Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Hope Pre-School Playgroup

Ysgol Estyn
Hawarden Road
Hope
Flintshire
LL12 9NL

Date of inspection: April 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Hope Pre-School Playgroup

Name of setting	Hope Pre-School Playgroup
Category of care provided	Sessional Day Care
Registered person(s)	Hope Pre-School Playgroup
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Catherine Hickson
Person in charge	Samantha Davies
Number of places	25
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	8
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	Monday to Thursday 12:30 – 3:00 term time only
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service does not provide an ‘Active Offer’ of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of Welsh language or culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	13/07/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection	02/2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	30/04/2024
The setting is English-medium and children attending all have English first language.	

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)**	**Excellent**
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 Plan for more opportunities to build on children's interests to further develop their sense of awe and wonder

What happens next

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

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to how adults support and encourage children's speech and language skills, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Children are highly confident communicators. Nearly all children express themselves and their needs clearly and in detail and these are responded to well by practitioners. Children effectively influence their play and experiences as they move around freely, choosing where and what they want to play with. Children access the imaginative resources and activities independently.

Children settle well and cope with separation from their parents. They arrive happy and eager to join their friends and choose what they want to do. Children feel safe in the care of practitioners with whom they are familiar and in an environment where they feel comfortable. All children gain a sense of belonging and feel highly valued. They are treated with respect, and practitioners understand and effectively respond to their interests and needs.

Children are respectful, learn to show empathy towards others and successfully share space and resources. Children are motivated to follow the expectations of practitioners as they are given the support and encouragement they need to understand and behave appropriately. For example, they understand they have to be patient at times, and they talk to each other politely when waiting their turn to use popular games and puzzles. Nearly all children understand they should put items

away when they have finished, and children were excellent at interacting and following routines.

Children purposefully engage and focus on an activity they have chosen as it interests them and is something they enjoy. They self-direct their play as they move around the range of activities and opportunities, for example when using patterned stones to make shapes in the sand. Children talk enthusiastically about their play and share their experiences and enjoyment keenly, for example when proudly sharing their experiences of the weekend when they had taken the class bear home.

Children have positive experiences that help support their learning and development. They confidently access imaginative provision that supports their development. They enjoy a range of skills including physical as they climb and balance and fine motor skills as they mark make and use tweezers to pick items up. Children confidently attempt to be independent as they use the toilet, wash their hands, and access their belongings. Most children are keen to accomplish and try things for themselves before asking for help if needed. For example, a child was extremely proud when they managed to put their coat on themselves for the first time.

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

All children make excellent progress from their individual starting points. They enjoy their learning and achieve well in their activities. Many children's communication skills are excellent, and nearly all children are making very good progress, including those at the earlier stages of development. They express themselves with confidence and use appropriate language in spontaneous and structured play. For example, children accurately describe the bubbles blowing in the outside area. Most children express themselves with confidence and a few use rich vocabulary. For example, children talk about their holidays with enthusiasm and describe where they are staying in a great detail.

Nearly all children show an interest in books and enjoy listening to stories on the mat. Many children access the books independently turning the pages in sequence and correctly answer questions. Most children listen well and follow instructions carefully. For example, they get their own aprons for painting and wash their hands. Most children enjoy mark making and are developing early writing skills. They make name stickers for their paintings independently and use chunky chalks to make patterns and marks on the playground. Children's Welsh language skills are very good and they express themselves in Welsh when choosing their snacks and ask for 'dŵr' or 'llaeth'. They join in with Welsh songs, rhymes and stories enthusiastically. For example, they enjoy singing 'Mr Hapus' and suggest reasons why the characters are happy or sad.

Most children's physical skills are excellent. Children use balance bars and large hoops to follow an obstacle course on the playground. Children transfer sand using large scoops and shovels with accuracy and control. Most children develop good fine motor skills and use small bottles and pipettes for making potions in the mud kitchen.

They use screwdrivers and small tools with increasing control. Children attach paper to an easel using magnetic grips and hang socks on a washing line.

All children develop a range of numeracy skills successfully and are beginning to count. Many children count using one to one correspondence with accuracy, for example, when counting their friends at registration time. All children develop a range of numeracy skills successfully and are beginning to count confidently, recognising numbers up to 10. Children enjoy sorting hoops and construction toys and identifying the different colours and shapes successfully. They choose activities with confidence and select the appropriate tools for their task. Most children enjoy being creative, for example, when using fabric paints to decorate a large drape. They mix their own colours and select the appropriate tools for the job sensibly.

Many children express themselves through music and movement and enjoy sessions with a visiting dance teacher. All children develop their personal skills well. They are beginning to put on and fasten their coats and can pour drinks with increasing control. All children develop effective social and emotional skills. They discuss where they want to play with their friends and co-operate well with each other. For example, two children use a checklist to spot mini beast in the garden. They use technology in their play and take photos of their activities independently.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep children safe. They implement effective policies, procedures and routines including keeping records of children and staff attendance. Practitioners record accidents and incidents effectively and share these with parents. Practitioners have appropriate training to support them in their roles. They have suitable first aid qualifications, which enable them to deal with any issues or incidents. Practitioners know what to do if they have concerns about a child and have up to date safeguarding training. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners are effective in promoting and supporting children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Snack choices are nutritious and only milk or water is offered. Practitioners are consistent in helping to prevent cross contamination and the spread of germs. They promote handwashing regularly, and all areas are kept clean. Practitioners ensure that children have opportunities to be active indoors and outside and make sure access to outdoors is available, so children get plenty of fresh air.

Practitioners interact with children in a caring and supportive manner. They create a fun atmosphere and join in with children’s play successfully when it is appropriate to do so. For example, there was lots of laughter when a practitioner joined a child who was trying to hula hoop. Practitioners are committed to supporting children to talk and develop their speech and language through ensuring each child has the opportunity to speak. They are highly responsive to the needs, feelings and moods of children, which allows them to deliver focused support and interactions. Practitioners are effective and consistent in managing behaviour, and all children are fully aware of the expectations.

Practitioners effectively model and support children to develop a range of skills. They provide good resources and activities that encourage children to become active and curious learners. The varied resources are exciting and inspire children to learn through their play. For example, enhancing the mud kitchen with items including herbs they had grown in the garden to get children to use their senses. Practitioners are beginning to develop their planning in the moment and invitations to learn to support progress and ensure they expand on children's interests. Practitioners get to know the children well and provide tailored support and care so all children's needs, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), are catered for.

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

Practitioners' planning is very effective and they provide a range of activities that promote the all-round development of children well. They plan provision for children with additional learning needs effectively and ensure that all children develop their skills over time. Practitioners provide an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning and they plan enjoyable activities to develop children's skills. Practitioners are aware of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and are beginning to identify children's interests. For example, practitioners provide a range of activities based on constructions tools after children show a keen interest in using screwdrivers to disassemble toys. However, opportunities to develop activities to promote all children's interests are not always realised.

Practitioners use the setting's systems for recording, monitoring and reporting progress effectively to plan activities and experiences based on the children's previous learning. They keep detailed records on children's progress and individual targets are identified, implemented and monitored. This helps ensure that children reach their individual potential. All practitioners are suitably qualified, have up-to-date knowledge of child development and understand how to support those with additional learning needs. Practitioners' interactions with children are very good. They know when to intervene appropriately in children's activities and play, and when to stand back and observe. They use questioning techniques very effectively to challenge and support children in order to develop their learning. Practitioners have high expectations of all children and consequently they learn how to relate to others and take responsibility for their actions. As a result, children form positive attitudes to each other and develop self-discipline.

Practitioners are excellent language models. They encourage the use of correct grammar and take opportunities to extend children's vocabulary regularly through the course of their play. They question children skilfully and patiently, which encourages them to respond maturely and sensibly, describing vividly their experiences. They provide a wide range of resources for developing mark making and early writing skills both indoors and outdoors, such as chubby crayons, chalks, paint and marker pens.

Practitioners also provide interesting and imaginative resources that develop children's mathematical skills successfully, for example measuring equipment and toys for sorting according to size and colour. Practitioners ensure that children develop their digital skills well through exploring and playing with different devices

and equipment such as voice recorders. Practitioners use every day Welsh words and phrases with confidence and take opportunities to encourage the children to use Welsh during their play. Children develop a good understanding of the world in which they live. They enjoy searching for minibeasts in their garden and understand that plants need sun, water and soil to grow. Practitioners value the children's creative process and not only the end product.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and the children have a range of activities to learn about themselves, their families, their community and the wider world. Practitioners foster values such as honesty, fairness, and respect and promote principles that help children to distinguish right from wrong and as a result children are respectful, polite and thoughtful.

Environment: Good

Leaders and practitioners provide a well maintained, safe and secure environment where children thrive. They complete appropriate risk assessments to ensure hazards are identified and managed well. Practitioners complete visual checks daily to ensure that no new hazards have occurred before the children arrive. They record visitors and maintain appropriate safety routines to ensure that there can be no unauthorised access.

Practitioners have created a welcoming environment, which provides children with a sense of belonging and pride. For example, children's work is attractively displayed and the building is decorated in calming colours. Practitioners ensure that the layout of the environment is effective in supporting children's play, learning and independence. For example, there is direct access to the recently improved outdoors so children can choose to be indoors or outside. Leaders provide sufficient space and facilities indoors and outside to cater for all children's needs and give them the room they need to explore and play safely. The environment is effective in allowing children the opportunity to participate in energetic physical play and activities that involve digging and filling items with water, sand, or soil. Practitioners have access to suitable facilities to prepare snacks and provide child friendly toilets and handwashing facilities.

Resources are inspiring and support children to develop a range of skills through their play. Practitioners have developed creative areas of learning and they model their use to support children's skills. For example, practitioners were playing alongside children in one of the two sand play areas. One is large enough for children to stand in and practitioners and children were making sandcastles and building together. Suitable resources to promote cultural awareness are available, including dolls and books. A wide range of natural materials and real-life objects effectively enhance provision and encourage play and learning, for example a washing line and pegs to support children's fine motor skills and real empty food boxes and pots and pans in the home corner. Providers ensure that children have access to inviting resources to encourage them to engage in physical activities that support and develop their movement and co-ordination. These allow children to take measured risks including a designated space for equipment that encourages children to climb and balance safely.

Leadership and management: Good

Leadership within the setting is effective, and as a result, children are nurtured well in an inclusive and welcoming environment. Leaders create a strong, positive ethos among practitioners, and all are committed to the aims and objectives of the setting. They have produced a clear statement of purpose that informs parents about the setting's work and what it has to offer. All practitioners have a sense of purpose and understand their roles and responsibilities well. There is good communication between the registered person and the setting leaders and regular committee meetings are held to support the setting, for example, they hold many successful fundraising events.

Leaders listen well and take into account the views of practitioners, parents or carers, children, and other stakeholders when evaluating the provision and its effect on children's progress and wellbeing. Practitioners have a good awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement, and their role in bringing about those improvements. Leaders carry out regular staff appraisals which clearly identify targets for professional learning which help to secure improvements in provision. The setting has suitable contingency plans for staffing and there is a high ratio of practitioners to children. As a result, children's skill development is very strong. The practitioners have relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children. All staff show a commitment to continuing professional development and they attend regular sessions such as for the curriculum for Wales and child protection training. Leaders provide purposeful opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills.

Leaders act promptly on advice from the local authority and make effective use of available grants, for example, when making significant improvements to the outdoor area. The setting has all the essential policies, procedures and documents in place.

Leaders have forged very good links with the children's families. Parents and carers are well informed and feel included and part of the setting. Practitioners inform parents about their children's learning and progress through an online app, and parents are keen to engage with this. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the care the setting offers to their children and the impact it is having on their learning. The setting is based on the school site and leaders ensure that children have a very smooth transition experience from the setting to the school. A few practitioners also work in the school's nursery class and this arrangement alleviates many concerns or worries that children might feel when leaving the setting.

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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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

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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