Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Appletree Nursery

Appletree Nursery
Norwegian Church
Langdon Road
Swansea
SA1 8QY



Date Inspection Completed

23/01/2025

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About Appletree Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Appletree Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	42
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	18 October 2021
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	**Good**
Care and Development	**Good**
Environment	**Adequate**
Leadership and Management	**Adequate**

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

Summary

Children are safe, happy and confident. They have a strong voice and can make many choices and decisions about what they do. Children behave well and have warm relationships with staff. Children thoroughly enjoy their play. They learn and develop well, with opportunities to be independent and learn to do things for themselves.

Staff understand and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy. They are kind and caring towards children and provide positive interactions to ensure children feel happy and valued. Staff provide a play-based curriculum and plan enhanced activities to support children's interests and development.

Leaders ensure the nursery is welcoming, safe and secure. Furniture, equipment and resources are of good quality, clean and accessible to children. There is an outdoor play area. However, this is not as well-resourced or set up and leaders are currently developing this aspect of their provision.

Leaders have a clear vision for the nursery and are committed to providing quality childcare. There is a good range of detailed policies and procedures to support the smooth and safe running of the nursery. Overall, paperwork is organised and completed to a good standard. However, at the last inspection Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) identified areas of non-compliance in relation to some aspects of record keeping and staff files. Leaders have not made sufficient progress with these and, therefore, we have highlighted these areas for improvement again.

Well-being Good

Children have a strong voice. They can make choices and decisions about what they do and how they spend their time. Babies have plenty of time to explore their environment and the range of stimulating resources available to them. Older children make purposeful choices from a good selection of toys, resources and activities. Children develop confident communication skills as they know they will be listened to, and their contributions respected. For example, babies who are not yet mobile indicate when they want something new to play with and older children demonstrate they have had enough to eat.

Children are safe and happy, and nearly all are settled. Most children cope well with separation from parents. Those who need a little extra reassurance readily turn to staff, with whom they develop warm, close relationships, for comfort or cuddles. Children learn the routines of the day well, which helps them develop a sense of security and belonging.

Children behave very well in line with their age and stage of development. Younger children play alongside each other, older children begin to play together. They benefit from kind, caring staff who support them well. There is a relaxed atmosphere in the nursery and children learn to take turns and share. For example, they wait their turn to shake the bottle during a Bear Hunt story activity or to collect their lunch from the table.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. We saw children engrossed in building with blocks or playing in the sand and water trays for extended periods. However, they equally love to join in with whatever adults are doing and many chose to engage with staff-initiated activities such as drawing or sorting and counting animals. Children learn and develop well from the opportunities and experiences provided for them. They take part in a good variety of activities that support their all-round development.

There are good opportunities for children to develop independence and self-help skills. They receive encouragement to feed themselves and manage their own personal needs, such as washing their hands or using the bathroom independently as they get older. Older children learn to serve their own lunch and return their plates and cups to the serving station when they have finished.

Care and Development — Good

Overall, staff work well to follow policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy. They are secure in their knowledge of child protection, knowing who to report concerns to and where to find relevant numbers. Appropriate training is in place for all staff in line with the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. Staff record their own and children's attendance times. Staff implement good hygiene practices in relation to nappy changing and food preparation and serving. There are good procedures for managing allergies and health care, with allergy care plans in place. Staff use an electronic app to record, and for parents to acknowledge, accidents, incidents and injuries children arrive with. Leaders have a good system to monitor these records for patterns or concerns. Staff complete appropriate records in relation to the administration of medication which parents sign. A dedicated cook prepares healthy meals and snacks daily that encourage children to try a variety of foods. Staff told us they take children on regular walks in the fresh air although outdoor play is currently more limited.

Staff communicate well with children and create a calm and relaxed atmosphere. They are good role models for children and interact purposefully and respectfully with them throughout the day. For example, asking them if they can change their nappy or if they would like to join in with an activity. Staff are patient and positive, offering lots of praise and encouragement to children as they play and move through the day. There is a good behaviour management policy in place to support staff should they need it.

Staff support children's play and learning successfully. For example, they promote language development as they model and repeat words clearly, take opportunities to count or ask appropriate questions that encourage children to think. Although we did not hear much Welsh used during our visit. Staff focus well on the interests and needs of the children. Each child has a key worker who identifies their next steps in learning along the pathways of the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales. Staff use these to inform their planning. They provide enhanced activities alongside an interesting and stimulating environment which allows children to choose from a wide range of play opportunities. Staff record observations and children's development which they share with parents on the app. They are awaiting new equipment which will enable the technology to work more effectively. Staff are alert to children who have or may have additional learning needs. They work with parents to monitor any potential emerging needs and liaise with outside agencies when appropriate.

Environment — Adequate

Leaders ensure they care for children in an environment that is safe and secure. They keep external doors locked and record any visitors they admit. Good risk assessments are in place and staff have easy access to them on noticeboards in each room. Staff follow good procedures for daily safety checks and regular cleaning. As a result, the nursery is very clean and, overall, well maintained. However, the windows are not in good condition and there is a small leak in the roof at the back of the entrance foyer. These issues do not currently impact the children, and the nursery owner told us they are in the process of addressing the replacement windows and roof repair. They also confirmed they have booked the five-year electrical check. There is no gas in the building. The nursery has underfloor heating and is warm, comfortable and well decorated. Leaders instigate and record regular evacuation drills to ensure staff and children know what to do in an emergency. All staff have untaken fire training and leaders arrange an annual service for firefighting equipment.

Playrooms are light and welcoming. The layouts provide children with plenty of space to play and move freely. Rooms are very well set up with play areas such as quiet corners, home corners or construction areas where children can access toys and resources independently as they choose where to play. Leaders provide cots for babies and sleep mats for older children. Staff can check sleeping children easily as they are in the same rooms. Child height toilets and sinks support older children to use them independently and there are suitable nappy changing facilities which allow children's privacy and dignity to be respected. There is a secure outdoor play area at the front of the nursery. However, leaders told us they do not currently use this much as they are working to develop the area and waiting for delivery of new resources. Staff make use of the local area to take children for walks.

There is a very good range of furniture, resources and equipment that are of good quality and suitable for the children using them. They are clean and well maintained. Furniture and many resources are of natural materials such as wood which creates a neutral and calm environment. Leaders provide open-ended and authentic resources which children can use flexibly and with imagination to effectively support their curiosity and exploratory play. For example, large wooden building blocks alongside animals, vehicles and images of buildings, sensory resources, real items in the home corner and open access craft materials. Some resources promote cultural awareness and diversity which helps children gain an appropriate understanding of the world they live in.

Leadership and Management — Adequate

Leaders are committed to providing a high-quality service, they are passionate and enthusiastic about their work. They share a clear vision for the setting and have comprehensive policies and procedures in place which contribute effectively to the smooth running of the setting. Leaders regularly review these policies and procedures. There is an accurate and clear statement of purpose. Paperwork is organised and generally kept to a good standard. However, leaders have not effectively monitored staff recording of their own and children's attendance. CIW highlighted these records as part of an area for improvement at the last inspection. Although there have been improvements in aspects of record keeping, there are still inconsistencies in the accuracy of registers. We have, therefore, left the area for improvement open and expect the provider to take action.

Leaders complete a quality of care review annually and seek the views of children, parents and staff to help inform this. The review offers some evaluation of the service they provide and identifies areas they would like to improve.

Overall, leaders follow safe recruitment procedures, but these are not always robust. CIW highlighted staff files as an area for improvement at the last inspection. There has been significant improvement in the records kept but there remain inconsistencies. For example, files sampled contained two references as is required by regulation, but these were not always from the most appropriate sources. We have, therefore, left the area for improvement open and expect the provider to take action. Leaders support staff well through good induction procedures, regular supervision and annual appraisals. They also hold periodic well-being check ins with staff. They ensure staff keep up to date with mandatory training such as food hygiene and paediatric first aid, although the first aid box did not contain sufficient supplies. Staff we spoke to told us they enjoy working at the nursery and feel well supported.

Leaders and staff develop good relationships with parents. They gather all relevant information before children start at the nursery to ensure they can support individual needs. They keep parents informed about their children's progress and what they do through a variety of methods such as the use of an electronic app and verbal daily feedback. Parents we spoke to gave positive feedback about the nursery and said their children are very happy there.

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	
30	Ensure registers of children's and staff attendance are consistently completed and reflect which staff are looking after which children.	Not Achieved
28	The provider must ensure there is full and satisfactory information or documentation available to show a robust recruitment process has taken place.	Not 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 the first aid box complies with relevant regulations and is regularly checked to ensure contents are replaced as necessary.
Standard 22 - Environment	Ensure all parts of the building are maintained in a suitable state of repair.

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)
Develop the use of incidental Welsh throughout the nursery.
Further develop the quality of care review to be more evaluative of outcomes for 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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