



Childcare Inspection Report on

Acorns Nurseries

**Coleg Morgannwg
Heol yr Odyn
Nantgarw
CF15 7QX**



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Description of the service

Acorns Nursery has been registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) since 2012 and is based on the site of Coleg Morgannwg, Nantgarw, in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The nursery is one of 13 settings in South East Wales owned by Acorns Nurseries Limited. It is registered to care for up to 72 children under the age of eight years at any one time. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 6.00pm. The nursery has a Responsible Individual (RI) Cherie Wilson who has nominated a Person in Charge (PiC) Angeleen Thomas to manage the nursery on a day to day basis.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children really benefit from this excellent service, which is thoughtfully planned and extremely child-centred. Children settle quickly and enjoy a wide range of play and learning experiences that are tailored to meet their needs. Staff are nurturing, consistent, knowledgeable and there is exceptional teamwork. The environment is very safe, secure and well maintained. Children have access to a range of good quality toys, materials and equipment to encourage them to play, explore and learn. The service is very well run. Leaders work in partnership with parents and other professionals in health and education to ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed appropriately so that they benefit from the service.

2. Improvements

The leaders are continually improving the outdoor space.

3. Requirements and recommendations

No requirements were made as a result of this inspection however we did recommend that the leaders ensure that the children have free access to a wide range of age appropriate toys/resources.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children are very happy; they settle quickly and have opportunities to make decisions. They thoroughly enjoy their play and have an excellent choice of interesting activities that are designed to promote their development. Children experience very warm and caring relationships. They are learning to interact and to cooperate with each other and with staff.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are able to express their views and needs in a variety of ways and they are listened to.

We saw that every child was heard because they were able to express their needs and preferences through their facial expressions, looking at what they wanted, signing and body language. Older children vocalised their choice and needs through speech. Each child had an individual play and development plan which was promoted throughout the session, with a mix of free play and focused tasks. We saw that children chose activities during free play sessions and they played alone or as part of a group in activities. Children also enjoyed playing outside on ride on toys and thoroughly enjoyed washing their cars. We saw children choose a seat for themselves at the table for lunch.

Children have a significant voice at this service.

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

Children are familiar with their surroundings and the routines of the service which makes them happy and gives them a sense of security and belonging.

We saw that most children arrived happily at the service and they moved around with confidence and went to staff or their preferred play area. Each child had a keyworker who worked closely with them to help them settle in and get the most out of attending. Settling in was very much on the children's terms and parents were able to stay with their child and play alongside them until they were happy. There was a very relaxed atmosphere and we saw children playing independently and with others. Children approached staff readily for cuddles or assistance. We saw children's work and photographs displayed in the corridor and the playroom every child had their own drawer and dedicated coat hook, which gave them a good sense of belonging.

Children feel fully valued, safe and happy.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning the importance of sharing and turn taking.

Children played happily. We saw that children were learning to co-operate and responded very well to praise. Children waited patiently at lunch time and said 'please'

and 'thank you'. Children chose whether they wanted to play by themselves or with others; some played independently with toys or activities such as drawing, whilst others engaged in their play together. Children willingly responded to staff's requests, such as when they were asked to line up and wash their hands, the children listened and co-operated. Children were learning to share and take turns, and once reminded of the need to do so they willingly took turns.

Children interact well with each other and with staff.

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

Children are interested and excited in their play and learning.

Children were fully engaged across the age range during the inspection visit. We observed children enjoying adult-led activities and free play, such as outdoor play with bikes, climbing frames. We also saw children using swings, slides, play with cars, dolls and jigsaws, water play and a number-recognition activity. We observed children laughing and having fun exploring in a range of natural materials for example water play, sand and mud. The children showed great delight in washing their cars outside and playing on the climbing frames, a group of children enjoyed playing tennis together. There was also a lot of laughter and smiles throughout the nursery. Children were enthused and wanted to tell us about their experiences when at the nursery. Children were self-motivated and fully absorbed in their chosen free play both indoors and outdoors.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

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

Children are confident, motivated and are developing their individual skills.

Children were confident in choosing their play and developing their play independently although they were also supported to extend their play by staff. Children had access to an imaginative play environment. Some toys, equipment and resources were arranged so that children could help themselves and routines and staff-led activities supported children's development. We saw that most children were confident to choose their play and try new things. We saw that children enjoyed singing songs and they joined in eagerly with familiar responses, repeated phrases and actions. Children were developing their self-help skills; they were encouraged to wash and dry their hands without adult support. The children's development records evidenced that they were making excellent progress and developing new skills in line with set targets. Older children's speech and language skills were well developed and children clearly told us about the activities they had done that morning. Children fed themselves well using their hands or cutlery as was appropriate to their age.

Children are developing well.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff are very motivated, consistent and thorough in supporting children's development and in keeping them safe and healthy. Staff have an excellent understanding of the children's individual needs and work together effectively. They manage behaviour very well and provide a range of activities to enable children to play, learn and develop.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff follow a range of clear policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy.

Staff are familiar with the service's policy on safeguarding and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child. Staff ensured that there was a great emphasis on healthy eating and outdoor activities. We saw that healthy eating was promoted through activities and by the children being involved in growing produce in the nursery garden, which the children tasted and cooked. All meals were prepared from fresh produce. Children were offered water and healthy snacks through the day. The kitchen was very clean and the service had been awarded a level five rating by the Food Standards Agency. Staff were aware of children's allergies and there was a record of these clearly displayed in the rooms and kitchen. We saw good hygiene practices, for example, we saw staff telling younger children about personal hygiene and safety; we saw older children washing hands before meals and after using the toilet without being prompted and we saw that staff used gloves when serving food or changing nappies. Staff ensured that there were risk assessments for activities and outings to keep children as safe as possible.

Children's safety and health is a priority in this service.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff follow the nursery's behaviour management policy and are consistent in their approach. They are good role models; very calm and respectful to the children and each other.

Staff implemented a comprehensive positive behaviour policy which encouraged them to think about the reasons behind children's behaviour and their stage of development. We saw many examples of staff implementing this effectively throughout the nursery. We saw absolute consistency in the management of behaviour. Staff made good eye contact with the children and used calm voices to encourage and reinforce good behaviour. We heard lots of 'well done!' as they praised children's efforts and celebrated their achievements.

Staff are highly effective at managing children's interactions. They skilfully promote children's excellent behaviour, confidence, independence and positive relationships.

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

Staff are aware of children's individual needs and plan for the next stages in their play and learning.

Staff ensured that before children started at the nursery, the parents/carers completed a registration form for their children. The forms contained information including their child's routines, likes and dislikes which helped the staff to settle the children. Staff knew children well through daily observations and sharing information with other staff and parents. Staff monitored younger children's facial expressions and body language to determine their needs. For example we saw staff responding when children were tired and when they needed a nappy change or the toilet. Staff confirmed that settling in procedures were very much child-led; children moved from one group to another when they were ready, not when they reached a certain age.

We looked at records of children's engagement and progress and staff had clearly identified their achievements and the next steps. Staff told us that activities were reviewed weekly to evaluate their effectiveness and then planned for the next month based on each child's individual needs. Keyworkers ensured that those needs were met. We saw that planning included celebrations of different traditions and cultures of the world. Staff had ensured that there was a good balance between child-selected and staff-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. Self-directed play was enhanced by staff asking open ended questions to extend the children's understanding and experiences. Staff gave children time to pursue their interests but never left them playing in isolation and we saw very positive reinforcement from staff.

Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic in promoting children's play, learning and development. They comprehensively meet children's needs and provide them with exceptional learning opportunities.

3. Environment

Summary

Children are cared for in a safe, stimulating and imaginative play environment. They have access to a range of resources which are selected and put out by the staff and an environment that is suited to their needs both indoors and outdoors. The environment is well maintained and continually developed to encourage exploration and learning.

Our findings

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

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment and that unnecessary risks to children are identified and reduced or removed.

The nursery was secure from unauthorised visitors and there was a record of all visitors. All areas of the nursery and equipment and toys were very clean and we saw very good hygiene practices. We looked at risk assessments and saw that they were up to date and covered all areas of the nursery and activities inside and outside. There were safety procedures for routines such as checking on sleeping babies, meal times and nappy changing. Wellingtons and waterproofs were provided for the children to use outdoors. We saw that there were annual tests for heating and electrical equipment and that regular fire drills had taken place for all of the nursery groups.

Leaders have ensured that the nursery environment is as safe as possible.

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 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 designed the outdoor area to allow children to explore a range of play opportunities such as a large grassed area; shelters; suitable flooring to crawl on, a shed and a separate garden area, which were both used for focused activities and children's free play. A hard surfaced area was used for playing with wheeled toys. Younger children also had their own smaller play area which they could explore safely. The person in charge was also developing a Forest Schools area off the site of the nursery which will be used by the older children. 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 offered a limited range of equipment aimed at sensory stimulation. The environment was being continuously developed to suit children's interests. Leaders had ensured that 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.

Leaders effectively ensure the suitability of the environment.

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

Children have access to a wide range of clean, good quality furniture, equipment, toys and materials which fully meet their needs.

Leaders had ensured that children of different ages had access to resources and equipment that suited their interests and developmental needs. However on our first visit we saw a limited amount of resources put out for the children to freely chose from. Although we were told they have the toys/resources these were not easily/freely accessed by the children. We saw babies playing with some soft toys and sensory toys. The toys and equipment were clean and good quality. The outside area was well resourced and equipped.

Leaders ensure that all children can access a wide range of good quality resources and equipment.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

The leadership at the service is highly effective and provides clear direction. Leaders thoroughly plan and review the service provided and they fully involve parents, staff and other partners. Staff are extremely supported and are very well trained and they receive regular supervision and appraisals to improve their skills and knowledge. There are excellent partnerships with parents and professionals which enhance the well-being of children.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders have a clear vision for the service and set clear and relevant policies and procedures that are focused on children's needs. The PIC creates a very positive ethos where children, parents and staff feel valued.

We found that the service was very well run. The PIC was very clear about the aims of the service and was a very visible presence in the nursery. We saw her engaging with children, parents, staff and health professionals throughout the day. She was very open and approachable and she reinforced good practice by celebrating successes and achievements with staff as well as being an excellent role model. Staff welcomed the PIC's support and advice and children were relaxed and at ease in her presence. We saw that the leaders regularly reviewed the service information, policies and procedures. The statement of purpose accurately reflected the service and the policies we looked at showed a clear understanding of best practice for children with additional needs. Staff told us that new policies and guidance were discussed in regular meetings and during staff supervisions so that everyone understood what was expected. The systems to monitor the development of children were very effective.

Leaders are highly motivated and extremely effective.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders ensure that there is ongoing review and development of the service including the views of children, parents, staff and other professionals.

Leaders showed us an up to date quality of care report which addressed feedback from children, staff and parents and included plans for the future. Children's views had been collected in various ways. Leaders had ensured that staff record developmental milestones and outcomes to monitor the development of children and plan next steps and review the success of nursery programmes each week. We saw that staff worked very well together as a team, they shared good practice and were very open to ideas for improvement. For example, staff told us they observed each other and gave peer reviews. Leaders had encouraged staff from other services to visit and see the nursery at work. Leaders and staff were happy to assist in our inspection process.

There is continuous self-evaluation and thorough planning for improvement.

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

Leaders ensure that staff are well supported; that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities and that resources are sufficient and suitable.

We saw that leaders used staff and resources effectively and that they worked alongside staff and other professionals to meet the children's needs. We spoke to staff and they confirmed that they had received a good induction and that the PIC gave them regular feedback on their performance, which helped them to work more productively. We saw that the leaders deployed staff effectively to meet the children's needs as well as to promote their job satisfaction. For example, staff took turns for cleaning, food preparation and snack supervision and they had responsibility for different areas in the playroom. Staff worked well together and said that they learned from each other. Leaders followed safe recruitment processes. Staff records contained all the required information including DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) and identification checks and references. The PIC ensured that staff received regular supervision and an annual appraisal of their practice and training needs. Training records showed that the leaders had provided all the required training for staff as well as specialised training to meet the needs of individual children.

Leaders manage staff and other resources extremely successfully.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders work with parents to identify children's needs and to keep them informed about their children's progress and well-being. They involve parents in making decisions about their children's care.

We saw that the leaders had collected detailed information from parents about children's needs, preferences and routines before they attended the nursery and were available to talk to parents each day. Parents were informed about the service, activities and events in a variety of ways including a website and newsletter. We saw clear systems to review children's progress regularly and parents were kept fully informed and invited to contribute and add more information. Regular reports of children's progress are sent home. Parents confirmed that the information from the nursery was 'excellent'. There were good links with other professionals such as the speech and language service, health visitors and representatives of schemes to improve children's well-being.

The leaders of this service have established excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies.

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 leaders ensure that the children have free access to a wide range of age appropriate toys/resources.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 16 July 2018 and 17 July 2018. The first visit was unannounced. During the visits we;

- spoke to children, staff, and the nursery manager;
- observed children and staff in all areas of the nursery and in the playground;
- observed children in two areas of the nursery and at lunchtime using the SOFI-2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff;
- looked at a sample of documentation and policies including staff files, registers, children's development records, the statement of purpose, policies and procedures and the service's quality of care review report and
- we read information about the service held by CIW including the Self Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) and previous inspection reports.

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

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Cherie Wilson
Person in charge	Angeleen Thomas
Registered maximum number of places	72
Age range of children	6 weeks to 5 years
Opening hours	7:30am to 6pm
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	12 June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	16 and 17 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?	This is a service that is working towards providing the active Welsh offer
Additional Information:	