



Childcare Inspection Report on

Little Acorns Day Care Nursery Ltd

**Llynfi Enterprise Park
Heol Ty Gwyn Industrial Estate
Maesteg
CF34 0BQ**



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Description of the service

Little Acorns Day Nursery Ltd. was registered in October 2006. The service operates from rooms within a building situated on an industrial estate in Maesteg. The service is overseen by the responsible individual Sarah Stephens on behalf of Little Acorns Day Nursery Ltd. The persons in charge are Sarah Stephens, Caroline Fallows and Karen Stephens. The service is registered to provide care to a total of 57 children aged from birth to 12 years and operates from 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday all year round. The main language of the service is English and some basic Welsh is promoted. The service receives funding for the education of three-year olds and is inspected by Estyn.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Overall, we Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) found that children who attend this service have a good voice. Children benefit from participating in a range of interesting activities indoors and outdoors. They experience a range of educational and fun activities. They are happy and settled and have good relationships with their carers. Staff are qualified and experienced. We found that children have access to a suitable range of toys, furniture and equipment. The environment is safe and well maintained. The service is managed well.

2. Improvements

During the course of inspection the provider has:

- provided a valid heating test certificate and Portable Appliance Test;
- provided the current statement of purpose;
- updated the safeguarding and complaint policy;
- purchased a new changing mat and
- confirmed that outdoor containers are now turned upside down to prevent them filling with water.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We have made a recommendation, which is detailed at the back of this report.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children feel safe and happy within their environment and with their carers. Children make good age appropriate choices, they are confident and are developing their self help skills. They enjoy the play opportunities and experiences offered and their independence skills are developing well.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children make choices, are listened to, and are encouraged to speak and express themselves.

Children had a good voice and were listened to at the service. They confidently moved from one play area to another and had free choice of toys and activities. We saw children help themselves to the resources as they were stored at low level. We saw young children select musical instruments themselves before taking part in a music activity. Children asked for second helpings of snacks and meals. They had free play opportunities and engaged in activities of their choice as well as taking in part in an adult-led activity such as yoga.

Children have a good voice at this service.

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

Children are happy, settled and have good bonds of affection with staff. They move around and choose activities with confidence.

Most children arrived happily and settled quickly. Any unsettled children were comforted and enjoyed cuddles and reassurance from the staff. We saw that children had positive attachments with the staff caring for them. The children were at ease, confident and relaxed with their carers. We saw children confidently approach staff for cuddles, for reassurance or to ask for support, for example at toilet visits. Children confidently moved around the play areas and explored the resources and activities on offer. We heard laughter and saw many smiling faces.

Children are happy and feel valued.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning to co-operate and they interact well with each other.

Children played well together. We saw that children busied themselves with the activities on offer to them, they helped themselves to toys or asked for resources such as the 'beauty box'. We saw some good co-operation and communication between the children as they worked together to clear away the toys. Most children took turns and shared resources. We saw the older children share the beauty box and took turns with the water play resources. We saw younger children sharing the musical instruments during a music

session. Children's behaviour was good, we saw minor disputes which were resolved with minimal intervention from staff.

Children interact well.

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

Children enjoy organised and free play activities and are interested in their play and learning.

Children enjoyed their time at the service. They had a choice of resources and freely moved around their play areas and activities. We saw children getting very excited and animated to join in with the yoga session. They clearly knew the routine and were seen taking their shoes off and sitting on the gym mats. They particularly enjoyed joining in with the songs and practising for the Christmas show. Children were enthusiastic and eager to explore and learn. We saw children persevering for some time to complete craft activities, to look at books and had fun contributing to story time.

Children enjoy good play and learning experiences and show enthusiasm.

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

Children are able to choose from a range of activities, which promote all round development and independence skills.

Children had opportunities to develop and become independent. We saw children participate in educational activities such as arts and craft, looking at books and taking part in story time. We heard them singing songs and being encouraged to count in Welsh. Younger children's language development was promoted well, we heard them being encouraged to respond to questions and to repeat words. During water play children listened to shells, we heard staff ask "what can you hear – the waves? What else can be found in the sea?" "Star fish" the children replied. We heard music playing in the background during the visit, we did not see children engage with the music. Older children independently visited the toilets and washed their hands but staff were on hand to offer support if necessary. Most children ate their meals independently and we saw the helper of the day use tongs to serve bread to the children. We saw that most children helped to tidy up the toys. Children were encouraged to do as much as possible themselves, however, support was offered when needed, such as to put coats and hats on.

Children are developing their all round skills well.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff have warm and caring relationships with the children. Staff know the children well and meet their individual needs. Staff provide a variety of stimulating play opportunities to promote the children's all round development.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote children's health and safety well. They offer healthy meals and promote healthy lifestyles effectively.

Staff were very consistent in ensuring children's safety and promoting healthy lifestyles. Safeguarding was a priority, staff were well aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and clear about what to do if they had concerns. Leaders had achieved the Healthy Gold Snack Award. Leaders provided children with freshly prepared meals and were fully aware of children's dietary needs. They devised individual place mats for each child displaying a photograph, name and any dietary requirements, which was also used for children to easily identify their seat at meal time. We saw the staff followed good hygiene practices, they wore appropriate protective clothing for nappy changing, washed the tables, changed the bedding after use and reminded children to wash their hands prior to meals and after toilet visits.

Staff are effective at keeping children safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff are good role models. They promote positive behaviour and manage interactions very well.

Staff managed interactions very well. We saw some staff engage with children, chat to them respectfully and praise them at all times for the efforts and achievements. We heard the words such as *"good boy/girl"* and *"good job"*. We heard staff encourage children to wait their turn with the toys and to share. Staff sat at the children's level on the floor or at the tables and used appropriate language to communicate with the children. Staff appropriately intervened when minor disputes arose.

Staff manage children's interactions successfully.

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

Staff know the individual needs of the children in their care. They plan activities to promote children's all round development.

Staff promoted children play, learning and development well and we observed them joining in the play resulting in children's laughter and fun. During play, staff members encouraged and supported some quieter/non-verbal children, to make their needs known by pointing to items, we also saw that a 'it's my choice' book containing photographs were used so that children could show staff what they wanted to do next. We heard staff extending children's play and learning by encouraging children to tell them what they wanted to do and offering

choices. Staff knew the children's needs and they understood their children's preferences, likes and dislikes. For example, in the baby section staff members knew if a child liked a comforter for nap time. Children had access to a very good selection of resources to promote their all round development.

Staff promoted children play, learning and development effectively.

3. Environment

Summary

Leaders provide a suitable and safe environment for children. There are various dedicated play areas for children in the various age ranges. There is plenty of space for play time, quiet time and meals/messy play. There is a good supply of resources and equipment to meet the children's needs. There are dedicated outdoor play areas for the various age groups.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that the environment is a safe, clean and secure. Leaders identify risks to children and so far as is possible, eliminate or reduce them. Some improvements are needed in this area.

The environment was safe and secure with the main service's entrance accessed by a finger print system. The refectory area was secured by a turn buckle lock. A visitors' book was completed. The outdoor areas were enclosed and secured with fencing and gates. Risk assessment forms were available for each area, with a matrix used in April/May 2018. Staff carried out daily safety checks on the premises, toys, equipment and the outdoor area. However, we saw that outdoor buckets were full of water, a nappy change mat had split and the sofa in the baby room was worn. Since the previous inspection, leaders had further developed the outdoors areas to create an additional messy play area and expanded the side area for free access. Safety gates were in position where necessary. Monthly fire drills were practised and although the leader told us that a heating system check and portable applicant test had been undertaken, certificates were not available at the inspection. The service had been awarded a food hygiene rating of 5.

Overall leaders provide a safe, clean and secure environment for the children.

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

Leaders provide suitable premises, which are child friendly and stimulating. The layout promotes children's independence well.

Leaders maintained the premises effectively. There was enough space and facilities to meet the children's needs and they were light and airy. The under two room had been divided into areas for non mobile and mobile children, the 2 year old room had been divided into a play area and sensory area and the 3+ year old areas had been designed in line with the principles of the Foundation Phase. Children had excellent free flow indoor and outdoor opportunities as the doors led directly outside and were often left open for free choice. Inside each section had areas for table top play, floor play and quiet time. The refectory was mainly used for messy play, meals times and some group activities such as singing. Outdoor areas had been divided for each age range of children and were suitably equipped with resources. The premises promoted older children's independence very well, children were able to explore their areas and visit the toilets independently.

Leaders ensure the environment is suitable for children's learning.

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

Leaders ensure that children have access to furniture and equipment that are suitable for their needs.

Leaders ensured that children had access to furniture and equipment suitable for their needs. There was a good range of toys and resources that were appropriate for their ages, needs and development. Toys, equipment and furniture viewed were well maintained, however, the sofa in the under 2s section was worn. There was plenty of visual evidence that leaders promoted cultural awareness. We saw various dolls, dressing up items, books and displays. Basic Welsh language was promoted, we heard Welsh words, counting and songs during our visit and some areas displayed bilingual signage and labelled boxes. The service employed two Welsh speaking staff members.

Leaders ensure there is a good variety of resources and equipment available to children.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders ensure that the service is compliant with the regulations and national minimum standards. The service is managed well and the record keeping is organised. Staff recruitment is robust.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders ensure that the service meets regulations and national minimum standards.

A statement of purpose was in place, it contained all the required information. There was a comprehensive range of policies and procedures and these had been recently reviewed. However, the complaints and safeguarding policy displayed the old CIW telephone number. A random sample of children's files were viewed and all information required was in place. Records inspected were methodical and comprehensively completed. We saw that developmental records were maintained and daily diaries shared with parents. The systems to monitor the development of children were very effective, their progress and achievements were records and staff had developed medium and long term plans. Evidence that activities were evaluated and how they could be improved upon were viewed. Staff told us that they were fully involved in the planning process. Leaders maintained a record of children's attendance as well as staff attendance.

Leadership is efficient.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders evaluate their service. Leaders are keen to obtain feedback and to improve the service provided.

The service had a self-evaluation system, which included questionnaires for parents, professionals, staff and children. Leaders had produced a quality of care report for 2018/19. Leaders had developed an action plan identifying areas for improvements and how these would be met. Some areas had already been met such as some information forms were updated, the purchase of ICT provisions, the development of the outdoor area and the implementation of an in-house training schedule.

Self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

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

Leaders know their conditions of registration. The management of the service is effective.

Leaders follow a robust recruitment system. We sampled three staff files and found that files contained the necessary information as required by regulations. Staff one to one sessions and annual appraisals were in place and staff told us that they felt fully supported and that their training was supported and encouraged. Of the 14 staff employed, 13 staff

were appropriately qualified to at least a level 3 and some staff had gained a level 3 in the Play Work qualification. All staff had attended core training in child protection, first aid and food hygiene. Staff had also attended numerous additional training courses such as Wellcomm, Designed to Smile and fire safety. The staff to child ratio was maintained during the inspection. Vehicle documentation was available for those who transported children.

The management of the service is organised.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders and staff keep parents informed about their child's care.

The service had a 'parent involvement policy', which encouraged parents and carers to become involved with the service and to visit the service to discuss their child's development. There were information areas throughout the service, for example in the foyer and at the service entrance. The service's policy and procedure folder was available to parents. Leaders had good partnerships with the local community, we saw photographic evidence of children undertaking various activities in the nursery and the community. We also saw a 'praise our team' area where parents could place comments. Staff gave verbal feedback at collection time and parents shared any necessary information with the service.

Leaders have good partnerships.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the provider should:

- use music for a specific task or as an activity and
- risk assess the sofa in the under two room.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of the schedule of inspections.

Two inspectors visited the service on 28 November 2018 for approximately 4 hours. We:

- inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice;
- spoke to some children and some staff;
- provided questionnaires to be issued to parents, staff and children and
- provided detailed feedback to the provider by telephone on 2 December 2018.

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	Sarah Stephens
Person in charge	Sarah Stephens Miss Caroline Fallows Miss Karen Stephens.
Registered maximum number of places	57
Age range of children	Birth to 12 years.
Opening hours	7:00am to 6:00pm Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	17 August 2016 and 23 August 2016
Dates of this inspection visit	28 November 2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
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 that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Additional Information:	