Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Mighty Oaks Blackwood

Blackwood Primary School
Apollo Way
Blackwood
NP12 1WA



Date Inspection Completed

02/08/2024

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About Mighty Oaks Blackwood

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Mighty Oaks Blackwood Ltd
Registered places	32
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	None
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

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

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

Summary

Children have good opportunities to make choices and influence the direction of their play. They are happy and relaxed in their relationships with staff, showing significant trust and warmth. Children behave kindly and considerately, communicating effectively with both adults and their peers. They are independent and confident in their own abilities.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They care for children in a kind and relaxed way. Staff support children's learning and development appropriately and facilitate a variety of stimulating activities.

People who run the setting have effective systems and procedures in place to ensure the environment is safe, clean and secure. The premises are welcoming, friendly, and provide a good space for children to play and learn both indoors and outdoors. Resources provided are varied, interesting and age appropriate.

The leadership and management of the setting is efficient and supports practise well. People who run the setting are organised and have suitable policies and procedures in place. They deploy staff appropriately to ensure there are always sufficient qualified and experienced staff available to care for children.

Well-being Good

Children are settled and show enthusiasm for the setting. They are happy to independently explore available resources and use them in a way that interests them. Children make choices freely and confidently make requests to adults. For example, while enjoying some time in a sensory tent, children asked a staff member if they could take it outside. They then spent considerable time playing an imaginary game "*going to the moon*!" Children greatly appreciate the opportunity to move freely between the outdoor and indoor environments throughout their sessions. They share their views with staff when asked to choose songs to sing.

Children feel safe and secure in the care of staff. They demonstrate warm relationships by readily approaching them for a hug or to engage them in conversation. Children receive great encouragement and praise from staff, which gives them the confidence to play, learn and explore. For example, children beam when staff members admire their artwork and their responses when chatting about a story. Children show affection to their friends and favourite toys, for example by cuddling a doll as they chat together.

Children respect each other and behave well for their ages. They interact and play kindly together on shared tasks. For example, they happily work together to stack cushions and then move them into a sensory tent in readiness for their planned role-play. Children enjoy discussing their learning and activities with each other and with adults. For example, they approached us to tell us they had made cookies and explained what ingredients they used.

Children greatly enjoy their freedom to engage with activities of their choice. They have regular exercise and fresh air and highly value the time they spend outdoors, engaged in active play. For example, children negotiate bikes carefully around the outdoor area, singing as they do so. Many children concentrate for an extended period on a range of self-guided activities such as writing numbers to add to a playhouse. They enthusiastically engage in familiar adult-led activities such as origami.

Children develop well and are confident and curious. They have many opportunities to develop their independence skills through a variety of daily routines. They use the toilet and wash their hands with levels of independence in line with their stages of development. Some children help staff to tidy resources and all children serve themselves fruit from shared bowls. They engage excitedly as staff read familiar stories, shouting out the words they know are coming up next.

Care and Development Good

Staff follow clear policies and procedures to ensure children are healthy and safe. They demonstrate effective hygiene practices such as wiping tables and regular handwashing. Staff use effective methods of ensuring food and drinks are served safely. They follow clear procedures to manage allergies and food requirements effectively. On warm days, they ensure children are wearing sun hats and help them to apply sunscreen. Staff recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of their responsibility to report safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities. People who run the setting record and track safeguarding concerns very thoroughly and make referrals appropriately when necessary. Almost all staff members have first aid training, and they implement very clear procedures for recording accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries. People who run the setting review these regularly to identify concerns or patterns and take action to address anything identified. Staff follow procedures for administering medicine in line with the setting's policy. Staff ensure children are always well supervised; they ensure resources are being used safely and move quickly to remove emerging risks such as sand on the floor. People who run the setting carry out regular fire drills and reflect well on them once they are completed

Staff deliver warm, skilful care. They know the children well and meet their individual needs thoughtfully. They identify opportunities to engage children in a way that will interest and stimulate them. For example, a staff member asked a child what number their house was and provided the child with a piece of paper to put that number on the playhouse. The child was then joined by another who engaged in discussing the numbers and writing out more to put on the playhouse. Staff show great interest in all children and engage them in purposeful chatter throughout the session. For example, while at lunch they discussed the seagull they had seen outside and what they thought it would find in the bin. Staff work well together to support and promote children's social behaviour, taking into consideration their age and stage of development. They provide explanations for behaviours needed to ensure children understand the impact of their actions.

Staff support children's learning and development very well. They plan a range of stimulating activities, which run alongside free play and impromptu activities instigated by children. For example, a child found a snail in the outdoor area which led to children putting out flowers to feed it and making snail tracks using glitter and glue. Staff members evaluate activities thoughtfully and observe children closely to identify their next steps. They use very effective and detailed methods to track children's development. Staff use limited amounts of Welsh. They provide effective support for children with additional needs through working closely with professionals to deliver developmental support plans.

Environment — Good

The setting is based within a demountable building on a school site. People who run the setting and staff ensure the environment is safe and secure. Staff ensure the gates and doors are locked, and that visitors always sign in at the setting. People who run the setting have risk assessments in place for all areas of the building and outdoor area. They review and update these at regular intervals and support them with weekly and monthly checks of specific risks. People who run the setting have put clear emergency procedures in place and have ensured appropriate precautions such finger guards are in place. They obtain the appropriate certificates to be assured the required safety testing has been carried out for the building.

People who run the setting and staff have worked hard to create an inviting, child friendly and stimulating environment both inside and out. All areas have been set up thoughtfully to meet the needs of children and promote curiosity and independence. There are two light and airy playrooms that provide space for children to move freely and easily. Children have access to an outdoor area located next to one of the playrooms that provides them with good opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills. This area is partially covered and provides opportunities for outdoor play in all weathers. There are clean and accessible toilets, together with handwashing and nappy changing facilities adjacent to the playrooms. These are well stocked with soap and paper towels to promote an infection free environment.

Children have easy access to varied and interesting resources that aid their development effectively. Each of the two rooms has a range of clean, well-maintained and age-appropriate resources that meet children’s needs. They are stored at low-level so children can access them independently. Staff rotate resources regularly to ensure children are stimulated and provided with different and varied learning experiences that interest them. People who run the setting have ensured children have access to some resources that promote our diverse society and a few natural and real-life items to promote imagination. The outdoor area provides many interesting resources that encourage children to engage in both active and creative play. Staff conduct termly checks to ensure all resources are in good condition.

Leadership and Management — Good

People who run the setting are efficient in the way they manage and operate the nursery. The statement of purpose reflects how the nursery runs, allowing parents to make an informed decision about the care their child receives. People who run the setting have devised a good range of detailed policies and procedures to guide staff and inform parents. They review and update these regularly. Staff sign children in and out of the building and staff members also register their attendance at the start; however, they do not always sign themselves out. People who run the setting inform Care Inspectorate Wales of significant events affecting the care provided or the children attending. They obtain detailed information about children to ensure they fully meet their individual needs.

People who run the setting undertake an annual review where they consult with parents and children. They create a report that identifies strengths and areas they have targeted to develop and plans to achieve this. People who run the setting ensure the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) has been completed and submitted on time to Care Inspectorate Wales. They manage changes very positively and take pride in their achievements and developments. For example, they have created a floor book to chronicle the improvements they have made to the outdoor area. The setting's complaints policy is clear and appropriate. People who run the setting have not received any complaints.

People who run the setting support staff to provide a quality care provision. They spend considerable time within the play areas to ensure they know the staff and children well. Staff we spoke with told us they feel very supported. People who run the setting ensure all staff have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. They also ensure all staff have the skills, qualifications and knowledge to provide a safe service to children. People who run the setting deploy staff well to ensure there are always sufficient qualified staff present to care for children. They carry out regular supervisions to provide staff members with formal opportunities to discuss their professional development and any concerns they may have.

Parents consulted with by inspectors were generally very happy with the care provided by the nursery. They noted that the outdoor area was a strength of the setting. People who run the setting work closely with professionals to ensure children's needs are met.

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	

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 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	Develop use of the Welsh language.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure all staff sign out of the setting.

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)
Identify further opportunities to develop children's independence skills.
Increase the use of real-life items to stimulate and interest 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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