



## Inspection Report

**Acorns Nursery**

**Rhos Y Fedwen Primary School  
Honeyfield Road  
Rassau  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 5TA**



**Date Inspection Completed**

09/02/2023

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## About Acorns Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Person	Melanie Madden Leanna Davies
Registered places	20
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	25 January 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

<a href="#"><u>Well-being</u></a>	<b>Good</b>
<a href="#"><u>Care and Development</u></a>	<b>Good</b>
<a href="#"><u>Environment</u></a>	<b>Good</b>
<a href="#"><u>Leadership and Management</u></a>	<b>Good</b>

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

## **Summary**

Children are happy, settled and have lots of fun at the setting. They make choices about how they spend their time, and they can follow their own interests freely. They develop warm relationships with staff and interact with them positively. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning and development and their independence skills are progressing.

Staff keep children safe and implement successful policies and procedures. Their interactions with children are consistently warm and they effectively support children's needs. Staff plan a range of activities led by the children's interests and keep detailed records of children's progress.

The environment is welcoming and well organised. Staff follow good infection control procedures to ensure the environment is clean, safe and suitable. Some risk assessments do not ensure that all risks to children are considered. A wide variety of good quality toys, resources and experiences promote children's all-round development. An area for improvement has been identified in relation to maintaining oversight of safety checks for the premises.

The leadership and management of the service is effective. There is a small close-knit team and the people who run the service support staff well, providing good development opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and detailed. Parents speak highly of staff and are complimentary about the care their children receive.

Children express themselves well and follow their own interests. They make confident choices and decisions about the activities they would like to take part in. For example, they choose to play with bikes or building blocks rather than engage in a planting activity. They confidently ask for anything they want because they know they are listened to. For example, we heard children ask, *“Please can we go outside now?”* and *“Please can we have some more paper?”* They contribute to the planning of play activities and help to develop role-play areas such as ‘The Vet’s’ and the ‘Groom Room’.

Children feel comfortable in their surroundings and are familiar with routines, settling quickly into their play. They have formed strong bonds with staff, meaning they are happy, feel secure and settle well. They readily seek out hugs from staff and we saw that one child, who was upset, received lots of attention and cuddles from their key worker. Children receive frequent praise for their efforts and their work is celebrated and on display, providing them with a sense of achievement and belonging.

Most children are developing close friendships and interact well with one another. They often approach staff to chat, ask for help or invite them into their play. Most children play happily alongside one another, chatting and discussing their interests. They are kind, caring and considerate and they cooperate and share resources happily. For example, when planting flowers, a child said, *“Here you go, have mine”*, as they passed a shovel to another child who wanted to join in. They are learning to manage their behaviour with gentle verbal reminders.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They are engaged and choose activities that stimulate and interest them. For example, many children expressed enjoyment as they made items of their choice from playdough and were excited to show the staff and visitors what they had made. Nearly all children show great enjoyment when playing outdoors. They told us about their bug hotel and excitedly used miniature wheelbarrows to transport soil to fill their planters. They are keen to share their work and achievements. For example, a child said *“Look at me, I’m planting flowers”* as they smiled happily.

Children are developing their self-help skills appropriately. For example, they learn to put on their coats to go outdoors. They access the toilet and wash their hands, confidently asking for help when they need it. During snack times children eat independently. However, we noted that further opportunities to develop independence skills such as serving themselves and pouring their own drinks were missed. Most children help to tidy up after play and put resources away.

## Care and Development

Good

Staff implement required policies and procedures to ensure they are effective in keeping children safe and healthy. They receive regular safeguarding training and are confident in their role, following rigorous procedures. They keep thorough records relating to accidents and incidents and these are monitored and evaluated regularly. However, although parents are kept informed and provided with a copy of each accident or incident, we noted that they do not sign the forms appropriately. Most staff hold paediatric first aid training, enabling them to deal with minor accidents confidently. There are effective systems in place to record the safe administration of prescribed medication and parents are kept informed. However, we noted that multiple forms are used making it difficult for staff to identify the time the last dose was administered by parents or carers. Food provided to children is freshly prepared, healthy, and nutritious and staff follow clear and agreed procedures to manage food allergies and individual dietary requirements. Staff promote children's physical well-being successfully through lots of outdoor play experiences, offering them the benefits of physical exercise and fresh air. All staff hold relevant food hygiene training and follow suitable cleaning procedures as part of the infection control process to help keep children healthy and safe.

Staff have lovely relationships with children, interacting in a kind, caring and patient manner. They use gentle tones when talking to the children which helps to create a relaxed and happy atmosphere. They work together to support children's social behaviour and sit with children at snack and mealtime to model good social skills. They implement positive strategies in line with their behaviour management policy and offer praise and encouragement to children often. We heard phrases such as *"Good listening"* and *"You're doing a great job there, well done"* often. Staff are good role models, continuously reminding children to share, be kind and use their manners such as 'please' and thank you'.

Staff promote children's learning and development successfully. They plan a range of stimulating and interesting play experiences that appeal to children's interests in line with Curriculum for Wales. They engage positively with children during play and facilitate learning naturally and in the moment, asking appropriate questions. For example, staff ask, *"Which insects do you think we might find in our bug hotel today?"* providing children with a sense of wonder. They undertake regular observations to track children's progress and identify next steps in learning. Key workers keep detailed records of children's achievements in their development books. These include photographs and examples of children's work. Staff have a very good understanding of how to meet the needs of children requiring additional support working closely with outside agencies. Staff promote the Welsh language successfully, using simple words and phrases with children often. They use festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year to help children learn about different cultures.

## Environment

Good

The environment is clean, safe and secure. Staff ensure there is only authorised entry to the setting and maintain a log of any visitors. They are vigilant and supervise the children closely at all times and the outdoor play area is secured when children are playing outside. Registers record the time both children and staff arrive and leave the premises. Staff complete daily safety checks to ensure hazards are identified and risks to children are eliminated. There are a range of regularly reviewed robust risk assessments in place ensuring staff know how to keep children safe. However, risk assessments for the premises, both indoors and outdoors do not identify or consider all potential hazards and the risks these pose to children. Regular fire evacuation drill practices are carried out to ensure everyone is aware of how to leave the building safely and fire equipment is regularly tested. During the inspection visit, people who run the setting did not have a clear system in place to maintain oversight of when building safety checks for the premises were due or hold copies of the relevant certificates. These were provided during the inspection process; however, the periodical electrical safety check presented was out of date. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

The environment provides a welcoming, well maintained, child friendly space which meets children's needs. Activities are set out in one main playroom which is well organised into interesting areas that promote children's curiosity, imagination, and development. Children have daily access to a stimulating outdoor area, which includes a variety of play areas including a mud kitchen and a music station. It also encourages children to explore and enjoy lots of physical play through use of climbing frames, slides, tunnels and a variety of ride-on toys. Since the last Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection, people who run the setting have made continued improvements to the outside play space for children. The registered person told us how they have recently developed a storytelling area and how they also have plans to develop a new sheltered area which can be used for outdoor mark making. There are a suitable number of children's toilets and nappy changing facilities available, and bathrooms are well stocked to support independence.

Children benefit from a range of good quality resources, furniture and equipment that is clean, well maintained and suitable to the age of the children. Children access the resources freely because they are stored at low level, supporting independence. Staff enthusiastically embrace newer approaches to learning enhancing children's curiosity. Available resources such as weighing scales, teapots and, kitchen utensils and various role-play areas support this. There are a number of resources to promote multicultural awareness such as a range of story books, puzzles, dolls and puppets. Staff conduct regular checks to monitor resources to ensure they are of good quality and relevant to children's interests and learning. They regularly rotate toys to provide further choice and variety for children.

## **Leadership and Management**

**Good**

People who run the setting are skilled and experienced and overall, manage the service to a good standard. There is a clear vision for the setting and people who run the setting have

high expectations of staff, always supporting them to do their best. The statement of purpose provides parents with detailed information on how the setting runs, allowing them to make an informed decision about its suitability for their child. People who run the setting regularly review their policies and procedures and ensure staff implement them successfully. Thorough record keeping systems are in place including children's contracts. People who run the setting always inform CIW of events set out in regulations, providing relevant information at the correct times to ensure that children are safeguarded, and their welfare promoted.

People who run the setting have established effective systems for the evaluation of the service and are committed to improving outcomes for children and their families. They continually self-evaluate and seek feedback from parents, staff, children and outside professionals to inform the quality-of-care report. They use this information effectively to identify priorities for improvement and set realistic targets such as improving opportunities to support early language acquisition and to further improve parental links.

People who run the setting value their staff and always ensure that there are enough qualified and experienced staff to make sure children are always well cared for. There is a strong ethos of teamwork amongst them, and they work closely together which results in high staff morale and improved outcomes for children. There are robust recruitment and induction processes in place, ensuring staff are suitable to work with children. Regular supervisions and appraisals are held to support staff in their professional development and reflection on their practice. Staff told us that they feel supported by management and are confident to talk to managers with any concerns. Frequent meetings are held to ensure that all staff are kept up to date on relevant information and discuss any issues relating to the running of the setting.

Partnerships with parents and outside agencies are extremely positive. A handover is provided to parents on collection, with verbal information shared about their child's time in the setting. Photographs of daily activities are also shared via private group messages. Parents report a good level of satisfaction with the care their children receive. There are strong links with key professionals such as the local authority, local primary schools and the early years advisor to ensure the appropriate support is available for all children including those with additional learning needs.



### Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
<b>New</b>	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
<b>Reviewed</b>	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
<b>Not Achieved</b>	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
<b>Achieved</b>	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

### Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

### Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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25	The Registered Persons (RPs) must ensure that there is a system in place to maintain oversight of safety checks for the premises and ensure that all the relevant certificates are obtained for their own records.	New
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation 29 (3)(a) - Employment of staff: This is because the RPs had not ensured that staff receive appropriate formal supervision to support their practice.</li> </ul>	Achieved

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 8 - Nurture and well-being	Provide further opportunities to encourage independence of children at snack time.
Standard 5 - Records	Ensure parents or carers sign all accident and incident forms.
Standard 11 - Medication	Streamline medication forms to enable staff to easily identify the time the last dose has been administered by parents or carers.
Standard 24 - Safety	Extend risk assessments for the environment to ensure that all hazards both indoors and outdoors and the risks to children are considered.

Ratings	What the ratings mean
<b>Excellent</b>	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
<b>Good</b>	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
<b>Adequate</b>	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
<b>Poor</b>	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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