



Inspection Report

Baby Acorns

**42 Partridge Road
Roath
Cardiff
CF24 3QX**



Date Inspection Completed

04/01/2024

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About Baby Acorns

Type of care provided.	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	Acorns Nurseries Ltd
Registered places	55
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	Click or tap here to enter text.7 June 2020
Is this a Flying Start service?	Click or tap here to enter text.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>	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

Children are extremely happy and very much enjoy their time at the setting. They have excellent opportunities for play and learning within a very nurturing setting. Children interact well and form close bonds with their peers and staff. They have numerous opportunities to learn skills for independence. They develop valuable skills through an extensive range of high quality play experiences.

Staff are professional, qualified, and work together effectively as part of a team. They have a particularly good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. Staff implement robust and clear policies and procedures. They plan an excellent variety of interesting and fun activities, to support children's development.

The environment is bright, clean, extremely welcoming, and well organised. The outside area is a great strength, providing an extremely interesting, stimulating, and safe area. There is an excellent selection of well-maintained and superior quality resources both inside and outside. Staff follow procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable, completing risk assessments and daily checks consistently.

The leadership and management of the setting is strong. Leaders are passionate and committed to providing high quality childcare. They have extremely thorough processes in place to monitor the quality of the setting. Leaders are proactive in keeping up to date with current childcare practice and changes to legislation and employ staff to specialise and provide support in different areas. They manage the recruitment and employment of staff well and staff are committed to providing excellent care for the children. Leaders foster a clear culture of continuous improvement and build strong partnerships with parents and others for the benefit of the children.

Well-being

Excellent

Children have a strong voice. They have very many opportunities to make choices. They decide what they would like to play with from the very many activities on offer, both inside and outside. Younger children choose from a particularly good range of developmentally appropriate and stimulating resources. This promotes their all-round development, enabling them to follow their own interests with confidence. For example, a child showed interest in the sand tray, putting their hands in it. They are supported enthusiastically by staff to explore the texture and make shapes in it, which they clearly enjoy.

Children are happy, relaxed, and confident. They are developing their social skills well and in line with their ability, age, and stage of development. They are developing strong attachments with staff in their base area, and they are comfortable to approach familiar people when they need help or reassurance. Children feel secure by knowing the daily routines and confidently respond to directions from staff. For example, children spontaneously, and very often approach staff for cuddles and babies held up their arms as they displayed signs of wanting a nap. Children playing alone, are content and soon joined by other children and staff in their games. Children clearly enjoy the praise and positive comments from staff, smiling broadly. Children take delight in playing outside and there was a lot of laughter as they played freely, running around, and seeking out their preferred activities.

Children are learning to behave very well. They are learning to successfully share resources and very few incidents required staff intervention. Children sit together at mealtimes, chatting with each other and staff, listening to others talking about subjects that are important to them. For example, what they are going to do on the weekend and food they liked. Children engage enthusiastically in activities such as singing and crafting. Those who did not want to engage at the time could find an activity they liked and joined in when they were ready.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop new skills with the play and learning experiences available. They are curious and engaged learners who value the chance to explore the environment. They enjoy free play and readily join in structured, adult led activities such as finding animals that had been hidden under objects in the tuff tray. Children are very engaged in their chosen play throughout the setting. For example, during free flow time they really enjoyed playing outside in the water tray, filling jugs so a plastic duck floated to the top and playing with musical instruments. Others really showed interest in the Welsh area, playing with a dragon, and dressing up in cultural clothes.

Children are successfully learning to become independent learners and develop their self-help skills in line with their age and stage of development. They are given time to do things for themselves such as putting on their bibs at lunch time, cleaning their own faces and dressing to go outside. They enjoy helping to tidy up and are becoming proficient in

dressing themselves after using the toilet or putting on aprons for messy play. Babies are becoming increasingly social and independent. They readily explore their playroom, accessing toys they would like to play with. Babies can develop skills to eat independently because they are given varying degrees of support according to their needs.

Care and Development

Excellent

Staff have a clear understanding of their roles within the setting. They are effective in keeping children safe and healthy because they confidently follow the setting's policies and procedures. Staff have access to a good range of training opportunities, and this supports them to be confident in their role. They are clear about their responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns and meeting any medical needs. Staff are aware of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Additional Learning Needs legislation. They supervise children extremely well and implement safe hygiene procedures. There are healthy initiatives in place at the service such as the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school scheme. Staff provide healthy meals and snacks, and children have free access to their beakers of water during the session. Staff support children to be physically active and this includes very frequent or free access to the outside play area. Staff clearly record accidents and incidents, and these are monitored regularly to identify any trends, which may need to be addressed.

Staff manage children's interactions sensitively and with exceptional skill. There is a comprehensive behaviour management policy in place which staff implement confidently. They know the children as individuals and have a sound understanding of child development, and its impact on children's behaviour. Staff consistently use positive language and praise, which enhances children's well-being. They offer simple, clear explanations, and encourage kind behaviour. On the rare occasion staff needed to manage behaviour, they implemented consistent and positive strategies in a calm and patient manner. Children respond positively to instruction, such as to slow down or to use kind hands. Staff are nurturing and act as good role models. For example, using good manners, apologising if anything negative occurs and listening to other staff. They encourage children to be kind to their friends and they sit with them for their meals to promote their social skills.

Staff are motivated, professionally qualified, and keen to effectively promote children's development. They monitor children's progress effectively, conducting regular observations and using developmental progress tracking systems well. Staff communicate with each other consistently and are aware of their individual roles in delivering nurturing, responsive care. Staff deal with children's personal needs promptly and discretely. They treat children with respect and value them as individuals. They kneel to the children's level and use calm voices to guide them. Staff maintain good eye contact and their positive expressions provide children with reassurance. Staff are enthusiastic in their interactions, holding children's interest and making activities fun. Many staff use the Welsh language spontaneously during activities, and children engage well with this.

Environment**Excellent**

Leaders provide a safe, well-maintained, and very welcoming environment. They have detailed risk assessments for all areas of the environment and many activities, and these are reviewed on a regular basis. They ensure that annual maintenance and safety checks are completed in a timely manner. There is a secure system for entry to the setting and staff ensure that all visitors sign into the service. There are health and safety reminders around the setting, such as posters outlining fire evacuation, food preferences and hygiene procedures. Many are trained in a range of health and safety matters, including first aid.

Leaders organise the space to a high standard and with children's needs at the forefront of the design. They ensure areas are light and decorated in neutral colours with natural materials, providing a calm ambiance. Leaders provide inviting, well-equipped play areas for different aged children, with good nappy changing/toileting facilities. Staff adapt areas for older children to sleep and children under one year sleep in a cot room. Staff make play areas welcoming and homely. They adapt the large 'messy' playroom for mealtimes, providing exceptionally good facilities for children to eat together. Leaders have designed the environment so that children have the option to play in the outdoors regularly as it is accessible for most of the session. The outside area provides excellent play opportunities which can be accessed in all weathers. There are numerous, well thought out areas for children to play imaginatively and develop their physical skills both inside and outside. Walls are adorned with mirrors and objects to stimulate children's thinking and develop their fine motor skills.

Leaders ensure that there are excellent resources to stimulate the children's interest and imagination. Children have easy access to play resources that are varied and highly suitable for the age of the children who have access to them. Staff change learning areas regularly, to maintain children's interest and extend their skills. Leaders invest in an extensive range of superior quality resources such as real life resources, musical instruments, pots and pans and crockery. Staff provide a rich environment for play and learning with most resources easily accessible to children, as they are visible and stored at their level.

Leadership and Management

Excellent

Leaders are skilled, experienced and manage the service very well. There is a clear and inspirational vision for the service outlined in the Statement of Purpose. There is a strong ethos of child-centred care, and this is evident when you speak to managers and staff. They maintain detailed policies and procedures that are reviewed and updated as and when required. They give staff the opportunity to familiarise themselves with policies on a regular basis and ensure that parents are kept informed of any changes. Staff maintain daily records such as daily registers, accidents, and daily risk assessment checklists well.

Leaders have a robust system to review the quality of the service they offer. They consult with all relevant parties, who contribute to an effective annual self-evaluation process and create a culture of continuous improvement. They fully respond to parent, staff, and children's requests. Leaders set high expectations of themselves and staff. They submit the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) to CIW appropriately. This included a comprehensive report of their quality of care review, including their plans for future improvements. Leaders employ additional staff in their main company office who have specific areas of responsibility such as safeguarding, additional learning needs, curriculum planning and human resources. They keep the company, managers, and staff up to date with national priorities, developments in childcare changes to legislation.

Leaders have effective systems in place to recruit, induct and employ staff. They maintain well organised staff files that evidence all the required checks and information required by regulations, are in place prior to staff starting work. Daily records such as attendance and staff rotas show that enough staff are employed for the numbers of children attending. The person in charge is not included in staff: child ratios and is knowledgeable and skilled in the management of the setting on a day-to-day basis. Leaders monitor staff professional development and progress through one to one supervision and an annual appraisal. Staff told us they felt supported to do their jobs to a high standard. There is a strong team ethos and their sense of pride in their roles was palpable throughout the setting.

Leaders have established systems to enable them to work in close partnerships with parents. They seek detailed information about their children's needs and preferences, keeping parents well informed via newsletters, emails and notices on display in the setting. They are about to implement an electronic 'app' to further aid effective communication with parents. Parents tell CIW that they are extremely happy with how the setting communicates with them and keeps them updated regarding their child. Leaders have established effective links with a wide variety of external organisations and individuals such as the local authority and childcare support organisations. They have useful links with health visitors, schools, and other professionals that they can call on to support children with emerging additional needs.

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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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)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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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