Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Acorns Nursery

Community Hall
37 Cimla Common
Neath
SA11 3SU



Date Inspection Completed

16/09/2024

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About Little Acorns Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Betty Morgan
Registered places	30
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	18 October 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Well-being	**Good**
Care and Development	**Adequate**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Adequate**

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

Summary

Children have a strong voice. Nearly all children are happy and quickly settle. They are confident, engaging with one another and staff well. Children are interested and involved in their play. They are developing their independence skills successfully.

Staff work suitably well to keep children safe and healthy. They are aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff interact positively with the children, supporting their individual needs. They engage with children in their play and encourage children to become independent.

Leaders and staff offer a welcoming, environment which supports children to learn and play successfully. They ensure there are appropriate toys, resources and equipment which children can explore and use. Staff undertake regular checks and ensure hazards are dealt with appropriately.

Leadership and management of the setting is improving. There has been progress following the last inspection. However, effective, and consistent practices need to be embedded. Staff feel well supported and there are strong partnerships in place. Leaders have taken action to achieve some recommendations from CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) as part of this inspection.

Well-being — Good

Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about what activities and resources they want to play with. They freely choose where they want to play, with resources readily available to them. Children decide if they would like milk or water to drink and serve themselves toast at snack time. Children who want more, help themselves. Verbal and non-verbal communication is recognised. For example, children point to water when asked if they would like water or milk at snack time. Children who are not ready to engage in group activities are able to continue to play.

Nearly all children are happy and cope well with separation from their parents or carers. We saw children settle quickly when starting their session and swiftly engage in play. They are calm and interact with one another well. We saw groups of children play happily together. Children are confident to call staff by their names and engage with them. One child asked a staff member to *"come and play babies"* to which staff immediately agreed to. Children receive support and reassurance, having cuddles and rest if needed. New and unsettled children have additional support. Children are familiar with routines. For example, at tidy up, meal and home times.

Children express enthusiasm and enjoyment. They smile, laugh, and engage with each other and staff. Children cooperate with each other. For example, they work together when block building and during role play in the home corner. Children engage in group time and in child led activities. Nearly all children share well, with little support from staff. One child commented to us *"I'm caring, caring is sharing",* whilst passing a small world giraffe to a friend. Children sit together well, whilst eating their meals and listen to instructions well. For example, supporting to help and 'park' the cars.

Children are interested in their play and learning. They follow their own interests and engage in activities of their choice. While there is opportunity for children to join adult led group activities if they wish. Children competently build objects out of magnets, read books and complete puzzles. They engage in physical activities, using the slide and ride on bikes and cars. Children confidently engage in group singing activities and story time, joining in actions, songs and questions. They are beginning to take responsibility and help. For example, at snack time children help to put their food waste in the bin.

Children are developing their independence skills well. They help to tidy up and wipe their noses. Children pour their own drinks into a glass and are supported, if needed. They serve themselves at snack and competently carry china plates to their table. Children put on dressing up clothes and get their bags and coats ready for home time. Children access bathroom facilities independently, or with support of staff, if needed.

Care and Development — Adequate

Staff work suitably well to keep children safe. All staff have appropriate paediatric first aid training, and many have completed child protection training. However, some require updates and food hygiene training. Leaders have not yet completed level 3 safeguarding training. Staff understand the importance of safeguarding children and explain what they would do in a child protection scenario. They promote healthy habits through regular handwashing, offering healthy snacks and access to drinking water or milk. Staff mostly follow appropriate procedures when nappy changing and toileting. However, nappy changing practices are inconsistent. They have procedures for recording accidents and incidents, with parental signatures sought. Existing injuries form have been implemented following the inspection.

Staff are kind and caring, they observe children well and support children's individual needs appropriately. They are good role models, treating children and each other with respect. Staff give praise and acknowledge children's efforts. We heard staff say, "*Da iawn*", *"Well done- good girl"* and *"good listening".* They manage children's behaviour by engaging with children on their level. They encourage children to be kind and take turns. Staff use gentle tones and reassure children. For example, when completing a puzzle, staff said *"Try it yourself, I'll help you"*, with praise and recognition given when the child completed it independently. Staff interact positively with children. They sit and interact with children at mealtimes and move around the setting supporting them in their play. There is a balance of adult led group times, such as singing and story times as well as child led free play.

Staff know the children well and understand their individual needs. They provide children with opportunities to learn and develop through the range of varied activities. For example, physical, imaginative and sensory activities. Staff use Welsh with children during the day. For example, at transition times, during song and group time and whilst learning colours and numbers. Staff undertake basic observations of children's development and share photos of children's achievements with parents. However, staff informed us they are currently in the process of developing their observations and tracking systems following changes to the setting. At present there is no planning in place or record of children's next steps.

Environment — Good

Leaders and staff provide a welcoming open-plan nursery. They care for children in a safe, secure and clean environment. There is a buzzer phone system in place, with an internal porch area. Doors are secure and visitors sign in. The building has the required safety checks in place, including fire and electrical tests. Fire drill practices take place. However, they have not been completed routinely or in line with their fire policy. Leaders ensure there are appropriate cleaning routines and heating checks in place. Staff are aware of potential risks within the environment and carry out on-going visual checks. Risk assessments are in place for some aspects of the provision. Staff discuss practices in place. However, written risk assessments for school runs, transporting children, activities and visitor/volunteers were not available. Following the inspection visit, basic written risk assessments have been implemented. The building has undergone improvements recently with a new roof, PVC windows and an additional children's toilet being fitted.

The large, bright, airy hall has ample space for children to move freely. A separate cloakroom stores children's belongings and follows on to the bathroom facilities. Within the hall, there are a variety of play areas that suitably support children's development and independence. Children use ride on toys and engage in gross motor play, as well as take part in group activities, without impacting on other areas of play. Leaders organise the play and learning environment well. For example, furniture is of appropriate size and height for the children. There are a variety of displays, posters and prompts which promote bilingual language. An interactive photo display promotes children's sense of belonging. There is no outdoor space available at present. However, leaders confirm they access the local park, opposite the provision, when possible. There are plans in place to develop both inside and outside environments in the future.

Leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment are of a good standard. They offer children a variety of age-appropriate furniture, toys and equipment. For example, small world toys, mark making, 'real life' resources, books and a cwtch area. Low-level storage enables children to identify and choose resources easily. Equipment is suitable for all children attending. For example, there are age-appropriate toilets and a hand wash basin with step to support children who are beginning their toileting journey.

Leadership and Management — Adequate

Leadership and management of the setting is developing. Leaders have acted to comply with some of the national minimum standards and regulations following our last inspection, although inconsistencies remain. They must sustain and embed improvements effectively across the setting. Leaders have notified us of changes at the setting and updated their statement of purpose but do not always inform us of staff changes. Following our inspection, they have updated their online account with a more detailed statement of purpose, staff matrix and changes to the opening hours. However, they have been prompted by CIW to make these changes and have not acted on their own initiative. This is an area for improvement, we expect the provider to take action.

Leaders mostly maintain accurate records. They complete registers with actual times of children's arrival and departure. Staff members sign in and out of the setting, at the start and end of day. Following the inspection, more detailed registers for staff have been implemented, including when they are on a school run or on break. Children have complete contracts, with some consent forms in place. Following the inspection, these now include photo permission, use of social media and home languages. There are a range of policies and procedures, some of which undergo regular review. However, not all policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current provision and practices, or changes and updates in legislation. Leaders have up to date certificates for public liability insurance, MOT, TAX and business insurance. The setting has registered with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office) following our visit.

There are systems in place for the evaluation of the service. A basic quality of care report has been provided alongside the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS). The report provides very basic information about what has been achieved at the provision during the last year. It does not reflect parental, children or professional views. Although leaders explain next steps and improvements planned at the setting, it was not included within their quality-of-care report.

Leaders ensure staff and regular volunteers have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. They have termly meetings, and daily catch ups prior to the setting opening. Staff informed us they feel well supported by leaders and each other. They commented they are a small, tight knit team and feel part of a family. However, staff do not receive formal regular supervisions and appraisals. This is an area for improvement, we expect the provider to take action. Staff files were complete and include all regulatory information. Leaders encourage staff to undertake training, with information shared and cascaded to all staff.

Leaders work closely with other professionals, including the local authority and Flying Start. They have strong links with the community, which is a strength in the setting. Leaders promote positive partnerships with parents. They keep parents up to date, through private messages, and verbal conversations at the start and end of the session. As part of the inspection process, we sought comments from parents which were positive.

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	
29	The registered person does not always undertake individual supervisions or appraisals	Not Achieved
31	The registered person does not always informed CIW of changes to staff within the 14 day timescales.	Not Achieved
15	The statement of purpose does not include all the information required by regulations.	Achieved
30	The staff register was not up to date.	Achieved

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 10 - Healthcare	Ensure consistent hygiene practices in relation to nappy changing.
Standard 20 - Child protection	Ensure all staff complete appropriate training and leaders undertake Level 3 Safeguarding training.
Standard 3 - Assessment	Implement and develop observations, next steps and planning for children at the setting.
Standard 22 - Environment	Ensure fire drills are undertaken regularly, in line with the setting fire policy.
Standard 18 - Quality assurance	Ensure policies reflect the current provision, changes in legislation and guidance, including review dates and planned date for next review.
Standard 18 - Quality assurance	Develop a thorough Quality of Care report to include views of parents and children.

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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