Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Estyn
Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Toybox Day Nursery

Alternative Centre for Education (ACE)
Coleg Cambria
Kelsterton Road
Connah's Quay
Flint
CH5 4BR

Date of inspection: July 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Toybox Day Nursery

Name of setting	Toybox Day Nursery
Category of care provided	
Registered person(s)	Ann Johnson
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Ann Johnson
Number of places	106
Age range of children	0-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	55
Number of children who receive funding for early education	23
Opening days / times	08:00am - 05:45pm Monday - Friday
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	November 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	March 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	02/07/2024

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**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	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Further develop opportunities to build on children's interests to increase engagement and develop extended learning

R2 Ensure a greater use of the wider outdoor space to provide opportunities to further develop children's awareness of the environment

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 its partnership working with parents, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children have a very strong voice. They make choices and decisions confidently about what affects them, for example when deciding which cereal to choose. They select their own resources, which enables them to develop their play well. Nearly all children express themselves well through verbal and non-verbal communication, as they know practitioners will listen and respond positively to them. Children choose when they would like to listen to a story and snuggle with a practitioner who reads with them. Children of all ages communicate successfully in their own way and practitioners respond to them expertly.

Nearly all children arrive happily at the setting and are eager to start playing. They settle quickly and cope well when leaving parents and carers. Children have warm, close relationships with practitioners and receive a high level of support and comfort if needed, which helps them to feel safe and valued at the setting. They are confident and share achievements with practitioners, for example showing proudly how high they can jump. Children join in with songs enthusiastically and show that they are happy by spontaneously singing and clapping.

Nearly all children are aware of the settings routines and follow them well. They make purposeful choices about where they wish to play and move confidently between activities. They interact and play well alongside other children appropriate to their stage of development. Children cooperate well and take turns. They work together effectively, for example arranging a piece of wood at different angles to see if it makes a toy spider move more quickly. Most children are kind and thoughtful to each other and help by pushing a bike over the bridge or letting a friend play on the musical board. They work together well when tidying toys ready to go outdoors.

Nearly all children listen and follow instructions well. They have confidence to seek help when they need it, for example when requesting help to take the top off a bottle of bubbles. Children are aware of simple rules, such as coming to the snack table when there is a space. Nearly all children develop their independence and self-help skills well. They pour their own drinks and select and dispense cereal and choose fruit with minimal support. Older children learn how to put on their coats and share this with parents excitedly at home time. Nearly all children feed themselves at lunch time, using cutlery competently, and accessing their own drinks freely.

Nearly all children are active and engaged in their play and learning. They show purpose and curiosity as they take part in activities. For example, they are curious about tractors and look carefully to find the different parts. They enjoy learning about the world around them and the importance of insects when celebrating bee day.

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

Nearly all children including those with English as an additional language make good progress from their individual starting points. They enjoy their learning and achieve well in their activities. Most children's communication skills are good. They use appropriate language in spontaneous and structured play. For example, they discuss how they will transport water along large strips of guttering. Most children express themselves with confidence. A few children use rich vocabulary to communicate what they are making when preparing meals in the home corner. Most children express themselves confidently in Welsh. For example they say 'golchi dwylo' before going to wash their hands and repeat familiar words and phrases from a story when read to them. Nearly all children show an interest in books and enjoy listening to stories read to them by practitioners. Around half the children access books independently turning pages in sequence and very few are beginning to read independently. Nearly all children listen well and follow instructions carefully. For example, they fetch paper towels to dry their hands or collect their coats for outdoor play.

Most children enjoy mark making and are developing early writing skills appropriately. They attempt to write their name on the pictures they produce. Many children's physical skills are developing well. For example, they handle real crockery plates carefully in the home corner. Children follow instructions to jump, run and hop in the outdoor area. They handle construction tools carefully and bang nails into pieces of polystyrene successfully. They develop their co-ordination skills through activities such as filling buckets with water and transferring them to the water trough with increasing accuracy and control. Many children develop their fine motor skills and make confident choices about the resources they use. For example, they manipulate playdough to make cakes and accurately roll out dough and cut out shapes with dough cutters. Many children use tweezers to pick up wiggly wool worms.

Most children develop a wide range of numeracy skills and use them in their play successfully. For example, they accurately count the number of nails in their models. Children develop a good understanding of measure. For example, a few children use rulers to measure the ramps they build with large blocks and they describe water containers as full or empty. Many children are developing their creative skills well. They have valuable opportunities to express themselves through craft, music and movement. They mix paints and create colourful paintings and dance along to music. Nearly all children develop their independent personal skills well. They are beginning to put on and fasten their coats and help themselves to a drink. A minority of children handle cutlery effectively and cut up their own lunch. Children are developing good digital skills and use digital cameras for photographing their work. Nearly all children develop effective social and emotional skills and co-operate well with each other in their play.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners support children's health and well-being highly effectively. Leaders and practitioners have an excellent understanding of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns. The practitioners all have suitable training and the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children fully meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners provide excellent support for children. For example, when they arrive at the setting, they give children plenty of time to settle and play. The setting has all appropriate policies in place and practitioners pay excellent attention to the setting's procedures in relation to hygiene, health, and safety, for example wearing aprons and gloves to prevent cross infection. Practitioners provide healthy snacks and meals for children, along with milk or water to drink. They ensure that water is available for children at all times and offer gentle reminders for them to have a drink during the day. They ensure that children's allergies are recorded and use a system of different coloured plates so that everyone can enjoy their food safely. Children's records are complete, including comprehensive health care needs, so that practitioners can provide a high level of care for the children. Practitioners complete a register detailing attendance, note minor injuries and bring these to the attention of parents and carers effectively.

Practitioners are kind, caring and supportive, and interact with children in a calm and gentle manner. They use positive behaviour management strategies, which are highly effective. This creates a positive, happy, calm and engaging atmosphere at the setting. A key worker system is in place, which ensures that practitioners know the children and their families well. As a result, children feel safe and happy and their individual needs are exceptionally well met. Practitioners engage with children and extend their play successfully. They regularly use praise, often including the use of Welsh. They know when to stand back and allow children to discover on their own and when to intervene to take the learning on. For example, they encourage children to build a tower or persevere longer with a farmyard jigsaw. Practitioners are vigilant and remind children of simple rules such as washing their hands after a snack.

Practitioners have created highly successful relationships with parents. They share photographs and videos with parents so that they can see in detail the progress their child is making each day through an app. They also ensure enough time to speak to parents before or after the session if they wish. Practitioners know the children exceptionally well and they adapt the provision to respond effectively to the children's individual needs. They use information provided by parents about their child effectively when considering the provision. Practitioners recognise opportunities to extend children's knowledge and curiosity effectively, for example when asking children how it feels to hold a tiny spider gently in their hands. Practitioners provide an exceptional level of care for all children.

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

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development. They provide a worthwhile range of activities that promote children's all-round development, including those with additional learning needs. This ensures that children progress well in their learning over time. Practitioners' planning takes good account of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, and the planning for skills is excellent. The setting has developed a series of parent packs with an excellent set of resources so that children can practise their numeracy, reading and cutting skills at home. Practitioners are beginning to consider developing activities based on children's interests. However, a few opportunities to increase engagement and develop extended learning are missed.

The setting's systems for recording, monitoring, and reporting on children's progress are effective and practitioners plan learning experiences based on children's previous learning well. Detailed observations and records are kept on children's progress and individual targets are identified, implemented and monitored effectively. The setting engages with parents and carers to gain a perspective of each child's strengths and areas for development. There are specific focus weeks for gathering evidence for individual children and parents contribute to that process and highlight children's interests and achievements at home.

Practitioners know when to intervene in children's activities, and when to stand back and observe. They have high expectations of all children's behaviour and as a result they learn how to relate positively to others and take responsibility for their actions. Practitioners are effective language role models. They use questions well, to challenge and support children in their learning as they play. Practitioners provide beneficial activities and resources for children to develop their mark making and early writing skills in the well-equipped areas of provision. Practitioners are developing children's numeracy skills by using a range of counting, measuring and sorting equipment across the provision, for example by counting out the cakes they make in the dough play area. Resources to develop children's digital skills such as digital cameras are well utilised.

Practitioners value the children's creative process. They encourage individual expression and pieces of art work are displayed at child's eye level. Practitioners value the process and not the end product. They encourage children to explore in the outdoor area and help them develop a sense of awe and wonder, for example when growing beans in pots and growing flowers in planters in the outdoor area. However, the setting's forest area is not fully utilised to help children better develop their awareness of the environment. Practitioners recognise opportunities to extend children's thinking, for example when encouraging children to work out how to use water pumps to syphon water. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Children learn about a range of celebrations, including those from their own religions and cultures. Flags and greetings from a range of countries are prominently displayed and this helps to create an inclusive and diverse

community. Practitioners foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect, and promote principles that help children to distinguish right from wrong.

Environment: Good

Overall, leaders ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments are suitably safe, secure and well maintained. Children are well supervised and risk assessments identify and address any potential hazards to keep children safe. Leaders ensure an effective level of hygiene and a cleaning schedule, and good attention to infection control means that the setting is thoroughly clean.

The environment is light, bright and welcoming with neutral colours and materials that ensure that children's work is a focal point. Leaders make sure that children are well cared for in a supportive and relaxing learning environment, which considers children's individual needs well. There is plenty of space to move around and the displays of children's work and photographs give them a sense of achievement. A wall display of a family tree ensures that children have a sense of belonging. Low storage and labelled baskets mean that children can access resources independently. Suitable low level wooden tables, chairs, rugs and cushions enable everyone to play at their level of choice and learn together. The way in which cosy areas are set up with plenty of books fosters a love of reading. Leaders ensure that the setting is organised to provide a fully inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities and areas of the provision. Although there are a wide range of areas for play activities, adherence to a set timetable means that children do not have free access to the outdoors. Leaders do not use the wider outdoor learning environment such as the wooded area and the nature garden sufficiently.

Leaders ensure that children have easy access to a range of resources and equipment that are of good quality, many recycled, such as a table and seats made from wooden crates. There are loose parts for building and tyres outside for planting and a kitchen complete with metal utensils, pots and pans, which add a real-life element to the children's play. This ensures that children develop natural curiosity and engage in play purposefully. Areas for balancing and sliding are easily accessible and enable children to develop different physical skills. A diverse community is reflected effectively by figures, stories and celebrating traditions from different countries.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders and practitioners have created a very strong, positive team ethos, and all are committed to the aims of the setting. Leaders ensure that there is a clear statement of purpose that fully informs parents about the setting's work and what it has to offer. Practitioners have a strong sense of purpose and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders are extremely effective in their roles and have created an inclusive and welcoming environment, which ensures that children are nurtured and cared for well. They fully comply with regulations and national minimum standards.

Leaders have a detailed awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for development. They take full account of the views of practitioners, parents or carers, children, and other stakeholders in their decisions. There is a well-established and robust system for carrying out staff appraisals and frequent supervisions. These take the form of 'connecting conversations', which clearly identify targets for professional learning. They also consider the well-being of staff. As a result, this secures continued improvements in provision. The setting has suitable contingency plans for staffing and new employees receive and have excellent induction process.

All practitioners have a high level of qualifications and much experience of working with young children. All staff show a commitment to continuing professional development and attend regular training, such as Curriculum for Wales, child development and safeguarding, which has brought positive changes to the setting's environment. Leaders prioritise the development of practitioner's Welsh Language skills and plan strategically for Welsh across the setting. The setting acts on advice from the local authority and leaders make effective use of available grants, for example purchasing equipment to support children's skill development and enhancing digital competence.

Leaders make good use of the close links that they have developed with the local college. Children make regular visits to the college and participate in well-being activities, and they have regular exercise classes. These activities have a positive impact on their social, physical and emotional skills. The setting's engagement with parents is outstanding. They hold regular play and stay sessions and parents are fully included in the organisation of the setting. Communication is excellent and, as a result, parents are well informed, and feel included and part of the setting. Parents are kept up to date using an interactive application and through regular meetings, which helps to keep them informed of their child's progress. New children are inducted to the setting successfully and parents and children are offered phased visits before entry. Transition arrangements are in place to support children who are moving on. The setting has the school jumpers in the dressing up area and there are visits from Nursery class teachers to the setting. As a consequence, children are excited and confident about their transitions to school.

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

This document has been translated by Trosol/Prysg (English to Welsh).

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Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	

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.

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