



Childcare Inspection Report on

The Croft Playgroup

**The Aston Family Centre
Larch Avenue Shotton
Deeside
CH5 1NF**



Date Inspection Completed

10/12/2019

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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

Description of the service

The Croft Playgroup offers full day care and runs from a room in Aston Family Centre in Shotton. Iain Shine is the responsible individual and Catherine Shine is the person in charge of the day to day running of the service. The service opens Monday to Friday from 8:45- 14:45 and runs term time only. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 19 children from aged 0 to 12 years. Flying start places are offered.

English is the main language of care with Welsh promoted. This is a service that does not provide the Welsh language 'Active Offer'.

Summary

Theme	Rating
Well-being	Good
Care and Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership and Management	Adequate

1. Overall assessment

Children are happy, direct their own play and enjoy attending the service. Staff keep children safe, they are kind and meet children's individual needs effectively. The indoor environment is stimulating, well-resourced and promotes learning but the outdoor play area is not used well enough in the colder months. Leaders are experienced and generally manage the service appropriately but the committee do not always work effectively. Leaders are reflective and have positive links with parents and the wider community.

2. Improvements

Following the inspection the person in charge provided us with:

- Completed staff files which met regulations and
- documentation to evidence students had completed appropriate suitability checks.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We have advised the person in charge that improvements are needed in relation to staff supervision (regulation 29). A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as there was no immediate or significant impact for children in relation to this issue. We expect the responsible individual to take action to rectify this and it will be followed up at the next inspection.

We made recommendations in relation to the management of the service, outdoor play, staff training and further resources to promote children's play.

1. Well-being

Good

Summary

Children have plenty of opportunity to direct their own play and make decisions. They are happy, know the routines and interact appropriately. They develop positive relationships with staff and enjoy taking part in engaging activities, which help them develop basic skills including independence.

Our findings

Children contributed confidently and made decisions about their play and learning. For example, children chose where and what they wanted to play with and they decided what to eat from a small selection. Children's interests were acknowledged resulting in future activities being altered. For example, an activity was changed and the doctors and nurses resources were brought out instead because this met children's interest on that particular day. Children were listened to and those who chose not to join in with specific activities were respected.

Children had positive bonds of affection with the staff and were comfortable and at ease. For example, children were keen to involve staff in their imaginary play and enjoyed looking after staff who pretended to be poorly including sticking plasters on them. They laughed and giggled when staff did funny dancing and enjoyed sitting on their laps to talk about their weekend. Most children coped well with separation from parents/carers because they were well supported.

Children interacted appropriately. For example, they were friendly and keen to show us their toys with smiles on their faces. With support they shared the tools in the dough and were beginning to take turns. Some had formed friendships and co-operated well in the role-play area to make dinner. They were learning to take care of equipment such as the books and most, with some support, listened to and followed instructions.

Children were motivated, engaged and took part in activities with interest. For example, they enjoyed pouring cups of tea in the role-play area, mixing food in the bowl and taking food to various members of staff. In the sand tray, they showed curiosity by dropping scoops of sand to make the wheel turn and watched in amazement. All parents we spoke to told us their children thoroughly enjoyed attending the playgroup.

Children had access to a good variety of experiences with toys and resources within their reach, enabling them to develop skills and become independent. For example, children confidently selected the resources they wanted to use in the home corner and were encouraged to tidy their resources away after use. Children were successfully learning to

do things for themselves such as using the toilet, putting their cups/plates away and emptying food waste in to the bin after eating.

2. Care and Development

Good

Summary

Staff keep children healthy and safe but they could develop this further by renewing safeguarding training. Staff are kind in their approach and manage interactions well. They successfully meet children's individual needs and plan a good range of experiences, which promote and develop children's skills.

Our findings

Staff followed effective procedures which kept children healthy and safe. For example, children and staff attendances were noted, which ensured everybody could be accounted for in the event of an emergency and demonstrated suitable staffing ratios were followed. Fire drills were conducted regularly but staff did not record the time taken to undertake a drill. Most staff held current paediatric first aid qualifications and accident/incident records were written accurately and were shared and signed by parents. Staff had not attended recent safeguarding training but when questioned they demonstrated they understood the policy and knew who to report to if they were concerned about a child. However, some staff were less confident with the child protection referral procedure than others. Leaders informed us they had already planned for staff to attend safeguarding training in the new year. Good hygiene practices were followed and staff promoted healthy lifestyles appropriately by offering children healthy food and drink. However, staff did not provide children with enough daily outdoor/physical play opportunities.

Staff followed the service's behaviour policy consistently and managed children's interactions well. For example, they were kind and respectful in their approach towards children and praised them when they showed good manners or completed tasks well. They reminded children to use equipment safely and used re-direction when needed. This resulted in children's behaviour being generally positive.

Staff were well qualified and experienced. They planned a good variety of stimulating learning experiences which promoted children's curiosity. For example, children enjoyed selecting their chosen craft materials to make Christmas stars. Staff provided responsive care and had a nurturing caring approach. For example, they cuddled children and gave appropriate comfort when they were upset. There were effective arrangements to support children with additional needs. For example, staff drew up care plans, worked well with specialist agencies when needed and worked in close partnership with parents. They met children's individual needs well, which resulted in children making appropriate progress. Children's next steps were considered and staff regularly reviewed children's progress.

3. Environment

Good

Summary

Effective procedures are in place to ensure children's safety. Leaders care for children in a welcoming, stimulating environment and staff ensure the service is well resourced and toys are of good quality. However, the outdoor area could be used more effectively to promote children's learning.

Our findings

Leaders successfully provided a secure environment for children. For example, doors to the service were locked, a safety gate prevented children from accessing the kitchen and we were asked to sign the visitors' book on arrival. Written risk assessments were completed and reviewed, showing leaders reduced or eliminated potential risk in both the premises and during activities undertaken.

Leaders ensured the indoor environment was bright, welcoming and provided rich play and learning experiences. For example, resources and play spaces were organised well and reflected the foundation phase principles. Children had enough space to move freely and most resources met children's interests. Good quality resources, such as the wooden role play kitchen, promoted curiosity and the accessibility of resources created an enabling environment where children could lead their own learning. Low level toilets and hand washing facilities enabled children to take care of their personal needs with growing independence. Children's work was attractively displayed on walls, which provided a sense of value and belonging and the environment had cosy areas for relaxing as well as hard floors for messy play and eating. However, staff did not use the outdoor play space well enough, which limited children's learning experiences. Outdoor play is important because it provides a sense of freedom and can have a positive effect on children's all round development.

Leaders ensured children had a wide range of good quality resources, which were well matched to the children's ages and stages of development. For example, the dolls were hugely popular with children looking after them, pushing them around the room in pushchairs and feeding them dinner. Natural resources were available to explore such as chopped tree branches and leaders promoted diversity appropriately. For example, they celebrated events such as Chinese New Year where children dressed up in costumes and tasted Chinese food. Effective cleaning systems were in place which ensured toys and the premises were clean. However, children were not provided with 'loose parts play'. This type of play would benefit the children because it supports invention, problem solving and offers a sense of wonder.

4. Leadership and Management

Adequate

Summary

Leaders are experienced and generally manage the service appropriately. However, the committee do not always work effectively enough. Leaders are reflective, manage some documentation appropriately and have positive links with parents and the wider community.

Our findings

Leaders were experienced and keen to make improvements. Policies and procedures were understood and generally implemented in practice, which resulted in the service meeting most regulations and national minimum standards. The statement of purpose reflected the service well, which enabled parents to make an informed decision before using the service. Staff told us they enjoyed caring for the children, they felt supported and valued by the person in charge and worked well together. However, at times, the committee and the responsible individual did not work with each other well enough and sometimes committee decisions had a negative impact on staff morale. Committee meetings took place regularly but the minutes were not always shared quickly enough, which meant leaders were not always fully informed.

Leaders listened to our constructive feedback and immediately started to address some of the issues raised in relation to documentation. Leaders were aware that their annual quality of care report was due to be written in the new year. They sent questionnaires out to parents in preparation for this and all comments received were positive. Since registration, leaders had made some improvements, such as holding more staff meetings, which had a positive impact on the running of the service.

Leaders did not manage staff or documentation well enough. The committee carried out appraisals but staff strengths were not identified and supervision meetings had not taken place since the service re-registered 10 months ago. Regular supervision meetings are required by regulation and provide further opportunities for staff to discuss children's progress, their own progress and to identify any training requirements. Staff files showed meaningful induction had taken place, staff were well qualified and had up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Certificates. However, of the five files we looked at, none had job descriptions or employment contracts, four did not have health declarations and two did not have a second reference. This did not meet our regulations. However, leaders provided evidence to show staff files had been completed with all relevant documentation before the report was published. Children's registration records contained all required information and were well organised.

Leaders kept parents well informed about their child's time at the service through daily chats at drop off and collection time. Further information was periodically shared throughout the year, which

enabled parents to see children's developmental milestones and achievements. Leaders were approachable and all parents spoke very highly of the staff and the care they provided. The service had close links with Aston Family Centre, the Flying Start team and Early Years Wales, which had a positive impact on children's outcomes.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

To improve practices, leaders could consider:

- Ensuring that leaders and the committee fulfil their roles effectively;
- providing more opportunities for children to be physically active outside, all year round;
- using loose parts play to promote children's creativity and problem solving skills and
- providing up to date safeguarding training for all staff.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

One inspector visited the service from 8:45-14:45 on Tuesday 10 December 2019.

We:

- Observed practice and completed observations using the SOFI2 tool to evidence the children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- inspected the environment, toys and equipment;
- spoke to the children, staff and two parent/carers;
- spoke to the person in charge and the responsible individual;
- looked at a wide range of records including the statement of purpose, policies, procedures, five staff files and four children's records and
- provided feedback to the person in charge on the day of inspection and provided additional feedback to the person in charge via telephone on Thursday 12 December 2019.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Iain Shine
Person in charge	Catherine Shine
Registered maximum number of places	19
Age range of children	2-4
Opening hours	Monday – Friday 8:45- 14:45 term time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	First inspection since re-registration
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	10 December 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of the children who use, or intend to use the 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'.
Additional Information:	