastically in a story. Children are successful in sharing resources and are learning to take turns. They respond positively to instruction, such as to slow down or to use kind hands. Most children sit together happily at mealtimes, chatting with each other and staff, listening to others talking about subjects that are important to them. Children who do not want to engage are supported by staff, to find an activity they like and can sit when they are ready.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop new skills with the play and learning experiences available. The children are curious and engaged learners who value the chance to explore the environment. Children are very engaged in their chosen play throughout the setting. The emphasis is on free play but there are also structured, adult led activities, which most children choose to participate in and thoroughly enjoy. For example, children sit well at circle time and talk about their feelings, whilst others prefer to continue with activities such as painting or playing in the kitchen.

Children are successfully learning to become independent learners and develop very good self-help skills. They are given time to do things for themselves. Children are becoming proficient in serving themselves food and using suitable cutlery to eat. They enjoy helping to tidy up and are becoming increasingly skilful in dressing themselves after using the toilet or putting on aprons for messy play.

Care and Development — Excellent

Staff have a clear understanding of their roles within the setting. They are extremely effective in keeping children safe and healthy because they are knowledgeable and show commitment to putting the setting's policies and procedures into practice. Staff have access to a good range of training opportunities, and this supports them to be confident in their role. They are clear about their responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns and medical needs. Staff clearly record accidents and incidents, and these are monitored regularly to identify any trends, which may need to be addressed.

Staff manage children's interactions with exceptional skill. There is a comprehensive behaviour management policy which staff implement confidently. They know the children as individuals and have a sound understanding of child development, and how it impacts on children's behaviour. Staff use positive language and praise at every opportunity and deal with unwanted behaviour in a calm and patient manner. They give simple, clear instructions, such as encouraging children to be kind to each other and to help tidy up. Staff sit with children at mealtimes, encouraging respectful discussion and promoting their social skills by demonstrating good manners and eating skills.

Staff are motivated and effectively support children's development. They monitor children's progress exceptionally well, carrying out regular observations and using developmental progress tracking systems well. Staff effectively support children displaying any emerging additional needs. They monitor children's needs and seek additional support from a range of relevant professionals. Staff communicate with each other consistently well and are aware of their individual roles in delivering nurturing, responsive care. Staff attend to children's personal needs promptly and discretely. Staff know the children really well and invite them to ask and answer lots of questions, to develop their curiosity and thinking skills. Many staff use the Welsh language confidently during activities, and children engage well with this.

Environment — Excellent

Leaders provide an environment that is of an extremely high quality. They have highly effective systems to ensure it is safe, well-maintained, and very welcoming for children. They have detailed risk assessments of the environment and many activities, and these are reviewed on a regular basis. They ensure that annual maintenance and safety checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a secure system for entry to the setting and staff ensure that all visitors sign in. Leaders place health and safety reminders around the setting, such as posters outlining fire evacuation and hygiene procedures. A member of staff is designated as a health and safety champion. Many staff are trained in a range of health and safety matters, including paediatric first aid. Staff undertake regular fire drills with children, ensuring they can evacuate the building safely.

Leaders have organised the environment exceptionally well and with children's needs fully considered. They decorate walls in neutral colours and use many natural materials, providing a calm atmosphere. They have ensured that the areas are light and bright. Children get plenty of fresh air as each base room has easy access to outside play, often on a free flow basis. Leaders provide interesting and inviting, well-equipped play areas which are welcoming and homely. They are set up to reflect the real world, such as a large home area with a dressing table, music area, and book areas. Staff access good nappy changing and toilet facilities and adapt areas for children to sleep if required. There is a dining area in one of the messy playrooms which provides plenty of space for children to experience a social occasion at mealtimes. The outside area has been very well thought out, providing areas for children to play imaginatively and develop a range of skills.

Leaders ensure there is an extensive range of excellent quality resources including superior quality, real life resources, such as pots, pans, and crockery. Staff change learning areas regularly, to maintain children's interest. Leaders have risk assessed the resources and monitor the use of real items closely. It is a rich environment for children to enjoy their play and learning. Staff ensure that the resources are easily accessible to children at their level. Leaders provide a particularly good range of resources in all areas that reflect a diverse and multicultural society.

Leadership and Management — Excellent

Leadership of the setting is exceptionally strong. Leaders are inspirational, skilled, and experienced. There is a clear vision for the setting that leaders outline in detail in the Statement of Purpose. Leaders instil a strong ethos of child-centred care, and this is palpable when you speak to managers and staff. They have developed detailed policies and procedures which are reviewed and updated as and when necessary. Staff have regular opportunities to familiarise themselves with policies and any changes, such as in regular staff meetings. Leaders keep everybody updated with national priorities and developments in childcare.

Leaders have an effective system to review the quality of the care they offer. They seek the views of all relevant parties, and they use these views to contribute to an effective self-evaluation process. Leaders produce a comprehensive report of their quality of care review, with clear and targeted plans for further improvements. Leaders foster a culture of continuous improvement which staff understand and value, with regular opportunities to update their skills through training. The management team set high expectations of themselves and staff.

Leaders have robust and clear systems in place to ensure safe recruitment. They maintain evidence in well organised staff files showing that all the required checks and information required by regulations, is sought prior to staff starting work. Managers provide useful one to one supervision sessions and annual appraisals for staff, effectively monitoring their professional development. They keep daily records such as attendance and staff rotas, showing there are always enough staff for the numbers of children attending. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. This has resulted in a team of staff who work together very well and support each other in providing effective play and care for the children. The manager is not included in staff:child ratios and is knowledgeable and skilled in the management of the setting on a day-to-day basis. The Provider employ additional staff centrally to support the setting with matters such as human resources, additional learning needs, safeguarding and implementing the Curriculum for Wales.

Leaders have systems in place to enable them to share information with parents clearly. They seek detailed information about children’s needs and preferences, and they keep parents well informed via newsletters, emails, notices on display in the setting and secure social media. They are in the process of introducing the use of an electronic ‘app,’ which will make communicating with parents even more efficient. Managers have established effective links with a wide variety of external organisations 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

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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