



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

A report on

**Holt Under 5's Playgroup
Holt Under 5's Playgroup
Holt CP School
Chapel Street
Wrexham
LL13 9DG**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Holt Under 5's Playgroup

Name of setting	Holt Under Fives Playgroup and Toddlers
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Julie Suckley
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Helen Jowett and Sarah Jones
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	7
Number of children funded for up to five terms	0
Opening days / times	9.00am to 3.00pm, Monday to Friday during term time
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 Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	22/05/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/02/2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	27/06/2019

Additional information

All children speak English as their first language.

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Good
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Care and development	Good
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's physical skills, particularly when using large equipment
- R2 Ensure that expectations of behaviour are consistent
- R3 Ensure that the appraisal process generates effective targets for improvement for all practitioners including the persons in charge
- R4 Ensure that the setting's policy on the use of personal mobile phones by staff is clear and that all staff follow it consistently

What happens next

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

Main findings

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children make effective choices and decisions, and many express their views effectively. For example, they ask to take part in a creative activity and decide which sea creature they would like to make. Children select resources from a choice of glue and collage materials to complete the task successfully with little support.

Nearly all children feel secure. They enter the setting happily and cope well with separation from their parents. Most children know where to store their belongings and take pride when their artwork is praised and displayed in the environment. Most children know that their likes and dislikes are taken account of. For example, during snack time, children who tried but did not like lettuce left it on their plate.

Nearly all children form bonds of affection with practitioners, which fosters their confidence and self-esteem well. For example, children invite a practitioner to join them when playing with the toy animals or ask them to read a story. Many children form firm friendships, and a few introduce their friends to unfamiliar adults confidently. Nearly all children show support for each other as they encourage friends to complete an obstacle course in the outdoor area.

Nearly all children interact purposefully. They play together co-operatively, taking turns and joining in with each other's play well. For example, when they ask to join friends in the role-play area, they are welcomed and told to be careful with a 'very heavy' picnic basket. A few children take turns with toys and equipment independently such as when they give a tablet computer to a friend without being asked. Overall, nearly all children behave well in line with their age and stage of development. They take appropriate care of toys and equipment. However, on a few occasions children do not respond to adult requests promptly, such as when they are asked to tidy toys away.

Nearly all children engage in play-based activities eagerly. Many children show curiosity and explore toys and resources effectively. They enjoy leading their own play, such as when they pretend to create a picnic in the role-play area. However, on a few occasions children are disappointed when their play is cut short abruptly in order to follow the session routine.

Nearly all children are confident and motivated. They experience a beneficial range of activities and do things for themselves, for example, they put on wellington boots, sweep up sand that has spilled on the floor and wash their hands before their snack independently. Most children enjoy spreading tomato puree and sprinkling cheese when making their own pizzas which they look forward to eating later in the day.

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

Most children enter the setting with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. They make good progress, particularly in developing their personal, social and problem-solving skills. For example, they work together and try different approaches when exploring ways to make toy cars travel faster down a section of guttering.

Most children develop their numeracy skills well from their starting points. Many count objects accurately to five and most say numbers in order to ten. Many children are beginning to recognise a few simple two-dimensional shapes and a majority make good use of mathematical vocabulary. For example, they compare their size to a friend and point out who is the tallest.

Many children develop strong communication and literacy skills. For example, they chat happily about their favourite ice cream flavours or ask if they can play outside. During group time, nearly all children pay close attention to a story and most join in with songs and rhymes. A majority select favourite books, turn pages and chat about the pictures independently. Most children develop their mark making skills well and enjoy using chalks, felt pens and paint on a large scale. Around half write for a purpose, such as when they pretend to write a food order in the role-play area or attempt to write their name on a jellyfish model they have made.

Most children develop their creative skills effectively, such as when they produce colourful paintings of sea creatures or explore a variety of sounds using percussion instruments. Many children access and use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment well. For example, they swipe pictures and select icons successfully when using tablet computers. Most children use battery operated resources well to enhance their play, such as torches and voice recorders.

A majority of children develop their physical skills successfully. Most develop their co-ordination when they use a range of tools such as scoops and sticks well. A majority of children negotiate space effectively when running and balancing as they play in the outdoor area. However, a minority lack confidence when taking part in large-scale physical activities, and skills such as throwing, and balancing are underdeveloped.

During their time at the setting, most children develop their Welsh language skills effectively in relation to their starting points. They respond to a range of Welsh words and phrases positively. Most children join in with simple Welsh songs and a minority say numbers to eight with a little support.

Care and development: Good

Nearly all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe and healthy. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Overall, practitioners make suitable provision for infection control and all have completed first aid training suitable for the age ranges of the children. Practitioners record accidents and incidents and inform parents appropriately. They prioritise medical needs over daily routines and are comforting in their response to children's medical needs. For example, when administering medication, practitioners do not rush, they take time to re-assure the child and remain calm. Nearly all practitioners are familiar with fire evacuation procedures and undertake monthly practice evacuations appropriately.

Overall, practitioners promote healthy lifestyles successfully. They provide regular opportunities for children to be outside in the fresh air, plan suitable opportunities for children to be physically active and offer healthy options at snack time.

Nearly all practitioners develop children's social skills effectively. They model good manners and collaborative play effectively. For example, they help children persevere when looking for their name card or putting on their wellington boots. Most practitioners offer gentle reminders to share and take turns and, as a result, children's behaviour is generally good. However, practitioners are not always consistent in their expectations and children are not always clear about what is expected of them. For example, at tidy up time, a few children were allowed to continue with their task while practitioners made others stop and help tidy up.

Nearly all practitioners celebrate children's achievements and praise children for their efforts frequently. For example, on completion of their craftwork, a practitioner told a child that she loved it and lots of smiles were shared. Nearly all practitioners are positive role models for children, they demonstrate how to complete a task before allowing children to have a turn independently.

All practitioners know children well and strive to meet their individual requests and needs. For example, when a child asks for a story, a practitioner responds enthusiastically and nearly all the remaining children listen too. Practitioners promoted the children's knowledge of the wider society and diversity by scheduling a weekly 'International snack day' this includes various foods from around the world for the children to try such as croissants and noodle soup. The setting has suitable systems to support children with additional learning needs. They work effectively with other professionals to ensure that all children receive the necessary support to thrive.

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

The setting provides an effective range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors that engage nearly all children successfully. Practitioners support children to develop their personal and social skills well. For example, they encourage children to spread tomato puree independently when making 'pizza' or to help a friend to carry a heavy book.

Provision to support children's literacy skills is effective. Many practitioners model reading throughout the session successfully. This results in a majority of children showing a high level of interest in books and stories. Practitioners provide imaginative opportunities for children to take part in mark making activities. For example, a mark making journey through the village stimulates children's interest in using chalk and felt pens on a large scale very effectively.

Throughout the environment, there are useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills such as using brushes, and pegs and threading activities. The outdoor area provides appropriate opportunities for climbing, balancing and ball skills. However, a minority of children do not access these resources regularly enough to develop their skills and confidence effectively.

Practitioners provide a range of learning experiences that promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well. They foster their sense of awe and wonder successfully and provide a wide range of effective opportunities for them to learn about and care for living things. For example, they support children to look after and harvest the lettuce and potatoes they grow in the vegetable patch.

Many practitioners develop children's problem-solving skills successfully through stimulating and exciting planned activities. For example, they provide a range of useful resources such as rope, binoculars and a net when challenging children to rescue a toy cat they find stuck in a tree.

Practitioners provide an effective range of opportunities for children to develop their numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. Creative activities, such as collage and model making, provide children with beneficial opportunities to count, match and compare size. Most practitioners model Welsh language effectively through singing songs and using simple words and phrases throughout the session. Resources, such as voice recorders, support children to extend their Welsh language vocabulary successfully.

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice. They explain things clearly, model activities and question children to extend their learning. Practitioners observe how well children engage with activities and adapt the provision in response effectively. For example, after noticing a child's reluctance to mark make, they introduce chalk to a number area where the child chooses to play. This engages the child in mark making successfully.

The setting has suitable assessment procedures. Practitioners identify what children can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. They record useful observations that show children's progress over time successfully.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a consistently safe, clean and secure environment. There is an appropriate system to manage access to the premises and this includes a suitable record of visitors. There are a range of appropriate risk assessments and daily checks to maintain safety. Leaders have a secure understanding of the need to support children to take risks while still protecting them from harm. For example, in the forest area children explore freely and collect natural items. Practitioners identify unnecessary risks to children and leaders respond swiftly to any hazards identified.

Leaders ensure the environment is suitable to promote children's well-being and development. All play areas are secure and welcoming with ample space and variety. For example, there is a large outdoor area for physical development, a forest area to promote outdoor learning and a large indoor hall. There is a suitable range of opportunities for children to explore natural and recycled materials both inside and outdoors, which include logs, a tyre swing, and sensory exploration in soil and sand.

Leaders provide resources and equipment that are of good quality, well maintained and suitable. The layout of the indoor environment provides children with beneficial opportunities to make choices about their play through a range of learning areas. Practitioners ensure that children have good access to resources and equipment. Overall, this develops their independence successfully as they follow their own interests and ideas. However, resources are limited in a few areas, such as the construction area where children's choice is confined to block play. Practitioners provide a few resources that represent a range of cultures and promote diversity suitably including books and small world figures.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide an exciting learning environment for children, which lies at the centre of the community. The person in charge works closely with the registered person and keeps them appropriately informed through regular updates and meetings. She works effectively with practitioners to provide a caring and engaging environment for all children. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and all practitioners feel valued.

There is an up to date statement of purpose that ensures parents can make an informed choice about using the setting. The person in charge shares an appropriate range of suitable policies and procedures with practitioners to support the effective running of the setting. Leaders make sure they follow safe recruitment processes for all staff and that the setting meets the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners consistently. However, the setting's policy on the use of personal mobile phones by staff is not clear enough to ensure that procedures are consistent.

Leaders have generally effective arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement and all practitioners are committed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for children. The person in charge makes beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process. Nearly all practitioners identify the setting's areas of strength and aspects they need to develop clearly. For example, they explain how their improved use of questioning supports children to develop their problem-solving skills successfully. However, the setting has not identified the need for practitioners to be more consistent in their management of children's behaviour.

Leaders use the setting's appraisal and supervision systems to review the performance of practitioners suitably. They provide useful opportunities for practitioners to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. However, many targets focus on completing a given task and do not provide practitioners or the person in charge with clearly identified areas for improvement. Leaders provide suitable opportunities for continued professional development and practitioners take advantage of these and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact, such as improving practitioners' understanding of how to engage children in mark making activities successfully.

Leaders have developed a range of effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children successfully. The setting makes beneficial use of its links with the community and external agencies. For example, leaders organise an annual scarecrow trail within the village, which raises beneficial funds for the setting and strengthens children's sense of belonging within the community.

Leaders keep parents informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing effectively. For example, they hold regular meetings to share children's achievements and to discuss their progress.

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)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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