



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**ONS Acorns Nursery - Duffryn**

**Government Buildings  
Cardiff Road  
Duffryn  
Newport  
NP10 1GX**



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## **Description of the service**

ONS Acorns Nursery is registered to provide day care for 35 children and cares for children aged between six weeks and five years of age. It is one of 12 nurseries owned by Acorns Nurseries Limited. It operates from a single storey building situated in government grounds on the outskirts of Newport. Care is conducted through the medium of English with some Welsh incorporated as part of the daily routine. The company has identified a Responsible Individual (RI) to oversee the nursery and has a Person in Charge (PIC) to deal with the day to day management of the setting.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

ONS Acorns Nursery is well run, employs enthusiastic, well trained staff and ensures that resources are plentiful and of very good quality. Children have access to a very good range of interesting learning experiences which they find stimulating and enjoyable. The environment is well maintained and safe for children. However some procedures need to be reviewed so that environmental risk assessments are consistently robust. Staff have good knowledge of the children's needs and provide nurturing, supportive care. Children are well settled and form close bonds with their key workers who are motivated and appropriately trained. The PiC and management team set high standards, are conscientious and seek continual improvement.

### **2. Improvements**

- Recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed including reviewing circle time, continual access to water for children, development of activity planning reviewing the statement of purpose. It has also;attained a silver level Small Workplace Health Award to encourage staff well being;
- the company has employed a manager to cover when a PIC is not working;
- induction of new staff has been developed along with a 'Back to basics' review for established members of staff and
- a curiosity corner has been established to encourage children's play and imagination.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

The nursery is compliant with regulations and exceeds National Minimum Standards in their care of children.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

The nursery provides children with very good opportunities to develop skills and knowledge and experience a sense of achievement. Children have access to a variety of resources and activities that support their all-round development and encourages them to enjoy their play and learning. This includes physical, emotional, social, language and creative experiences to promote their independence and help them transition more easily both within the nursery and onto more formal education.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children of all ages are allowed to make choices and staff actively support this. We saw that children had a choice of activities and free play opportunities. We saw and heard staff encouraging all children to participate and express their opinions, giving them time to make choices and supporting when needed in their chosen activity. Mind maps are used to gather children's ideas and incorporate them into planning of activities and themes and in the development of the service. For example, children had expressed their choices when the toy order had been reviewed and as a result a toy volcano and toy dinosaurs had been purchased. The resources were easy for children to access which ensured their play choices were met. We saw that all children had access to the outside play space timetabled into their day. We heard children speaking and talking confidently with staff and inviting staff into their play. The staff listened and responded in a warm, animated manner which encouraged children to engage further and explore their ideas.

Children are encouraged and confident to express themselves and know their views will be respected.

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

Children are settled and comfortable and they are valued by the staff team. Children are settled and there are systems in place, including a key worker system, to promote children's feelings of security and emotional well-being. We saw that staff sat with children and comforted and cuddled them at appropriate times either at children's requests or when they saw a child needed support. Children chatted and smiled during their play which suggested they were happy and relaxed. We saw that children's wishes and needs were recognised by staff and were responded to warmly and appropriately. Parents told us that their children were happy at the nursery and well supported by their carers.

Children gain a sense of security within their surroundings and with their carers.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children interact well with their peers and are supported in their social development by staff and the daily routines. Children participate in small focused circle time activities giving them opportunities to participate and practise their social skills such as sharing and listening. We saw that children were able to participate appropriately in play, being polite, able to take turns and respond appropriately to staff instructions. We saw children demonstrating good manners and frequently heard them using 'please' and 'thank you' throughout our visits. Children were kind to each other and, for example, we saw one child waving and saying "Bora da!" attracting the attention of their friend to include them in circle time.

Children are learning how to socialise with their peers and develop positive relationships.

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

Children enjoy the opportunities available to them and have a wide selection of activities to promote their learning and development. Play was well organised and children could choose to join in with focused play such as messy/sensory play involving foam, sand, painting or playdough. If they did not wish to participate, children could freely move from one area to another and choose activities of their own interest. For example, we saw children really enjoying making dinosaur bones in the outside classroom, whilst other children explored with magnifying glasses or played with small world figures. We saw children enjoying looking at books, taking part in circle time and enjoying outdoor physical games. One child was eager to show us the planting area enthusiastically saying "Vegetables growing!." Children demonstrated real enjoyment and reward in their play.

Children enjoy the play and learning opportunities provided at the nursery.

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

Children are provided with opportunities to gain independence, develop and learn through play and daily routines. At lunch time we saw that children were encouraged to use their cutlery to feed themselves, pour their own drinks and generally improve their self-help skills around meal times. A helper of the day was chosen and helping with tasks, helped children develop their self esteem and confidence. They clearly enjoyed these opportunities. The storage of resources enabled independent choice and the different activities such as the home corner, books and construction helped encourage children to develop different skills. Older children were encouraged to self register when they arrived, to help them develop feelings of competence and self reliance.

Children are given time, space and frequent opportunities to learn and do as much for themselves as they can.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are well trained, experienced and motivated. Relationships with children are warm and affectionate and staff work well together to provide a good quality service. Staff understand key policies and practices and follow these in their every day work in order to keep children safe and healthy. However, we have recommended that routines around meal times for younger children are reviewed. Children's interactions are managed well and staff plan and provide a good range of activities to ensure children are engaged in their play and learning.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and have a good understanding of the systems in place to protect children. We saw that there was a file to log any concerns and referrals to the local authority safeguarding team had been made when needed. There were effective procedures in place to manage infection and food hygiene. The nursery was registered with the Environmental Health department and had received a level four food hygiene rating. We saw checklists to remind staff about procedures such as daily, weekly and monthly cleaning systems. The fire log book demonstrated that emergency evacuation procedures are practised very regularly. We saw that managers complete monthly audits of accidents and incidents to help determine any trends of problem areas Staff we spoke to had a good understanding about the milk preparation procedures adopted by the nursery and we saw that nappy changing was done discreetly and kindly and in line with nappy changing procedures; older children were supported in their toilet training needs. Information relating to allergic reactions of children was clearly displayed and the chef and staff knew children's specific dietary needs. The nursery has achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Eating award and promoted healthy options for children encouraging them to develop healthy eating habits. It has successfully completed all aspects of the healthy sustainable pre-school scheme National Award Criteria and are now a healthy sustainable pre-school promoting all round good health including physical exercise and good oral hygiene.

Staff ensure that children are kept safe and healthy by following the procedures in place.

#### **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff support interactions very well. There is a behaviour management policy which provides guidance to staff and which informs their practice. They are consistent in their approach and set realistic boundaries in line with the developmental ages of the children. We heard staff using calm and gentle tones and distracting children as needed. We saw staff kneeling down to the child's level and providing comfort and reassurance if they were upset. It was clear that positive, supportive relationships

were in place and that children were confident that their needs would be met by carers who knew them well. We saw staff pre-empting children's needs and this helped maintain a relaxed atmosphere. We heard staff giving children praise and complimenting them when they made attempts as well as on their successes. Conflict situations were kept to a minimum as children were well stimulated and enjoyed their activities.

Staff promote the emotional wellbeing of children by carefully managing interactions and the use of positive behaviour management practices.

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

Staff know the children well and a keyworker system ensures that children's individual needs are identified and met. The nursery employs a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who supports children with additional needs. Children's health needs are recorded when they start at the nursery. Health care plans are devised when required, as the SENCO works alongside health professionals developing strategies that are needed to promote children's development. We spoke to several staff and they were able to discuss with a high level of confidence, the individual needs of the children in their care. The company also employs a Foundation Phase teacher who supports staff in their planning around children's educational and learning needs; we saw detailed development records in place for children. We observed during messy play that the key worker of one child had set up a painting activity and encouraged the child to participate. She explained that the child did not like certain aspects of messy play and so the painting activity was being used as a means of encouraging the child to move onto other sensory activities. One parent we spoke with also stated how their child's language skills had improved since attending the nursery. However, we did notice that one particular lunch time session for the babies, presented as disorganised and we have recommended that these routines be reviewed to better suit the mix of children on particular days.

Staff are able to meet children's individual needs to a very good standard although the lunch time routine for the babies needs to be reviewed.

### **3. Environment**

The nursery operates from a single story building within government grounds and therefore security checks on all people accessing the area are carried out by security personnel at the main entrance to the site. The nursery is clean, bright, maintained to a high standard, well decorated and inviting for children. A wide range of very good quality resources are available to children who also have direct access to a large, stimulating, well resourced outside play area. Care is taken to maintain safety in order to ensure the well being of children, although some risk assessments need to be reviewed. There are some limitations due to the lay out of the building such as no dedicated sleep room for older children. However, staff are mindful about how to best use the base rooms so that children's needs are met.

#### **Our findings**

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

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment Staff ensure that the nursery is secure and that no unauthorised access is allowed. We were asked for identification upon arrival and to sign a visitors' book in and out. The front door had a secure entry system which was monitored by staff, children's attendance was recorded appropriately and children were carefully supervised. We saw that records were kept regarding accidents/ incidents that had occurred on the premises. The nature of the accidents was typical of the age and stage of development of the children and did not raise any concerns about the safety of the premises. Daily risk assessment checklists were completed and monitored along with a weekly safety and hazard checklist. These demonstrate that maintenance issues are addressed promptly, as the nursery has its own maintenance team and can also access government employed maintenance team regarding structural work. However, we have recommended that some risk assessments are reviewed as we identified two issues within the environment that needed to be addressed. One being the securing of open doors when children are accessing the outside play area and a second involving the appropriate positioning of lighting. Both of these issues were immediately addressed during the inspection. The nursery employs a cook, specifically responsible for the preparation of all meals for the children at the nursery, ensuring that hygiene and safety procedures are followed during food preparation. A dedicated housekeeper ensured that infection control procedures were followed, ensuring the building is kept clean and safe. We did discuss that the entrance gate did not have a lock although was securely closed and unable to be opened by children. The management team told us that this had already been identified and had discussed ways in which this could be improved. However, we noted that staff positioned themselves well throughout the setting and maintained good communication with their colleagues. Consequently staff could monitor the children's safety in an unobtrusive manner and be on hand to offer assistance if needed. This ensured that all areas of the setting were suitably supervised and supported children to play and explore their surroundings safely.



There are systems in place to ensure the safety of the environment but some of these would benefit from further development.

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

Children are provided with suitably adapted indoor and outdoor play spaces and facilities. Base rooms benefit from good natural light and the environment is welcoming and attractive. There are some limitations within the indoor environment as although there is a separate sleep area for babies, there is not a designated sleep area for older children. However, staff are mindful of this and use the routines of the day to identify quiet areas/rooms where children can sleep and rest undisturbed. There are a wide range of play opportunities providing a variety of experiences to develop children's skills. The furniture is child sized, sturdy and well designed. There are toilets which are easily accessible and adapted for use by children. The outside play areas are very well equipped with a range of resources such as a mud kitchen, outside classroom, planting/allotment area, forest school area, climbing frames, hoops, balls and ride on vehicles. These areas provide children with excellent opportunities to gain new skills and experience a wide range of outdoor play experiences. Children told us that they loved the forest school and climbing frames/tunnel.

Leaders have provided a play environment which is well designed and resourced for children's needs.

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

Children have access to a very good range of developmentally appropriate play and learning resources indoors and outdoors. These are good quality and available in sufficient quantity to ensure children have variety and choice. We saw that resources were clean and well maintained. There is a good selection of multi cultural toys and books available for the children that promote diversity and equality. Furniture is appropriate for the age of the children and is of very good quality. Regular checks are undertaken to ensure all resources and equipment are safe, clean and of suitable quality with any broken or worn equipment immediately removed.

Systems are in place to ensure the high quality equipment and resources that enhance children's play and learning experiences are maintained to a very good standard.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Overall we found that the quality of leadership and management at the service is good. Robust recruitment, supervision, evaluation and identification of training needs is undertaken. Excellent working partnerships with health professionals, staff and parents are fostered. We did find that some systems, such as visual checks, need to be strengthened and management were very responsive and receptive to implementing this as soon as possible.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Management of the service provides the necessary support and guidance to maintain good working practices so that children have a positive experience of the nursery. The service has a clear statement of purpose and an operational plan giving information about the nursery, as well as appropriate policies and procedures which are shared with parents. The responsible individual has a strong vision for the service which is shared with the staff. Robust recruitment procedures are implemented and policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and shared with staff. A very good induction for new staff has been established along with an induction review for longer standing members of staff. This ensures that the team maintain a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Team meetings with staff and also managers' meetings are held regularly and records demonstrated that they are productive and used to share information effectively. The nursery had participated in the 'Small Workplace Health Award' and achieved Silver standard, working towards Gold. We found that the use of Welsh was encouraged. Notifications are regularly sent to CIW to update us about the service and the Self Assessment of Service (SASS) had been completed and sent to us as required.

There are effective systems in place to ensure that the nursery is well managed.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Management are continually developing the service provision and take into account the views of children, parents and staff. The quality of care review used questionnaires to gain information from staff and parents and used key worker information to ascertain the wishes of children. The recently developed staff news letter also enabled staff to provide anonymous feedback to the service. We noted that high quality resources were purchased to ensure that the interests of children were developed and that such developments were identified within an annual action plan.

Effective strategies to improve the service are in place.

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

The management of staff and resources is well organised and the nursery operates smoothly, supporting children's learning and play. There are well qualified and experienced staff who are effectively deployed to care for the children. Records evidenced that staff are appropriately trained and mandatory training for paediatric first aid, food hygiene and child protection is undertaken on a rolling programme; this is recorded on a staff training matrix. Additional training is also identified and discussed within regular, well implemented supervision, so that staff have opportunity to follow interests or access pertinent training to support their key worker children. The nursery had participated in the 'Small Workplace Health Award' and on the day we attended healthy lunches were being prepared for staff as well as children. We were told that staff are encouraged to think about their health and well-being and staff reported to us that they felt very well supported by the company. We noted that resources were of a high quality and well maintained and it was explained to us that systems are in place to ensure staff check and report any issues.

Management of staff and resources is robust ensuring the nursery is appropriately staffed and operates well.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

The service ensures that all the necessary information relating to the care of children is obtained at the time of registration before they start attending the service. We spoke with parents who told us that they were pleased with the level of communication they received about their children. Parents also told us that they had supportive relationships with the managers and felt confident to discuss any issues. Regular information about developments and events at the nursery are sent to parents via email and there is also a parents' information board at the entrance to the nursery. The role of the SENCO supports information sharing with health professionals and staff attend Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings as needed as good working relationships have been developed. We saw that the nursery had developed a nursery cook book with some of the children's favourite recipes so that they could be replicated within children's homes.

Effective partnerships are in place which supports the nursery to prioritise positive outcomes for children.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

- Daily risk assessment checklists for the environment need to be reviewed and
- improve lunch time routines for babies to better suit the mix of children on particular days.

## **6. How we undertook this inspection**

An unannounced, full inspection was undertaken over two days by one inspector, with feedback given on the second visit. A total of 10 hours spent at the nursery. The following methodology was used to gather evidence for this report:

- Information held by CIW and consideration of a range of policies, procedures and records kept by the nursery;
- observations of care routines and practices undertaken;
- visual inspection of the setting, both inside and outside;
- discussions with the staff and management team;
- conversation with the children attending the nursery and
- verbal feedback from parents who were dropping off/collecting their children and feed back within parent and staff questionnaires.

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

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Martyn Hogg
Person in charge	Amanda Sanderson
Registered maximum number of places	35
Age range of children	Six weeks to five years
Opening hours	7.30 – 18:00 Monday - Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	23 July 2014
Dates of this inspection	10 and 11 May 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?	The provider does not provide the 'Active Offer' in relation to the Welsh Language.  An 'Active Offer' means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. This is part of the Welsh language Policy to develop and strengthen Welsh language in services.
<b>Additional Information:</b>  Cherie Wilson and Peter Reynolds are in the process of becoming the named Responsible Individuals (RI) replacing Martyn Hogg.	