Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Acorns (Carnegie) Playgroup

Carnegie Library
Corporation Road
Newport
NP19 0GP



Date Inspection Completed

03/10/2024

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About Little Acorns (Carnegie) Playgroup

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Lynn Rusic
Registered places	30
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	13 June 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
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	**Adequate**
Care and Development	**Adequate**
Environment	**Adequate**
Leadership and Management	**Adequate**

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

Summary

Children are content and settled within the nursery. They have formed relationships with each other and staff, which helps them feel safe and valued. They have a sound understanding of routines and are learning the difference between right and wrong. Children can make some choices about how they spend their time, and they are confident in their environment. Children have adequate opportunities to develop skills.

Staff are professional, appropriately qualified and enjoy their work. They are kind, caring and interact well with children. Overall, staff keep children safe and implement suitable routines, policies and procedures. Staff manage behaviour appropriately and have realistic expectations. They make some recordings of children's development and have basic written activity planning to support staff in encouraging children's development.

Managers ensure the premises are secure and safe. They provide a welcoming and suitably organised environment. Play areas and equipment are adequately clean and maintained. Many resources are plastic single-purpose toys, but a selection of new resources are being introduced to increase the inclusion of natural materials and open-ended resources.

Leadership and management is inconsistent. Managers have high expectations regarding the standard of care provided, but some areas need attention. They have suitable policies and procedures in place. Some records and recording systems are not sufficiently effective and do not record all necessary information on all occasions. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, staff have not regularly received formal supervisions. Staff told us that despite the lack of supervisions, they feel valued and supported. Leaders produce an annual quality of care review, although it does not support them to make improvements across all areas. Parents speak highly of managers, staff and the care their children receive.

Well-being — Adequate

Children have a voice and staff value the children's communication. Children move around the play space freely and join in with activities happily. They are able to make some choices about how they spend their time and over their activities from the selection made available. There is some consultation with children about activity provision. They are largely free to choose unstructured activities outdoors, but activities indoors are mostly adult-led.

Children are content and settled at the nursery. They have developed reliable relationships with staff and are confident to approach them for guidance or comfort. Children settling in benefit from staff who are warm and considerate of them, providing lots of comfort and encouragement. Children form friendships at the setting in line with their age and stage of development. They play happily together or alongside each other. We saw children enjoy and persevere at many types of play.

Children are learning to co-operate, take turns and share, and they are developing sensitivity to the emotions of others. They understand routines well and know what is expected of them. Children enjoy the praise they receive for positive behaviour, and they interact well with staff and other children. For example, we saw children asking for their friends by name to join them on the climbing frame, or play alongside one another contentedly.

Children find some enjoyment in their play and concentrate on activities for an appropriate amount of time. We saw children were active and curious throughout the inspection. They moved freely around their play space, interacting with toys that staff had laid out. They receive encouragement and feel a sense of achievement. For example, we saw children persevere at puzzles with a member of staff. She modelled mathematical language such as "bigger" and "smaller", and colour, and she praised the children when they worked out which pieces go where.

Children are developing suitably in line with their age and stage of development. Systems are in place to ensure additional support is provided where needed, for example liaising with external agencies for additional learning needs. Children are able to do some things for themselves, such as access the toilet facilities. However, opportunities for developing independence skills are not sufficiently promoted, such as helping to serve at mealtimes, tidying, or washing hands.

Care and Development — Adequate

Staff are effective in their roles. They are clear about their responsibilities and have sound knowledge of how to keep children safe and healthy. Staff provide regular access to physical exercise and fresh air outdoors. Some meals and snacks are nutritious, and the setting maintains the Healthy and Sustainable Preschool award. However, not all meals are fully in line with Welsh Government's food and nutrition guidance for childcare providers, and children do not have free access to drinking water throughout their time at the setting. Staff know how to raise safeguarding concerns. They speak confidently about safeguarding procedures and know managers will be responsive to any concerns they raise. Staff spoke positively about the support they receive from managers, and they are committed to on-going improvement. Staff follow procedures for recording the administering of medication, accidents, incidents and existing injuries.

Staff set realistic boundaries, are good role models and use a fairly consistent approach to managing behaviour, taking into account children's age and understanding. They guide behaviour positively and praise children to reinforce good behaviour. They also encourage children for making a good effort. We saw children respond well to this approach.

Staff provide a nurturing and caring environment in which they promote children's play and well-being appropriately. They have a relaxed, happy and caring nature towards children. They speak in a reassuring manner, and this helps to ensure the play environment is calm and pleasant. The staff group are keen to ensure they are good play facilitators; relevant staff and managers have undertaken playwork qualifications in order to improve their understanding of play for school-aged children. They are also beginning to introduce the concepts of the new Curriculum for Wales into the setting. Staff know children well and understand their preferences. They also record some observations of development. Basic written activity planning is in place, but it does not take into consideration how the activity will promote children's skills and development or how staff can support this. It is also not evaluated consistently, which was pointed out at the last CIW inspection. We heard very few occasions where Welsh was used.

Environment — Adequate

Managers and staff ensure the environment is safe and secure for children. They ask all visitors to sign in and out of the building. All staff are responsible for ensuring good hygiene throughout the day. They undertake fire drills with children regularly and record these appropriately. Managers ensure insurance certificates are up to date, as well as routine safety checks for the building and appliances, such as fire safety equipment. The landlord undertakes gas safety and electrical systems checks routinely. Managers should ensure they have sight of these checks to assure themselves of the safety of the building. Staff undertake daily safety checks of the areas used by children. Managers do not keep written risk assessments but we observed no additional risks to be addressed.

Managers and staff maintain the environment appropriately and provide a welcoming, child friendly space, which is suitable for the age of the children cared for. They provide child-sized tables and chairs for children to do activities. They store a small selection of resources at low levels allowing children to access them independently, supporting their free choice. However, we saw few occasions where a child accessed stored resources themselves. The outdoors is spacious and provides suitable opportunities for children, and we saw them make good use of the gardens. Indoor play spaces adequately support children's play and development. Children's work is displayed and valued, and this gives children a sense of belonging. However, additional decoration, which filled most of all walls, cupboard doors and windows, was overwhelming and of limited benefit to children. The layout of the indoor play spaces do not maximise children's free-flow.

Leaders ensure children have access a suitable variety of adequate-quality resources which are appropriate to the age of children attending. At present these do not include many natural resources. However, we saw that new, more natural and open-ended resources have been purchased and will be introduced shortly. The effectiveness of this new resource provision will be considered at the next inspection.

Leadership and Management — Adequate

The quality of leadership and management varies at this setting. Managers are experienced and are passionate about providing good quality care. However, some management responsibilities are not appropriately addressed. There is a detailed statement of purpose providing parents with essential information about how the setting runs, and appropriate policies are in place. Registers of children's attendance contain all the necessary information and are completed in a timely manner. Managers do not adequately audit records of the administering of medication, accidents, incidents and existing injuries to ensure they are consistently completed in full.

Managers have in place a system to ensure that a formal self-evaluation of the service is undertaken on at least an annual basis. The quality of care report states that the service consults with parents, staff, children and relevant external agencies in order to review the quality of the service. However, those views are not reflected and it is not clear how this information is used to inform improvements. No action plan for improvements is included.

Managers are not sufficiently effective in overseeing staff. Staff are well organised, which allows them to remain calm whilst delivering care. They are well trained and there is a strong culture of continuing professional development at the setting. Staff confirmed they enjoy working at the setting. Whilst there are enough qualified and experienced staff to care for children, managers explained to us that staffing numbers have been pressured in the last 12 months, meaning that the person in charge has often worked providing care in order to cover instances such as staff breaks or sickness. This has taken her focus off essential managerial duties. A result of this is that staff have not received formal supervisions with the regularity they normally would. However, a schedule is now in place to address this and staff confirmed that they feel supported, and know they can approach managers if needed. Managers have also not ensured that all necessary recruitment checks have been recorded for staff but this was put right during the inspection.

Managers value highly the positive relationships developed with the community and parents. Staff told us that the relationships they build with parents are at the heart of the service they provide and are vital to making the positive impacts for children. They are very keen to ensure that parents feel they can approach them at any time. We spoke to parents who were very complimentary about the service and they were all confident to leave their children there. They reported that staff are very friendly and approachable. They ensure parents are kept informed of their child's day at handover, and parents told us they felt they had all the information they needed to make an informed choice about using the service. Managers and staff also work closely with a variety of external agencies to ensure children and families receive the support needed, for example with speech and language services.

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)
Standard 12 - Food and drink	Fresh drinking water should be freely available to children at all times, and all food and drinks provided should be in line with the Welsh Government's nutrition guidance for childcare settings.
Standard 18 - Quality assurance	The quality of care review should include the voice of children, parents and staff, consider the breadth of the provision, and include an action plan of improvements for the coming 12 months.

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice
Recommendation(s)
Activity planning should be developed further to support staff in providing activities for children which are engaging.
The inclusion of the Welsh language should be strengthened.
Further consideration should be given to how the environment can be developed to improve children’s experiences.
Management oversight should be strengthened so that records are audited to ensure they are complete (e.g. staff files, contracts, accident records).

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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Date Published 02/12/2024