



Inspection Report

Little Acorns Preschool (Caerphilly) Ltd

**Derwendeg Primary School
Hengoed Road
Cefn Hengoed
Hengoed
CF82 7HP**



Date Inspection Completed

24/03/2023

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About Little Acorns Preschool (Caerphilly) Ltd

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Little Acorns Preschool (Caerphilly) Ltd
Registered places	28
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	
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.

<u>Well-being</u>	Good
<u>Care and Development</u>	Adequate
<u>Environment</u>	Adequate
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Poor

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

Summary

Nearly all children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the setting. Children are confident to express their ideas and opinions and can make decisions about how they spend their time. They are developing positive relationships with each other and staff. Children's independence is progressing well.

Staff are kind, caring and offer reassurance to children when needed. Staff engage well with children, supporting their play and building their confidence. Staff are confident in their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding matters. Overall, children's health needs are considered. However, there are several areas which require improvement.

The environment is clean and secure. There are suitable processes in place to ensure the safety of the environment. However, during the inspection we identified several emerging risks which require improvement. There are a wide range of equipment and resources both indoors and out, to encourage children to play and learn. The environment provides children with suitable opportunities to make independent choices in their play and develop their self-help skills.

The responsible individual endeavours to provide a quality service. They do not follow suitable recruitment procedures in relation to their regulatory responsibilities when ensuring safe recruitment. There are a few other areas which require improvement. There are a suitable range of policies, procedures, and documentation in place. Staff are happy at the setting. They undertake a range of training opportunities via the Flying Start team. Relationships with parents are good.

Well-being	Good
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All children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. There are a variety of toys and activities freely available to them. Nearly all children express themselves confidently, as they know their wants, needs and moods will be listened to. For example, a child chose not to join in at snack time, as they wanted to continue to play with the train track. This was respected by the staff member. The child joined the staff member at the snack table later, when it was a little quieter and they had finished what they were playing with.

Nearly all children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the setting. They are comfortable in their surroundings, familiar with daily routines and have a good sense of belonging. For example, children know where to hang their coats and are familiar with where to place their lunch bags. All children receive frequent praise for their efforts and achievements, this makes them feel happy and valued.

All children enjoy their play and learning. They are enthusiastic and fully involved in the activities. All children have good opportunities to develop, learn and use their imagination to meet their developmental needs. Children concentrate for a good length of time in line with their age and stage of development. They enjoy one another's company and show interest in what each other is doing. For example, two children pushed a large tube up the banking together, to then roll it down again, repeatedly. Demonstrating perseverance and gaining a sense of achievement when working together.

Children play well together, chatting to each other and staff about what they are doing. We saw children playing together with a staff member, building a tower with small blocks, talking about the different shapes, and trying to recreate the shapes with their hands. Children can follow their own interests. For example, a member of staff supported a child to turn over a dolls pram to watch how the wheels spin around. They showed great delight in this activity.

Children are beginning to develop their independence skills, enabling them to do things for themselves. For example, children independently use the cereal dispenser to make a choice over which cereal they would like. They pour their own milk and carefully carry their bowl back to the table, where they eat their snack using a spoon, competently. Promoting children's self-help skills and building their self-esteem.

Care and Development

Adequate

The setting has a range of suitable policies and procedures in place which support staff to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff are generally cautious

when dealing with any safeguarding matters. They are confident in the steps to take if they have concerns. There are ineffective procedures in place to accurately record staff and children's times of arrival and departure. Therefore, it is not possible to accurately identify when children attend the setting. It is also unclear which staff are providing care for which children at any given time.

Overall, children's health needs are considered. Staff implement some procedures to support children when recording and reviewing accident and incident records. However, records are not always sufficiently maintained as not all records were available to review during the inspection. Children's health and safety could potentially be compromised as accurate records are not being maintained appropriately. This is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. Staff implement suitable procedures to support children when administering medication. However, during discussions with staff and records viewed it was identified that medication is not stored in line with the settings policy. Children's health and safety could potentially be compromised as medication is not being stored appropriately. This is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

Staff provide children with an adequate healthy snack. Staff keep children well hydrated by ensuring water is always available. All staff follow good hygiene practices at mealtimes, tables are wiped before children sit down to eat. Staff wash their hands often and wear gloves when handling food to prevent cross contamination. Children wash their hands before eating, embedding good hygiene routines. All staff are confident when implementing appropriate procedures to support children who have allergies and intolerances. However, the procedures are not recorded in a policy to ensure any new staff would know what is expected.

All staff interact very well with the children and build positive relationships with them. They are warm, kind, patient and offer reassurance when needed. All staff understand the behaviour management policy. Staff implement a positive approach to guide children towards the behaviour which is expected. For example, a child was exploring the hand washing station, a staff member was very quick to respond, suggesting they come and play with the sand. Re-directing the child to another activity, which they responded to positively. We heard all staff frequently praise and reinforce positive behaviour.

Staff know the children well, respond well to individual children's needs and treat them with respect. They engage positively with the children, supporting their play, building their confidence. Staff complete basic observations and assessments and use these to plan for their next steps. They are beginning to embed the Curriculum for Wales. The setting has satisfactory procedures in place to support children with additional needs. Staff work in partnership with professionals to ensure children receive the appropriate care to meet their needs. However, not all children have their individual plans reviewed in a timely manner.

Environment**Adequate**

The setting is safe and secure. It is clean and suitably maintained. There are suitable processes in place to ensure the safety of the environment, including regular fire safety checks and fire drills. However, most fire drill records do not record key details or reflect the

learning which has been identified during the drill to better inform future practices. There are a few basic written risk assessments in place including some daily safety checks, covering all areas of the setting. However, these are not always robust enough and do not include all potential hazards or identify the necessary steps to take to eliminate risks. During the inspection we found several emerging risks. For example, a woodwork activity including the use of small stainless-steel nails was set up in readiness for children to participate, alongside a member of staff. However, there were periods of time where children had unsupervised access to the activity's resources. A water butt at child height was left without a secured lid, causing a potential hazard. The responsible individual took immediate action to address these issues. However, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

There are suitable facilities and good quality, appropriately sized furniture to meet children's needs. The layout of the environment allows children to move around freely. Children's self-help skills are promoted by them being able to access toilet facilities, with minimal support from staff. Should children wish to rest or have some quiet time during the day there are a range of options available to them. The sensory room provides a calm atmosphere, especially for children who may find the busyness of the main playroom overwhelming at times.

There are a wide range of equipment and resources both indoors and out, promoting children's curiosity. A few natural and recycled resources are used as play materials. For example, crates and tubes for outside play, enhancing children's play experiences. Resources are organised and displayed attractively on low level shelving units, so they are easily accessible and inviting to children. Wall displays focus on promoting key messages such as healthy eating, equality and diversity and celebrating children's experiences and achievements, giving them a sense of belonging.

The outside space is easily accessible directly from the playroom, which is of suitable size. There has been a great deal of investment to develop the space, which includes a large canopy to provide some protection from the elements in wet weather. A fence around the parameters of the soft play area, safeguards children from falling down the steep banking. The outside space offers a range of opportunities from growing vegetables and flowers in the warmer weather. Children watch the birds feeding from the bird feeders placed in the trees. There are a range of equipment which promote physical play using bikes and apparatus such as a climbing beam.

Leadership and Management

Poor

The responsible individual endeavours to provide a quality service and responds positively to recommendations for improvement. An adequate statement of purpose provides parents with the relevant information about the setting, so they can make an informed choice. The responsible individual provides staff and parents with a suitable range of policies, procedures, and documentation to support the running of the setting. Documents such as

children's contracts are signed and exchanged with parents prior to the children starting at the setting.

The responsible individual is aware of their responsibilities to undertake self-evaluation procedures. They seek the views of parents, and are working towards including the views of children, and other professionals as part of their next review. As part of the process, they produce a report.

The responsible individual does not follow suitable recruitment procedures. During the inspection six staff files were viewed. Most of these do not contain the information required by regulation to evidence their suitability. For example, four staff files do not have any references. One staff file only contained one reference. Three of the staff files do not have a detailed work history prior to starting at the setting. Therefore, the responsible individual cannot be confident that all staff employed to work directly with children are appropriate to do so. We have therefore, issued a priority action notice. The provider must take immediate action to address these issues.

Staff have up to date job descriptions and contracts defining their roles and responsibilities. However, the responsible individual does not ensure there are sufficient staff who have the relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with children. They do not ensure the role of 'person in charge' always remains supernumerary as outlined in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years. While no immediate action is required, this is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

Staff have completed the required mandatory training. Additional training is also undertaken in partnership with the Flying Start team. For example, the curriculum for Wales, autism awareness and communication friendly spaces, among others. New staff undertake a suitable induction process. Regular supervisions, annual appraisals and team meetings are carried out with staff. Staff feel supported in their roles. They feel proud to work at the setting.

Staff have good relationships with parents. They keep them informed. Parents we spoke with were highly complementary about the setting. They told us the responsible individual and the staff are very approachable and supportive.

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
28	The responsible individual failed to ensure that all required suitability checks on staff employed have been carried out prior to appointment at the setting. The responsible individual must be satisfied that staff employed have the appropriate skills and are suitable to work with children.	Not Achieved

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
30	The responsible individual failed to ensure that accurate records such as children and staff hours of attendance and accident records are maintained and securely stored. The responsible individual must ensure that procedures are in place and followed by staff to maintain accurate records to safeguard children's health and safety.	New
26	The responsible individual failed to ensure that medication is stored appropriately in line with the setting policy. The responsible individual must ensure that procedures are in place and followed by staff regarding the storage of medication to ensure children's health and safety is maintained.	New
25	The responsible individual failed to identify, assess and minimise risk to children at the setting. Suitable arrangements must be in place to identify and eliminate risks.	New
14	The responsible individual failed to ensure that there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified, skilled and experienced persons looking after the relevant children as outlined in National Minimum standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years. The responsible individual must ensure that staff have the required qualification, skills and experience to be able to fully meet the children's needs. The responsible individual failed to ensure that the role of 'person in charge' remains supernumerary at all times. Therefore, the responsibilities/tasks associated to the leadership and management role to ensure the smooth running of the service are not being fully met.	New

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 4 - Meeting individual needs	Ensure individual plans regarding children with Additional Learning Needs are reviewed in a timely manner.

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice

Recommendation(s)
Ensure policies are strengthened to reflect procedures followed when managing allergies and intolerances.
Ensure fire drill records hold key details and reflections of learning identified to better inform future practice.

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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