



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Acorns Playgroup  
Community Church  
15 Price's Lane  
Rhosddu  
Wrexham  
LL11 2NB**

**Date of inspection: May 2019**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Acorns Playgroup

Name of setting	Acorns Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Mary Arton and Angela Pritchett
Person in charge	Susanna Crossley
Number of places	26
Age range of children	2 and 3 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	15
Number of children funded for up to five terms	N/A
Opening days / times	Monday, 9:15 – 15:00, Tuesday, 9:15 – 11:45, Wednesday 9:15 – 15:00, Thursday 9:15 – 11:45
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a setting that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh Language service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	26/09/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/05/2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/05/2019
<b>Additional information</b> A few children speak English as an additional language. A very few children have been identified by the setting as having additional learning needs.	

## Summary

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Learning</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care and development</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and assessment</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Non-compliance**

**No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.**

## **Recommendations**

R1 Improve the provision to support children with English as an additional language

R2 Further develop purposeful opportunities to develop children's understanding of different cultures

R3 Develop links with the local community to enrich children's learning experiences.

## **What happens next**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children have a strong voice within the setting and make appropriate decisions. They know practitioners will listen to their views and respect their comments. Nearly all children move around freely choosing where and what to play with confidently. They express opinions and have a say in some aspects of their care. For example, they choose fruit for snack and which activities they wish to take part in such as listening to a story.

Nearly all children separate well from their parents and are happy to join their peers and be in the care of practitioners. For example, children put their belongings on their pegs on arrival at the setting and join their peers in a chosen activity. They develop a close relationship with practitioners and engage well with them. Nearly all children are happy and confident to talk to adults. They form friendships and play together happily. Nearly all children interact well with each other and cooperate and share with others. They show empathy and respect towards other children and show a good understanding of their needs, for example when supporting and comforting a child who has fallen and injured their knee. Nearly all children behave appropriately, following simple routines and rules well. They respect the setting's resources and help to put them away when they have finished using them or when asked to do so.

Nearly all children are happy and engage in activities they enjoy and have freely chosen. They are able to follow their interests and choose appropriate activities. Nearly all children focus and concentrate for an appropriate length of time for their age and stage of development. For example, when completing a jigsaw a child was happy to sit with a member of staff until it was complete.

Nearly all children develop their independent skills well, for example, they find their name card independently and post this into a post box during self-registration. They show resilience when finding things difficult, confident they will receive help should they need it, such as when zipping up their own coat or putting on their visibility jackets. Nearly all children use mathematical language appropriately, such as 'most' when counting blocks and a few confidently identify shapes during independent play.

### **Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good**

Most children make good progress in developing their skills across the foundation phase areas of learning. They listen well and follow instructions with understanding, for example when pouring their own drinks at snack time. With support, most children join in enthusiastically with songs in English and Welsh and many know the words and actions for familiar rhymes. For example, they sing "Hwyl fawr ffrindiau" with enjoyment. Many children talk confidently to each other and adults.

With encouragement from adults, many children use mark-making equipment with increasing control. For example, many use a range of tools such as paint brushes, chalks and crayons to draw in the outdoors. Most children enjoy looking at books

and choosing stories to read to themselves or an adult. Nearly all listen carefully when practitioners read to them and show obvious enjoyment.

Most children count to five confidently and many use mathematical language in an appropriate context. For example, when counting paper bees to match to the number thrown on the dice. A few talk about 'big' and 'small' when playing independently with dough. Most children develop an awareness of sequences and patterns appropriately.

Many children use a variety of information and communication technology (ICT) role-play equipment appropriately. For example, children use a drill to pretend to repair wheels and they take photographs of themselves during play. They understand that they need to operate switches and buttons to make something happen. Most children confidently use a sound cube to answer mathematical questions, such as "what colour is the triangle?".

Many children develop good physical skills. They use bikes and scooters confidently to move around safely, balance on different surfaces and crawl through tunnels. Many develop effective fine motor skills, for example when using glue and scissors with increasing control to make snail pictures.

Most children make strong progress in developing Welsh language skills. They understand simple commands given in Welsh and many children know their colours in Welsh and speak confidently. Nearly all children know a good range of songs and rhymes in Welsh and join in with enthusiasm, for example when greeting each other in the morning with 'Bore da'. They show enthusiasm when listening to Welsh stories.

Many children are developing appropriate problem solving skills. For example, they dress and undress dolls with control and work together to build small houses out of bricks. Nearly all children interact well together and get along with one another. They behave well and have a good understanding of the expectations of them. For example, they share bikes and scooters and take turns when necessary.

### **Care and development: Good**

Nearly all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities well. They have up to date safeguarding training and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners implement practices that keep children safe effectively, for example by conducting regular fire drills so that practitioners and children know what to do should they have to evacuate the premises. They implement an effective routine when children are moving from the premises to use the school yard. For example, children wear fluorescent jackets to make them easily recognisable to practitioners.

Practitioners use a suitable range of positive practices that encourage children to lead a healthy lifestyle. They support and encourage children to wash their hands at appropriate times and provide healthy snack choices. Practitioners provide children with regular opportunities to access the outdoors to ensure that they are active throughout the session.

Nearly all practitioners manage interactions well. They implement procedures to deal with behaviour effectively, in line with the setting's policy. For example, they use distraction to diffuse situations and place themselves at a child's level to discuss unwanted behaviour. Nearly all practitioners are good role models and communicate with the children in a calm and friendly manner. They promote purposeful opportunities for the children to be sociable, for example during snack and circle time. Activities such as brushing teeth, hand washing, regular exercise and healthy eating are integrated into the setting's everyday routines.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. All practitioners attend regular training and they can discuss the setting's health and safety procedures with confidence. This ensures that children and practitioners are kept safe. For example, they regularly count children in and out of different play areas, which ensures that they know the whereabouts of the children as they play and learn.

Nearly all practitioners provide appropriate activities and resources that meet the needs of the children. They facilitate children's learning effectively through worthwhile play activities, for example by providing opportunities for children to play with toy cars in the garage and encouraging them to count how many cars were parked there. Many practitioners use incidental Welsh appropriately during planned activities and a few practitioners use it during children's free play. Nearly all understand the individual needs of children. However, in general, practitioners do not always provide effective support for children whose first language is not English. Most practitioners have received communication training but this is not used effectively to support language development of these children.

**Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good**

The setting provides children with a range of stimulating learning experiences across all areas of learning. Practitioners' planning takes good account of the requirements of the foundation phase and focuses well on developing children's skills. They make imaginative use of resources to provide an interesting learning environment with a range of high quality learning areas and activities available for the children. Practitioners ensure that they provide useful opportunities for children to develop their independent skills by ensuring a good balance of adult and child led activities. For example, making sand castles and mark making with water and big brushes in the outdoors.

Practitioners involve children appropriately in contributing ideas for activities and respond to their interests effectively, such as through providing toy tools to pretend to repair some wheels on a pushchair. They work to enhance children's play by providing suitable resources, such as doll's high chair during snack time.

The setting provides good quality opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. There are good opportunities for children to become familiar with an exciting range of interesting ICT resources in the continuous provision. For example, an ICT table provides children with opportunities to select a range of suitable equipment to use during their play. Practitioners encourage children to use ICT, such as using buttons on a cube to ask and answer

mathematical questions. They use mathematical language during activities such as when talking about the different sized snails and counting the numbers of daily helpers.

They plan effectively to develop literacy and numeracy skills in the indoor and outdoor environments. For example, the book areas have a wide range of interesting English and Welsh books to help children develop their early reading skills. Practitioners encourage children to develop an enthusiasm for books by reading to them regularly. They allow children to develop their reading preferences by allowing them to have an individual vote on which story they would like to hear read to them.

Nearly all children have good opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions. Practitioners use Welsh well during welcome sessions and encourage the children to respond to instructions and questions. They sing songs and rhymes with enthusiasm to introduce simple Welsh phrases, such as 'hwyl fawr' and when talking about colours.

The setting provides an appropriate range of learning experiences to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Practitioners support children's spiritual development well, for example through a daily thank you prayer and celebrating Chinese new year. The setting promotes recycling well with children sorting and recycling different materials after their snack. For example, the helpers place fruit waste and milk containers in the appropriate bins. However, practitioners do not always provide suitable opportunities to develop an understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.

The setting has effective arrangements to track children's progress and to plan for the next steps in their learning. All practitioners make careful observations of what children do well and skills that require further development. These observations feed suitably into future planning and records. All staff have high expectations and more able and talented children are challenged through effective questioning, such as using larger numbers and more complex instructions when using dough.

The setting keeps parents and carers well informed about their child's progress across the foundation phase areas of learning through daily conversations and regular information sharing. Practitioners identify children's needs to develop specific skills and, as a result, staff successfully use a range of engaging and interesting experiences. For example, they make paper bees to use in a counting game and provide additional toys when required. Links with the wider community are limited which impacts on the children's understanding of the work of other adults.

### **Environment: Good**

Practitioners maintain and develop the learning environment well, providing children with a welcoming and child centred place to play and learn. Leaders and practitioners implement positive safety practices and nearly all of the processes followed are effective in keeping children safe. For example, external doors are secure and risk assessments, alongside daily checks, are conducted on the environment to ensure hazards are identified and managed well. Although the setting records the names of visitors appropriately, the information does not include sufficient detail.



The setting consists of three rooms with direct access to a small outdoor area. Practitioners organise the rooms effectively and all available space is utilised to provide children with a range of opportunities. For example, the large hall provides children with space to be physically active. All areas are inviting and provide stimulating environment for the children. Practitioners use a range of wall displays effectively throughout the setting in order to show that they value and celebrate children's work.

The outdoor area provides an interesting and effective environment with purposeful areas of learning for children to play and develop their skills. The area is welcoming and promotes children's learning and curiosity well. For example, the water play area includes guttering, funnels and buckets for children to use and explore independently. Practitioners equip the small outdoor area well which allows children to learn about the world around them, for example by, planting flowers and vegetables. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to use the adjacent school's yard and nursery playground. This allows practitioners to plan activities that require more space, for example parachute games and tyres and fixed play equipment for children to climb and balance on. Resources and facilities are of good quality and suitable for the age and stage of development of the children. These include resources that promote children's curiosity and develop their learning. For example, a set of electronic scales to use with the playdough so children can weigh their models and a piano mat for children to make music. Most resources are made from natural materials which support children's play well. For example, numbers written on pieces of wood and an investigation area that included leaves and twigs. The furniture and fixtures are of a child friendly height which allows children to be independent in their learning.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The leader has a clear vision for the setting that focuses on providing a welcoming, friendly and inclusive ethos. She shares this vision effectively with all practitioners and parents. She has high expectations of staff and challenges them to do their best. The setting's statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting and all work hard to make improvements that will impact on quality. All practitioners are passionate about the setting, many have worked there a number of years.

Leaders use regular appraisal meetings to ensure that all practitioners are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that they address identified areas for improvement successfully. Leaders also use this well to identify the training needs of all the practitioners in order to further develop their professional knowledge and skills.

Practitioners identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement effectively. They have established appropriate self-review and reflection processes to ensure improvement in standards of children's learning and the provision. Leaders and practitioners monitor progress against targets in the improvement plan regularly during informal staff meetings and daily discussions. This provides valuable opportunities to evaluate the setting's strengths and identify further areas for development, such as the development of the outdoor area and arrangements for a teddy bears picnic.

The responsible individuals and the setting leader have a clear understanding of the setting's finances and prioritise expenditure effectively. For example, the setting has purchased a selection of communication resources that support the children effectively. They support the setting well through informal meetings and they have a good understanding of the work of the setting. They monitor the finances carefully and the committee ensures that accounts are audited regularly. This ensures that children benefit from a well-resourced provision.

The setting has a strong partnership with the local school that has a positive effect on provision and children's progress. For example, they regularly use the adjoining school's outdoor play area and visits to the school support children's transition highly effectively. The setting has regular visits from the local authority advisory teacher who provides guidance on teaching and learning. The setting has the appropriate number of staff and ratios are adhered to and an effective system of using parent helpers. Partnerships with parents are good and staff are regularly available to speak to parents about their child's progress or their individual needs. Practitioners regularly attend Early Education sessions to support their skills. However, links with the community to support the children's understanding of the wider community are underdeveloped.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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