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

The Highway Day Nursery

115-117 The Highway
Hawarden
Flintshire
CH5 3DN

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About The Highway Day Nursery

Name of setting	The Highway Day Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Larraine Mark
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Larraine Mark
Number of places	65
Age range of children	0 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	34
Number of children who receive funding for early education	9
Opening days / times	Monday to 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 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	28/10/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/02/16
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	20/03/2024
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Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**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 Ensure practitioners' interactions support children's learning effectively

R2 Ensure that leaders and practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the Additional Learning Needs Act

R3 Improve the use of observations to ensure they support individual children's progress effectively

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children enjoy their time in the setting. They arrive happily and separate from their parents and carers with ease. Most children form positive relationships with practitioners and approach them for support and reassurance when needed.

Most children develop their personal and social skills effectively in line with their age and stage of development. They are familiar with the daily routines of the setting and develop their independence effectively. Babies willingly have a go at feeding themselves, and toddlers persevere when attempting to put on waterproofs. Pre-school children develop their confidence well when undertaking specific roles such as laying the table during snack time.

Most children make choices and decisions about their play purposefully. Many move freely between learning areas with confidence. They follow their own interests and develop their ideas such as when they transport resources from one learning area to another. Most children share resources and play alongside each other effectively with little support.

Most children communicate confidently and express their needs successfully. For example, toddlers use gestures to show practitioners the resources they would like to play with. Most older children have developed the language skills they need to

express themselves effectively. They chat with their friends as they play and communicate their choices clearly during snack time.

Nearly all children feel safe and valued in the nurturing environment provided and over time develop a sense of belonging. They know that practitioners will listen to them and be responsive to their needs. For example, babies are able to sleep when they are tired rather than at a scheduled time. Many children show kindness to others and interact positively. Their behaviour is good, and they listen well to practitioners. For example, they respond positively when asked not to throw soft toys or to take turns. Older children are beginning to recognise and talk about their feelings such as when they make happy and sad faces from dough.

Most children are enthusiastic and interested in their play indoors and outdoors. They embrace beneficial periods where they lead their own play and particularly enjoy learning outdoors. Many children choose to join friends such as when they wash dolls together, or transport sand and sawdust with diggers. Toddlers show joy as they run around outdoors, or ride wheeled toys over the grass humps. Most children show curiosity in the resources provided. For example, babies bang on a metal tray or observe the reflections they see in it.

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, particularly in the development of their physical and personal and social skills. A majority of children cooperate with each other successfully such as when they make up a chasing game together or pour water into each other's containers. Many children develop their thinking skills well and show perseverance when faced with challenges. For example, they try different approaches when trying to work out how to squirt water from a pump.

Most children develop their communication and literacy skills well. They listen attentively, and many speak clearly with confidence. For example, they chat happily about their grandparents and siblings. Many children pay close attention to a story and join in with songs and rhymes enthusiastically. A minority select favourite books independently or ask practitioners to read to them. Many children develop their mark making skills successfully and enjoy exploring paint and chalk on a large scale.

Most children develop their large physical skills particularly well. For example, they develop their balance skilfully as they ride wheeled toys down a challenging slope. Most improve their coordination effectively as they use a range of tools such as spades, brushes and sticks. Most children develop their creativity and imagination successfully such as when they pretend to cook using real vegetables in the role play area. They express themselves freely as they mix paint colours in water or play a range of percussion instruments.

Most children develop their numeracy skills effectively. They recite numbers in order to at least ten and count objects to five accurately. Most children develop their understanding of mathematical concepts successfully and make good use of

mathematical vocabulary. For example, they explain that there is ‘one more’ plate left when tidying up after snack, or they describe containers as ‘full’ and ‘heavy’ when playing in the water area.

Most children use digital equipment confidently such as a metal detector, digital camera or light board. They play simple games on tablet computers to support learning across the curriculum. For example, they develop their understanding of comparison when playing a shape matching game.

Most children develop their Welsh language skills effectively. They respond to a range of Welsh words and phrases positively and join in with songs and rhymes enthusiastically. Most children use Welsh words such as colours or numbers with little support such as when they count rocks in the outdoor area.

Care and development: Good

Leaders and practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They have a clear understanding of the setting’s policies and procedures and understand their duty to report concerns. Practitioners regularly discuss safeguarding scenarios in staff meetings and attend regular update briefings. The setting’s arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners practice fire drills regularly and this ensures children and staff are familiar with evacuation procedures. They understand the policy to follow such as when administering medication and observing children when sleeping. Practitioners keep careful records and share these with parents. Practitioners supervise children well and the setting often exceeds the required ratio of adults to children. All practitioners have attended relevant First Aid training, which enables them to deal with any accidents and incidents appropriately.

Practitioners have a warm manner with children and deliver nurturing care consistently. The key worker system is working positively, and practitioners are kind and attentive role models. Staff, including the nursery cook, understand children’s specific dietary needs and ensure these are met. Practitioners promote healthy eating, drinking and physical exercise effectively. For example, babies and children have free access to water bottles and eat healthy food during snack time. Practitioners provide activities, which are diverse and promote a range of cultures.

Practitioners interact with children positively. They promote positive behaviours and attitudes sensitively by talking to children encouragingly about, for example, walking not running or to take turns. Practitioners know when to stand back and observe and when to intervene to support children’s interest and involvement. However, practitioners use of interactions to support individual children to make progress is underdeveloped. For example, in a minority of cases interactions are too general to support the progress of individual children.

Practitioners use appropriate systems to track children’s development and to support them. Observation notes, individual assessments and children’s next steps are recorded and shared with parents regularly. In general, practitioners meet the individual needs of children well. For example, they use signing to support the

development of children's communication skills. However, arrangements to support children with specific additional learning needs require strengthening. Changes to staff responsibilities has led to a lack of clarity about the setting's procedures. As a result, lead practitioners do not yet have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act.

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 playful approach to supporting children's learning that engages children well and supports them to make good progress. For example, they support children to learn about the world around them by splashing in muddy puddles and encourage creativity through engaging in imaginative play. They plan a range of learning experiences that meet the needs of children well and provide an effective balance between adult led and child led learning experiences. Practitioners place a strong emphasis on learning outdoors, and this supports children's progress across the curriculum well. For example, children develop their physical, communication and social skills successfully as they share a swing or stir leaves and petals in the mud kitchen. Practitioners often provide children with effective challenge. For example, they encourage children to spray water at the highest target or support them to walk along a bouncy plank.

Practitioners promote the Welsh language purposefully by modelling language patterns clearly and engaging children in activities such as singing and counting. For example, children develop their Welsh language and numeracy skills well as they estimate and count when singing number songs in Welsh. Practitioners support children's digital skills successfully through opportunities to explore a range of equipment such as metal detectors and remote-controlled toy cars.

A range of learning experiences promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children as they encourage them to observe and explore the ice they discover in the outdoor area. They encourage children to show consideration for living creatures such as when they make birdfeeders to hang in the garden area.

Practitioners support children's thinking skills and independent learning well. Many practitioners question children thoughtfully, often asking open questions such as 'I wonder how…?', or 'I wonder why…?'. Practitioners ensure children have ample opportunities to explore and try things out such as when they spray coloured paint onto a large sheet or mix paint in a pool of water.

Practitioners know the children well. They make regular observations of children's play and are beginning to identify their interests and motivations in response. However, observations are often overly descriptive and the use of observations to support individual children's future learning is at an early stage of development.

Environment: Good

The setting provides a secure, clean and stimulating environment for children. Leaders prioritise children's safety and ensure there are suitable policies and

procedures in place to minimise any potential hazards. Practitioners complete risk assessments appropriately and take action promptly to address any issues which arise. Staff complete training in health and safety, food hygiene and first aid to ensure they have the knowledge to keep children safe. Leaders and practitioners are vigilant, ensuring unauthorised persons do not enter the building. Staff keep all areas used by children clean and tidy and well maintained. Practitioners check children's toys and play equipment regularly to make sure they are kept in good condition. Leaders manage building work and improvements to the building effectively, ensuring children are not on the premises when work is carried out.

Leaders ensure the nursery is a welcoming and comfortable place in which to work and play. There is plenty of space for children to move around freely and to play both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners make good use of resources to ensure children benefit positively from the spaces and equipment available to them. For example, toddlers regularly use the garden room and preschool outdoor facilities. Leaders ensure all playrooms have suitable furniture and equipment such as low-level tables and chairs to aid children's independence. There are suitable toilet facilities for adults and children, with sensory taps and lever taps in place to ensure children can use them with ease. The baby room is well resourced and has its own kitchen for the preparation of baby formula and breast milk. Leaders have an office in which to work undisturbed and seating for confidential discussions with practitioners, parents and visiting professionals.

Leaders ensure they provide a wide range of interesting toys and play equipment across the nursery. Children access many play items freely as they are stored at a low level in baskets which they can easily reach into. Leaders have introduced more natural and sustainable resources into play areas. These enhance children learning well. For example, toddlers show curiosity and sustain interest as they play with wildflowers, branches, and herbs. Resources are age appropriate and of good quality. A few resources such as books and dolls represent diversity appropriately. Practitioners work well with families to ensure the setting represents the beliefs and celebrations of all children. For example, parents support practitioners to share information and resources about Ramadan.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide a welcoming and caring environment where children feel valued and excited to learn. They work with practitioners purposefully to lead the setting and support the care and development of children successfully. Leaders implement safe and appropriate processes for recruitment and deployment of practitioners. They meet regularly with practitioners and provide clear communication resulting in the smooth running of the setting. There is an up-to-date statement of purpose that ensures parents can make an informed choice about using the service. Leaders are organised and have an effective range of policies which they share well with parents.

The setting has useful arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for development and this has resulted in improvements in many areas. For example, leaders have improved the outdoor learning environment for older children well with

resources that support children's learning effectively. The setting consults parents regularly to gain their views and practitioners know what the setting does well and areas they need to develop. For example, practitioners describe how recent improvements to planning have increased children's engagement in their play. However, leaders have not identified the need to strengthen the setting's implementation of the ALN Act.

Leaders ensure that practitioners have many opportunities for continued professional development. This has a beneficial impact on their practice, such as improving practitioners' questioning skills in the pre-school room. Opportunities for practitioners to develop their understanding of the new 'Curriculum for Wales' have resulted in positive changes such as improved opportunities for children to lead their own play. Leaders and practitioners are reflective and identify effective targets for improvement through appraisal and supervision. Nearly all practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and strive to improve their performance. A majority of practitioners are committed to developing their practice through undertaking further qualifications.

The setting makes beneficial use of practitioners and resources to support children's wellbeing, play and learning successfully. Leaders makes sure that the setting meets or exceeds the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. For example, a well-resourced garden room supports children's curiosity and engagement effectively.

The setting has a worthwhile range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Practitioners keep parents and carers informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing through, for example, sharing observations and a communication app. Leaders have developed beneficial links in the community which enhance children's learning successfully. For example, they have established strong partnerships with local care homes and a nearby farm. These links support children's learning well and enable them to experience a sense of belonging to the wider community.

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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Publication date: 24/05/2024

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. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

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

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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.

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