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

Guilsfield Preschool Playgroup

Guilsfield CP School
Guilsfield
Nr. Welshpool
Powys
SY21 9ND

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Guilsfield Preschool Playgroup

Name of setting	Guilsfield Preschool Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Huw Jones
Responsible individual (if applicable)	NA
Person in charge	Debbie Richardson
Number of places	19
Age range of children	Three to four years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	21
Number of children who receive funding for early education	16 three-year-olds, 4 four-year olds
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9.00am to 3.00pm
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 children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	March 2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	February 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	29/11/2022
No children at the setting speak Welsh at home.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Strengthen the link between self-evaluation, improvement planning and actions in the Quality of Care Report

R2 Clarify the role of the responsible individual in the management of the setting

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:

Most children interact confidently with each other and with practitioners. Nearly all enter the premises happily, and quickly settle into familiar routines, such as sitting quietly with a book until everyone arrives.

Across the setting, children express themselves confidently and know that practitioners will consider their wishes. For example, a group of children wanted to play with the chalk boards, so they were bought out by staff, which developed into a letter recognition activity.

Nearly all children are happy and comfortable playing with their friends and practitioners, expressing their enjoyment through smiles and laughter. When children need assistance or comfort, they are confident to approach practitioners and ask for help. For example, a child approached a member of staff to help put out the basketball hoop.

Most children are enthusiastic about activities they enjoy, such as blowing and chasing large bubbles around the garden and popping them before they reach the ground. Many children are starting to form friendships appropriately and show care and concern for each other. For example, children were heard having discussions about their poorly brothers and sisters at home and asking how they could help them. Nearly all children share resources well and are starting to take turns.

Most children make effective decisions and choices about the activities on offer, moving confidently from one activity to across different areas in the setting. A few children set up their own play by collecting play dough and tools and organising where they sat, before discussing what they were going to make.

All children behave well and sustain attention appropriately. They listen attentively and follow instructions carefully. Most children respond well to questions asked during circle time and participate happily in song time.

Most children know and respond well to setting routines. For example, children hang up their coats and bags on designated pegs, change their shoes and self-register and most participate enthusiastically in tidy up time. Nearly all children develop appropriate personal care skills such as washing their hands, using the toilet independently and putting on their wellies and coats to play outside.

Independence is a strong feature of the setting and children have many opportunities to develop their independence throughout the session. However, there are some daily routines, such as snack time, where opportunities to enhance these skills further is underdeveloped.

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

Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points. Most develop communication and literacy skills well. Many choose to visit the reading area and most enjoy looking at a book together. Children listen respectfully to each other's views when selecting a story and settling down to share it. They enjoy handling books independently and demonstrate appropriate early reading skills. Many children enjoy mark making and make use of notebooks and paper to write shopping lists and notes to give to each other. Most children are beginning to form letters and hold writing implements with a recognisable grip.

Nearly all children join in enthusiastically with Welsh songs and rhymes during the day and a very few sing them independently as they play. Many understand simple Welsh words and phrases such as, for colours and time to tidy up. However, a very few are confident enough to respond to simple Welsh language words, greetings, or instructions.

Many children are developing physical skills well. They run and jump with increasing skill as they catch bubbles before they land on the ground. Most children show a good sense of balance as they walk on planks and tiles, jumping with confidence from one to the other. Many ride bikes around the outdoor area, skilfully navigating uneven terrain and fixed obstacles.

Nearly all children confidently follow their interests during the session and, as a result, they remain engaged in uninterrupted play for sustained periods of time. Most children are curious and ask questions to develop their understanding. They show high levels of perseverance and resilience. For example, when playing 'basketball' they continued to practise until they could throw the ball through the hoop consistently.

During child-led sessions, most children play together co-operatively. For example, they work in pairs to build 'very tall towers' using blocks. They share ideas about which shapes to use and try out different options before making a final decision.

Many children develop numeracy skills successfully. They count up to five with confidence, recognise corresponding numbers and use mathematical language in their play. For example, they compare the number of pieces of fruit different animals eat and say which is more or less, say which tower is the tallest and which bubble is the largest or smallest.

Most children's creative skills are developing well. They enjoy performing familiar songs as other children accompany them with guitars and drums. Many children show an interest in painting and drawing using a range of different mediums confidently to create pictures. They take pride in their work, show a good sense of achievement, and independently choose their favourite work to display on the wall. Many children use the interactive board confidently to mark make and create abstract patterns. They show developing coordination skills as they manipulate objects, making them larger or smaller, selecting colours and drawing shapes with increasing control.

Care and development:

The responsible individual ensures that safeguarding has a high priority and promotes children's health and well-being very successfully. All practitioners have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe. At the time of the inspection, the setting's policies did not reflect their practice, however, these were updated during the inspection and now reflect the correct procedures to follow. The arrangements in place for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

All practitioners have attended safeguarding training, and all hold the relevant first aid qualifications. They implement the setting's policies and procedures appropriately.

The setting encourages healthy eating well by providing an open-ended snack time enabling children to access at a time they choose. Children have plenty of exercise and fresh air, which is encouraged by the free flow access to the outdoor area.

Hygiene procedures and practices are good, and practitioners regularly encourage and remind children to wash their hands.

Practitioners provide good care and support for children. They praise good behaviour and achievements, offering positive encouragement when children try to do things for themselves and persevere with a task. For example, a few children took considerable time and care making a tower, their efforts were praised by staff and recorded on an electronic tablet. Practitioners use verbal rewards frequently. For example, they say 'wow' and 'well done' and high fives are given to encourage children and comment specifically on what the child had achieved.

Children's behaviour is good and, as a result, the environment is calm. Nearly all children are very kind, considerate and polite towards to each other. Consequently, there are very few disagreements and when they do occur, they are resolved quickly by sensitive intervention from practitioners.

Practitioners support children's development well. They provide a wide range of interesting and varied activities for the children. However, a few set routines have a negative impact on the free flow of activities. For example, the regular changing of footwear as children move between the indoors and outdoors.

Practitioners are good role models for the children. They continually reinforce their values with the children, such as being kind, sharing and being resilient. Practitioners promote and prompt the use of good manners and consistently encourage children to share, work and play together.

Practitioners know the children well and have a clear understanding of their individual needs, abilities, and preferences. Children's individual files document this. The setting has effective procedures to support children with additional needs. Leaders have prioritised training to ensure practitioners have a good understanding of the relevant procedures to support children with additional learning needs. As a result, the setting has developed a suitable system to identify, and support these children and their families. Practitioners work positively with other agencies and meet regularly with parents, to provide advice and reassurance. They keep parents well

informed about their child's progress and involve them appropriately in setting targets through regular verbal discussions and social media.

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

Practitioners have a very good understanding of child development. They are skilled and highly motivated to ensure that all children become happy, confident, and inquisitive. Practitioners understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play. They work effectively as a team to plan activities that reflect the interests and needs of the children well.

Planning reflects the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and is suitably flexible to reflect the changing interests of the children. For example, earlier in the term children became very interested in buildings. As a result, practitioners adjusted their plan to increase opportunities for children to build different structures and explore shape and size.

All practitioners have established good relationships with children. They regularly observe their key children at play and, as a result, they know them very well and are responsive to their individual needs. Practitioners use information from observations appropriately to plan the next steps for learning. Progress and next steps are recorded in 'My Story' and shared with parents regularly. Practitioners have identified the need to develop this process further to ensure that children are making progress across all skills during their time in the setting.

Practitioners provide effective English and Welsh language models for the children. They speak clearly and take every opportunity to introduce new vocabulary to children purposefully, encouraging them to respond to simple words and phrases in Welsh. Practitioners provide worthwhile learning experiences and opportunities for children to develop literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. For example, when performing 'Where the Wild Things Are' using shadow puppets and a puppet theatre, practitioners encourage children to follow the story, count out the characters needed for each scene and narrate the story.

Practitioners are flexible in their approach and provide children with many opportunities to participate in extended periods of play. They make good use of questioning to develop learning and thinking skills and understand when to intervene, and when to step back to give children time to work things out for themselves. Practitioners organise the environment and plan most activities to encourage children to develop independence. However, there a few activities that are overly adult-led and, as a result, practitioners do not always make the most of worthwhile opportunities to reinforce strengthen children's independent skills.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about Welsh culture and heritage. For example, children make Welsh cakes, listen to stories, learn the national anthem, paint daffodils, and make large-scale models to celebrate St David's Day. Practitioners also plan beneficial opportunities for children develop an understanding of other cultures and beliefs by making rangoli patterns for Diwali and celebrating Chinese New Year.

Environment:

Practitioners provide a nurturing and caring environment where the needs of the children come first. The environment is welcoming and supports children to play and learn successfully. The layout of the premises promotes children's independence well.

Leaders organise the play and learning environment to support children's independence effectively. For example, all furniture is of appropriate size and height and the low-level storage enables children to identify and choose resources easily.

Practitioners ensure that there is a range of excellent and age-appropriate resources available to children, to stimulate interest and facilitate learning indoors and outdoors. For example, practitioners promote use of recycled and natural materials, and use real fruit and vegetables in the shop to make play more authentic and enjoyable for children. All resources are clean, well maintained and fit for purpose. Practitioners regularly change the range of resources to ensure they reflect children's needs and interests well.

Leaders ensure that the accommodation is very safe and secure. Safety measures are embedded into the daily routines and help to ensure the setting runs smoothly. Risk assessments are thorough and undertaken for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment. These are reviewed and updated often. Fire equipment tests and emergency evacuation procedures are completed regularly.

Toilets and hand-washing facilities are age-appropriate and easily accessible. An open-ended snack time is set up throughout the session and children butter their own toast and pour their drinks independently.

Leadership and management:

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting, which is shared effectively with parents and the school community. They have created a welcoming environment that successfully supports children to develop confidence, become inquisitive and enjoy learning.

Relationships between practitioners and children are strong, and this has a beneficial impact on children's wellbeing. Practitioners provide constant encouragement and reassurance to ensure children achieve their best at all times.

Leaders collect a wide range of evidence from a range of stakeholders, including parents and children, to understand the strengths and priorities of the setting. However, this information is not used well enough to inform the setting's 'Quality of Care Report' or improvement planning. Leaders regularly review their progress across all areas, but do not always evaluate the impact of their actions well enough in addressing their priorities.

Leaders use grants well to enhance provision in the setting. For example, they have recently purchased a woodwork bench and tools and trained a practitioner to enhance learning experiences and help children develop new skills. Financial management of setting is appropriate and overseen by the local authority.

Leaders ensure that there are sufficient qualified practitioners employed in the setting. The setting has an appraisal system in place for leaders and practitioners. However, this process does not clarify responsibilities for leaders well enough to ensure that actions arising from appraisals are addressed in a timely way, such as, identifying the need to increase staffing at busy times. Leaders and practitioners engage very well with local authority training. This has enabled them to keep up to date with the curriculum and put in a system to support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners have established a good relationship with their advisory teacher, engaging in regular professional dialogue and acting on advice to improve the provision for their children.

Partnerships with parents are very good. Practitioners have worked hard to continue to strengthen links with parents through regular discussions and social media. They provide parents with regular updates on their child's progress and, as a result, parents feel very well informed.

Parents report that their children love coming to the setting and enjoy the range of experiences available to them when they are there. Parents feel that practitioners know their child very well and they have made good progress since they joined the setting. Parents feel that practitioners are very approachable, and they are confident that any concerns they may have would be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Leaders are re-establishing partnerships with local services and the school community to enhance learning experiences for children. For example, the children in the setting are going to the cinema with children in the school. Leaders have identified the need to further develop these partnerships in the future.

There is a strong partnership between the setting and the school. Most children have lunch in school and, as a result, they are familiar with staff and the school environment. There are valuable transition arrangements such as, visits from teachers, and joining in whole school celebrations and educational visits. As a result, nearly all children transfer confidently into 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)

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 06/02/2023