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

Ysgol Carreghofa Owlets

Ysgol Carreghofa CP
Llanymynech
Powys
SY22 8PA

Date of inspection: October 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Ysgol Carreghofa Owlets

Name of setting	Ysgol Carreghofa Owlets
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Powys County Council Childcare and Play Services
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Claire Pritchard
Person in charge	Elizabeth Williams
Number of places	18
Age range of children	3 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	8
Number of children who receive funding for early education	5
Opening days / times	Monday to Thursday 09:00 – 15:15
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	23 May 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first joint inspection.
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	10/10/2023

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)**	
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	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that practitioners always make effective use of observations and assessments as they plan next steps in the children's learning

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: Excellent

Nearly all children have exciting opportunities to make choices and decisions about what affects them. For example, when children ask to play outside in the rain, the practitioners are respectful of their wishes. Nearly all children's opinions and interests are highly valued and acted upon. For example, during snack time in the forest area children have a choice of banana or apple with hot chocolate to drink. Children are heard saying "*I love hot chocolate*" as they chat eagerly with each other.

Nearly all children are exceptionally happy, settled and relaxed, and they benefit from practitioners who know them very well. Children arrive happily at the setting and settle quickly after leaving their parents. They hang their coats and bags by identifying their personally labelled peg and checking in by hanging their labelled wooden disk on the feelings tree, saying "*I'm hapus*". Children celebrate that they were successful at checking in by shouting *"I did it!"*

Nearly all children build affectionate bonds and develop positive attachments. They interact with each other extremely well and treat each other with great respect. Nearly all children's behaviour is exemplary, and they play together well and take turns appropriately. They are fully supported and encouraged to take part in an activity resulting in a very strong feeling of achievement and high self-esteem. For example, children beam with pride when they receive a high five for counting the conkers and identifying how many are remaining. Most children sit and listen carefully to the story session, joining in with the sounds of the animals, pointing at the pictures and answering questions appropriately.

Nearly all children are fully engaged in their play and learning and concentrate for an appropriate length of time. They benefit from some structured routines as well as the freedom to move around and choose their own activities both indoors and outdoors. Nearly all children are highly motivated, animated and fully engaged in their play and learning. They thoroughly enjoy and explore the large variety of learning opportunities and authentic resources. For example, in the woodwork area children use real nails, hammers and pieces of wood to create sculptures. Nearly all children are self-motivated to start their own play and to influence their tasks and activities. For example, children choose to complete jigsaws before moving to have quiet time in the reading corner. They follow their personal preferences successfully.

Nearly all children have excellent opportunities to develop their independence skills, enabling them to do things for themselves successfully. They dress in their wet weather clothes themselves and enjoy splashing in the wet puddles while holding their umbrellas. During snack time, children prepare their own fruit and pour the water from the jug. Most children access their water and toilet facilities independently throughout the day. Children understand the importance of recycling and are able to independently determine which bin they should use for the paper towels; *"the blue bin for paper".* Most children problem solve effectively. Children discussing the feathers found on the floor in the forest area laugh and suggest to the practitioners that the feather was left by a "*Cheetah*". Children challenge the staff members knowledge seeking a reaction from the strange answer.

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

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funding elsewhere was too few to report without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners fully understand and consistently implement policies effectively, promote healthy lifestyles and personal safety of children. They are proactive and efficiently manage any risks as and if they arise. All practitioners respect children's feelings and voices. For example, they ask them if they need help with handwashing and children are comfortable and familiar with this routine. Practitioners follow highly effective processes to keep children safe, for example to keep them hydrated by ensuring that children have continuous independent access to the water jug and cups and ensuring that children dress independently in wet weather clothing when playing outside in inclement conditions. Practitioners are thorough with safeguarding scenarios and can explain confidently what they would do if they had concerns. They work methodically as a team to ensure children's safety. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners' interactions with children are outstanding. They speak respectfully with children and show exceptional interest, pleasure and care in all that they do. They manage any sign of possible conflict, carefully and quickly. Practitioners skilfully encourage children to take care of the environment through highly effective

interactions, which support and aid children's learning successfully. They explain simple rules for the woodland purposefully, for example ensuring that children understand why they can't take creatures home and why it is not appropriate to rip branches, and ensuring that they do not leave rubbish behind. Practitioners competently model strong language and communication skills by purposefully extending children's vocabulary, for example when asking children to sit on the *"speckled frog log"* to wash their hands before snack time. Practitioners reinforce previous learning effectively by reminding children of what they had discovered about the characteristics of the creatures found in the woodland. As a result, practitioners ensure that children have a greater understanding and respect for the outdoors and a real interest in the world around them.

All practitioners implement positive behaviour strategies effectively and purposefully. They are consistent in their praise for children, for example when they complete specific tasks and undertake responsibilities. Practitioners are very courteous towards children and each other. They value children's views and demonstrate genuine warmth and kindness towards them. Nearly all practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and take every opportunity to enhance interactions through careful responses, correct spoken language and enhancing their vocabulary. For example, practitioners enhance children's understanding of stories creatively, and use a story sack of resources to bring the story to life and extend children's learning.

Practitioners know children exceptionally well and have an extensive understanding about their stage of development and needs. They respond to children's individual needs promptly. Practitioners consider children's ideas and respond to their interests and curiosity with further activities to enhance their experiences for learning. They promote diversity and children's rights extremely well. For example, practitioners use a variety of books from around the world and of different cultures as a basis for discussion with the children. They plan a range of activities to enable children to learn more about festivals and traditions including Rosh Hashanah, St David's Day and Chinese New Year. Practitioners provide pieces of colourful material and fabrics in the dressing up area to encourage children's creativity, wonder and curiosity in the wider world.

Practitioners are committed to providing an excellent range of play and learning activities and opportunities. For example, they encourage children to use feathers and mud found in the woodland as a writing tool to develop early mark making skills. Practitioners are fully aware of children's individual development and provide specific age and stage appropriate activities. They have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities to support children with additional learning needs. For example, practitioners support children that are not able to sit on the mat to continue with a table-top activity. They check that the children are still able to see and hear the story from the table. Practitioners diligently and regularly review children's individual plans and update their support folders. They draw on advice from multiple agencies and support services to support children's needs.

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 teaching and learning and offer a wide range of rich play opportunities based on the principles of Curriculum for Wales. They create a nurturing learning and play environment, which creates a strong sense of belonging amongst the children and supports their learning and development well. This also has a positive impact on children's well-being and supports strong attitudes to learning.

Practitioners promote children's independence effectively and show respect when children make their own choices about their play and learning. For example, practitioners respond promptly to provide beneficial play and learning opportunities to support a child's interest in using the toy family of ducks to play outside. This has a positive impact on children's self-esteem and interest in their learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Practitioners and children also raise money for charities, for example holding a coffee morning and a sponsored bike ride, which strengthens children's understanding about the importance of helping others.

Practitioners use a range of useful questions to promote children's natural curiosity and thinking skills. They also provide real-life opportunities for them to make sense of the world around them and to reinforce their learning. For example, practitioners make good use of the forest area for children to search for mini beasts and woodland creatures. Practitioners purposely include and apply information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, for example by encouraging children to record their stories using the tablet computers then using the headphones to listen and share with their peers.

Practitioners provide valuable and authentic outdoor play and learning experiences for children, which contribute positively to their confidence and happiness. They incorporate problem-solving experiences into everyday routines effectively, for example by encouraging children to build a shelter to protect Sally Squirrel's food for the winter. In addition, they support children's numeracy development well through a variety of meaningful contexts. For example, practitioners provide opportunities for children to transport water to fill a variety of containers and trays, which also encourages their use of mathematical language and develops their understanding of the concept of floating by getting the ducks to float.

Practitioners encourage Welsh language development through applying incidental Welsh words, phrases, greetings and songs. For example, they use phrases such as "*golchi dwylo"*, "*amser snac"*, "*dewch i eistedd ar y mat*" throughout the session. They provide a wide range of interesting opportunities for children to explore mark making using a variety of equipment and surfaces both indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are confident in using a range of writing tools and media, for example to draw around blocks to recreate a picture of Powis Castle.

Practitioners consistently promote a sense of belonging in children's learning, for example by including pictures of children on holiday with their family. They have

established beneficial assessment processes to capture children's achievements, which relates well to setting's ethos. Although practitioners observe and assess children regularly to evaluate their strengths and areas for development, they do not always use this information effectively enough to plan for the next steps in their learning and play.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that the indoor and outdoor learning and play environments are safe and secure. They complete written risk assessments, which reduce risks effectively, including checking daily risks. They ensure that required safety and maintenance checks are up to date and they follow procedures in relation to visitors accessing the setting. The premises are clean and well maintained; they are light, bright and airy and leaders ensure sufficient ventilation. Practitioners follow procedures effectively, including daily checks of the environment and hygiene procedures such as sanitising tables prior to meals. They wear appropriate protective clothing, as and when needed. The toilet and nappy changing facilities are appropriate, and practitioners follow guidelines to ensure that children's privacy and dignity are respected. Leaders conduct regular fire drills, ensuring that everyone involved knows how to leave the setting safely in an emergency.

Leaders ensure that the environment is welcoming and provides a range of opportunities for children to play, learn and move freely between indoor and outdoor areas. The woodland experience area offers children further learning experiences in the outdoors. Leaders decorate the environment using natural tones and materials to create a calm and relaxing atmosphere. They provide a range of interesting equipment and resources, and many reflect the natural environment and real-life objects that promote purposeful play. Most resources are at low level and furniture is appropriately sized. As a result, children make choices about where they want to play and what resources they want to use independently.

Leaders provide designated areas for children to store their personal items. Displays show children's photographs, work and achievements attractively. This supports a sense of belonging and promotes their self-esteem well. Leaders use a variety of play and learning materials effectively to promote children's cultural awareness, including Welsh heritage and diversity. This promotes children's understanding of the world well. Play and learning areas have sufficient resources to ensure that practitioners can offer stimulating and exciting activities for the children. The resources, toys and books are suitable, clean and in good condition, enabling practitioners to prepare activities confidently.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have created a strong vision and a purposeful strategic direction, which are based on creating a safe and happy place for children to learn and develop. As a result, leaders and practitioners are consistent and effective in their practice. No breach of regulations or national minimum standards was identified during this inspection. They have a clear statement of purpose, which gives parents accurate insight into the provision and its aim. Leaders succeed in achieving their vision of

being happy and caring together. They ensure that policies and procedures are suitable and are followed correctly.

Leaders have established worthwhile procedures for evaluating the quality of the provision and have accurately identified the settings strengths and areas for development. This has led to effective plans and actions being developed and practitioners gaining confidence in embracing change. For example, they have made changes to the indoor and outdoor provision to create an authentic and inspiring learning and play environment.

Leaders follow thorough recruitment processes and carry out regular supervision for practitioners. They agree valuable actions for staff development and training needs to support provision. Leaders ensure that there are sufficient suitably qualified practitioners who have experience of working with children and understand their role well. Practitioners and leaders hold regular meetings and use communication well to discuss children's engagement in play, discuss their observations and identify children's next steps. As a result, leaders create a strong team ethos and work together effectively to support children to achieve their next steps.

Leaders have established trusted relationships with parents. They update parents and carers regularly. For example, they recently introduced an app to share children's experiences and achievements. In addition, they use a newsletter and social media website well to communicate with parents and carers. Leaders have a successful partnership with the primary school, which supports children’s transition well. They respect and consider the views and advice of others. This has enabled the leader to make changes to provision, which has contributed well to children’s learning and well-being.

Leaders use funding and grants wisely to support setting priorities for improvement and meeting children’s needs. For example, leaders purchased ICT resources to support children’s learning and to effectively enrich their experiences.

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: 12/12/2023

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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