



Inspection Report

Acorns ActionPak

**Whitchurch High School
Penline Road
Whitchurch
Cardiff
CF14 2XJ**



Date Inspection Completed

09/08/2022

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About Acorns ActionPak

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Out of School Care
Registered Provider	Acorns Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	297
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	09 August 2016
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	Working Towards. The service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and intends to become a bilingual service or demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

<u>Well-being</u>	Excellent
<u>Care and Development</u>	Excellent
<u>Environment</u>	Excellent
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Excellent

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

Summary

ActionPak out of school care is very child centred with a strong emphasis upon children's participation and consultation. Children are very happy and comfortable in their surroundings and have the opportunity to make friends with other children and form good relationships with staff. They are encouraged to be as independent as possible and express themselves.

Staff are professional, appropriately qualified, responsive and attentive to the children. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to keep the environment safe, secure and clean and staff implement these well. They manage children's behaviour very well and know children's individual needs.

The scheme operates from Whitchurch High School. The local authority is responsible for general maintenance which is maintained to a very good standard. The resources, both inside and outside, are very varied, high quality and appropriately risk assessed. The environment is safe for children and promotes children's play and learning exceptionally well.

Leadership and management arrangements are exceptionally good; managers are very experienced, organised and dedicated to providing an excellent service. Consultations with parents, children and staff contribute to the developments of the service.

Children have a strong voice at the service and are encouraged to contribute and express themselves. The timetable of activities has been devised through staff responding to children's input at the previous Easter playscheme. Children have developed the rules and identified a means of raising a concern or complaint. These ideas and suggestions have been laminated and displayed throughout the scheme so that they are readily available to all children. Children have easy access to toys and play equipment. They have a strong say in directing their play, in line with their ideas or interests.

Children are very happy and relaxed. New children are welcomed, and staff help them to settle into their groups and encourage them to make friends and participate in activities. Even though children attend for a relatively short period, their work is valued and displayed to build their sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Children have lots of fun and play very well together. They are polite and show patience and respect for their friends. They respond well to staff and readily follow instructions. They develop their social skills and friendships. For example, during an impromptu circle time, children said their name and shared their favourite colour with the group. Children listened, welcomed each other, and took interest in what was being said. They concentrate very well. For example, during a karate session, children listened and followed the rules so that the session progressed well, even for children who were unfamiliar with the activity.

Children are very happy in their play, enjoy the resources and games, and the huge variety of activities available. In their questionnaires children highlighted that they love playing with their friends. Children told us that they loved playing football and swimming, whilst we saw younger children take great delight in dressing up as fairy princesses with the role play materials.

Children have lots of opportunities to practice and develop their independence skills in line with their age and stage of development. Children wash and dry their hands, tidy up and problem solve during play. They bring their own lunch bags and access these at snack and lunchtime, eating their food independently with their friends. The vast play opportunities help develop their confidence and this in turn supports them to learn new skills.

Care and Development

Excellent

Staff implement procedures very well, to keep children safe and promote their development and well-being. They have a clear understanding of the safeguarding procedures and their responsibilities to keep children safe and report any concerns. Staff have easy access to children's information and know children's allergies, dietary requirements, and medical needs. They complete records relating to accidents, incidents and administering medications appropriately and promptly. Staff encourage lots of indoor and outdoor exercise promoting children's physical well-being. There are enough suitably qualified staff to care for children and supervise them appropriately. Most staff have a paediatric first aid qualification to ensure all children have easy and quick access to a member of staff who is trained to respond to minor injuries. Staff practise fire drills with children so that they know what to do in an emergency. They help children understand healthy lifestyles through promoting personal care, safety, and developing respectful relationships.

Staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs. Staff treat children kindly, calmly and practise appropriate behaviour management strategies. Staff are consistent in their expectations of children and give clear instructions when guiding children. They provide appropriate activities for children's individual abilities and encourage children to be curious, experience new things and have fun. For example, some children had not had any experience of karate and staff were heard discussing it with children suggesting they may enjoy it. They have good relationships with their colleagues and communicate well with each other. This ensures children are appropriately supervised and supported throughout the day.

Staff have the skills and knowledge to identify children's individual needs and plan appropriate play and learning opportunities. They set up areas so that children are curious and have choice in how they wish to play. They plan and evaluate activities very effectively. They support children to make decisions and grow in confidence. Children with additional health needs are supported and an individual health plan is put into place to ensure their needs can be met. An additional needs co-ordinator is employed by the company and is available to support staff and give guidance. We noted that health and hygiene support for older girls was provided in a sensitive and caring manner.

Environment**Excellent**

The people in charge have created a safe and secure environment. Following discussion with inspectors, the person in charge (PIC) liaised with the local authority to obtain fobs to allow external doors to be locked at all times. Staff maintain accurate registers of staff and children, with duplicate copies kept in base rooms and with group leaders as they move around the facilities. Leaders ensure that risk assessments are detailed and regularly updated. Group leaders complete daily safety checks for all areas used by children and complete checklists prior to and following all outings off site. Leaders ensure fire drills are carried out and recorded each week, that gas and electrical safety testing is up-to-date and public liability insurance is in place. Staff check toilets for cleanliness every hour. A contracted company provides bus transport for trips.

The playscheme operates from Whitchurch High School. Managers ensure that the facilities are adapted superbly for the age of the children cared for by providing furniture that is of a suitable size. Great care has been taken in organising the location of base rooms; the rooms for younger children are located nearer to the managers' office. All rooms are well-maintained and of a suitable size for the number of children. The playscheme makes use of allocated rooms for cooking and art, together with three indoor spaces for active games and sport. Children have daily access to a large playing field for games and sports activities. A shaded space is available for children to use during hot weather. Staff have access to private spaces for their breaks and an office for confidential conversations if needed.

Children have access to an exemplary range of age-specific activities and resources for both indoor and outdoor play. At the start of each playscheme, children suggest the resources that they would like to use and managers respond very creatively. Staff ensure resources are clean and in an excellent state of repair. They clear outdoor equipment away and store it inside between uses. Food provided for cooking activities is fresh and stored correctly. Indoors younger children enjoy free access to multicultural resources, role-play, books, games and building resources. Older children have access to resources including large floor and table top games.

Leadership and Management

Excellent

Leaders are extremely motivated and have the skills to manage the setting very effectively. They are committed to continual improvement and development of the service to provide the highest quality care for children and families. The statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of how the setting runs. Leaders ensure policies and procedures are very detailed and updated regularly. They maintain accurately recorded written records and information is shared with relevant staff. They share the required information with Care Inspectorate Wales.

Since the last inspection, the people in charge have made changes to their complaints policy and now have a very effective poster to encourage children to share their feelings about the setting. Managers conduct a thorough quality of care review annually and consult with parents, staff and children for their feedback. Leaders have systems in place to monitor accidents or incidents in order to identify any emerging risks within the environment

Staff are exceptionally happy working at the setting. Leaders have robust recruitment procedures which ensure all required information is available to evidence the suitability of staff to work with children. They keep well organised personnel files which hold all required information and safety checks. Staff follow a comprehensive induction process prior to commencing employment. They undertake training in paediatric first aid and safeguarding, and they are provided with all policies and procedures. Staff feel that their induction and training is very effective. Leaders are keen to provide further training to their staff and make and receive requests very positively.

Communication between managers and staff is clear and open and staff feel very well supported and have excellent communication between themselves, the PICs and leaders of the service. One staff member told inspectors *“The management team are always on hand and try their utmost to assist with problems and accommodate us where they can.”* The PICs undertake observations of the staff’s working practices and provide supervision to staff. There are enough qualified and experienced staff to ensure children are well cared for at all times.

Managers are very receptive to feedback and act upon issues which are brought to their attention, without delay. They work very closely with the site caretaker to ensure that the safety of the children in their care is always the priority. Partnerships with parents are strong. Inspectors were told that *“staff are always friendly and approachable”* and *“such an excellent childcare service. Never failed to be impressed. My child is happy, stimulated, well cared for and safe”*. Parents commented that they could contact managers easily and that they would be confident to raise any concerns.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	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.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	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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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	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.
Good	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.
Adequate	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.
Poor	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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