Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Flintshire Crèche Service – Westwood

Westwood Early Years Centre, Tabernacle Street, Buckley, CH7 2JT

07775221310

The inspection visit took place on 21/05/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	Flintshire Crèche and Childcare Service
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	24
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Excellent
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children's voices are highly valued and consistently respected, with routines expertly adapted to meet individual needs. Children feel exceptionally secure, confident and included, forming warm, responsive relationships. They are highly engaged, curious and developing cooperation. They demonstrate strong independence and resilience, as they enthusiastically lead their play and develop essential skills within a nurturing, responsive environment.

Staff implement highly effective and consistent procedures to promote health, safety and wellbeing, exceeding requirements. They demonstrate excellent safeguarding knowledge, strong hygiene practice and meticulous record-keeping. Staff are exceptional role models, fostering communication, behaviour and independence. They provide nurturing, responsive care and expertly support play, learning and individual needs through a well-planned environment.

Leaders maintain an extremely welcoming, well organised and thoughtfully maintained environment

that promotes safe practice and responds swiftly to risks. Space and resources are used effectively to support independence, exploration and inclusion. Staff ensure children benefit from a calm, stimulating environment with high-quality, well-maintained resources that support learning and development.

Leaders provide highly effective, responsive leadership with a vision embedded across practice. Policies are rigorously implemented and reviewed. Staff feel extremely valued and supported through strong communication and supervision. Continuous improvement is exemplary. Robust management, skilled staff and effective partnerships ensure consistently excellent outcomes for children.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children's voices are greatly valued and respected at the setting. They are empowered to make independent choices about their play and confidently access a wide range of resources both indoors and outdoors. Their individual preferences are recognised, with routines adapted so each child feels listened to and supported in their choices. For example, when children choose not to join the group for snack time, they are sensitively supported to eat at a time that suits them. Children's food preferences are noted on setting sheets, with favourite healthy snacks purchased for the following week to encourage them to enjoy snack time.

The crèche service is designed to support parents to attend courses and operates on a sessional basis, with children typically attending for a single morning or afternoon each week. Within this structure, children are exceptionally settled, happy and secure. They quickly develop warm, responsive relationships and are cared for by those who gain an understanding of their individual needs in a short time, ensuring they feel recognised and valued. Children confidently follow routines and demonstrate an excellent sense of belonging, demonstrated by the ease, confidence and the secure connections they form with both staff and the environment.

Children interact well for their age and stage of development, showing growing respect and developing cooperation skills. They listen and respond well to instructions such as coming to sit together for snack time or coming in from outside at the end of the session. They are learning to share and build positive relationships in a calm and supportive environment.

Children are highly engaged and enthusiastic learners. They are busy and purposeful, creating a lively buzz throughout the creche as they show curiosity and excitement across a wide range of meaningful activities. They enjoy connecting with nature by looking for birds and blowing dandelion seeds, and they sustain concentration when experimenting with cause and effect in the water tray. Children confidently navigate trikes across a range of surfaces and show high levels of creativity and initiative as they lead their own play, eagerly combining resources from around the room.

Children develop independence exceptionally well. They confidently make choices and freely access resources, showing high levels of initiative and curiosity in their play. Children actively and enthusiastically participate in daily routines, learn practical skills such as pouring drinks, serving snacks and tidying away. Many demonstrate strong determination when faced with new challenges, take pride in their achievements and are consistently empowered to build resilience and confidence through developing a 'have a go' attitude.

Care & Development — Excellent

Staff follow highly effective procedures to promote children's health and safety. They provide healthy snacks and are making good progress towards the Healthy Sustainable Pre-School Award. Staff implement strong hygiene practices, including thorough food preparation and nappy changing routines, and consistently follow clear, up-to-date policies. They promote children's wellbeing through regular access to fresh air and active play. Staff have completed the required safeguarding training and demonstrate strong knowledge. They confidently follow procedures, make referrals when needed, and ensure safeguarding information is clearly displayed. Staff maintain accurate attendance records and complete detailed accident and incident forms, which they share with parents. All staff hold full paediatric first aid qualifications, exceeding National Minimum Standards (NMS) requirements and strengthening children's safety. Regular fire drills ensure both children and staff know how to respond in an emergency.

Staff engage very effectively with children and are excellent role models. They maintain a strong focus on communication, talking and listening to children to support their understanding and confidence. They create warm and sociable environments, including at snack time, where they encourage conversation about things that interest the children. They manage behaviour highly effectively, using calm and clear reminders to promote safety and understanding such as walking rather than running indoors. They use praise consistently to reinforce positive behaviour and build children's self-esteem.

Staff provide exceptionally warm, nurturing care and manage transitions extremely well, ensuring children feel consistently safe, secure and reassured. They use a wide range of engaging approaches, such as singing, sensory play and expressive interactions, to capture children's interest and strongly support their emotional wellbeing. Staff skilfully encourage independence and thinking by asking thoughtful questions and offering gentle guidance at just the right time. This helps children to keep trying, confidently take on challenges and develop their own highly effective ways of learning. For example, staff sensitively and expertly support children to sustain concentration and demonstrate impressive determination while independently problem-solving how to manoeuvre trikes up a grass slope. Staff plan the environment exceptionally well to meet children's individual needs. They make excellent use of observations to personalise learning and respond well to children's interests.

The Welsh language is incorporated well into daily routines and interactions, further strengthened by their recent achievement of the Bronze Welsh Promise award. They work effectively with a range of professionals to support children who may have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This collaborative approach ensures all children receive timely, appropriate support, enabling them to have their individual needs consistently met.

Environment — Good

Leaders maintain a welcoming, well-organised and carefully maintained environment that supports safe and effective practice. During the inspection, we identified a set of steep steps in the outdoor area as a potential hazard. Leaders responded promptly and have confirmed in writing that the steps will be removed and re-installed to improve safety by end of Summer 2026. In the interim, the steps have been cordoned off and are out of use. Staff create a calm, homely atmosphere through the consistent use of natural furnishings, soft décor and well-cared-for resources. They maintain strong daily routines to ensure high standards of cleanliness, promptly addressing any mud brought into the building and cleaning up water spillages. They also ensure that all equipment, including soft furnishings and baby items, are cleaned regularly. Leaders ensure risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly and staff support children to take managed risks appropriate to their stage of development. For example, when toddlers do not yet recognise that a hill could cause them to fall, staff provide close physical support by holding both hands while allowing children to experience controlled slips onto their bottom. This approach enables children to safely learn about uneven surfaces, helping to build awareness, confidence and an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders ensure space is used effectively across the setting. Staff organise both indoor and outdoor areas thoughtfully, allowing for a smooth flow between spaces throughout the session. Resources are arranged on open shelving and in labelled baskets. This supports the development of independence, decision-making and confidence as children can easily select resources and follow their own lead. The indoor environment is arranged into clearly defined areas, including cosy reading spaces, sensory areas and open spaces for more active use. Outdoors, staff provide a wide range of equipment and use the space consistently to support physical development, coordination and exploration. For example, children roll balls down ramps and chase them to retrieve them, strengthening their movement skills and curiosity. Natural features, such as shaded areas, further enhance the quality of provision.

Leaders provide a broad and stimulating range of resources that reflect inclusive values and support a wide variety of experiences. For example, staff offer a good balance of natural and manufactured materials, including loose parts, which encourage creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking. In addition, resources such as small world setups, construction materials and sensory items support the development of imagination, fine motor skills and communication. Multicultural resources are well embedded throughout, including books, puzzles, small world figures and dolls that reflect a wide range of cultures. This helps children develop an awareness of diversity and promotes respect for others. Leaders ensure that all resources and equipment are of excellent quality, developmentally appropriate and well maintained.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders provide highly effective and responsive leadership and create a clear vision that all staff understand and follow in their daily work. They ensure policies and procedures are fully embedded and review them regularly to keep practice safe and up to date. Leaders work closely with staff, listening to their views and supporting them with any challenges they face. They place a strong focus on staff wellbeing and build a positive team culture where everyone feels valued, respected and included. Staff work extremely well together, feel listened to and supported, and benefit from strong communication through regular meetings and open discussions. Leaders promote a clear play-based approach, helping staff understand their role as enablers who support children to explore and take appropriate risks.

Leaders show an excellent commitment to continuous improvement and reflective practice. They complete a detailed and meaningful quality of care report that clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. They gather and use the views of parents, children and staff through questionnaires and discussions to inform their planning. Leaders also seek feedback from external professionals, including recently introduced quality reviews, and use this effectively to improve outcomes. Peer observations also take place regularly and support staff to learn from one another and strengthen their practice. Leaders ensure all staff understand these processes and their role in contributing to improvements, which helps maintain consistently high standards across the service.

Leaders manage staff and resources very effectively and ensure the service operates safely and efficiently. Children's records are accurate and complete. Recruitment processes are robust, ensuring staff are suitable, qualified and experienced. Staff files we sampled contained all required information and were well organised. Leaders carry out regular supervision and appraisals, which support staff development and wellbeing. Staff access a wide range of training opportunities and apply their learning confidently in practice. The team are highly skilled and knowledgeable, with a strong understanding of playwork and early years approaches. Leaders recognise that staff are their most important resource and ensure they are supported to provide high-quality experiences.

Partnerships are highly effective and make a strong contribution to children's wellbeing. Staff quickly build warm, positive and trusting relationships with parents, who speak very highly of the service. Parents describe staff as caring, supportive and attentive, and say their children enjoy attending and benefit from the experiences provided, particularly outdoor play. Leaders communicate well with parents and ensure they feel informed and involved in their child's care. This joined-up approach ensures children receive the right support at the right time and supports their ongoing development.

Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

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

Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2026.
You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.