



Childcare Inspection Report on

The Alphabet Tree

**Varlin Court
Western Industrial Estate
Caerphilly
CF83 1BQ**



Date Inspection Completed

01/05/2019

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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

Description of the service

The Alphabet Tree nursery is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide care for up to 65 places for children under the age of 12 years. The registered person (RI) on behalf of the limited company is Louise Lloyd. A person in charge (PiC) has been appointed to run the nursery on a day to day basis. The nursery offers flexible care including a wrap around service to local primary schools. It is open from 7.30am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. It is an English medium service with incidental Welsh introduced through play.

Summary

Theme	Rating
<u>Well-being</u>	Good
<u>Care and Development</u>	Good
<u>Environment</u>	Good
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Adequate

1. Overall assessment

Children are very settled and happy in a service that meets their all –round needs. They have positive relationships with their peers and bonds of affection with carers. Practitioners are responsive to children in their care and support them well, providing a good range of play and learning experiences to support their development. The environment is well maintained and clean with good systems in place to keep children safe and secure. Leadership of the service is effective overall, but a more robust and thorough approach is required in relation to recruitment processes to ensure that regulatory requirements are met. There is consistent monitoring of the service and strong partnership with parents is evident.

2. Improvements

The statement of purpose has been revised, there is more effective embedding of the Welsh language, ceiling panels have been repaired and the school run has been risk assessed

3. Requirements and recommendations

We have advised the registered provider that improvement is needed in relation to staff recruitment processes in order to fully meet legal requirements. A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as there was no immediate or significant impact for children using the service. The provider has since taken action to rectify this matter.

We have made recommendations under the care and development theme and the environment theme. These recommendations are discussed in the report and listed in section 5.2 at the end of the report.

1. Well-being

Good

Summary

Children are happy, secure and familiar with the routines of the setting. Play experiences are varied, age appropriate and sustain their interest. Positive relationships are developing between children of different ages and their social skills are developing in line with the age and stage of development.

Our findings

Children are confident communicators and have good opportunities to express themselves. They self-direct their play and follow their interests, and this is reflected in planning. We noted that they were vocal and confidently spoke up when asked what songs they would like to sing. They are resilient and cope well with separation from their primary caregivers and children across all age groups settled quickly. Bonds of affection were evident as children happily approached practitioners for reassurance, and to converse with them. When praised for their accomplishments and efforts they showed pride and satisfaction in their work.

Children interact well with their peers and show an ability to co-operate with others and take turns. During outdoor play they waited to use large play equipment and we observed three children spontaneously hold hands, dance and sing. At lunchtime children chatted happily to each other and practitioners. They shared resources and equipment, showed respect for the toys they played with and displayed good manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you.' We found that children were settled and comfortable with the routines of the setting and all children were confident to explore their environment.

Children are interested and curious learners and have good opportunities to develop and thrive, both indoors and outside. They are able to influence their play and there is a good balance of child led activities. They showed a keen interest in us and were eager to know why we were visiting. A group of children collected leaves and twigs for us to take home at the end of the inspection and welcomed us back the following day. Some children explored the caterpillar tunnel crawling in and out of it, whilst others enjoyed ride on play equipment. Children were suitably occupied, happy and had a good range of play experiences including group play, and messy play activities.

Children have good opportunities overall to develop their skills and independence in line with their age and abilities. Many children helped tidy resources away and it was evident that they were familiar with this practice. They used appropriate cutlery and drinking cups to develop their self-help skills, although there were missed opportunities at lunch and snack time as drinks were poured for children, and fruit was sliced and served to them. Many children were able to wash and dry their hands without adult assistance and put on their jackets and shoes, although due to their age some children required help with these tasks.

2. Care and Development

Good

Summary

Practitioners respond well to the needs of children in their care and promote their play and learning effectively. Good systems are in place to support children's health and safety and practitioners are aware of their responsibilities in this area. Practitioners are pro-active in identifying children's development and planning for their next steps.

Our findings

Practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to children's health and safety. Consistent practice is followed in relation to children's health with nutritional meals and snacks provided. Practitioners relay information to relevant people regarding children's specific dietary requirements and the cook is confident about her role in relation to children with allergies. There are appropriate infection control measures in relation to intimate care practice, hand washing and food preparation and we saw evidence of this throughout the inspection. Practitioners have an understanding of their role in relation to safeguarding. There is a detailed written safeguarding policy and procedure covering the legal framework, types of abuse and procedures for reporting and recording of concerns. There are clear lines of delegation in relation to safeguarding and practitioners have received appropriate training in this area. Risks are identified in relation to school runs and appropriate safety measures are followed, for example, ensuring that practitioners have first aid kits with them when off the premises.

Practitioners deal with children's social development and behaviour positively. The service has written positive behaviour and biting policies. The strategies outlined in these policies are appropriate for the age and abilities of children who attend the service with an emphasis on supporting children through positive reinforcement and partnership with parents. There was very little requirement for practitioner's to intervene as children were well behaved and respectful. On the odd occasion when this was required practitioners gently reminded children to share and of the importance of good manners. We found that practitioners themselves were good role models. They were respectful to each other and to all the children in their care. Consequently, there was a calm and nurturing atmosphere in the nursery.

Practitioners support children's learning and development effectively and ensure that they have a broad range of different play opportunities to promote their all-round needs. Babies non verbal cues were noted by practitioners and appropriate support given. Welsh was used appropriately through play, which had been a recommendation of the previous inspection. Practitioners plan for a good range of play and learning experiences and children with additional learning needs are supported well to enable them to participate fully in activities. For example, we noted that a child was effectively supported and supervised to enable their participation and engagement in activities, and their key worker had a sound

knowledge and understanding of the child's needs. There is a formal system for identifying children's progress and planning for their next steps. Sleeping babies are supervised and checks are made every 10 minutes, but currently there is no written record maintained.

3. Environment

Good

Summary

The nursery is located on an industrial site and offers a bright, child friendly environment. Internal and outdoor play spaces are well maintained with all facilities located on the ground floor. It provides a safe and secure environment to promote children's welfare.

Our findings

Leaders are clear about their responsibility in relation to the safety of the environment. Emergency evacuation drills are conducted on a regular basis. Examination of the health and safety file indicated that all required checks were up to date with regard to gas, electric and fire safety. There is a secure entry system, side gates are locked to prevent unauthorised access to the premises and there is a secure foyer area. Practitioners ensure that internal spaces are clutter free and floors and tables are cleaned regularly. Daily risk assessment are completed and risks monitored and reviewed. A recommendation of the previous inspection in relation to repair of ceiling panels has been actioned. There are contracts with suppliers for the safe disposal of waste including recycling of nappies.

Leaders maintain the nursery to a good standard, although we noted some wear and tear to the nappy changing unit in the Apple Tree room. Base rooms are clean and tidy and most offer good natural light. Two groups alternate between two rooms, and there are additional rooms for quieter activities if needed. Base rooms have displays of children's work giving children a sense of belonging, and there is evidence of Welsh signage. There is a dedicated staff room, and a room is available for private conversations with parents. There are areas for the storage of belongings and the foyer area is bright and welcoming with a noticeboard displaying information on the staff team. The outdoor space offers three distinct areas for play. However, one section was not in use during our inspection as bark was being laid in readiness for the new mud kitchen. CIW has since been informed that this work has been completed.

Resources and equipment is suitable for the age of children who attend the service. Babies have access to a good selection of toys, and equipment such as cots, and seating is in good condition. Older children also have access to an appropriate range of resources including arts and craft materials and books. In general, furniture is in good condition, although some tables and chairs looked a little tired. Externally children benefit from a good range of ride on equipment and climbing apparatus to promote their physical development. Amongst other resources available was a good-sized wooden playhouse that at the time of our inspection was used for the storage of equipment. However, if utilised appropriately it could offer children a lovely space for imaginary play and for quieter activities.

4. Leadership and Management

Adequate

Summary

Overall, leaders have effective systems in place to facilitate the smooth running of the nursery, but staff recruitment processes are not consistent and robust enough at present. Leaders were open and receptive to feedback given in respect of this matter and acted swiftly to introduce a more organised system. There are very positive partnerships with parents, as well as links with the community, and good systems to review and monitor the service to plan for improvements.

Our findings

There is good collaboration between leaders to ensure that the service runs effectively. The RI is regularly on the premises to oversee the running of the nursery and to support the manager and practitioners. Systems are in place to review and monitor service documents and records and there is a comprehensive range of policies that reflect the ethos of the service. The statement of purpose offers parents key information about the service, although it required some development and leaders addressed this matter immediately. Appropriate accident and incident records are maintained and evaluated to identify any patterns.

There is a strong approach to quality assurance to plan for improvements to the service. Leaders consult with outside agencies and parents as part of this process. The annual review report was comprehensive and detailed and included an evaluation of feedback and action plans to move the service forward. The voice of the parent was evident in the report and feedback from service questionnaires were included. The service has completed Phase three of the Healthy and Early Years (HEY) scheme and achieved the Healthy Snack Award (gold) in 2018.

Leaders provide practitioners with good opportunities to develop their practice and there is a culture of continuous professional development. Alongside, training such as safeguarding and food safety, there are opportunities for wider training covering topics such as Autism, sign along, circle time and employment law. Practitioners are level 3 or above qualified, with four staff holding a level 5, and a further three studying towards the level 5 qualification. Team meetings are held to discuss issues pertaining to the nursery, alongside room leader meetings where information is cascaded down to the full staff team. Supervision and appraisal systems are in place to support practitioners and evaluate their practice. However, there are shortcomings in relation to recruitment processes, as we found on examination of a staff file that information was missing in relation to references, identification and statements as to the suitability of the employee. Leaders have acted swiftly to address this matter and have reviewed staff files to ensure that all necessary documentation is in place as required by regulations.

There are well established partnerships with parents, agencies and the wider community. We spoke to three parents during the inspection, all of whom spoke very highly of the service and the quality of care given to their children. One parent was particularly complimentary about how leaders and practitioners have gone over and above to support them and their child. Additionally, we have examined twenty parent questionnaires returned to CIW. Parent feedback was extremely positive and complimentary with comments such as *'The staff are amazing,' 'I feel confident that my [child] receives the best service possible,'* and *'The service should be recognised for the quality of childcare and education which they provide.'* From the feedback we received, it is evident that the nursery is held in high regard by parents who use the service. Parent evenings take place at least once a year, and families are welcome to attend the annual Christmas party and to participate in fundraising events. There are visits from the Speech and Language service, from the Zoo Lab, the Forte school of music and there are plans to introduce 'Digging with Dave' and establish links with a local residential care home.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Review practice at meal times to ensure that children's independence is fully promoted;
- develop a system for monitoring sleeping babies;
- ensure that children have access to the play house and
- repair the surface of the nappy changing station in Apple Tree base room.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, unannounced inspection conducted as part of our normal schedule of inspections. It involved one inspector visiting the service over the course of two days for approximately 11 hours. The methodology used for the inspection included:

- Conversations with the RI, PiC, children, practitioners and three parents;
- observation of care practice and interactions between practitioners and children;
- a visual inspection of the nursery;
- examination of documents and records including the policy file, health and safety records, staff records and children's development files;
- examination of information held by CIW including the previous inspection report, twenty parent questionnaires and four practitioner questionnaires and
- feeding back our findings to the RI and PiC at the end of the inspection process.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Louise Lloyd
Person in charge	Kelly Savage
Registered maximum number of places	65
Age range of children	3 months to 5 years
Opening hours	7.30am until 6.00pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	18 June 2016 and 20 June 2016
Dates of this inspection visits	1 May 2019 and 2 May 2019
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?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's ' <i>More Than Just Words follow up strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.</i> '
Additional Information: None	

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