Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Appletree Nursery

Llanishen Fach Primary School
Heol Uchaf
Cardiff
CF14 6SS



Date Inspection Completed

26/02/2025

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About Appletree Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Appletree Nursery Group Ltd
Registered places	30
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	17 November 2022
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	**Excellent**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

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

Summary

Children are happy and settled. They have worthwhile opportunities and beneficial play and learning experiences at the setting. Children make independent choices about activities they engage in and are free to move between all opportunities offered. They have warm and valuable relationships with all staff and interactions are positive and valuable. Children's social and independence skills are developing well and age appropriately.

Staff keep children safe and implement the setting's policies and procedures effectively and thoroughly. Interactions between staff and children are always warm and positive. Staff positively support the needs of all children. Staff plan around themes and take into account children's interests or suggestions. They organise an excellent range of worthwhile play and learning activities and experiences.

The environment is welcoming and organised purposefully. People running the setting ensure staff implement thorough and valuable daily cleaning routines and infection control practices. The indoor and outdoor environments are clean, safe, and suitable for the children to play independently. All relevant risk assessments are in place to ensure potential hazards to children are identified and these are signed by staff members. The people running the setting make sure there are good quality toys and resources for indoor and outdoor activities suitable for the ages and stage of development of children attending.

People running the setting manage it effectively. The leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff team are consistently good and work well together. Parents / carers compliment the setting, the opportunities presented, and the care their children receive.

Well-being Good

Children arrive eagerly and excitedly at the setting. They cope well with separation from their parents / carers. Nearly all children are comfortable in their surroundings and in the company of the staff caring for them. Children's independence skills are developing as they are aware of daily routines such as toileting and washing hands.

Children communicate effectively and confidently with each other and the staff. Nearly all children show a positive interest in activities. For example, children were very keen to engage in the dough making activities and discuss how sticky and messy they were getting. Nearly all children show curiosity and explore a variety of valuable play opportunities. For example, children engage in free play activities and the mixing of coloured water to replicate the colour of fruit. They have opportunities to suggest ideas for activities but at present, this isn't clearly noted within the planning. Children are effectively aware of the moods and the feelings of others at the setting.

Children have formed positive bonds with all staff and with each other. These bonds have a clear and beneficial impact on their well-being. For example, children and staff enjoy the making of the dough with flour and coloured water, role playing and socialising at snack time. Children are all assigned a key worker but are welcomed by all staff in a friendly manner upon arrival. Staff ensure that children receive consistently good support which is tailored to their individual needs. This ensures a warm transition from their parents or guardians. Children therefore understand that staff respond purposefully to their individual needs and requirements. They successfully approach staff for support or guidance. For example, a few children require staff support during activities while others enjoy being independent.

Children have built worthwhile friendships with each other and work together co-operatively. For example, when a tennis ball went through the fence, children co-operated to fetch the ball without asking for help. They patiently wait their turn in all activities. For example, children sharing resources in the rice activities and taking turns with the liquids and when collecting fruit at snack time.

Children develop their independence skills well through the purposeful activities prepared and with the support of staff. For example, children are encouraged to pour liquid, decide how much flour they need and allow access to the toilet independently. They also wash their hands independently after activities. At the end of activities, they all clear resources independently and successfully dress themselves before outdoor activities.

Care and Development — Excellent

Staff effectively implement the setting's policies and procedures ensuring children are kept safe and healthy. They receive regular and effective safeguarding training and therefore thoroughly understand the setting's safeguarding procedures. Staff record accidents and incidents accurately using an electronic app and ensure these are signed by parents / carers to evidence they have been kept informed. All accidents and incidents are formally and superbly analysed on a weekly and monthly basis. People running the setting make excellent use of the technology available, to determine the cause and identify emerging patterns. The information is extensively used to prevent further accidents of a similar kind in future. Staff keep records of pre-existing injuries when children arrive at the setting. These include dates, signatures and actions taken by staff and parents / carers. All current members of staff have completed appropriate paediatric first aid training, enabling them to deal with accidents. Staff have clear systems in place if medicines are to be administered. They securely store medicines and record the administration of medicines, including last dose administered. Staff follow the Welsh Government food and nutrition guidance and encourage children to eat healthily. They provide breakfast, lunch and tea. Staff are aware of children's dietary needs and any allergies are dealt with appropriately and safely. Plates are coloured according to individual requirements and allergies. Staff wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when preparing and serving food to the children. Staff encourage children to wash their hands before and after eating to help develop their personal hygiene practices. However, this is not implemented consistently after children return from outdoor play.

Staff have superbly positive and warm relationships with children. The setting has a key worker system is in place, to help with children's individual assessments and to provide parents / carers with a point of contact. However, children are encouraged to engage with all staff throughout the setting. Staff are caring and patient when talking to children. Examples of high-quality interactions include, *'What does the flour feel like?'* and *'This is called vegetable oil – we cook with it and make cakes, pizzas and dough as well.*' Other examples observed were *'what fruit do you have?'* with the answer being *'grapes. I crushed grapes on holiday.'* Staff create a relaxed atmosphere, and as a result, children are comfortable. Staff support children's social behaviours superbly. They expertly remind children about appropriate behaviours and interactions and nearly all children respond exemplary. For example, staff reminded children *'kind hands,*' *'sit at the table for food'* and *'remember - inside - walking feet.'* Staff promote children's play, learning and development by planning a range of consistently high standard activities. Examples include messy play, role play and practical activities with measuring and mixing.

Staff consult children and gather their ideas for activities. Staff include children's suggestions for planning, and these are noted on appropriate planning documents. Incidental Welsh was heard within the setting.

Environment Good

The people running the setting make sure the premises is welcoming and warm for the children. They provide a valuable environment for children which is used effectively to develop their learning and skills. The indoor area is one large room with various activities and resources which promote children's independence, curiosity, and learning. Examples include sand and water activities, wooden building blocks, a role-playing area and naturally occurring items such as pinecones. All the children's experiences are through the encouragement of free access to age-appropriate activities and resources. The people running the setting ensure the environment is safe and secure. They have a suitable system to manage access into the premises. For instance, visitors are granted access by staff through the main entrance which is secure. The outdoor area is safely enclosed by fencing.

The people running the setting have developed and ensured risk assessments are regularly reviewed and reflect the premises, and the activities and outings children receive. They make sure potential hazards are identified and sufficient measures implemented to minimise these risks to children. The people running the setting conduct worthwhile daily health and safety checks of the indoor and outdoor areas. Evidence was presented regarding planned maintenance of matters discussed regarding safety of the outdoor areas. These included replacing steps and panels around the base of the setting. All other regular maintenance and safety checks are completed within appropriate timescales. Examples of evidence included fire and smoke alarm testing, fire extinguishers and electrical testing. People running the setting conduct fire drills regularly to ensure all staff and children know what to do in an emergency. The toilet facilities are age appropriate, with sinks placed at age-appropriate levels. The area meets children's privacy and dignity requirements. Cleanliness of the setting is consistently good, and it is cleaned nightly by staff. Staff were observed cleaning and wiping surfaces regularly during the day, especially before and after snack time.

Resources are stored at appropriate levels and children can access them and make their own choices. The people running the setting ensure children have access to resources indoors. Outdoor resources include a climbing frame, plastic and wooden picnic tables, a mud kitchen and bats and balls. All resources are appropriately and securely stored. All furniture and equipment are age-appropriate and of good quality. There was a range of resources to promote cultural awareness, celebrations, and diversity within the setting.

Leadership and Management — Good

People who run the setting are experienced and offer a consistently good service for parents and carers. They have a valuable and clear vision for the future development of the setting. Leadership and management of the setting is strong and successful. They have clear expectations of staff and effectively support them to do their best through offering consistently good and worthwhile training. The statement of purpose ensures a beneficial reflection of what the setting offers and provides parents / carers with consistently good information about the provision offered. People who run the setting regularly review their policies and procedures and ensure staff implement them successfully. However, policies reviewed need to be signed and dated by the reviewer. There are valuable record keeping systems in place including children's contracts, external agency visits, children's attendance, and staff files. People who run the setting inform Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of many events as set out in regulations, providing relevant information within the required time periods.

People who run the setting have consistently good systems when evaluating the setting. They ensure that they seek feedback from parents, staff, and children using useful questionnaires. Information is used to review performance, identify priorities for improvement and to further improve opportunities for staff and children. Staff are clearly valued by people who run the setting. During discussions with staff, it was clear that there is a valuable and positive ethos of teamwork within the staff team, and they work together to ensure the best opportunities and outcomes for children. The staff are experienced and make sure children are safe. During the inspection, staff files looked at contained evidence of regular supervisions and appraisals and evidence of additional training completed. Staff reported they nearly always felt supported by management. They noted that they can confidently talk and discuss ideas and concerns with them. However, people running the setting need to ensure that staff supervisions and appraisals are completed regularly.

Partnerships with parents / carers and outside agencies are consistently good and therefore they successfully support the work of the setting. People running the setting and staff confirmed they share regular daily updates with parents / carers through an electronic app and verbally? at collection time. The information shared with parents includes photographs of activities, snack and sleeping information and accidents and incidents. We did not speak to parents / carers, but cards and letters displayed noted children receive consistently good care and feel involved in the setting. Examples of comments recorded included *'A huge thank you for creating such a lovely environment'* and *'Can't thank you enough for everything.'* The setting has a strong partnership with the local school situated on the same site and the Local Authority.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

National Minimum Standards

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.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 4 - Meeting individual needs	Increase the voice of the children within the planning of themes and activities.
Standard 24 - Safety	Ensure that the steps leading to the outdoor area are repaired or replaced to minimise risk to users.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Ensure that staff receive regular one-to-one supervision which encourages them to think about their practice and developmental requirements.

Best Practice

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.

Recommendation(s)
Ensure that policies when reviewed are signed and dated by the reviewer.