



Childcare Inspection Report on

The Oak Tree Centre

**Ffordlas
Rhyl
LL18 2DY**

Mae'r adroddiad hwn hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

This report is also available in Welsh



Date of Publication

9 August 2018

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Description of the service

The Oak Tree Centre provides a full day care service for a maximum of 77 children up to the age of 12 and form part of the integrated family support centre in Rhyl. The hours of operation are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year. The care is mainly provided in English with children introduced to some basic Welsh phrases and songs. The nursery is funded to provide care for three year olds and is consequently inspected by Estyn. Places are also available for children under the Flying Start scheme. The responsible individuals are Roger Ellerton and Dawn Anderson. Dawn is also the person in charge of the nursery.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children attending The Oak Tree Centre are happy and enthused by their learning experiences. They experience positive attachments with staff who are extremely enthusiastic and dedicated to providing children with a wide range of positive experiences. Staff are knowledgeable, nurturing and consistent who enthusiastically meet individual needs. They benefit from a well planned, extremely child-centred service. Parents are extremely happy with their children's progress and the service provided.

2. Improvements

Since the last inspection leaders have invested a lottery grant awarded to them in developing a new outdoor play area which offers children a broad range of stimulating experiences which can be enjoyed by all.

A new supervisor role has been created which will enable leaders to offer staff additional structured support.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We made a recommendation in relation to promoting children's independence and use of the Welsh language and developing the baby outdoor play area.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning and interact in a highly positive manner. They are confidently communicate their choices and feel fully valued and secure.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children express their views confidently and know they can influence how they spend their time and that their ideas will be listened to.

Children regularly made choices about how they spent their time and what activities they wanted to take part in. We saw babies exploring their environment freely; they used non verbal queues to share with staff what they wanted to do. For example, they made it known to staff when they wanted to play with the sand, their wishes were listened to and responded to positively and a group of them enjoyed the activity immensely. The toddlers all individually chose the song they wanted to sing during circle time, by selecting a specific item from a box and they all shouted to the song the toy related to. Children in the pre-school room moved freely between indoors and outdoors and were afforded the same exceptionally well planned activities which ever area they chose to play in. They chose when they wanted to enjoy snack and were heard confidently chatting to those around them. After school club children plan how they want to spend their time, they make decisions about what themes and activities they want to take part in and we saw their ideas had been captured in a mind map.

Children enjoy significant opportunities to have their say and make choices.

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

Children are happy and settled and experience attentive and genuinely warm and affectionate care.

Children genuinely flourish at The Oak Tree Centre, they experience care where staff go over and above to make sure their time there is meaningful and full of affection and warmth. Babies benefit from responsive homely care; children were showered with praise and affection. Babies huddled on the sofa for cuddles and a story and the children confidently sought out familiar staff. We saw a child and staff playing for an extended period of time with linked telephones, they comfortably chatted with each other whilst moving around the garden; the child's imaginative play was encouraged and extended due to the genuine interest shown by staff in what they were talking about. Children's days are consistent, they knew what was happening next and this afforded them confidence and security in their environment. A parent noted they were *"very happy with the service provided, lovely nursery, very friendly staff and most of all my child is settled and happy"*

Children feel fully valued, safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact extremely well.

Children interacted and listened to instruction particularly well; they listened when it was time to tidy up and all eagerly worked to get the job done. Children enjoy an ample amount of positive interactions, a crawling baby was seen smiling at others from across the room and danced when they started singing familiar nursery rhymes. Children are forming friendships with one another, babies played, laughed and giggled amongst the soft cushions whilst they explored their environment. We saw two children enjoy a water play activity and they laughed and cheered when one successfully filled the tub. Children were seen running to get each other when they played outside used the magnifying glasses to hunt for bugs, one running to get another to show what they had found. We saw after school children sitting and relaxing with staff and friends whilst they hunted for four leaf clovers, they spoke about how their day had been and subjects important to them.

Children are successfully beginning to understand their feelings and emotions and are learning how to express them exceptionally well.

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

Children are enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

All children were highly motivated as they participated in their choice of play and learning. They had been learning about the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, the resources available reflected the theme and they enjoyed playing in the 'castle' and wearing the dressing up items. Children welcomed others to their games and chose when they wanted to be busy and occupied and when they wanted to focus on quieter tasks such as drawing pictures or painting stones. Children loved the water play activity and babies thoroughly enjoyed playing with the sand. They were all eager to go out to play; they enjoyed a wealth of different experiences in all outdoor areas; they rode their bikes on the pretend 'road', dug holes to search for treasure and read books. They enjoyed having so many activities to choose from both indoors and outdoors. Children were encouraged and supported to take positive risks and they enjoyed climbing the trees outdoors. Children were also seen dancing and doing gymnastics.

All children gain an inspiring and exceeding sense of achievement and great value from their play and learning experiences.

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

Children are confident, independent and make good progress.

Children were prepared for transition through the rooms; they were supported to progress and grow. For example, we saw a group of children from the toddler room being supported to engage in focused adult led tasks in preparation for their transition to the pre-school room. Pre-school children regularly visited the neighbouring school in preparation for their transition. Children positively self-directed their own play, choosing appropriate tasks to enjoy and they benefited from a wealth of opportunities for language development; for example, staff counted and babies mimicked the noise, creating sounds supporting them to

develop positive language skills. Staff used Makaton for communication and we saw children mirror the sings made by staff. Children were introduced to some basic Welsh words, through singing nursery rhymes and children confidently sang along. Parents noted on a completed questionnaire that since their child had been attending he has *'come on loads, he's doing things I never thought possible and can't thank the staff enough for everything'*

During snack time children were seen pouring their own drinks and cleared their own plates and were provided with individual wipes to clean their faces and hands when they had finished eating. We recommended children could be supported and encouraged to complete some of these tasks for themselves during lunch time

Children are able to accomplish things for themselves; they thrive because of the experiences offered.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are well organised, competent and motivated. They successfully promote children's all round development through varied and interesting planned activities and their caring and responsive approach. Staff are well qualified and experienced and work effectively to meet children's needs. They understand how to keep children safe and healthy and promote positive interactions through a consistent approach and being good role models.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they are committed to promoting children's overall well-being.

Polices and procedures were easily accessible and embedded in practice. Staff demonstrated a sound understanding of safeguarding and ensuring children's continued well-being. Staff spoken to were familiar and confident with the process to be followed if they were worried about a child. All staff spoken to informed us they felt they had ample opportunity for discussion with each other and leaders to monitor the well being of children and detailed records were kept.

Staff have established a close and effective working relationship with each other and parents. Accident and incident forms had been completed fully and a thorough review was conducted every month to ascertain whether there were any significant patterns which would highlight that change needed to be implemented. Staff had recently started completing a new new form when children had been sent home due to illness; and record when the child will be allowed back to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Staff reported this was a positive change and made everyone fully aware of what was expected of them. Staff also record head injuries on a separate form.

Staff followed the procedure recommended by the All Wales Infection Control audit tool when changing nappies to reduce the risk of spreading infection. The information was logged and later shared with parents in children's daily diaries. Staff supported children to wash their hands with soap and water before meal times. Meals and snacks provided were healthy and nutritious, snacks were prepared by staff and main meals delivered from the neighbouring school. Staff checked the food delivered to make sure it was served at correct and safe temperature. An alternative choice is made available for children with allergies and dietary preferences.

Physical activity was given high priority with all children spending an extended period of time playing outside in the fresh air. Staff supported the babies to play in the larger play area at the end of the day.

Staff have excellent measures in place to ensure children's overall health and well being are promoted.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are consistent. They are extremely approachable and caring.

Staff spoke with children in a calm and caring manner and children responded in the same way. We heard lots of 'please' and 'thank you' and positive behaviour was celebrated. Staff regularly showered children with praise and encouragement, letting them know how well they had done. Staff shared with children how 'fantastic' they were, and all exchanges were genuinely warm and affectionate. Staff implemented effective positive behaviour management techniques; distraction was used, when a child was upset because they wanted their mum, staff used a positive voice and encouraged them to look out the window with each other to see what was going on. They model appropriate behaviour and give children time and their full attention. Staff support children to take turns and share, when a child took an item from a child, they were supported to return the item and staff helped them get a similar item for them to play with. A parent told us *'the staff are amazing and so caring'*.

Staff foster and promote positive relationships, they are caring and passionate in their approach; thus enabling children to flourish and grow.

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

Staff fully promote children's play, learning and development.

Staff knew the children extremely well and provided plenty of support when needed; giving children time to follow their own interests and ideas. For example, staff had arranged a themed area linking into the "jack and the beanstalk" story where staff sat alongside children to talk about the different items and read the story to them again. They showed a genuine interest in the children's choice of activities; they were heard discussing how many snails they had been able to find in the garden. The pre-school room was extremely well planned making sure children experienced all of the activities set out in accordance with the Welsh Government's Foundation phase of Play and Learning. They told us they planned the themes and activities by carefully taking into consideration children's interests and level of ability which made learning fun and interesting for the children. Staff kept records of children's development, completing regular assessments of their ability and providing appropriate well planned activities in response, to extend children's learning. Staff regularly recorded observations to plan for the children's future play and learning and we saw evidence of children making positive progress in their understanding of the world around them. Children were developing fundamental skills and if needed they were accessing additional support and resources with staff and agencies working in partnership to ensure children thrived.

Staff are dedicated and very enthusiastic in promoting children's play, learning and development.

3 Environment

Summary

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a stimulating and secure child centred environment providing them with a positive ethos for play and learning. Effective procedures are followed to ensure children are kept safe and resources are clean and of good quality.

Our findings

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

Leaders prioritise the safety of children and ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities and implement changes when required.

Risk assessments were in place for all areas used and these had been reviewed and updated annually. Additional risk assessments had been completed for specific activities or changes to the environment and all rooms completed daily safety checklist to ensure the environment was safe before the children arrived. We saw an effective daily cleaning routine was implemented, with appropriate methods and procedures being followed. A visitors log and daily register were kept, recording the staff and children who attended; with a record kept of the name of the adult whom would be collecting the child at the end of the day. Fire drills had been regularly undertaken; with detailed record of action needing to be taken and evidence these had been implemented promptly. The evacuation route was clearly displayed in each room.

Leaders ensure hazards are identified and measures are put into place to minimise the risks to children's safety.

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

The indoor and outdoor play areas are welcoming, well-decorated and provide a rich environment for learning. There is sufficient space and facilities to meet the needs of different age groups and individual children.

Leaders and staff had made the outdoor play area a high priority and it was used as an integral part of the learning environment. Leaders and staff had thoughtfully laid out the outdoor area to allow children to explore a range of play opportunities because it contained: a large grassed area; willow shelters; a bug hotel; a shed and a separate newly developed area used for physical activity, sensory path, ride on toys, mud kitchen, tunnel and sand pit. Older children in particular enjoyed playing with the sand pit. Babies did not have immediate access to an outdoor area of the same standard and we recommended this was an area that could be developed further to encourage and allow babies to move between indoors and outdoors. The indoor area was laid out to suit the ages of the children in different areas. For example, older children had direct access to the toilets which they could access independently and babies had space to crawl and explore in their room which featured low level mirrors. Leaders had ensured the environment was bright and welcoming and that children's work and photographs were on display throughout the nursery which

created a good sense of security and belonging. A completed questionnaire by a parent said *"amazing staff, amazing environment"*

Leaders go over and above to ensure the suitability of the environment.

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

Leaders provide an outstanding range of good quality toys and equipment which provide children with a wealth of different and interesting activities.

The equipment and resources have been carefully planned to offer children a variety of different learning opportunities. Different textures were introduced and wherever possible leaders use natural and real life items. Children could sit and read either indoors or outdoors, amongst comfortable cushions or on the wooden table and chairs. The resources in each room reflected the ages and stages of children's development. Items are rotated and replenished with staff benefitting from being able to move resources between the rooms. Leaders and staff use the resources to reflect the current theme, for example, the play house in the pre-school room had been changed in to a castle and jack from the story 'jack and the beanstalk' was seen hanging from the ceiling. Baby room staff are diligent and thorough in their cleaning of resources with a detailed record of when items have been cleaned. A similar system was also being implemented in other rooms.

Leaders ensure there is an excellent range of resources and equipment available which promotes children's curiosity and enhances their experiences and development. Resources are interesting and children enjoy using them.

4 Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders are committed and successfully promote and support a clear sense of purpose. Leaders strive to deliver high quality care and provide positive and enriching experiences for children. Staff are highly motivated and skilful and genuinely care about the children. The service is highly valued by the families and surrounding community.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders model and deliver an excellent service.

Leaders have communicated their vision for the service well, the staff team is consistent and go over and above to fulfil the aims of the service and promote positive outcomes for children and their families. The person in charge and room leaders succeeds in working together to lead the service; they are visible and available. They give top priority to ensuring the service continues to move forward and have exceedingly high expectations for the direction and achievements of the service. The person in charge and staff are exceptionally committed and genuinely passionate, driving the service forward for the benefit of the children and families who use it. The person in charge and staff are thorough in their leadership to motivate the setting to be a nurturing, caring environment where children are happy, eager to learn and be confident. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and easily available for parents and staff. We discussed with leaders the recent introduction of the 'active offer' and the expectation the Welsh language is readily available within the service and we recommended more Welsh could be used day to day with the children.

Leaders and staff have a clear sense of purpose that promotes improvements and regularly exceeds The National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders regularly assess the quality of service delivery and implement robust strategies to improve and move the service forward where required.

We saw evidence of leaders assessing outcomes and regularly reflecting on what they do. Leaders and staff regularly complete play and area observations, different sessions will be observed by individuals whom do not usually work in that particular room. The observations reflect on what has gone well what could work better and suggested plans for the next steps. Professionals visiting the service are requested to complete a feedback form, reporting on how their visit went and record any observations made on how leaders and staff can improve practice and the environment for the future. Leaders involve staff in any changes and promote a positive ethos that they all work as one team. Leaders

provided regular feedback, support and guidance to staff and all had contributed to the annual quality of care review.

Strengths and areas for development are recognised and action taken to maintain and improve practice.

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

Leaders provide staff with a high level of support; resources are regularly reviewed and updated when needed.

Leaders supported staff in their roles and everyone is extremely familiar with their responsibilities. Leaders and staff are diligent in ensuring all staff feel supported. Staff attended appropriate training to enhance their knowledge and we were told by staff that leaders support staff for future career development.

Leaders clearly conveyed what the service seeks to accomplish and supported staff to be forward thinking and highly valued their work they do. Supervision and annual appraisals have been taking place and in order to ensure these continue to be regular and meaningful a senior member of staff has recently been recruited to provide the person in charge with day to day support.

Leaders have appropriate high expectations of themselves and others, set realistic targets and are good role models to motivate staff.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders work closely with partner agencies and promote working in partnership with parents.

Leaders provide parents and partner agencies with detailed information about what the service's aims and objectives are and what children will experience and benefit from when they attend the service. Parents benefit from receiving detailed information about their child's progress and achievements during their time at The Oak Tree Centre. All completed parent questionnaires returned were extremely positive. Parents shared that *'the staff are very approachable and inform us as parents how they get on'. My son really enjoys going to The Oak Tree Centre & loves all the staff there'*. This is an *'excellent service, very thankful for all their hard work and efforts.'*

We saw ample evidence of leaders and staff working in partnership with partner agencies and we saw positive feedback reports all stating how the effective joint working contributes to positive outcomes for the children. The service regularly welcomes professionals and parents to the service and in part the integrated family centre is a hub for the local community. The contribution the service makes to children's lives is highly valued.

Leaders have recently started holding play events in the local community, extending the positive experiences to additional children in the community.

Leaders work closely with parents to improve children's learning and well being, they are kept well informed and encourage parents to be active partners. The service is working hard in order to promote good links with the community and partner agencies.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

Leaders to consider;

- Supporting children to complete suitable tasks for themselves during lunch time;
- developing the outdoor baby play area further to offer;
- further develop the day to day use of the Welsh language; considering the 'active offer' of the Welsh language.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

One inspector visited the service on the 14 June 2018 from 09:20am until 18:00pm.

We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- spoke to the children and staff;
- read questionnaires from parents and
- looked at children's files and staff files;
- provided detailed feedback.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Roger Ellerton Dawn Anderson
Person in charge	Dawn Anderson
Registered maximum number of places	77
Age range of children	Birth to 12 years old
Opening hours	8.00am – 6.00pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	10 May 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	14 June 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service whom is working towards providing an 'Active offer' of the Welsh language. At present the Welsh language is not actively visible and available in the day to day operation.
Additional Information:	