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

Cwtsh Caersws

Caersws CP School
Maesawelon
Caersws
Powys
SY17 5HG

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cwtsh Caersws

Name of setting	Cwtsh Caersws
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Powys County Council Child Care and Play Services
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Nia DaviesSian Canning
Person in charge	Angela DaviesJoanne HardsTami Rowlands
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	13
Number of children who receive funding for early education	12
Opening days / times	09:00-15:30 Monday to Thursday Term Time only 9:00 – 11:30 Fridays only
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	March 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	First since registered
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	18/06/2024

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 Continue to develop opportunities for free flow outdoor play

R2 Improve practitioners use of incidental Welsh throughout the session to further develop children's Welsh language skills

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

Children are extremely happy at the setting. They settle quickly on arrival and are eager to start playing. They have a strong voice and confidently make many choices and decisions about things that affect them. For example, they choose activities and resources and decide which songs they would like to sing. Nearly all children communicate effectively and express themselves well. A few children who do not rely solely on speech are confident practitioners will listen and respond to them.

Children thoroughly enjoy attending the setting and are very familiar with the routines and boundaries. This helps them feel safe and develop a sense of belonging. For example, they responded calmly to the fire alarm going off and knew exactly what they needed to do. Children have warm, close relationships with practitioners and receive support and comfort if needed. They feel valued and show pride in the things they can do. This has a positive effect on their self-esteem and well-being.

Children behave well and readily accept practitioners' gentle reminders not to push or to take turns. Many children enjoy playing together and are making friends whilst others play alongside as is appropriate for their stages of development. Children have regular opportunities to name and talk about their feelings which helps them develop sensitivity to the feelings of others. Most understand the need to follow rules and respect other people, with a few spontaneously saying please, thank you or sorry.

Children are active and engaged in their play. They explore their environment enthusiastically and show purpose, curiosity, and imagination as they choose their activities. Nearly all demonstrate perseverance and interest. For example, as they re-tell stories, paint pictures, build water runs with pipes, stands and containers or put on a show on the stage. Children are equally as enthusiastic to join in with adult-led activities such as obstacle courses, music and movement or making ‘ice cream’ for the ice cream parlour.

Children develop skills and knowledge and make good progress through their play. They develop their ideas by following their own interests for large parts of the day. For example, working out how many jugs of water it takes to fill the bowl or deciding how much to charge for an ice cream. Children have good opportunities to increase their self-help skills. They learn to do things for themselves successfully as they help to tidy up, take responsibility for their self-care or manage their own lunch box.

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

Nearly all children are happy and curious and engage well with the learning opportunities available to them. Nearly all children make good progress over time, particularly in developing their communication, problem solving and social skills. Nearly all work together effectively to find suitable solutions to problems as they play and explore. For example, while making a special soup in the mud kitchen they decide to share a limited amount of tea bags ‘equally’ between them.

Nearly all children listen intently to practitioners and their peers and respond confidently. Most talk enthusiastically about their play and use a rich range of vocabulary very well. In the role play area children demonstrate sophisticated ideas and language which develops their personal and social skills and imagination very well. For example, while sailing to a ‘desert island’ they use a plank to create a bridge in order to ‘avoid a shark infested sea.’

Most children develop their early reading skills successfully. For example, when reading a book alongside practitioners, children predict confidently what will happen next in the story. The children’s love of books is evident as they choose stories to read independently or to share with practitioners, turning pages correctly as they look at the text and talk about the pictures.

Most children develop their early mark making skills successfully, writing their names in the sand and creating a simple label for their ice cream creations and pictures. Many children write their names with help from practitioners with a few more confident individuals writing their names independently.

Overall, most children are developing an understanding of the Welsh language and are beginning to respond to instructions well. A very few children are beginning to use Welsh vocabulary independently in everyday situations.

Most children are developing good physical skills. They use a range of equipment skilfully to develop their strength and balancing skills, walking confidently over

different textured surfaces outdoors. Nearly all children develop their fine motor skills successfully when making marks using a wide range of resources and by using tweezers and pegs.

Most children make good progress in their mathematical development. They use mathematical language naturally in their play, for example by recognising when bowls are full or half full. They sort items confidently according to their colour and a few measure objects in the outside area with a tape measure. Most children count and recognise numbers up to ten confidently.

Most children develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills purposefully. They use cameras confidently to take photographs of their work and have a good understanding of how to use technology to discover facts. For example, with the help of practitioners, they use the internet to look for information about ants after finding some in the setting and looking at them under a microscope.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners work successfully with leaders to keep children safe and healthy. Practitioners have a secure knowledge of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns. Effective systems are in place for recording, reporting, and monitoring any issues. Practitioners supervise children well and record their own, children's and visitors' attendance. They complete all relevant records in relation to accidents, incidents, existing injuries, and medication appropriately. All practitioners have suitable training in paediatric first aid. They know what to do in an emergency as they practise and record regular fire evacuation drills. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners implement good arrangements to keep children healthy. They follow good hygiene procedures in relation to food serving and nappy changing. Practitioners ask parents to provide their children with a packed lunch and a healthy snack of fruit. Practitioners provide milk or water to drink. They ensure children wash their hands when they arrive at the setting, after using the toilet and before eating. This helps to develop their awareness of personal hygiene practice well. Practitioners encourage children to be physically active and ensure they have regular opportunities to play outside in the fresh air.

Practitioners are kind, caring, and supportive. They interact with children in a warm and friendly manner which creates a positive, calm, and happy environment. Practitioners know the children very well and promote positive behaviour effectively. They acknowledge children's feelings and offer explanations and alternatives to manage minor disagreements. Practitioners speak respectfully to each other and children and are excellent role models. This contributes well to an atmosphere that fosters and promotes children's self-esteem.

Practitioners meet the needs of children successfully. They provide an extensive range of opportunities and activities both inside and outside that promote children's learning and development. However, children are not always able to choose to play outside. Practitioners plan some activities and areas of the play spaces around

themes which they develop depending on the direction children's interests take. For example, the ice cream parlour role play activity grew as practitioners observed children. Practitioners engage with children and extend their play well. They ensure children have plenty of time to explore resources and lead their own play and learning. Practitioners observe children. They track their development effectively and are alert to children who may have additional learning needs (ALN). They have good systems in place to ensure children receive the support they need and are developing their knowledge and expertise in this area.

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

Practitioners know their children well and have a sound understanding of child development and the importance of giving children time to explore and play. They have embraced the principles of the Curriculum for Wales well and provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning and play experiences for the children. They have a good understanding of the importance of allowing children extended periods of uninterrupted play and how this helps children develop their ideas and skills. They consider the children's interests and use them as a starting point to plan experiences and activities. For example, practitioners plan a range of stimulating activities related to pirates and sea creatures in response to children's interest after listening to a story about a kind fish.

Practitioners provide a calm and secure environment for children to play and learn. Their planning is becoming more consistently informed from observations and focuses on the children's next steps in learning. This approach builds on the children's knowledge and skills successfully.

Practitioners are excellent role models and support children to develop their language skills through caring and encouraging interactions. They provide children with time and space to explore mark making and early writing with a range of resources such as pens, crayons, chalks, and paint, for example when recording orders for ice creams in the ice cream parlour.

They promote a love of books through reading stories with the children and reflect on how to increase children's engagement with reading. For example, practitioners have combined the use of fiction and non-fiction books in all learning areas. As a result, more children are choosing to look at books when playing.

Practitioners enable children to develop their physical skills well. They encourage children to take calculated risks in their play and challenge themselves physically, supporting them to develop resilience, independence, and confidence. For example, practitioners encourage children to be confident and careful when negotiating large obstacles in the adventure playground.

Practitioners provide suitable experiences and ask appropriate questions to support children to gain a mathematical understanding of counting and shape, for example counting objects up to 10. As a result, children make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills. All practitioners provide a good range of opportunities for

children to use and understand the use of digital technology. For example, they model how to take pictures and record an explanation which is saved to an app for parents to view.

Practitioners provide a rich range of activities that promote the children's understanding of Welsh culture well through celebrating Saint David's Day, visiting the local railway station and Roman Road.

Practitioners successfully encourage children to join in a range of Welsh songs and rhymes. They use familiar phrases and vocabulary well during whole group sessions. As a result, most children enjoy singing a range of Welsh songs including songs about their feelings. However, they do not use incidental Welsh consistently and therefore opportunities to further develop children's Welsh language are missed.

Practitioners develop the children's spiritual, moral, and social skills effectively. For example, they arrange visits to the local church and celebrate diversity successfully by exploring the customs of Chinese New Year and reading books on multicultural issues. Practitioners show high levels of care and respect for everyone. They have a calm approach and, as a result, children are kind and respectful with their peers.

Environment: Good

Leaders and practitioners provide children with an extremely rich environment that supports their learning and development effectively. They ensure they care for children in safe and secure premises. Thorough systems are in place for practitioners to manage access to and from the setting safely. Leaders complete a range of written risk assessments that reduce risks effectively. They review these regularly and consistently complete daily safety checks of the environment. Leaders ensure regular building safety checks for the boiler, fire alarms and electrics are carried out under arrangements for the school. All areas of the premises, furniture and resources are exceptionally clean and well maintained.

The setting operates from two adjoining playrooms which are light and welcoming. Practitioners have developed a highly enabling environment with well thought out and distinct learning areas that invite children to come and play. There is ample space for children to move about and play. Attractive storage containers such as open suitcases and natural baskets enable children to independently access and explore toys and resources. Wall displays celebrate children's individual artwork and their community. They include photographs of the many activities children take part in along with signs and captions in English and Welsh. Interactive displays and interest tables support and extend children's learning. Integral toilets and a cloakroom area further support children's developing independence in managing their own personal care and belongings.

Children benefit from a large outdoor play area. Practitioners have developed this area to provide further excellent opportunities for play and learning. For example, spaces to run, climb or ride bikes. This area is accessible directly from one of the playrooms, and recent work in the school grounds has made it fully secure. Children

are also enabled to access larger climbing facilities, a nature area and Forest School in the wider school grounds.

Leaders provide good quality, age-appropriate furniture. They provide an extensive range of interesting and developmentally appropriate resources and equipment. There is an abundance of natural materials and resources that children can use in a variety of ways. Authentic resources, such as china crockery in the home corner help children learn to take care of things, treat them with respect and to use items safely. Books and images in all areas of the playroom support children's learning. For example, practitioners place books about bugs outside with relevant resources such as magnifying glasses and books about sea creatures on the under the sea table. Resources include those that promote cultural awareness successfully, including the culture of Wales.

Leadership and management: Good

All leaders have high expectations of themselves, practitioners, and the children. They provide very calm and positive leadership where adults and children are respected and supported to achieve their best. Leaders provide an informative Statement of Purpose and ensure they meet regulations and the National Minimum Standards. The setting is located on the site of a primary school and the working relationship between staff and leaders of both settings is very strong. Leaders, teachers, and practitioners work well together to plan transitions, which ensures continuity for the children as they transfer from the setting to the school. This close partnership is a strength of the setting.

Leaders' self-evaluation procedures are effective. They use a wide range of evidence to evaluate the work of the setting and identify strengths and areas for development effectively. The setting's improvement plans include a sensible range of targets and priorities. This allows leaders to improve the work of the setting purposefully through continuous improvement. The setting leader is an excellent role model and supports other practitioners in their professional development effectively. For example, leaders have supported practitioners in the development of the children's sense of Cynefin and Welsh language skills through useful training.

Leaders regularly seek the views of everyone involved with the setting. As a result, they ensure that they make useful changes to the provision to benefit the children and their families. For example, after consultation with parents and carers, the setting introduced an online messaging system for communicating with parents that provides personalised information about the children's experiences at the setting. This has strengthened the working relationships between practitioners and parents as well as allowing them to share useful information.

Leaders ensure there is a strong culture of teamwork and shared responsibility across the setting. They support practitioners with their appropriate professional development activity and meet their needs well. Systems for appraisal and supervision encourage reflection and identify areas for improvement successfully. Leaders ensure practitioners have access to informal training at the setting as well as

through purposeful ongoing professional development. Daily meetings provide opportunities for all staff to discuss what has been successful and plan learning experiences and improvements for the following sessions. As a result, staff feel valued and well supported.

Leaders have established highly beneficial partnerships that have a positive effect on the provision and outcomes for children. Practitioners work well with outside agencies including the Local Authority. This has a positive impact upon the overall progress of the setting and the children in their care.

Practitioners provide valuable information for parents about the children's achievements. They do so through apps, verbal discussions, and progress reports. Practitioners are very approachable, and parents are confident that any concerns they may have are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Parents report their children enjoy coming to the setting and participating in the wide range of engaging experiences available to them.

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: 20/08/2024

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.

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

	inspection	

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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Date Published 20/08/2024