Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

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

A report on

Little Scholars Nursery
Glyndwr
Mold Road
Wrexham
LL11 2AW

Date of inspection: July 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Little Scholars Nursery

Name of setting	Little Scholars Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Rebecca Mottram
Person in charge	Rebecca Mottram, Catrin Davies and Kim Weller
Number of places	91
Age range of children	0 to12 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	21
Number of children funded for up to five terms	0
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 07:30 to 18:00 (closes between Christmas and New Year and for bank holidays). Holiday club open between 08:00-17:30 (during school holidays) closes for one week at Christmas.
Flying Start service	No
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 people/children who use, or intend to use their 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'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	05/07/2017

Date of previous Estyn inspection	30/06/2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	09/07/2019
Additional information	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	**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 Improve continuous provision to ensure that children have consistent and effective opportunities to follow their own ideas and interests

R2 Develop the outdoor area by offering a wider range of child led learning experiences and ensure that children have consistent free flow access

R3 Ensure that the appraisal process generates more specific targets for improvement for all practitioners including the persons in charge

What happens next

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

Main findings

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children make appropriate choices and decisions about their play and learning confidently. For example, they choose what they would like to play with, whom they would like to play alongside and what they would like to eat or drink. Nearly all children express their needs assertively and know that practitioners value their contributions. For example, the older children vote for stories which are read at circle time and babies whom indicate they are tired are allowed to sleep as routines are flexible.

Nearly all children are happy, relaxed and settle quickly to activities. They have positive bonds of affection with their key workers and enjoy sharing smiles and cuddles throughout the day. Nearly all children are familiar with the setting's routines, which gives them a sense of security. For example, after they have eaten, children know to wipe their face before going outside to play.

Nearly all children behave well and interact purposefully. They play together co-operatively, taking turns and joining in with each other's play successfully. For example, children willingly take turns to roll themselves down the hill and with support share messy play tools happily. Meal times are sociable occasions with most children communicating positively and a few older children saying 'please' and 'thank you' without being reminded. A few children are learning to be resilient and after setbacks do not allow their play to be disrupted. For example, children rub their knees after falling off trikes and happily climb back on in order to continue their play.

Nearly all children engage well in play-based activities, show curiosity and explore toys confidently. For example, they enjoy finding balls in the shredded paper and particularly enjoy leading their own learning in the role-play areas. Most children show appropriate levels of perseverance. For example, they happily build towers after they have fallen down and concentrate until tasks are finished, such as when making birthday cards.

Nearly all children are motivated and take part in a range of activities which develop their independence successfully. For example, they tidy away resources, put their tissues in the bin, pour their own drinks and where possible they serve themselves at meal times. Nearly all children are developing appropriate skills for their age with many younger children knowing numbers to five and a few younger children knowing the colours in both English and Welsh.

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 developing their personal, social, language and communication skills. For example, they remind a friend they can have one more go, before it is their turn to use the tablet computer.

During group time, nearly all children pay close attention to a story and other texts such as a letter from Spaceman Sid with a few children selecting and handling books independently. Many children take part enthusiastically in activities that develop their mark making skills, such as using paint and chalk with a minority showing a good understanding of writing for a purpose. For example, they attempt to write their name on a painting or make a label for a display with support.

Most children develop their mathematical and problem-solving skills successfully. For example, they work out how to collect missing shapes from a space rocket when they find them stuck on top of a fence. Many children are beginning to recognise a few simple two-dimensional shapes correctly and a majority make good use of mathematical vocabulary. For example, they compare the size of their 'moonstone' to others and tell a friend that theirs is the biggest. Many children count objects accurately to five and most say numbers in order to ten.

Most children develop their creative skills effectively, such as when they produce large scale paintings, or explore a variety of sounds using percussion instruments. Most access and use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment well both indoors and outside. For example, they select icons when using tablet computers and use metal detectors to hunt for parts of a spaceship in a large sand pit successfully.

Most children develop their physical skills effectively. For example, they use scissors and glue sticks skilfully when making a model spaceship. Nearly all use a range of tools such as rakes, spades and brushes independently. Most children develop good gross motor skills, such as negotiating space on trikes, running through the bushes and balancing on an obstacle course.

Most children develop their Welsh skills well in relation to their starting points. They respond to a range of Welsh words and phrases positively and join in with songs and rhymes successfully. Many children use a few Welsh words such as colours with support and most count to three in Welsh independently.

Care and development: Good

The setting has effective procedures to keep children healthy and safe. For example, all practitioners have attended food safety training and follow infection control guidelines well. They complete accident and incident records accurately and all practitioners have up to date first aid training. Practitioners fully understand the child protection policy and the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Practitioners provide beneficial daily opportunities for physical play both indoors and outside. They ensure that there is healthy, nutritious food and drink offered to children. However, in the afternoon, children have to wait for a longer period than is recommended between meals.

Practitioners use strategies to manage children's behaviour successfully. They speak in a caring tone and use praise effectively to motivate children when completing activities such as making aliens out of dough. Practitioners make their expectations clear, for example gently reminding children to sit down at meal times and to use their fork, which results in children sitting and eating appropriately. Unwanted behaviour is usually dealt with quickly and effectively with practitioners diffusing situations successfully, using songs to distract children and explaining sensitively how and why it is important to take turns.

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced. They plan a good variety of stimulating learning experiences which promote children's curiosity. For example, young children investigate sensory bottles by shaking and rolling them and older children draw plans and make space rockets. Practitioners provide responsive care and have a nurturing and caring approach. For example, they cuddle young children when waking up and give appropriate comfort when children are upset or need reassurance.

The setting has effective arrangements to support children with additional needs. For example, practitioners draw up care plans, work well with specialist agencies when needed, and work in close partnership with parents. They meet children's individual needs well, which results in children making appropriate progress.

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 successfully. Nearly all practitioners focus well on developing children's communication, ICT, personal and social skills. For example, they encourage children to spread honey independently when making sandwiches.

Provision to support children's literacy skills is effective. The recently improved 'book nook' is inviting and well-resourced with a range of books, soft toys and cushions. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to take part in mark making activities such as using sand, foam and chalk. Activities such as writing a shopping list before visiting the supermarket support children's understanding of early writing well. Practitioners support children effectively during their learning activities. They encourage children to engage in activities and listen to their talk carefully such as when children talk about building a spaceship. As a result, children are confident in the setting. Practitioners use questioning well to challenge children and take their learning forward, for example when asking children what they think the spaceship roof should be made from.

The setting provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills including developing their grip using tweezers, brushes and puzzles. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to develop large-scale physical skills in the outdoor area. For example, an obstacle course supports children to develop their balancing and jumping skills effectively.

Most practitioners provide engaging opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills well. For example, they support children to count backwards from five as they pretend to be spaceships about to blast off into space. Many practitioners develop children's problem-solving skills successfully through stimulating planned activities. For example, they provide a range of useful resources such as pulleys and magnets when challenging children to collect parts of a spaceship they find stuck on a fence.

Many practitioners support children's Welsh language development effectively. They model Welsh through singing songs, counting and using a few Welsh words and phrases appropriately. Practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to take part in creative activities such as painting and making 'spikey' dough aliens.

A range of learning experiences promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder successfully and provide a wide range of effective opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things. For example, they support them to observe caterpillars as they change into butterflies before releasing them into the wild.

Most practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice. They explain things clearly, model activities and question children effectively. They combine focused tasks with children's free play well. Practitioners take account of individual children's interests appropriately when planning learning experiences. For example, they ask children which resources they would like to play with the following day. However, opportunities for them to select from a range of resources and follow their own individual ideas and interests are underdeveloped.

The setting has worthwhile assessment procedures in place. Practitioners identify what children can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. They record useful observations that show children's progress over time successfully.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment with all practitioners fully aware of the setting's health and safety procedures. Effective systems are in place including written risk assessments and daily room checks which ensure potential hazards are reduced or eliminated both in the setting and on outings. Access to the premises is managed well as leaders ensure the main entrance is locked and all visitors are recorded.

Leaders provide children with a well decorated environment which takes in to account the interests of the children with plenty of facilities to enhance their wellbeing and learning successfully. Babies have access to soft, spongy flooring, appropriate for crawling and older children have a separate area to ride bikes, climb steps and explore the grass banks and tunnels. Practitioners plan creatively to develop children's imagination and explore the world around them using the woodland area and high quality role play houses. The playrooms provide direct outside access and the outdoor areas are engaging and highly suitable. Practitioners generally give high priority to the outdoors. However, there are not always enough opportunities for children to have free flow access and lead their own learning. Indoors, practitioners use displays to celebrate children's achievements effectively. This gives children a sense of belonging and helps them feel proud of what they have achieved. The layout and design of the playrooms promote children's independence suitably and reflect the needs and interests of the children well. For example, the designated sensory room promotes babies all-round brain development and the pre-school rooms reflect the principles of the foundation phase appropriately ensuring a rich, varied safe space in which children can play, explore and learn.

Leaders provide a range of good quality, developmentally appropriate play and learning resources. For example, practitioners promote children's curiosity and problem solving skills through the use of 'loose parts play' where natural and recyclable materials can be moved around and used in endless ways. The setting has a wide range of low level furniture and resources that practitioners use effectively to enhance children's learning. For example, different sized planters enable all children to reach inside to plant and grow their own vegetables.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders work effectively with practitioners to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children. The responsible individual works closely with the persons in charge. 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. Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide the very best for all children in their care.

Leaders share an appropriate range of suitable policies and procedures with practitioners to support the effective running of the setting. They follow safe recruitment processes for all staff and 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 and make beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process. All practitioners are committed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Room leaders work with their team to identify areas of strength and aspects they need to develop effectively. For example, the focus on developing Welsh language provision in the toddler room has had a positive effect on children's skills in this area.

Leaders use the setting's appraisal and supervision systems to review the performance of practitioners suitably. They provide useful opportunities for practitioners to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. However, many targets are too broad and do not provide practitioners or the persons in charge with areas for improvement clearly enough.

Leaders provide effective opportunities for continued professional development and practitioners take advantage of these to improve their performance. This has a positive impact on practitioners' skills, such as deepening their understanding of how to support children's problem-solving skills successfully. The responsible individual provides beneficial opportunities for practitioners to undertake further study and many have gained additional qualifications during their time at the setting.

Leaders have developed a range of effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children well. The setting makes beneficial use of its links with the university and external agencies. For example, drama students talk to children for inspiration before they create a short play that they perform for them at the university theatre.

Leaders ensure that practitioners keep parents informed about children's care and development effectively through informal updates, newsletters and a useful noticeboard. Practitioners complete daily diaries for parents of younger children and hold meetings for pre-school parents to share children's achievements and discuss their progress effectively.

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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