Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

The Croft Playgroup

The Aston Family Centre
Larch Avenue Shotton
Deeside
CH5 1NF



Date Inspection Completed

28/04/2023

About The Croft Playgroup

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Registered Provider	The Croft Playgroup
Registered places	19
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	Manual Insert] 10 December 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	Manual Insert] Yes
Does this service provide the 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.

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Well-being	**Good**
Care and Development	**Good**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and Management	**Good**

For further information on ratings, please see the end of this report

Summary

Children's well being is good as they can express themselves and their needs confidently and know they will be responded to appropriately. They are happy and settled as they form positive relationships with staff and meaningful friendships with other children. They are respectful learning to share and cooperate with others. Children enjoy their experiences and have opportunities to develop a range of skills through their play.

Staff implement effective policies and procedures to keep children safe. A healthy lifestyle is promoted by staff through the food and drink offered and ensuring children have regular access to outdoors for fresh air and exercise. Staff manage interactions well and they are good role models. Some appropriate activities are planned to support children's learning and development.

People who run the setting ensure it is safe and secure. Risk assessments and daily checks are completed effectively. The environment is child friendly and creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It is spacious and provides exciting and inviting areas for children to play and learn indoors and outside. Resources and equipment are suitable for children and inspire them to develop a range of skills and have a variety of different experiences.

People who run the setting manage it well and are committed to providing the best care possible. They regularly review the setting and make improvements that have a positive impact on the children. People who run the setting have a good team of staff who work well together to ensure children are supervised effectively and have a range of experiences and opportunities. Good relationships are developed with parents so information can be shared appropriately and regularly.

Well-being — Good

Children have a good sense of wellbeing and are confident to communicate their needs and ideas, knowing staff will listen and respond to them with care and interest. Children happily talk with staff and those who have limited verbal skills are able to express themselves using nonverbal cues, such as pointing. For example, a child took a book to a staff member to show they wanted to look at it and they read it together. Children make choices about where and what they play with. They freely move around the room, accessing the resources and areas of learning.

Children settle well and are relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings. They develop positive relationships with staff. This was seen as they regularly played alongside them and invited them into their play. Children form positive friendships and enjoy playing alongside their peers, completing activities such as finding the fish together during water play. Children are familiar with the staff, environment and routines, helping them to feel safe. For example, children knew that after washing their hands they could choose where to sit for their snack.

Children learn to share the space and resources appropriately together. They are developing compassion and show kindness towards others. For example, holding each other's hands as they walk across the balance beam and asking staff if they are happy. Children are respectful towards each other and the resources. For example, they happily allowed others to join in their play and helped to tidy up when asked to do so.

Children show enjoyment as they play, with lots of smiles and laughter. They all actively engage in an activity they have freely chosen. A group of children had great fun hiding the figure in the water and then laughing when they found it. Children focus on their chosen activity for an appropriate length of time for their age and stage of development. For example, concentrating on catching a fish with their magnetic fishing rod and focusing until they caught one.

Children have appropriate opportunities to ensure they develop a range of skills. They have a chance to be independent as they can access the items and resources they want. Children showed confidence when finding what they wanted and then getting the resource out to play with. For example, children happily got the indoor balance equipment out and set up a course to follow, with only a little help from staff. Children are encouraged to attempt things such as, putting their coats on, themselves before asking for any help or support.

Care and Development Good

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and procedure to follow if they have concerns about a child. They keep children safe by implementing effective policies and procedures. For example, they practise regular fire drills with the children, so everyone is familiar with the procedure to follow in an emergency. Registers are kept of children and staff attendance.

Staff have effective procedures in place to promote a healthy lifestyle. Cleaning routines including regular hand washing and tables being wiped are part of daily routines and help prevent the spread of germs. Staff make sure children have regular opportunities to be active and get fresh air by accessing the outdoor areas.

Staff are good role models and promote positive behaviour. Any unwanted behaviour is dealt with quickly and calmly by staff to avoid it escalating. They use praise to celebrate achievements, good behaviours and children's learning. For example, high fiving a child when they tried to put their coat on themselves. Staff interact effectively with the children. They join in with their play when it is appropriate to do so and talk with them regularly to extend their learning and make their experiences sociable. For example, when playing alongside the children with the playdough, talking about the shapes and patterns they were making and sitting with the children during snack time talking about what they had been doing.

Staff plan appropriate activities for the children that extend their learning. They conduct observations of the children, so they are aware their interests and individual needs, but it is not clear on the planning how they have used their knowledge of children's interests or development in the planning. Staff provide children with a range of areas of learning and resources to support their learning. For example, children enjoyed playing on the bikes and trikes outside and playing with the animals in the small world area inside. Staff give children appropriate opportunities to be independent. They encourage children to try things for themselves, including eating and drinking. Staff support children to tidy up after their snack by taking their plates and cups to the bowl to be washed.

Environment — Good

The environment is a safe and secure space for children. Entrance to the setting is controlled by staff and visitors are recorded so there is no unauthorised access. Risk assessments and daily checks on all areas are completed. They show that hazards are managed well or eliminated where possible. For example, people who run the setting have assessed the large outdoor area and decided that, at present it is not part of the free flow activities available for children. It is only used when planned and all staff and children go out together. This is to ensure children are safe as the area is large and staff are not always able to supervise children safely if they are outside alone.

People who run the setting provide children with an indoor and outdoor environment that is spacious. All areas are well maintained, light, bright and create a child friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Indoors has been renovated and redecorated. It gives children a large open space in which to play and learn. There is room for a variety of activities including floor games and tabletop activities. Outside is a very large and inviting area in which children can explore and learn about the world around them and develop a range of skills. There is space for children to use fixed play equipment and climb, balance and crawl through tunnels. The large yard allows space for children to ride bikes, trikes and scooters and the natural area gives children access to nature. The sheltered area, with a mud kitchen and table, allows the outdoors to be used in wet weather.

People who run the setting have equipped the environment with suitable resources and equipment that are appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children. The areas of learning have been created to support children to use their imagination. For example, children enjoyed pretending to make food and drink in the home corner and practising their writing skills on the large chalk boards outside. All toys and resources are of a good quality and stored appropriately so they are kept clean. Most items are stored at an appropriate height so children can access them freely. People who run the setting have recently purchased new storage units that are more child friendly to ensure all resources are accessible. The environment gives children access to multicultural resources and natural materials. For example, sand and water trays are available and there are baskets of cones and wooden toys.

Leadership and Management Good

People who run the setting have a good knowledge and experience of the setting and care they provide. They show dedication and commitment to ensuring they provide a good service. Policies and procedures reflect the setting and the statement of purpose provides parents with information they need to ensure it is the right care for their child. Paperwork is organised and records such as children's registration documents are organised well so information can be found quickly when needed.

People who run the setting regularly review the care they offer. They complete an annual self assessment of the setting. They gather views and opinions of the staff, children and parents and consider these when planning and making any improvements. All responses the setting received from parents were positive and included comments such as "*my child loves attending, which tells me, it's a great place for them to be*" and "*staff have been brilliant, nursery is their favourite part of the day*". People who run the setting look back at what has gone well and what may need changing to ensure they are providing appropriate and effective care and experiences for the children. For example, creating an area outdoors where children can take measured risks through climbing and balancing on the equipment and creating a new kitchen area for preparing snacks.

People who run the setting have a good team of staff who work together well to ensure they supervise children sufficiently and the setting runs smoothly. Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and implement the policies and procedures appropriately. People who run the setting are approachable and staff have regular opportunities to speak with them to share their ideas. Regular supervisions and appraisals are held between managers and staff to ensure information is shared and training needs identified. Staff files are complete and evidence there is a robust recruitment procedure in place to ensure staff are suitably experienced and qualified to care for children.

People who run the setting and staff have developed positive relationships with parents. Information is shared through secure social media and through discussions with parents at the beginning and end of their child's session. The setting has close links with the local school. This supports children's transitions as information can be shared and the children can become familiar with the school setting prior to them starting full time.

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.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
29	Supervision: The responsible individual did not ensure supervision was carried out- there were no records and supervision did not happen.	Achieved

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.

National Minimum Standards	
Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 7 - Opportunities for play and learning	To review planning so more consideration is given to the children's interests, development needs and next steps of their learning.

Where we think it helpful, we may make best practice recommendations. These are to encourage settings that are doing well to become even better at helping children thrive.

Best Practice
Recommendation(s)
To review the outdoor area so staff are happy and feel confident to allow children to have free access throughout the day rather than just when planned.

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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