A report on

Little Acorns - Crossgates

Grounds of Crossgates CP School
Crossgates
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 6RE

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

About Little Acorns - Crossgates

Name of setting	Little Acorns - Crossgates
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Clare Halsam and Rebecca Price
Person in charge	Becky Pritchard
Number of places	24
Age range of children	2- 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	16
Number of children who receive funding for early education	15
Opening days / times	Monday- Friday 8:15-17:30
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	12/01/22
Date of previous Estyn inspection	November 2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	18/11/2025
Additional information	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Care and development	**Good**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure practitioners question children effectively to encourage them to think for themselves and develop their ideas

R2 Ensure practitioners model the Welsh language effectively and consistently to improve children's Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children are happy at the setting. They settle well on arrival and are keen to begin playing and learning. Most children have suitable opportunities to make choices about how they spend their time, including whether to play indoors or outdoors. They select their own activities and resources. Most children have a strong voice, and many children express themselves confidently because they know staff listen to their needs and preferences. They form friendships and show a willingness to help and care for one another. For example, during snack time children give each other hugs and help each other fill up their trailers with oats.

Nearly all children enjoy attending the setting and are familiar with daily routines and boundaries. This supports their sense of safety and belonging successfully. For example, they help prepare for snack time and understand the need to wash their hands beforehand. Nearly all children have warm relationships with practitioners and receive comfort when needed. For example, when a child is upset, practitioners offer reassurance and time to help them settle. Nearly all children feel valued and show pride in their achievements, such as proudly sharing pictures they created with visitors. This contributes positively to their self-esteem and wellbeing.

Nearly all children behave well and respond appropriately to practitioners' gentle reminders, such as when taking turns. Many children enjoy playing together and are developing friendships, while others play alongside one another in line with their stage of development. For example, a group of children spend considerable time playing with the tractors in the oats, whilst others are happy building a house out of blocks. Most children manage minor frustrations, sometimes with adult support. Nearly all children understand the importance of following rules and being respectful and courteous when playing alongside their friends and adults.

Nearly all children are active and engage in their play readily. They explore the environment with interest and show curiosity and imagination when choosing activities. Many demonstrate good levels of perseverance. For example, they spend sustained periods of time at activities they enjoy, such as exploring ice in a water tray. Many children also show enthusiasm when joining adult-led activities such as creating music and when moving their bodies in different ways.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge through play. They develop their ideas by following their own interests for extended periods. They have regular opportunities to develop their self-help skills. For example, they prepare and cut their own food, and tidy away afterwards, access the toilet independently and collect their coats and wellies to go outdoors. They choose freely from indoor and outdoor activities and put on suitable clothing for outdoor play. These experiences support their growing independence and self-care skills well.

Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in the development of their communication skills. For example, they discuss the roles they will take on when engaging in imaginary play with confidence. Nearly all children acquire new skills and knowledge readily as they explore their environments and engage in the learning experiences planned for them.

Most children develop their communication skills successfully. They join in with songs and rhymes, listen attentively and follow simple instructions well. They use appropriate vocabulary as they play, such as when they talk about squirting shaving foam into a tray. Many children enjoy looking at books with their friends and join in with repetitive phrases when practitioners read to them. Many children enjoy mark making activities such as noting orders on pads in the role play café and recording the different birds they see in the garden.

Many children develop their number skills effectively. They count the number of children sitting at tables, and objects such as toys as they play and explore. They count how many tractors they have, and the number of bread rolls they have made. Most children use a good range of mathematical language as they play. They recognise full and empty containers and big and small carrots in the garden.

Most children are at the early stages in developing their Welsh language skills. During whole group sessions, they join in with singing simple songs and a few children name the day of the week and weather with support from practitioners. When asked in Welsh, the majority point to the drink they want at snack time.

Many children develop their problem-solving skills as they play, such a working out how to chop a garlic clove and how to roll and shape bread dough. Many children develop their digital skills effectively. They use a blender to make soup, play with replica phones and keyboards, and operate a pre-programmable toy successfully.

Most children develop their physical skills appropriately. They use a wide range of small utensils competently, such as pipettes and spoons to transfer water and safety knives to chop up carrots and onions when making soup. Most children develop their gross motor skills well. They enjoy digging and moving sand with large spades, running in open spaces, and building with large loose parts in the garden.

Most children develop their creative skills well. They draw and paint pictures of their families, use cotton buds to replicate patterns from African drums and enjoy singing songs as they move a parachute in different ways.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners work well with leaders to help keep children safe and healthy. They have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and know how to respond if they have any concerns. Practitioners follow suitable systems for recording, reporting, and monitoring any issues. They complete the required documentation for accidents, incidents, existing injuries, and medication appropriately. All practitioners hold relevant paediatric first aid training.

They understand what to do in an emergency and practise fire evacuation drills regularly. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and do not give cause for concern.

Practitioners implement effective routines to promote children's health. They follow good hygiene practices when serving food and changing nappies, and they encourage children to wash their hands at appropriate times. This helps children develop a sound awareness of personal hygiene. Practitioners also encourage physical activity and ensure children have frequent opportunities to play outdoors.

Practitioners are kind, caring and supportive. Their warm and friendly interactions help create a calm and positive atmosphere. They know the children well and promote positive behaviour appropriately. Practitioners acknowledge children's feelings and provide explanations and alternatives to help manage minor disagreements. They speak respectfully to each other and to the children and act as good role models, contributing positively to children's developing self-esteem.

Practitioners meet children's needs effectively. They provide a wide range of activities and experiences indoors and outdoors that support children's learning and development. Practitioners observe children, monitor their development, and identify those who may have additional learning needs (ALN). They have suitable systems in place to ensure children receive appropriate support and continue to develop their knowledge and skills.

Practitioners plan authentic experiences across most areas of learning. For example, they provide real crockery in the home corner. They listen to children's interests and adapt learning experiences accordingly, such as when the children request certain toppings for their shaving cream cakes.

Practitioners support children well when they become overwhelmed or distressed. For example, they use calming techniques such as steady breathing and then help children think about possible solutions.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners have a thorough understanding of how children learn and plan stimulating and interesting activities for them to investigate. This motivates children to participate enthusiastically and ensures their full engagement. Practitioners note and respond to children's interests and fascinations and adapt learning opportunities as required. For example, practitioners noted children's interest in tractors and set up a role play farm for them to explore.

Practitioners work very well as a team and know the children well. They model language effectively and encourage children to use the appropriate vocabulary. For example, they name kitchen utensils as children prepare carrot soup. Practitioners provide commentaries about what children are doing and ask simple questions to promote children's understanding. However, they do not use questions to extend children's thinking and problem-solving skills well enough.

There are beneficial opportunities for children to develop their communication and literacy skills. Practitioners encourage children to join in with conversations and share their views and opinions. For example, they ask children about their favourite pizza toppings and discuss ways to roll out bread dough. Practitioners provide comfortable reading areas, where children can relax and enjoy listening to stories alone or with others. Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills by placing note pads in role play areas and tally charts for them to use when looking for different birds outside.

A few practitioners are beginning to support children to speak Welsh during whole group sessions, such as noting the day of the week and the weather. They encourage children to sing simple songs and respond to a few simple questions at snack time. However, practitioners do not always take full advantage of the opportunities to develop children's Welsh language skills as they play. Practitioners promote the cultural heritage of Wales suitably by celebrating St David's Day, and including resources such as flags, costumes and food tasting activities in the learning environment.

Practitioners provide children with valuable opportunities to develop their mathematical and numeracy skills in meaningful ways, such as counting toys, bread rolls and one another. Practitioners encourage them to use mathematical vocabulary as they play, for example by discussing full and empty pots of water and different sized vegetables.

Practitioners promote children's digital skills well. They provide them with pre-programmable toys, replica phones and a tablet computer to retrieve information.

Practitioners provide worthwhile activities and resources that allow children to be physically active and develop their physical skills effectively. For example, there are pipettes, knives, spoons, and paintbrushes which promote effective opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills.

Practitioners support the development of children's spiritual, moral and cultural development well. They provide a range of cultural resources that celebrate festivals from a range of cultures. These experiences help to support children's understanding of people's lives and beliefs that may be different from their own. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children as they encourage them to watch different birds outside and plant fruit and vegetables and observe them as they grow. They encourage children to show consideration for living creatures, such as caring for the setting's terrapin.

Practitioners have effective systems to assess and monitor children's progress. They use the outcomes of assessments to identify individual children's next steps and which skills they need to develop.

Practitioners provide parents and carers with beneficial information about their child's progress and well-being through daily updates, and useful end of year reports.

Environment: Good

Leaders and practitioners provide children with a well-resourced environment that supports their learning and development effectively. They ensure that children are cared for in safe

and secure premises. They complete a range of written risk assessments that identify and reduce risks, reviewing these regularly. They carry out daily safety checks of the environment consistently, and leaders maintain oversight of the required premises checks. The environment, furniture and resources are clean and well maintained.

The setting operates across two light and welcoming playrooms. Practitioners have created a well-organised environment with clearly defined learning areas that encourage children to engage in play. There is ample space for children to move freely. Storage solutions, such as natural baskets, enable children to access and explore resources independently. Wall displays celebrate children's work and their families and community, helping to promote a sense of belonging.

Children benefit from spacious outdoor play areas. Leaders and practitioners have developed these areas to provide valuable opportunities for play and learning. For example, children have access to spaces where they can run, climb, ride bikes, build and explore nature, along with growing their own fruit and vegetables. The outdoor area is fully secure and is accessed directly from both playrooms.

Leaders provide good quality, age-appropriate furniture, and a broad range of interesting and developmentally appropriate resources. There is a generous variety of natural materials that children can use creatively across different areas of play. Authentic items, such as china cups in the home corner, support children to learn how to handle items safely and with care. Books and visual materials are available throughout the playrooms to enhance children's learning.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting to provide high quality childcare with a happy atmosphere within a safe, secure, and stimulating environment. This is shared with practitioners, parents, and carers effectively. There is a strong management committee at the setting and members work closely with leaders to provide support that contributes positively to the smooth running of the setting. Leaders work with practitioners purposefully and provide effective communication that supports them to plan the care and development of children successfully. There is a clear statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the setting, and leaders ensure that a suitable range of relevant policies and procedures are in place.

Leaders and practitioners are committed to improving the setting. They have worthwhile processes to evaluate their work. They use first hand observation, feedback from parents, children, and practitioners to identify what works well and pinpoint aspects for improvement. Leaders clearly identify areas for improvement and prioritise those that will have a positive impact on provision, practitioners' skills, and outcomes for children. Leaders monitor progress diligently and draw accurate conclusions about the impact of the changes which were introduced. Leaders make effective use of grants to enhance provision and outcomes for children. For example, they have purchased an outside classroom to extend learning opportunities for children.

Leaders follow suitable induction processes and ensure that practitioners have up-to-date job descriptions, which include appropriate information about their roles and

responsibilities. They implement an effective system for practitioners' appraisals that leads to agreed targets and undertake regular supervisions. Leaders identify beneficial opportunities for practitioners to develop professionally and seek training opportunities to develop their practice and provide new learning experiences for children. For example, they attended a course to promote positive behaviour strategies.

The setting has developed strong links with a range of worthwhile partners that contribute positively to children's learning and development. Practitioners keep parents and carers well informed of what their children are learning and how they are progressing. They use a social media app to share photographs and key information with parents and carers, including suggestions on how they can support children's learning at home.

Leaders make good use of advice and guidance from healthcare professionals to support the development of children with additional needs, such as strategies to promote their speech and language skills. Leaders implement advice and guidance from the local authority's advisory teacher who has supported practitioners to improve the learning environment outdoors. There are effective links with the local school, including appropriate arrangements for children to move on to the next stage in their education.

The setting has beneficial links with the local community. Children visit a local lake and castle, travel on a bus to the cinema and frequently visit a nearby shop to buy groceries. These activities enhance children's experiences successfully and give them a valuable understanding about the world around them.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (http://careinspectorate.wales) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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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.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

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