



**Estyn**

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**The Oak Tree Centre**

**The Oak Tree Centre  
Ffordd Las  
Rhyl  
LL18 2DY**

**Date of inspection: June 2022**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About The Oak Tree Centre

Name of setting	The Oak Tree Centre
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Dawn Anderson
Person in charge	Dawn Anderson Gemma Jones
Number of places	77
Age range of children	8 weeks - 12 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	23
Number of children who receive funding for early education	23
Opening days / times	Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that 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.
Date of previous CIW inspection	14 June 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	May 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	28/06/2022
No children come from Welsh speaking homes.	

## **Non-compliance**

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure consistency across the setting with regards to children's independence at meal times
- R2 Provide more opportunities for children to develop Welsh language listening and speaking skills

## **What happens next**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Well-being:

Nearly all children arrive feeling happy, excited and ready to play. They engage well in activities, show resilience and interact well with practitioners and visitors. Most children are confident in expressing their feelings and making decisions when choosing resources and activities. For example, a child in the toddler room chose to build sandcastles in the sand. Nearly all children are content and express their enjoyment through smiles and laughter. Most children interact confidently with each other and with practitioners. Across the setting, children express themselves well and know that practitioners will consider their wishes. For example, in the baby room, children asked for bubbles and a practitioner got them.

Nearly all children are enthusiastic and active. They make independent decisions about activities and choose resources that are on offer to them. During free play, children choose to play in different areas, moving confidently from one activity to another. They follow their interests and demonstrate imaginative skills. For example, a group of children pushed a doll's pram telling a practitioner that they were off on their holidays to buy ice cream.

Most children are happy, relaxed and comfortable with their carers. They approach practitioners when they need comfort or assistance. For example, children seek support from a practitioner with hand washing. Children have a voice at the service. They requested that a soft play area was made bigger due to the outdoor area being inaccessible due to building work.

Nearly all children are starting to form friendships appropriately and show care and concern for each other. For example, during role play outside, children in the toddler room encouraged each other to stop their car at the zebra crossing for their friends to cross the road. All children behave well and sustain attention appropriately.

Children have opportunities for both free play and adult-led activities that are age and stage appropriate. Children respond well to praise for their achievements. They see that their work is valued because it is displayed on the walls, which gives them a sense of belonging. Most children access the environment independently. They develop appropriate personal care skills. For example, they wash their hands and use the toilet independently.

However, children do not always develop their independence well enough at mealtimes across the nursery.

### Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):

Nearly all children make strong progress from their individual starting points and gain a good/appropriate range of skills during their time at the setting. They develop physical skills robustly, making effective use of climbing equipment in the temporary outdoor area, and racing around with their friends while pushing prams. They develop fine motor skills well, for example by carefully placing twigs and pinecones

into plasticine to make a piece of art. These skills help them to hold crayons, paint brushes and pencils as they begin to make marks, developing early writing skills successfully.

Most children develop listening and speaking skills well. They listen to practitioners to follow instructions and to respond to questions and challenges as they play. For example, children explain that they are making cup-cakes in the mud kitchen. Many begin to chat with their friends as they play. Nearly all children begin to develop an interest in reading, for example by choosing to sit alongside a practitioner to listen to a story in the reading corner and selecting their own book to flick through. Many children begin to develop a suitable understanding of a few Welsh words and phrases. For example, they respond to the register in Welsh and sing a few songs, such as bidding each other goodbye at the end of a session.

On the whole, children develop numeracy skills successfully. They identify different two-dimensional shapes, begin to sort them accurately and start to order objects from the smallest to the largest. Many show an interest in numbers by playing with a calculator and making marks on paper. A few of those further on in their stage of development begin to trace numbers with their finger on an interactive screen successfully.

Nearly all children develop creative skills well, especially when they are given the opportunity to respond freely. They make drawings and paintings about their own experiences such as 'my caravan' or 'a bucket and spade'. Most children enjoy dressing up in the home area, for example by pretending to do the laundry, and many experiment with making music using percussion instruments. On the whole, children begin to develop a suitable range of digital skills, for example when having an imaginary conversation on a telephone during role play, and using a digital camera to take photographs of their friends.

### **Care and development:**

Practitioners have a sound understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They follow robust systems and procedures to ensure children's health and safety and have a strong understanding of their responsibilities. Practitioners follow effective cleaning procedures appropriately to ensure a hygienic environment for the children and to minimise cross contamination. For example, practitioners encourage children to wash their hands, before and after snack and messy play activities. Practitioners plan a beneficial range of opportunities for physical play and exercise to improve children's health and well-being. For example, children have access to fresh air daily during their play in the outdoor area.

Practitioners understand their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm, including how to respond to any child protection concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners have attended safeguarding training, and all hold the relevant first aid qualifications. All practitioners provide good care and support for children. The setting has an effective behaviour policy, which all practitioners implement well. They praise good behaviour and achievements and offer encouragement when children try to do things for themselves. They are good role models, promoting and prompting the use of good manners.

All practitioners know the children well and have a clear understanding of their individual needs, abilities and preferences. They provide a nurturing and caring environment where the needs of the children come first. Practitioners utilise information collected before children start at the setting to plan how to care for each child effectively. All practitioners provide children with good learning and development opportunities. They carry out regular observations of children's play and learning, which provides them with information on how children are developing and inform the next steps in their development. The setting has effective procedures to support children with identified and emerging additional learning needs, with support available from the local authority when needed. Practitioners act diligently on the advice of specialist agencies alongside information they receive from parents for the benefit of the children.

Practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to develop an understanding of being Welsh and the wider world. As a result, they learn how to treat people of all cultures with respect and tolerance. For example, they celebrate the customs of the Ramadan and Chinese New Year, in addition to St David's Day, St Dwynwen's Day and Christmas.

**Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):**

All practitioners form effective working relationships with the children, demonstrating the care and support that provides a solid foundation for learning. They plan engaging activities that target specific skills, as well as providing open access to a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities indoors. They also ensure that children have valuable access to resources in the temporary outdoor area that is in use while construction work takes place on the site.

Practitioners recognise the importance of providing children with extended periods of uninterrupted play. They intervene sensitively to take advantage of learning opportunities that arise naturally. For example, when a child begins to play with a measuring tape, the practitioner counts the numbers with them, and suggests that they measure the child's height. Practitioners enrich the different areas of the classroom to develop children's knowledge and understanding effectively. For example, they place wooden and metal objects in the sand, and challenge children to find the metal objects with a metal detector. They provide effective opportunities for children to develop literacy skills by introducing new vocabulary as they chat to children during play, and by reading stories to them when they decide to visit the reading corner. Practitioners are beginning to identify opportunities to introduce Welsh vocabulary during sessions. However, this aspect of the provision is underdeveloped at present.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about Welsh culture and heritage. For example, they encourage children to dress up on St David's Day and provide opportunities for them to make cards to take home for loved ones on St Dwynwen's Day. Children receive valuable opportunities to visit places in their community, for example when learning about different fruit at the local supermarket. They also provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about our diverse world. For example, children make pieces of art to raise awareness of Ramadan and Diwali. They provide opportunities for children to develop a sense of awe and wonder

for the natural world, for example when they watch the African land snails in a tank at the setting.

Practitioners track children's progress during their time at the setting diligently. They make accurate assessments to record children's starting points, and record their progress in gaining new skills, sharing the information at the end of the year with the school and parents. They observe children as they engage with tasks and adapt the provision as appropriate. For example, they planned sessions on counting to five after noticing that a group of children were mixing up the numbers.

### **Environment:**

The premises are secure and children benefit from having plenty of space to play, learn, eat and sleep. The setting has robust systems to ensure children's safety. Visitors cannot access the setting unless admitted by a staff member, and all visitors sign in upon arrival and out on departure. Practitioners demonstrate a good awareness of the relevant safety matters, such as the daily risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environments. Overall, the premises are clean and well maintained and all practitioners practise effective hygiene procedures, for example wiping down tables before serving food and wearing appropriate protective equipment such as disposable aprons, gloves and hair nets. The toilet and nappy changing facilities are clean, and practitioners follow guidelines to promote children's privacy and dignity. The premises are welcoming, warm and comfortable and provide a stimulating environment for children to play and move freely.

Practitioners promote children's well-being through providing access to an appropriate selection of toys and equipment in the main room, sensory room and in the outdoor areas. All children have access to an extensive range of age and developmentally appropriate toys and resources indoors. The outdoor area available to the children is currently limited due to ongoing building works to extend the children's centre, where they are situated. However, leaders have ensured that children of all ages can access outdoor play daily by using the nursery play yard, on the school site. The outdoor area available to the children is stimulating and encourages active learning such as messy play and physical activities well. All resources are clean and well maintained. Children access child sized furniture, such as tables and chairs as well as other equipment such as low-level sand pits, painting easels and climbing frames, to promote their physical development and independence skills successfully. There is a good range of toys and equipment to promote cultural awareness, including books and examples of cultural celebrations. Children have opportunities to care for living things by looking after the setting's goldfish.

### **Leadership and management:**

Leaders at all levels provide effective leadership that in turn has a positive impact on the progress that children make during their time at the setting. They create and maintain a clear team working ethic and ensure that all members of staff are valued. Leaders promote practitioners well-being by celebrating their achievements, for example by displaying positive messages received from parents prominently. They successfully promote a strong culture of safeguarding so that every practitioner is committed to securing children's well-being.

The setting has a suitable range of policies that influences practitioners' daily work effectively. Leaders evaluate all aspects of the setting's work routinely and take account of advice received from support partners. In the strongest cases, they act decisively to improve aspects of the provision in light of the evaluation process. For example, they have introduced more information and communication technology (ICT) equipment having noted that pupils' digital skills were underdeveloped. Leaders conduct regular robust supervisions and observations of individual practitioners' work, providing them with valuable targets. They ensure that all practitioners have access to beneficial professional learning opportunities. For example, practitioners now provide more opportunities for children to play for extended periods as a result of training about the principles of Curriculum for Wales. Very recently, leaders have established suitable links in order to develop Welsh language provision in the setting.

Leaders manage resources well. This includes ensuring that there are enough suitably qualified practitioners to support the children in all areas of the setting. They allocate and prioritise expenditure appropriately, including making effective use of additional grants. For example, leaders have bought new resources to enrich the outdoor area. They manage the physical environment well, including working with partners such as the local primary school to minimise the disruption to children's learning while construction work takes place on the site.

Leaders develop beneficial links with a range of external partners. They work closely with the monitoring headteacher and support teacher from the local school to develop new systems, such as planning and assessment, and share practice with other providers. They maintain productive links with parents, sharing information via an app and newsletter. They take part in local and national initiatives such as a programme to promote oral hygiene, and an organisation that enriches provision at the after-school club.



## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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Publication date: 31/08/2022