



Inspection Report

Willow Tree Nursery

**190 Llantarnam Road Llantarnam
Cwmbran
NP44 3BH**



Date Inspection Completed

05/06/2024

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About Willow Tree Nursery

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Willow Tree Nursery
Registered places	50
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	16 November 2023
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	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>	Adequate
<u>Care and Development</u>	Adequate
<u>Environment</u>	Poor
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Poor

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

Summary

Almost all children are happy and enjoy their time at the setting. They develop trusting relationships with staff as they know most of their needs will be met. Children behave and interact appropriately for their ages and stages of development. They have many opportunities to develop their skills and independence.

Staff are kind, caring, and interact well with children. They manage children's behaviour positively. Most staff understand and implement the setting's procedures to promote children's health and hygiene. They plan appropriate activities and use suitable systems to track children's progress and identify their next steps.

People who run the setting have created an environment that is generally stimulating and interesting for children. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are equipped with varied resources and furniture. However, significant improvements are required in relation to risk assessment of resources, to ensure the environment is safe for children.

People who run the setting have policies and procedures in place to guide the running of the nursery. However, the quality of leadership and management needs to improve to ensure staff recruitment is robust, record keeping is stringent and there are enough qualified staff deployed to care for children.

Children have opportunities to make choices and influence the direction of their play. Older children make requests for stories and songs while younger children select resources freely from the items set out for them. All children use the indoor areas as they wish while older children use their allocated areas in the garden confidently. All children make their wishes known when offered more food, responding in an age-appropriate manner.

Children show pride in their achievements and are delighted when staff members recognise this. For example, babies beam when staff praise them for dancing and walking. Many children have clear bonds of affection with staff. They look to their keyworkers and other staff members for support and reassurance and usually receive this. While at play, children receive responsive care if they are upset which quickly soothes them. However, lengthy mealtime processes result in children sitting for a considerable time, leading to boredom and upset.

Children behave kindly and considerately in line with their ages and stages of development. They communicate appropriately with both adults and their peers. Babies engage excitedly in conversation with staff, shouting “*Yeah, Daddy!*” when asked if Daddy is in work. Older children delight in creating games with their friends such as chasing each other in a circle around the garden. Children of all ages share resources and play together happily. They respond well to praise and positive reinforcement and enjoy engaging in meaningful activities led by staff.

Children are free to explore their environment and spend time on activities that interest them, which encourages them to learn and develop. Older children have regular exercise and fresh air, and highly value the time they spend outdoors engaged in active play. They develop their physical skills by kicking balls. Children engage well with planned themed activities such as making bees out of yellow and black playdough and googly eyes. They request activities such as water and show great enthusiasm when they are brought out. Children spend appropriate lengths of time on activities demonstrating perseverance.

Children have opportunities to develop their independence through a variety of learning routines. Older children assist with giving out cups at snack time, use tongs to pick up their own fruit and help to wipe tables. Their understanding of the importance of recycling is developed through putting the empty milk bottles in the correct bin. Babies are encouraged to tidy up toys and to feed themselves with growing independence.

Staff follow some procedures to maintain children's health, such as allergy management and ensuring children have access to healthy meals and water. They have recently reviewed processes regarding the warming of food. Staff wipe tables before and after food and sweep any food up from the floor. However, they do not consistently follow hygiene procedures relating to hand washing, toileting and nappy changing. Staff have a suitable knowledge of safeguarding procedures and people who run the setting make and record referrals appropriately. They record accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries in good detail. However, forms are not always signed by parents and people who run the setting don't always maintain oversight to ensure they are fully aware of occurrences. Staff monitor sleeping children appropriately. They follow suitable procedures to administer medicine and record this accurately. People who run the setting carry out fire drills and record this suitably. An appropriate number of staff members have paediatric first aid training to ensure first aid can be given promptly.

Staff care for children in a kind and relaxed way. Many interact well with children to engage them, for example by asking what fruit they are going to have and showing excitement as they bring the fruit around for children to select. Staff use appropriate methods of calming unsettled children such as giving cuddles or distracting them with a toy they like. However, staff do not always respond to unsettled children promptly during these more structured times of day. Staff manage behaviour in line with the setting's policy through gentle reminders such as "*No thank you, we all play together.*" They support these reminders with thoughtful explanations to aid children's understanding of appropriate behaviour. Staff praise children for their achievements, telling them, "*You're amazing at that!*".

Staff plan a range of stimulating activities based upon children's interests and fascinations. They make regular, purposeful observations to track children's progress and identify next steps in their development. Many staff members use questioning to encourage children's thinking. For example, they ask children to identify the animals they find in the water tray and discuss colours and shapes as children play. They share information such as nappy changes, sleep and food eaten, with parents via a communications app. People who run the setting liaise suitably with outside agencies to ensure support is provided appropriately to children with additional needs.

Environment**Poor**

The nursery is set out across two floors of a building solely used by the setting. The premises are secure. People who run the setting have undertaken a full fire risk assessment for the building and ensure firefighting and detection equipment are tested regularly. All routine maintenance checks for the building are undertaken in a timely manner and insurances are in place. Door hinges are covered with finger guards and all blind cords and hazardous substances are secured away from children's reach. People who run the setting have undertaken risk assessments covering different areas of the building and outdoor area. However, they do not assess risks relating to specific play resources leading to accidents in the environment. This is placing children's health and well-being at risk, and we have therefore issued a priority action notice. The provider must take immediate action to address this issue.

The nursery is generally an attractive and well-maintained space for children to play. The upstairs of the nursery is light and bright, but the lower level is dark in places. Furniture is child-sized to allow children to be independent as they learn and play. Babies eat in highchairs while older children use low tables and chairs for their meals. The outdoor area is sectioned to provide separate spaces for children of different ages to play with children of their own age. The space is partially covered to allow for all weather play. Babies have access to a calming sleep room with well-maintained cots, while older children enjoy a dedicated sleep room with mats. Children have access to an appropriate number of clean toilets and sinks, stocked suitably with handwash and paper towels to promote an infection free environment. Baby and toddler rooms have use of appropriate nappy changing facilities.

People who run the setting provide clean, good quality resources. Staff store them at low-level, so children can access equipment independently. Resources are varied and stimulate children's interests appropriately. In the playrooms for older children, they have access to real-life items to encourage creative role-play and imaginary play.

Leadership and Management

Poor

People who run the setting ensure some aspects are appropriately managed, but improvement is needed in some areas. The statement of purpose, which was updated during the inspection, provides an accurate picture of how the nursery runs. There is a wide range of policies and procedures that people who run the setting review annually. Some amendments to these were discussed at inspection. The cars used to transport children to the provider's other setting have valid insurance, tax and MOT. People who run the setting obtain the required information relating to children's needs including permissions for elements of care such as emergency medical treatment. However, staff do not complete registers appropriately to record children in attendance and who is caring for them. People who run the service do not notify Care Inspectorate Wales of significant events affecting the well-being of children in their care. These are areas for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action.

People who run the setting carry out an annual review of the quality of care they provide. This review includes the views of parents and children. The report identifies improvements made through the year and actions to be taken in response to feedback from parents and children. There is a complaints policy in place and action taken in response to complaints is documented.

People who run the setting ensure staff undertake the required mandatory training and have DBS checks in place. However, improvements are needed to ensure some staffing procedures are compliant with the regulations. People who run the setting were unable to provide evidence to show that sufficient staff are deployed to care for children at all times. This is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. People who run the setting do not always follow robust procedures to ensure the suitability of staff. They had not obtained sufficient references or employment history for a number of staff members. This is an area for improvement, and we expect the provider to take action. New staff undertake an induction when starting employment at the setting. However, this was insufficiently stringent and lacked clarity in terms of training regarding policies and procedures. Staff said they are happy working at the setting. People who run the setting have recently put a new system of staff supervision and annual appraisal into place to ensure staff are supported in their roles.

Parents we spoke with were positive about their care provided and noted the staff were welcoming and friendly.

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
25	The provider must ensure all higher risk resources are risk assessed and hazardous items are not within reach of children.	New

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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28	The provider must follow robust procedures to ensure staff are appropriate to work with children.	New
27	The provider must ensure appropriate numbers of qualified staff are supervising each group of children at all times.	New
30	The provider must ensure records of the attendance of staff and children are accurate.	New
31	The provider must inform CIW of all injuries to children requiring medical care.	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	Respond promptly to children's cues when they wish to be removed from highchairs.
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Ensure all children and staff wash their hands before mealtimes.
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Ensure staff follow nappy changing and toileting procedures consistently.
Standard 5 - Records	Review accident and pre-existing injury procedures to ensure oversight by managers.
Standard 13 (Day Care) - Suitable Person	Develop staff induction processes to ensure they are clear and robust.

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)
Review snack processes in the pre-school room to minimise waiting time for children.

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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