



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

A report on

**Ysgol Heulfan Playgroup Plus
Ysgol Heulfan
Sunny View
Gwersyllt
Off First Avenue
Wrexham
LL11 4HS**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Ysgol Heulfan Playgroup Plus

Name of setting	Ysgol Heulfan Playgroup Plus
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Julia Thomas Haigh and Rebecca Billington
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Not applicable
Person in charge	Nicola Griffiths
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	11
Number of children funded for up to five terms	0
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm during school term time only
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 does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of the people/children who use, or intend to use the service. This may be because the service is situated in a primarily English speaking area and the provider does not currently intend to offer or promote a Welsh language service.

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Date of previous CIW inspection	13/11/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/03/2011
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	11/02/2020
Additional information Nearly all children speak English as their first language.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Excellent
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Care and development	Excellent
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 Ensure that children have more opportunities to develop their play outdoors

R2 Develop questioning techniques to extend learning and provide greater challenge

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to supporting children's well-being through highly effective use of sign language and non-verbal gestures for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all children have a strong voice and are exceptionally confident to express how they are feeling because they know they will be listened to. For example their non-verbal cues are quickly recognised such as pointing to the Hoover to play with. They speak with ease to practitioners, for example asking for help to dress up in role play clothes, which enable them to extend and build on their play experiences positively. They tell practitioners which area they want to play in, meaning that they have opportunities to make their own decisions. For example choosing to sit at the easel to paint rather than stand. Nearly all children move to their activity of choice, decide how they want to spend their time, and engage in what interests them confidently.

Nearly all children feel exceptionally safe, happy and valued. They are comfortable and secure because of the familiar, which is displayed as a visual timetable. As a result, nearly all know when it is time to play and time to listen effectively. Nearly all cope well with separation from their parents because they experience consistent care and know what is expected. Nearly all have a sense of belonging and know whom to go to for help, for example when the handle came off the teapot.

Nearly all children interact highly effectively. They greet one another and adults warmly and the friendships children form mean they enjoy spending time together. Nearly all work and play together exceptionally well. For example, they delegate roles when playing with construction blocks. They interact in small groups, for example around the water tray, and work together in pairs to prepare a delicious lunch for their friends successfully. Nearly all understand the need to share equipment and do so readily. For example, when using a timer to calculate their turn, they hand over equipment such as the mop quite happily to their friends. Many younger children show outstanding care and concern for each other by helping to put on hats and telling friends when it is time to put on their coat so that they are not left behind.

Nearly all children are happy to explore their environment and enjoy their play and learning. They take part in activities at their own pace and concentrate effectively until they complete activities. Nearly all children can move in time to a rhythm and complete actions from a story successfully. They are enthusiastic about what they are doing and persevere, for example when sweeping up. Children enjoy listening to music before they go home giving them the chance to relax after their play. Nearly all listen to stories exceptionally well, and even the youngest children are totally engaged.

Most children make very good progress from their starting points and nearly all complete tasks for themselves highly effectively. For example, even the youngest children follow hygiene procedures before snack independently. They wipe their own faces and check in a mirror they are clean. They show great respect for resources and tidy up carefully and effectively.

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

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points. They make particularly strong progress in the development of their personal and social skills. For example, they show kindness as they tell a practitioner that a friend's toy car has stopped working. A majority of children are beginning to co-operate with each other well as they make a train track or fill a peg board with a friend.

Most children develop their literacy skills well. Many chat confidently to familiar adults and a minority give simple instructions. For example, they tell an adult to look at a worm in a magnifying pot or to put wellies on. Most children understand and follow instructions well, such as when they tidy up in the outdoor area. During group time, nearly all children listen well, and most are beginning to join in with songs and rhymes. They are beginning to join in with familiar phrases or actions as they imitate animals from a story. Most children develop their mark-making skills well and enjoy using pencils, felt-pens and chalks. A very few children are beginning to develop an understanding of writing for a purpose, such as when they make marks on paper and tell a practitioner it is for 'nana'.

Most children's numeracy skills are developing well. A minority count accurately to at least four as they play with ducks in the water tray or count pretend fruit. A minority of children use mathematical language regularly in their play. For example, they describe a worm as 'really big' or a tower as 'very tall'. Many children are beginning to sort objects by colour or match simple 2-dimensional shapes accurately.

Most children develop their physical skills successfully as they run, scoot and balance in the outdoor area. A few throw a ball into a low net or roll a plastic hoop successfully. Most improve their coordination as they use a range of tools such as spades, glue sticks and tweezers successfully.

Most children develop their information communication and technology (ICT) and thinking skills effectively. For example, they persist and think carefully about how to move a battery-operated car out of a corner or towards a practitioner. Most children develop their creative skills well as they paint at an easel or decorate a crown with collage materials.

Most children develop Welsh language skills effectively. They follow simple instructions and respond well to familiar Welsh greetings and songs. Many children name a few colours and are beginning to repeat simple phrases such as 'ble mae' when prompted. A very few children use Welsh spontaneously, such as when they say numbers in order to six.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners keep children healthy and safe effectively. They create a caring and nurturing atmosphere and understand and follow a range of suitable policies and procedures well. All practitioners have completed safeguarding training and they know what to do should they have any concerns about a child. Practitioners are vigilant in caring for the children and use resources to reduce the risk of spreading infections successfully. Practitioners have undertaken first aid training to enable them to undertake simple treatments. They record accident and incidents effectively. Practitioners adhere to children's individual dietary needs and preferences successfully. For example, they take good account of any allergies that children have when preparing and serving food. Practitioners undertake fire drills with the school and they know how to evacuate the premises safely and promptly. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners are exceptionally positive role models. They give children their time and full attention and, as a result, children feel highly valued. An experienced team provide an exceptional level of support for children using Makaton and other non verbal gestures. This is incorporated naturally as part of the provision, although with the younger children it is particularly highly effective. Expectations of behaviour are made clear and practitioners calmly and sensitively explain these to children. For example, when it is time to finish playing, they get children know five minutes and one minute before the end of activities and support this with the visual timetable. Practitioners support older children particularly well to understand their feelings, such as when talking about what it feels like to be poorly.

Practitioners provide children with highly effective positive play and learning opportunities, this gives each session purpose and structure. Practitioners place high importance on tracking children's progress and recognising individual needs. Practitioners use children's experiences and interest as a starting point for their learning journey. For example, an interest in dinosaurs leads to an area being created for them outdoors. They sit alongside children to provide support, guidance and to extend children's learning effectively. Practitioners give highly responsive care, as they know the children and their families very well. Key workers understand the way in which their children learn and provide sensory experiences sensitively, such as minty playdough. Practitioners promote the Welsh language using simple Welsh phrases, rhymes and songs successfully.

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 well. Nearly all practitioners support children to develop their personal and social skills very successfully. For example, they support children to take turns with battery-operated cars by using a sand timer and encourage them to tidy up at the end of the session.

A range of appropriate learning experiences promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder successfully when they encourage children to plant carrots and potatoes, observe them as they grow, and harvest them to make soup. They provide effective opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things, such as when they support children to make bird feeders to hang in the garden.

Practitioners provide a range of opportunities for children to develop their communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well. For example, they engage children effectively as they read stories and provide a welcoming story area with a beneficial range of books. Practitioners provide interesting opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills, such as when they weigh and sort vegetables using a balance scale. They use a range of resources successfully to support children in developing their ICT skills for instance using a tablet computer and a popular battery operated Hoover.

The setting provides useful opportunities for children to develop large-scale physical skills in the outdoor area such as pedalling and balancing. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their grip and coordination when using pencils, brushes and scissors. A popular creative area provides valuable opportunities for children to draw and create pictures using collage materials. Practitioners support children's Welsh language development effectively. They model Welsh through singing songs, counting and using a few Welsh words and phrases well.

Most practitioners have a good understanding of effective foundation phase practice. They explain things clearly, model activities and combine focused tasks with children's free play successfully. As a result, children sustain interest in tasks and enjoy periods of uninterrupted learning. However, on a few occasions, practitioners lead children's play too much, which limits children's opportunities to explore and try things out for themselves. Nearly all practitioners are positive language role-models. A few question children well, for example when they ask children to consider what they should do about spilled water on the floor. However, many practitioners' use of questioning to challenge children and extend their learning is underdeveloped.

The setting has effective assessment procedures. Practitioners observe children and identify what they can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. They record useful observations to show children's progress and use the information suitably to identify next steps in their learning.

Environment: Good

The environment is safe, secure and clean. On arrival, visitors are asked for identification and their presence is recorded through signing the visitor book. Leaders ensure risk assessments are up-to-date and they include risks during activities and outings. Hazards are kept to a minimum and practitioners supervise children well. When outside, they ensure that children play safely while supporting them to engage in fun physical activities.

The premises are warm, welcoming, bright and accessible to all. Children's work is displayed along side photographs of their family, which give the children a sense of belonging. Play areas are well organised and appeal to children's interests though providing activities and resources which stimulate their imagination. For example, practitioners attach pieces of gauze to the ceiling to hold many different coloured balloons as part of Chinese New Year. This focal point captures the children's imagination and stimulates discussion effectively. The indoor space is large enough to allow free movement and this enables children to extend their play and ideas effectively. Although the outdoor area and resources provide children with good opportunities to be active, for instance when they pedal and balance, there is no free access for children to develop their play outside independently.

Leaders provide children with access to an extensive range of good quality resources. They also, provide a wealth of play and learning experiences through natural resources such as wood and shells. Areas of learning including the sand corner are well planned and appeal to the children's interests. Activities and toys are suitable for the ages of children attending and available in sufficient quantity to provide an interesting choice. Resources are stored at low level so that children can access them and extend their play successfully.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders work very effectively with practitioners to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children. The person in charge works closely with the registered persons and they manage practitioners and children well to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following established routines. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and all staff feel valued. Practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities within the setting and are beginning to take a lead on areas of provision. This has resulted in most areas that children access independently being well resourced and organised, such as the creative area. Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide children with high levels of care, develop all aspects of their learning and ensure that they receive any early support they need.

Leaders have an effective range of suitable policies and procedures and share these with practitioners to support the effective running of the setting. They make sure they follow safe recruitment processes for all staff and that the setting meets the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners consistently. There is an up-to-date statement of purpose that ensures parents can make an informed choice about using the setting.

Leaders have effective arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring the setting is preparing well to implement national initiatives such as the new curriculum for Wales. All practitioners are committed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for children. For example, practitioners explain how enhancements made to the outdoor area, such as dinosaurs, have increased children's interest and engagement when outdoors.

Leaders use the setting's appraisal and supervision systems to review the performance of practitioners suitably. They provide appropriate opportunities for practitioners to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. However, a minority of targets are too broad or focus on completing a given task. 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 develop provision to promote children's number skills.

Leaders have developed a range of effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children successfully. The setting makes effective links with the community and external agencies. For example, leaders organise a visit from a police officer to enhance the curriculum and children enjoy a visit to the local library. There is a strong partnership with the school that supports children's learning well and helps prepare them to move on to the next stage of their education. For example, younger children regularly access the school's soft play area. Transition sheets are completed for children which show progression throughout the year. There is a clear indication of achievement, which provides individual starting points highly effectively for when children move onto nursery class.

Leaders keep parents informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing effectively. They involve them in their children's learning well. For example, leaders invite parents to join their children for a Chinese buffet when they celebrate Chinese New Year.

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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