

A report on

Oaktree Childcare Centre

**Bistre Community Centre
Nant Mawr Road
Buckley
Flintshire
CH7 2PX**

Date of inspection: January 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Oaktree Childcare Centre

Name of setting	Oaktree Childcare Centre
Category of care provided	Day care
Registered person(s)	Angela Gracie
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Angela Gracie
Person in charge	Angela Gracie, Sharon Catherall
Number of places	40
Age range of children	2-12 years of age
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	24
Number of children who receive funding for early education	6
Opening days / times	Monday-Friday, 07:30-18:00
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
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 Welsh language needs of children who use, or intend to use, their service. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow-on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Date of previous CIW inspection	22-09-21
Date of previous Estyn inspection	February 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	24-25 January 2023

Non-compliance

We identified non-compliance in relation to Care and Development, and Leadership and Management, and we have issued a priority action notice to the provider. The provider must take immediate steps to address these and make improvements.

We notified the provider of Areas for Improvement where the setting was not compliant with the regulations. A notice was not issued, but these are identified as area for improvement, and the Responsible Individual must address these. Information on all non-compliance will be included in an Action Improvement Summary, which will be published on CIW's website only.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the provision for developing children's Welsh language skills
- R2 Improve the quality of the risk assessment process to better identify and eliminate risks
- R3 Use effective observations and assessments of children's play and learning to inform the next steps in their learning and development

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. CIW will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Well-being:

Nearly all children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time. Practitioners provide a good range of toys and activities that are freely available to them. Most children express themselves confidently, as they know they will be listened to. For example, a child expressed that they wanted to come in from playing outside and eat their lunch early as they were hungry, which was supported.

Most children are happy and relaxed, and they enjoy their time at the setting. They are comfortable in their surroundings and familiar with daily routines, and they have a good sense of belonging. All children receive frequent praise for their efforts and achievements, which makes them feel happy and valued.

Most children enjoy their play and learning. They are enthusiastic and fully involved in the activities. Most children have access to appropriate opportunities to develop, learn and use their imagination to meet their developmental needs. Most 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, children were admiring each other's efforts when decorating themselves with jewellery in the dressing up area. Children play well together and chat to each other and practitioners about what they are doing, for example when playing together with the practitioner in the cosy corner, making funny noises and giggling with each other when playing with the puppets. Children can follow their own interests and are beginning to develop their independence skills appropriately. Many children hang their own coats up and wash their hands competently on arrival. At mealtimes, practitioners support children to pour their own drinks and open their own lunch boxes. As a result, children's self-help skills are promoted well, which raises their self-esteem.

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

In general, most children make suitable progress from their starting points during their time at the setting.

Nearly all children make themselves understood by pointing, using words and simple sentences. Most understand familiar instructions such as 'It's time to tidy up'. Many children join in with songs at whole group music & movement time. They take on the role of stomping through the jungle and dressing up to go on holiday. Many children use appropriate language in their play and exploration, for example when describing the worm they have found and placed in a pot as sleeping.

Most children listen well to carry out instructions such as 'let's get ready for outside time'. Most enjoy looking at books, turning pages independently, and a few talk about what they see in the pictures. For example, they talk about the ingredients in the recipe book before pretending to go shopping. Many children experiment positively with mark-making with different media such as paint and chalks, for example to draw

lines and shapes outside. A few children understand some of the functions of writing, such as recognising that the letters in their name on their picture means that it belongs to them.

Many children develop mathematical skills appropriately. A few use the language of big when looking at the worm they have found and recognise 2D shapes. Most children are familiar with the sequence of the session and understand 'next' and 'after'. A very few count in their play and around a half join in with the practitioners when counting how many children are present. A minority of children select and use appropriate mathematical ideas, equipment and materials to solve practical problems, for example selecting a small cup to pour water from the large teapot.

Most children show enjoyment in singing Welsh songs at whole-group time and are beginning to use simple words and phrases. For example, they say 'yma' when asked if they are present at registration time. However, in general, children's Welsh language skills are underdeveloped.

Many children's physical skills are developing well. They use pencils, tweezers, playdough, tools and wooden blocks well in their learning, showing good fine motor skills. Many children show enjoyment and pleasure as they develop their creative skills effectively. For example, they dance expressively and play percussion instruments successfully. A few children use a programmable toy with practitioner support, and many understand the functions of devices such as a calculator and pretend laptop in the role play corner.

Care and development:

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements and give serious cause for concern. Safeguarding policies and procedures require improvement and leaders and practitioners do not follow and apply child protection procedures well enough. This is placing children's health and well-being at risk and we have therefore issued a priority action notice. The responsible individual must take immediate action to address the issues.

Practitioners provide children with a suitable range of healthy snacks. They keep children well hydrated by ensuring that water is always available. Practitioners mostly follow good hygiene practices in line with infection control guidance, such as wiping tables before children sit down to eat and washing their hands when handling food to prevent cross contamination. Children wash their hands before eating, embedding good hygiene routines.

Most practitioners interact very well with the children and build positive relationships with them. They are warm, kind and patient, and they offer reassurance when needed. Most practitioners understand and implement the behaviour management policy appropriately. They use a positive approach to guide children towards the behaviour that is expected and frequently praise and reinforce positive behaviour. For example, a practitioner quickly re-directed children who were becoming over excited when throwing placemats in the air, explaining that someone could get hurt if they continued and supported them to find an alternative game to play.

Practitioners 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 and building their confidence. Although practitioners complete observations and assessments appropriately, they do not always use these well enough to monitor children's progress or plan for their next steps. The setting has satisfactory procedures in place to support children with additional needs. Practitioners implement identified strategies to support them, such as the use of sign language to aid communication. However, this is not consistently implemented by practitioners.

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

Most practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn through play and are increasing their understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. They provide children with access to a range of appropriate resources in the indoor and outdoor environments and allow children to make choices about where and what they would like to play with. As a result, many children sustain interest in their learning and play for appropriate periods of time. Many practitioners use questioning effectively to develop children's learning, for example asking children what they may find under the leaves when looking for bugs.

Practitioners are at the early stages of a more responsive planning approach based on children's needs and interests. In the very few examples where this works well, practitioners adapt the provision appropriately in response to children's interests. For example, when the children were interested in traditional stories, the practitioners ensured that there were suitable resources to encourage storytelling.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills suitably, particularly their early writing skills where they encourage the appropriate use of pencils and chalks during their play. They also support the development of children's gross motor skills appropriately by encouraging children to adopt a role during movement sessions and jump onto shapes in the outdoors. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities to develop numeracy skills, for example by filling and emptying with water, sand and gravel. In general, practitioners provide sufficient opportunities to develop children's ICT skills through their play such as a toaster and kettle in the home corner.

Practitioners make beneficial use of visits beyond the setting to enhance children's learning experiences. For example, children have enjoyed visits to the nearby park and as a result are confident to run, climb and balance. Practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things. For example, children care for the setting's pet rabbit and enjoy looking for worms and insects in the outdoors.

Practitioners support children to develop their personal and social skills suitably. For example, they remind children to dispose of towels in the bin after handwashing. Practitioners use a very few simple words and phrases in Welsh during whole group activities, although they do not use the language sufficiently throughout the session. They provide appropriate opportunities for children to celebrate the history and culture of Wales. For example, they decorate a heart on St Dwynwen's Day and draw pictures of daffodils on St David's Day. Practitioners plan suitable learning experiences that promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well.

For example, they foster a sense of awe and wonder when searching for minibeasts and observing caterpillars changing into butterflies.

Practitioners provide parents and carers with useful information about the children's achievements and progress through social media and verbal discussions at the setting. Although practitioners draw on first-hand observations to inform their assessment of children's development, this is at an early stage of development and they do not always use the outcomes of assessments well enough to influence the responsive planning process sufficiently.

Environment:

The learning and play environment is safe and secure. It is clean and suitably maintained. Visitors, practitioners, and children effectively record when they arrive and leave the building. There are suitable processes in place to ensure the safety of the environment, including regular fire safety checks and fire drills, and daily safety checks of all areas are carried out. There are a few basic written risk assessments in place. However, these are not always robust enough and do not include all potential hazards or identify the necessary steps to take to eliminate risks.

The setting has sufficient facilities and appropriately sized furniture to meet the children's needs. The layout of the playroom supports children to move around freely. Children's self-help skills are promoted by them being able to access the toilet facilities, with minimal support from practitioners. However, the privacy and dignity of children are not ensured. Nappy changing is carried out in the bathroom area on the floor. Should children wish to rest or have some quiet time during the day, there are a range of options available to them, which they access in the main playroom. The outside space is easily accessible directly from the playroom, which is of a suitable size. A large canopy provides cover during the wet weather. The fence around the parameters of the outside space offers security and some privacy for children when they play.

The setting has an adequate range of toys and resources, which are of suitable quality. A few real-life items are used to enhance some areas of the environment and children's play experiences. For example, saucepans and baking trays are included in the outdoor mud kitchen and hats, bags and jewellery are available in the dressing up area. This mirrors real life experiences and promotes curiosity for children. Many resources are organised and displayed attractively on low level shelving units, so that they are easily accessible and inviting to children. The outside space has a few areas of interest set up for children, such as chalk boards and a large sandpit. Practitioners ensure that the outdoor environment gives children appropriate space and opportunity to be physically active and enjoy the learning and play experiences. There is adequate space for larger equipment to promote children's physical play. For example, a low-level balancing frame is positioned on the grassed area of the garden.

Leadership and management:

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide a stimulating environment where they learn through play in partnership with parents. The Responsible Individual is highly involved in the day-to-day running of the setting and supports the leaders

well. Practitioners have up to date job descriptions and their roles and responsibilities are defined clearly. However, leaders do not ensure that there are sufficient practitioners who have the relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with children. In addition, the responsible individual has failed to ensure that all required suitability checks regarding staff employed have been carried out prior to appointment at the setting. In general, leaders ensure that practitioners have suitable access to appropriate supervision and appraisal processes, although these are not always recorded effectively enough.

The setting's statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting. Leaders have developed useful links with the local authority advisory teacher to improve the provision and children's outcomes. The setting has appropriate self-evaluation processes, which identify strengths and areas for improvement suitably. For example, leaders have identified appropriate ways to increase the use of Welsh at the setting, although this has not yet impacted fully on the provision or children's outcomes.

A few practitioners have engaged in worthwhile training opportunities such as responsive planning to enhance children's learning. However, not all practitioners have accessed a range of continuous provision development. As a result, practitioners have not fully developed their skills to support all children effectively. Leaders and managers use grant funding effectively. For example, they have improved the outdoor environment, which is having a positive impact on children's well-being.

Leaders and practitioners build strong links with parents and carers, and share information with them purposefully. Parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and value the regular exchange of information they receive about their child through day-to-day contact and via social media. There are beneficial links with the school, which support children's transition to the next stage in their education. Leaders and practitioners share appropriate information about children's progress to support them as they move on to the next stage of their education.

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)

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Publication date: 28/03/2023