

Childcare Inspection Report on

Acorns Nurseries (Oakfield Street)

**16 Oakfield Street
Roath
Cardiff
CF24 3RD**



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Description of the service

Acorns Nurseries (Oakfield Street) is registered to provide day care for up to 49 children and cares for children between the ages of eighteen months and five years of age. It is owned by Acorns Nurseries Limited and operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. It operates from a large premises situated near to Cardiff city centre. The company has identified a Responsible Individual (RI) to oversee the nursery and has a Person in Charge (PiC) to deal with the day to day management. Care is conducted through the medium of English with some Welsh introduced.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Acorns Nurseries (Oakfield Street) is child centred and children's well-being, care, play and learning is central to how the nursery operates. Staff are experienced and well trained and build warm and nurturing relationships with the children. The environment is very well maintained and resources are of a very good quality. Leadership and management of the service is excellent with a clear understanding of National Minimum Standards and regulations in order to meet and exceed its legal responsibilities.

2. Improvements

The service has implemented recommendations from the last inspection:

- Formal supervisions are recorded and dated and
- the All Wales Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare Settings has been followed.

The service continues to invest within the nursery which is evident from the resources available and the high standards within the environment. Leaders have employed a practitioner to overview policies, procedures and record keeping and also developed a role for a dietary monitor to support cooks in checking dietary needs.

3. Requirements and recommendations

There were no areas of non compliance identified at this inspection.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and have developed secure relationships with the staff that care for them. They are encouraged to develop good social skills and are busy and able to play with a range of activities and resources which stimulate their curiosity and development.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are encouraged to explore and express themselves. Rooms are well equipped and easily accessible for all children who enjoy morning sessions of free flow play, with a choice of activities and equipment which children can access independently. Children can choose to play inside and outside. The children are comfortable approaching staff for assistance and staff supported them very well. Children participated well and were encouraged to express their views when playing or talking with staff. We saw from activity evaluation forms that children are consulted and their feedback is sought and recorded to help plan further activities that the children will enjoy.

The nursery provides opportunities for the children to express their views and thoughts and these are listened and responded to.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are settled, happy and relaxed. We saw children arriving at the nursery and they promptly left their parents / carers to play with activities that captured their interest. Children told us what they liked to play with and who their friends were and were clearly comfortable within their surroundings and with the staff. All staff interacted and played very well with the children. Children sought out staff to play and interact with, and staff responded to them positively. We saw children playing in a dinghy and they called a staff member over to sit in the dinghy and “row to an island!” with them. Strong attachments have been developed with staff and this is further supported by having an effective key worker system in place.

Children are happy and settled and confident in the staff working with them.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Staff support children to develop their social awareness and practice social skills. The children responded well to staff instructions to share, take turns and be kind to their friends. Staff used positive language and acted as good role models to prompt children as to what is acceptable without using negative language. We heard children using ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ throughout the inspection. Children were visibly pleased when staff praised them for sharing and being kind to each other. Staff sat on the floor, to be at the child’s level and positioned themselves carefully both within the rooms and outside play areas so that the children were suitably supported. Some of

the younger children engaged with tasks for quite a long time, given their age and stage of development. We saw children rolling different coloured balls down tubing, each ball represented a planet rolling through space, and then children collected them to start again. They engaged very well, turn taking and waiting patiently. Throughout the nursery, staff used appropriate strategies to help children learn how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships, which resulted in the nursery having a happy and calm environment.

Children are happy and interact well with their peers and the people who are looking after them.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

All children enjoy and are very engaged in their play and learning. We saw children playing with a very good variety of age appropriate toys including sand and water play, extensive art and craft materials and used recycled materials within their activities creatively. For example, 'moon boots' had been made so that children could make painted footprints on large bubble wrap which created a whole range of learning opportunities and sensory experiences for children. These activities enabled children to extend their creative and imaginative play. There was lots of chatter and conversation as well as laughter and warm interactions. Observations throughout the two days demonstrated that children have a balance of organised and free play activities.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning and benefit from a large selection of toys and activities

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop their independence. Toys and resources are situated so that the children can access these easily. We saw the older children use the bathroom independently. Coat pegs are at low levels which ensure children are able to access their personal belongings independently. At meal times children are encouraged to serve themselves from shared platters, and pour themselves drinks. Children were given flannels and prompted to wipe their hands and faces themselves, all of which supports their independence. We heard lots of incidental Welsh throughout the setting and children responded well to simple instructions and conversation. Activities are set up so that children can practice independence skills and were, for example, encouraged to take their shoes off and put moon boots on themselves, which children enthusiastically did as they were excited about stomping on the bubble wrap. Children are enabled by staff who are positive, encouraging them to learn and do as much for themselves as possible.

Children are encouraged to develop their independence skills both formally and through the play and learning opportunities on offer.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are well qualified, experienced and understand and implement key policies to keep children safe, promote their development and ensure children feel secure. Relationships with children were warm and affectionate and staff worked well together to provide a high quality service.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

The setting has been awarded a Level 5 by the food safety department of the local authority. Food provided at the nursery is freshly cooked and menus indicate that the food is varied and healthy. It looked and smelt appealing. The nursery employs a cook supported by a dietary monitor who is aware of any food intolerances and makes adjustments as required. Information relating to children with food intolerances is clearly displayed and all staff we spoke with knew the procedures and policies in place. Fresh water was readily available to all children throughout the day. Risk assessments are well written with hazards identified and preventative measures put into place. Fire Drills with children are practised on a monthly basis, with regular testing of safety equipment such as smoke alarms and emergency lighting supporting the overall safety of the setting. We saw that managers complete monthly audits of accidents and incidents as well as sickness levels to help determine any trends or problem areas. Children's health needs are recorded when they start the nursery. We spoke to several practitioners and they were able to discuss the health needs of the children in their care with a high level of confidence. Staff had appropriate first aid qualifications. The company provides a rolling training programme for staff in safeguarding and this ensures that all staff receive regular training in this area.

Staff and managers are mindful of their responsibilities in providing a safe and nurturing environment.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff understand how to manage children's behaviour in a positive manner so that children are receptive to and learn rules and boundaries. We heard one staff member remind a child 'No running. Good walking!' and the child responded appropriately and walked outside to play. Staff praised children for listening and taking turns and this reinforced the positive interactions children had with each other. Staff acted as good role models by demonstrating good manners and polite interactions. We observed that they spoke in calm and gentle tones, which were respectful and warm and gave children good eye contact when they spoke to them, ensuring children were paying attention and listening. Staff encouraged children to think of their 'friends' and supported inclusivity.

Staff manage interactions well and the setting provides a calm and reassuring environment for children to play and learn.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff have developed excellent relationships with the children and understand their individual needs well. Staff plan and provide very creative and stimulating activities for children's abilities. For example, we saw that children had made large ice blocks containing different textures and materials so that they looked interesting and children discovered new things as they melted. This engaged children very well. There are detailed development records for children in all base rooms. Regular observations are completed and children's strengths and areas for future development are identified. Careful questioning by staff further promotes the children's learning and understanding. We saw children in the forest school area learning about bugs. Staff asked the children where they thought the insect might be, 'under a rock? In the grass?' Children discussed their ideas and then started finding and catching insects to look at them through spy glasses, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Children engaged in these interactions and really enjoyed their time with the staff.

Staff promoted the children's well-being, learning and development to a very high standard and know children's individual needs very well.

3. Environment

Summary

The environment is clean, bright and maintained to a very high standard. Toys and resources are well looked after, plentiful and of a very high quality. Considerable care is taken to maintain safety in order to ensure the well-being of children. The setting benefits from a large outside play space, including planting areas and a forest school. A large conservatory acts as both a dining and messy play room.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

The PiC ensures that the premises are generally safe and there are daily risk assessment sheets completed by staff to support this process. These are monitored and as the company also employs a maintenance team any issues or identified hazards are addressed promptly. The nursery employs house keepers who support the safe, smooth and effective running of the setting. We noted that staff understood and implemented key safety procedures and positioned themselves well throughout the setting. This helped to ensure that they could monitor the children's safety in an unobtrusive manner and be on hand to offer assistance if needed. We heard lots of communication between staff and they worked well together. This ensured that all areas of the setting were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore in a safe and engaging manner.

Parents and carers can be assured that the children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

The building has been exceptionally well adapted to meet the needs of the children attending the nursery. The indoor play spaces are light, airy and very well maintained. All areas used by children are on the ground floor and they have direct access to a very well resourced outside play area. The indoor play space is very well decorated, child centred, warm and welcoming. There is considerable bilingual Welsh/English signs for the children to see. Windows provide lots of natural light. The outside play areas are well resourced and we saw the children enjoy playing with a range of exciting activities such as forest school activities, water play, and riding on trikes and bikes. These activities provide children with opportunities to experience lots of different types of outdoor physical play which is an important element in children's all round development.

The environment both inside and outside provides a highly stimulating learning environment and is of excellent quality.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children have access to good quality, varied resources, which are used creatively and imaginatively to enhance children's play experiences. There is a selection of multi cultural toys and books available for the children to use which help to reflect the wider society in which we live and promotes diversity and equality. Furniture is appropriate for the age of the children and of very good quality. Daily checks ensure that equipment is in good working order and we were told that any broken toys are removed immediately. The resources are plentiful and well maintained with regular cleaning procedures to ensure good hygiene standards.

Resources and equipment are appropriate for the different age ranges, are excellent quality and support the children's all round development.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

There is a strong management structure in place at the setting who support and implement very strong record keeping, clear policies and procedures and safe recruitment procedures.. The nursery is well organised and managed to a very high standard. The PiC, managers and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and were open and transparent throughout. Monitoring and review of the service leads to continual improvements which enhance the experience of the children who attend.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

There are thorough systems in place to support the effective operation of the nursery and ensure the nursery is fully compliant with the national minimum standards and day care regulations for children. The PiC has high standards and these are shared with the staff team. Regular team meetings are held which support information sharing and promotion of good working practices. When we spoke with staff they were clear about their roles and expectations, said they felt well supported and enjoyed working at the nursery. Many of the staff have worked for the company for a number of years. There are clear policies and procedures in place which supports the smooth and effective running of the nursery.

Leadership is effective and this is demonstrated in the smooth and efficient running of the setting and the high standards found throughout.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

The service strives to constantly review and develop the nursery and has employed a child care practitioner to regularly review and monitor policies and procedures to ensure they reflect up to date child care practice and to ensure they are understood by staff and implemented effectively within the nursery. An annual quality of care review is undertaken with feedback sought from parents, children and staff. The service then produces a report which clearly outlines areas for further improvement. These improvements are evident in the new resources bought for the setting.

Self evaluation and planning for improvement is very effective.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

Staff are managed very well and receive regular, meaningful supervision in order to identify good working practices. Staff files evidenced that safety recruitment checks such as two references and checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) were complete. All staff receive induction to new roles and more long-term staff also undertake refresher training to ensure their knowledge is up to date. Most staff are qualified to, or working towards level 3 or above, and there were sufficient staff working who held the necessary paediatric first aid qualification. Safeguarding training is organised by the company and there is a three year rolling programme in place,

ensuring that all staff have regular training in this important area. Agency staff are not used at the service as staff from other Acorns nurseries cover annual leave or sickness. All practitioners receive regular formal supervision and annual appraisals, in addition to attending regular staff meetings; all of which supports and promotes effective communication and consistency in care practices.

The overall management of practitioners, staff and other resources is excellent.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Staff build good relationships with parents and other child care, education and health professionals. Parents told us that they were very pleased with the communication they had with staff about their child and felt confidence in the staff. The management team have worked hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers and have arranged a selection of social events such as a Mother's and Father's Day Tea Parties and stay and play events for parents/carers. Parents' Evenings are held annually. There is a large notice board in the reception area of the nursery which provides parents with a range of information, including the setting's policies and procedures, the weekly menu, as well as a board showing key worker information. The management team seek to have effective relationships with their staff and have developed a staff newsletter which encourages anonymous feedback so that staff have a voice in addition to their feedback within team meetings. Additionally the company provides a well-being officer to work with staff across all nurseries, to help support with any issues of health or well-being, an additional needs co-ordinator to work with parents and health professionals and an early years teacher to guide staff in their planning for foundation phase children.

Partnerships are very effective and valued by all staff.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

None

6. How we undertook this inspection

An unannounced full inspection was undertaken over two days by one inspector, with feedback given on the second visit. The following methodology and information was considered:

- Information held by CIW;
- observations of care routines and practices undertaken;
- visual inspection of the setting, both inside and outside;
- discussions with staff and management team;
- conversation with some of the children attending the nursery;
- consideration of a range of policies, procedures and records kept by the nursery and
- speaking with two sets of parents dropping off/collecting their child from nursery.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

3. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Susan Hogg
Person in charge	Joanne Perkins
Registered maximum number of places	49
Age range of children	18 months to 5 years
Opening hours	7.30am – 6pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	11 December 2015
Dates of this inspection visits	02 and 03 July 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language. An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services
Additional Information: Cherie Wilson and Peter Reynolds are in the process of registering as Responsible Individuals to replace Susan Hogg.	