



Inspection Report

Appletree Nursery

**Appletree Nursery
Norwegian Church
Langdon Road
Swansea
SA1 8QY**



Date Inspection Completed

18/10/2021

About Appletree Nursery

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Appletree Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	42
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	March 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the needs of children who use or intend to use their service.

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Summary

Children at this nursery are settled, happy and engaged. They have a strong voice as they are listened to and their individual interests are catered for successfully. As a result, they are highly motivated and engaged in their play and make good progress. Care staff are warm and supportive of the children and they know them well. They use positive methods for encouraging good behaviour and establish good relationships with the children. Care staff understand their roles and responsibilities well and have an adequate understanding of safeguarding. People who run the setting ensure that the nursery is well resourced, safe and secure. In the main, people who run the service proactively check and replace fixtures and resources when needed although some maintenance/replacement is required. Overall, people who run the service ensure the nursery runs smoothly and has efficient processes in place but improvements are needed to evidence safe recruitment processes and to ensure attendance records are accurate and that they reflect when/which staff are responsible for children during the day.

Well-being

Nearly all children participate well and are encouraged to express their thoughts and contribute ideas. Children actively engage during story time and share their thinking. When listening to stories they responded to questions about the characters and storyline. For instance, care staff asked, "*Are you happy today like him? Do you like pies too?*" and children willingly answered.

Children have a confident voice as their ideas, opinions and individual interests are given high priority. Children are able to choose stories they would like to listen to and songs to sing. The toddlers, for example, each chose a nursery rhyme to sing as a group, such as 'The Grand Old Duke of York and 'Incy Wincy Spider.' Care staff asked all children to contribute which showed that they were each valued as individuals. Children's interests inspire the daily activities, which places the child at the heart of the activity planning.

Children are happy, comfortable and engaged. Almost all children are content and feel secure to explore the environment around them. For example, when resources or activities were set out children immediately showed an interest and started to play. Other children moved around the room to play how they wished. Some used the slide while others played with the play kitchen resources. One child had recently started and was finding separation from parents difficult. However, staff provided lots of reassurance and responded to the child's needs and as a result, they were soon happy, settled and tucking into a second helping of lunch.

Children interact positively with others. They are encouraged to take care with resources and they help with tidying up as this forms part of the routine. One child sang along to the 'Are We Helping?' tune as they tidied away toys ready for lunch showing that they were used to hearing it and many children willingly assisted. Children smiled when staff praised them showing that they felt valued for their efforts. Children waited patiently for their name to be called to collect their lunch or to have it served to them, depending on their age. Younger children played happily alongside each other and some of the older children played with others, showing that they actively listen, co-operate and are building friendships.

Almost all children are highly motivated and engaged in their play and they benefit from free choice and a range of planned activities during the day that focuses on their personal interests. For example, staff had created sensory trays using animal figures as a few of the children had shown an interest in farm animals. Care staff give children's individual needs careful consideration and provide for them successfully. Because of this, children develop well and make good progress.

Care and Development

In the main, care staff understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe and healthy. They follow infection control procedures successfully and encourage good hygiene practices such as washing hands before eating, cleaning of surfaces and toys and use of PPE equipment like gloves and aprons. Care staff actively enact upon their sickness policy and procedures to ensure that the risk of cross-infection to others is minimised. The setting had a number of new staff members who had a basic understanding of how to identify signs and symptoms of child abuse, but not all care staff were aware of the correct procedures to follow. Care staff record pre-existing injuries although do not routinely discuss or note parents' comments, despite the policy stating it should. They carefully consider children's allergies and dietary requirements and the kitchen is organised efficiently to minimise any risk to children's health because of their individual needs.

Care staff manage interactions in a warm and encouraging way. They promote positive behaviour well by celebrating good behaviour and use lots of praise, such as *"Amazing helpers!"* and *"Amazing sharing, well done."* Care staff actively encourage co-operation, sharing and good manners. For instance, one staff member prompted a young child to say, *"Thank you"* and they did so, which showed that they were listening responding appropriately. Staff used incidental Welsh so that children became familiar with Welsh vocabulary and phrases. Care staff know the children well and have a good relationship with the children. The key worker system ensures that children receive care from a consistent adult who understands their individual likes, dislikes and ability. This was evident when care staff played with the children and interacted with them. For example, care staff said, *"I know you like strawberries, don't you. Does your baby like strawberries too?"*

Care staff promote the development of all children by planning for a wide range of interesting play and learning experiences, which cover all developmental areas. They routinely evaluate activities in order to improve outcomes for children and to inform future planning. Recent activities that the toddlers had participated in included making Halloween potions, sensory spider play, looking for spiders in a web and practising verbalising words related to the Halloween theme, such as 'spider'. Care staff's observations demonstrated that they had a sound understanding of child development and how to ensure children made good progress. For instance, the next steps included, *"more opportunities for X to join in with others by implementing group activities"* and *"explore different grips when mark making."* Staff confidently discussed children's individual needs. The nursery's policy in relation to additional learning needs however, did not reflect the change to the new code of practice which had taken effect in September. People who run the setting sent a revised policy during the inspection process.

Environment

The environment is secure and, on the whole, well maintained indoors and outdoors. Safety measures ensure that access to and from the setting is secure and children are safe as no-one can enter the building and are asked to wait outside. People who run the nursery ensure that there are thorough cleaning routines to maintain good hygiene practices. A few things were showing sign of wear or damage, particularly the windowpane in the baby room, which had rotted and was allowing the wall to become damp. Washing was being dried in the baby room because of a lack of available space although this was when children were not present. During a second visit the person in charge was ensuring that washing was being dried elsewhere. The changing mat and the floor below the washing machine were beginning to show signs of damage. The person in charge said that the responsible individual was aware of these issues and had plans to change or repair them.

Leaders of the setting ensure that staff are suitably aware of their responsibilities relating to health and safety. During the inspection the fire alarms sounded twice, caused by steam from the kitchen but staff were prepared and ready to evacuate the building before being given the all clear. Fire drill records showed that drills are performed with sufficient frequency. The fire drill records did not have the full date. Health and safety checklists are consistently completed to show that the environment is safe for children. Whilst the person in charge said that staff received a full induction which included health and safety, the induction forms in some staff files not always reflect this because they were blank.

The premises is warm and inviting due to the soft colours and the emphasis on natural materials and resources. Each room is zoned for different forms of play or activities, such as a reading area, creative area or role play area. There is sufficient space for children to undertake activities and there are spaces for children to sleep or relax in. Children are able to easily access toys and materials to use as they are stored at child's height and in a way that encourages free and easy access. There are a wide variety of loose parts and natural materials to explore such as sand, cones, wooden toys, buttons, ribbons, shells and bangles. This encourages children to explore different materials, textures and allows for creativity and imaginative play. New balance bikes had been purchased for use with the older children to help develop balance and their gross motor skills. Children are able to access the small outdoor area for fresh air but are also taken on regular walks around the immediate area so that they spend time outside.

Leadership and Management

Overall, leaders have a strong sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement to ensure good outcomes for children. They have developed good systems and procedures to ensure the smooth running of the nursery. Whilst most of the national minimum standards are met, we identified non-compliance in relation to records and staffing. Leaders have implemented a new online app to enable better communication between staff and parents. The app also records attendance. However, the records were not always accurate and did not include information necessary to meet the regulations. For example, staff had regularly failed to sign out and therefore was not an accurate picture of when staff were caring for children. The records did also not show when staff spent time in different areas or when they were not responsible for children, such as breaks. As a result, The person in charge said that staff signed children out when they remembered and because the time could not be 'backdated' could not be relied upon to be an accurate account of their attendance.

Leaders regularly seek the views of parents, staff and children to inform their quality of care review. Leaders observe children and ask the older children questions as part of the process although not always evaluated to provide useful information that can be used to assess quality. The report outlined some parents' suggestions: a new menu and the proposal of an air conditioning system. The nursery's improvement plan incorporated these ideas to show that others' thoughts and ideas are considered.

Leaders manage staff and resources inconsistently. This is because there is not sufficient evidence to suggest that leaders follow a robust recruitment process in respect of all staff. For example, a number of staff files showed that people who run the service had completed tick lists to indicate that checks had been undertaken but there was no supporting evidence. In respect of four staff members, there were either one or no references to show that their suitability had been checked. Few staff files contained a signed medical declaration of health. Records showed that two staff's DBS checks had expired and a new one not obtained for months. Supervision notes were not always available, and appraisal sheets did not always record the dates.

Leaders of the service have found new ways to communicate and keep parents informed about their children in order to establish effective relationships with parents. A new online app allows staff to send messages directly to parents and provides regular updates on their progress with photographs of children taking part in activities. People who run the service said parents have responded positively and is working well at a time when contact has been restricted. Contracts had been obtained, although some important information had not been gathered prior to children starting. For example, doctor and medical information which would have been required in the event of an emergency. People who run the service had gathered information about children to help them settle in the nursery and had sought relevant permissions.

Recommendations to meet with the National Minimum Standards

R1 Ensure all staff are familiar with safeguarding policies and procedures

R2 Repair the window frame in the baby room and undertake any associated remedial work

R3 Complete records with sufficient detail, to include full dates and signatures

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
30	Records have not been kept as required by the regulations. Ensure all records are accurate	New

	and kept in line with regulations.	
28	Staff files did not contain the required number of references and lacked information to support that staff were suitable to work with children. Leaders of the setting must ensure that there is full and satisfactory information or documentation available in relation to the person to show that a robust recruitment process has taken place.	New

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