Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Little Acorns Day Nursery

Welshpool Youth Centre
Howell Drive
Welshpool
SY21 7AT



Date Inspection Completed

11/12/2024

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About Little Acorns Day Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Little Acorns Children's Daycare Ltd
Registered places	39
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	First inspection since registration
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	**Excellent**
Care and Development	**Excellent**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Excellent**

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

Summary

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They have a very strong voice and excellent opportunities to make decisions and choices about what they do and how they spend their time. Children develop confidence exceptionally well and engage purposefully in play-based activities. They communicate effectively and form positive, warm relationships with the leaders and each other.

Staff are nurturing, caring and enthusiastic. They successfully meet children's needs, and their interactions are consistently high-quality. Leaders and staff manage children's behaviour sensitively and effectively. They offer an excellent range of both child led and planned activities and experiences that greatly enhance children's play and learning opportunities.

Leaders ensure the premises are safe, clean, and well maintained. They provide a homely, enabling environment that is welcoming and organised. They provide an extensive range of engaging resources that support and extend children's play and learning.

Leaders are very passionate about their work and manage their setting extremely well. Paperwork is very well organised and regularly reviewed. They are highly reflective and review their setting as an on-going process. Leaders develop strong partnerships with other professionals and parents who are extremely complimentary about the service.

Well-being Excellent

Children have a strong voice with excellent opportunities to make choices about how they spend their time. They are engaging communicators expressing themselves confidently in ways appropriate to their ages and stages of development. They interact enthusiastically with the staff, each other and visitors. During our visit, they were keen to include us in their play and chat. Children's opinions and views are highly valued, and they know they will be listened to.

Children clearly feel safe, happy, and valued. They are very settled. They know the routines of the day very well which helps them develop a strong sense of security and belonging. Children develop close, warm relationships with the staff and each other. They learn to share and take turns. Through activities and discussions around feelings and emotions, they begin to learn to name them and develop empathy with others. For example, we saw an older child offer to help younger ones or ask if they wanted to do something on several occasions.

Children behave and interact extremely well, especially considering their young ages. They cope well with minor upsets and respond positively to explanations and resolutions offered by the staff. Children play well alongside each other and listen carefully to the staff when they portray safety messages.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They are curious, engaged learners who benefit from an excellent range of opportunities and activities. They are self-motivated to move between activities such as choosing a book to look at, building with blocks or drawing or decorating the Christmas tree. They develop concentration as they engage with these activities for extended periods. During their play children have many opportunities to learn and develop. For example, they begin to name colours and shapes, develop their vocabulary and use numbers. They develop physical control such as when playing in the elf workshop, using scissors, turning pages or using wheeled toys, slides and balls outside. Children also have good opportunities to develop their understand of diversity and community through everyday stories, images and outings. For example, they regularly visit local churches and homes for the elderly.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence and self-help skills which enables them to do things for themselves successfully. For example, they develop independence in making choices, helping to tidy up, cleaning the table for snack, deciding when they wish to have snack, washing their hands and pouring their own drinks. As children get older, they develop increasing independence with using the bathroom and managing their own clothing such as shoes and coats, eventually learning to help younger children with their coats. However due to the layout of the setting accessing the toilet independently is restricted.

Care and Development — Excellent

Staff have an excellent understanding of their role and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They demonstrate a thorough understanding of safeguarding procedures and have a detailed policy in place to support their practice. Staff accurately record accidents, medication administered and any injuries a child may have when they arrive and consistently ensure parents sign these records. They record the times of children's attendance. Staff promote and meet children's health needs successfully. They have a healthy eating policy in place, which they share with parents. They implement allergy plans when needed which they regularly review with parents. Staff ensure children get plenty of fresh air and exercise which further contributes to the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle. Effective hygiene practices are in place, including good nappy changing procedures.

Staff interact with children extremely well. They are calm, patient, and caring and act as excellent role models. Staff manage behaviour successfully with clear explanations of what children need to do if there is a problem. They use distraction methods and lots of praise to reinforce good behaviour. Staff form close bonds with the children, and they respond positively to them. As a result, their behaviour is excellent.

Staff are highly effective in supporting children's play and learning. They provide a play-based setting where children can follow their own interests and lead their own play. They are skilled at taking spontaneous opportunities to develop children's understanding such as providing them with relevant resources when a child expresses interest in something. Alongside free play, staff loosely plan interesting, enhanced activities that support and extend children's skills and thinking. They weave themes such as keeping safe, road safety, Remembrance Day or seasons into day-to-day activities successfully.

Staff are proactive and passionate about promoting community awareness and diversity through a range of resources, activities and outings. For example, the children excitedly told us about the visit they had planned later that day to sing carols in the local church. They use some Welsh both conversationally and incidentally to support children's developing understanding of the language. Staff track children's development and successfully meet the needs of all children including any who may have additional learning needs such as speech delay.

Environment — Good

Leaders ensure the setting is clean and well-maintained. It is safe and secure with external doors locked and keys inaccessible to children. Safety features such as baby gates are in place where needed and the outdoor area is securely fenced with monitors in place. They keep a record of visitors to the premises. Leaders have comprehensive, detailed risk assessments in place. These identify potential hazards and show the steps the setting takes to eliminate risks. Leaders review the risk assessments regularly. Gas and safety checks are carried out regularly and smoke alarms are checked weekly. Regular evacuation practises are carried out to help children become familiar with what they need to do in an emergency.

Leaders create an interesting and enabling environment that is child friendly and homely both inside and outside. Three sperate play spaces are available and split according to children's age, there are also times when all children mix. Children benefit from a playroom with ample space to play where they can also eat comfortably at appropriate sized tables. However, due to the layout of the property children do not have direct access from the play space to the bathroom and outdoor space. Each play space has a good variety of resources that children can access independently. Younger children sleep undisturbed in cots in a sleep room which the staff monitor diligently. The outdoor space offers children further and different opportunities to play and learn. Leaders also makes very good use of their local area to visit places such as the local town, parks, libraries and churches to further extend children experiences.

There is an extensive range of good quality resources and equipment both inside and outside that are clean, safe, and suitable for the children using them. There are some resources to promote awareness of diversity and cultural differences, including the Welsh language and culture.

Leadership and Management — Excellent

Leaders provide a high-quality, child centred setting. They are passionate and enthusiastic about their work and run their business efficiently. Paperwork is very well organised, easily accessible and reviewed regularly. Leaders have a comprehensive range of good policies to support the safe and smooth running of their setting which consider and reference the rights of children. A detailed Statement of Purpose that is useful for parents is in place.

Leaders are highly reflective. They evaluate the setting on an on-going basis with a thorough formal review each year. They seek the views of children and of parents and carers at each point of their journey with her setting. Leaders identify relevant areas for development such as developing their understanding of the Curriculum for Wales. Developments have a beneficial impact on children. For example, the introduction of the well being dog, which has proven to help some children through difficult times.

Leaders are well qualified and experienced and ensure they keep up to date with mandatory training such as paediatric first aid, safeguarding and food hygiene. They are also committed to continuous professional development and undertake many other courses that become available. The leaders ensure that all staff maintain a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Leaders work with other professionals such as teachers and local authority advisers and use community resources such as libraries. They develop excellent relationships with parents collecting all relevant information about their children before they start with them to ensure they can meet their individual needs. Leaders keep parents well informed about their children and what they do through a variety of methods that include an electronic app and daily verbal feedback. We saw many lovely thank you cards and positive questionnaires from families.

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 inspection	N/A

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)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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)
To consider introducing more multi cultural resources throughout the setting, especially in relation to the children who attend.

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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