A report on

Alphabet Playgroup

Undy Primary
Pennyfarthing Lane
Undy
NP26 3LZ

Date of inspection: December 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Alphabet Playgroup

Name of setting	Alphabet Playgroup Limited
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Not Applicable
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Tracey Millard and Louisa Sutton
Person in charge	Tracey Millard and Louisa Sutton
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2.5 years – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	18
Number of children who receive funding for early education	0
Opening days / times	Tuesday and Thursday 8:30am – 2:45pmMonday, Wednesday and Friday 9am – 12:30pm
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 not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	January 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	November 2019
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	02/12/2025
Additional information	

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 Strengthen observation and assessment processes to inform future planning.

What happens next

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

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to Embedding British Sign Language to Support Communication and Inclusion

The case study would highlight how the nursery has introduced and embedded British Sign Language (BSL) to support children's communication and inclusion for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

The setting provides a nurturing and welcoming environment where nearly all children settle quickly on arrival and separate confidently from their main caregivers. They are greeted warmly by familiar practitioners and show excitement when they see their friends. Nearly all children demonstrate a secure understanding of routines and expectations at the setting, for example, they unpack their bags, hang up coats, and place their name on the registration tree on arrival. These familiar routines

contribute to children's strong sense of belonging, helping them to feel safe and relaxed within the setting.

Nearly all children make purposeful choices about where and how they play, both indoors and outdoors. They access a wide range of high-quality, stimulating resources and activities, either independently or with appropriate support from practitioners. They have meaningful opportunities to influence what happens at the setting. For example, using tokens to vote for their preferred story that practitioners will read to them at the end of the session. This helps them feel listened to and respected.

Nearly all children form trusting and emotional attachments with practitioners. They approach practitioners confidently, communicating their needs in ways appropriate to their stage of development, such as seeking comfort and connection during story time by sitting close to adults.

Nearly all children behave exceptionally well in line with their age and stage of development. They are beginning to form positive respectful and kind relationships with each other. Nearly all children are beginning to take turns and share resources successfully. For example, when playing a matching game, children wait patiently for their turn to find pictures of their friends.

Nearly all children show curiosity and enjoyment in their play and learning, demonstrating high levels of engagement and involvement. For example, during a musical movement session, children laugh and twirl with enthusiasm, copying actions and adding their own ideas as they move to the rhythm.

Nearly all children show an increasing level of independence during their time at the setting and have many worthwhile opportunities to develop these skills further. For example, they select and serve themselves snacks, pour water or milk unaided from a jug, and wash their plates in the washbasin independently. They manage personal care tasks, including handwashing and feeding themselves, with minimal support.

Nearly all children make strong progress in line with their stage of development, particularly in their communication skills. Many begin to use Welsh words and respond appropriately to simple instructions. The use of British Sign Language is embedded in daily routines and play well. Many children use signs confidently to communicate their needs and ideas, helping

them to feel understood and valued and supports their early communication skills effectively.

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 funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners respond to children's individual needs, abilities and preferences highly effectively. This helps to create a nurturing and supportive atmosphere at the setting. The setting has robust procedures to support children with any emerging additional needs. Practitioners undertake beneficial training to equip themselves with relevant skills and knowledge needed to provide a tailored approach. Practitioners work with a range of support agencies, such as health visitors, to ensure they meet children's needs successfully.

Safeguarding is given a high priority at the setting. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They complete a wide range of relevant training and demonstrate a clear understanding of the setting's policies and procedures. Detailed and precise records are maintained, including children's attendance, staff working hours, and comprehensive logs of accidents, incidents, and pre-existing injuries. Leaders monitor these records effectively to identify any patterns or trends. A comprehensive set of risk assessments, including fire safety, is in place, and regular fire evacuation drills are logged appropriately. The setting's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners promote healthy lifestyles highly effectively. They provide a choice of healthy, freshly prepared food at snack and mealtimes and ensure children have regular access to enjoyable outdoor play and physical activity. Procedures for managing food allergies and individual dietary requirements are robust and followed consistently. Water is freely available throughout each session, which children access independently.

Practitioners are excellent role models. They demonstrate genuine kindness, care, and patience, which has a positive impact on children's well-being and learning. Practitioners follow the behaviour management policy consistently and set realistic and clear boundaries for children. They provide children with frequent praise and encouragement in a range of situations, including when they engage in new experiences. Practitioners offer gentle reminders to help children learn the importance of values such as fairness, kindness, and respect. As a result, children exhibit respect, cooperation and empathy and begin to manage their emotions appropriately in their interactions with their peers.

Practitioners ensure children have valuable opportunities for both free play and adult-led activities which are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. They take note of children's progress suitably and are beginning to use information from observations to support immediate interactions. Practitioners identify children's interests and include these in their planning. They promote equality and diversity by providing a wide range of multi-

ethnic books, resources and activities throughout the setting. The use of Welsh language is promoted positively through songs and greetings.

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

Practitioners provide a welcoming and stimulating environment where children are encouraged to explore and make choices about where they play. Practitioners provide free-flow access between indoor and outdoor spaces, enabling children to move independently and make decisions about their play, which fosters their confidence and curiosity well.

Practitioners develop children's creative skills well through a wide range of experiences, such as free access to creative activities within the learning environment and adult-led tasks. For example, during Christmas craft activities they model suitable creative techniques that children can copy alongside encouraging them to explore their own ideas independently. They respond flexibly to children's requests, such as providing different materials for them to create their own designs.

Practitioners are sensitive to children's individual preferences and emotional needs and encourage them to participate in new experiences without pressure. For example, when children are hesitant to join in activities, practitioners model the process sensitively, allowing children to join in at their own pace.

The setting makes effective use of real-life and local experiences to enrich children's learning. For example, practitioners offer beneficial opportunities for children to deepen their understanding of the world through experiences such as planting bulbs and observing seasonal changes. They make meaningful links with community members, such as a tree surgeon, who explained the changes happening to the trees around the setting and provided logs for children to use creatively in their play. Visual displays and resources reflect the local area, supporting children's sense of belonging and connection.

Practitioners promote children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development effectively. They model discussions around fairness and making choices that respect people and the environment. As a result, children learn the importance of respect and kindness, helping them develop strong social skills and positive relationships.

Practitioners develop children's early communication skills highly effectively. They incorporate British Sign Language (BSL) naturally throughout routines, songs and activities, modelling signs consistently and encouraging children to use them. As a result, many children are beginning to sign key words confidently, which supports their understanding and ability to express their needs clearly.

Practitioners help children to develop communication, early literacy and numeracy skills through activities such as singing, role play and counting games well. They provide worthwhile opportunities for children to make choices, solve problems and use their imagination in their play. For example, by providing resources for children to explore how they may scoop and share bird seed into containers. Practitioners encourage children to act responsibly, such as washing their own dishes after snack and returning resources after use.

Practitioners are knowledgeable about how to support children's learning and often respond in the moment to children's interests and needs by adapting activities, introducing relevant resources, and using skilful questioning. They are beginning to observe and assess children's progress and use this information to inform some aspects of daily provision. However, they do not always use observations to inform planning of future experiences well enough or to build on successfully what children have previously learnt.

Practitioners work collaboratively and share responsibilities effectively. They model inclusive and respectful interactions consistently and use purposeful questioning and vocabulary to extend children's thinking and communication skills effectively. They adapt their approaches well to meet children's individual needs, including those who use alternative communication methods.

Environment: Good

Practitioners ensure children are supervised carefully in a safe, secure and clean environment. They follow clear and comprehensive policies, which allow them to promote the safety and welfare of children successfully. They give security high priority, ensuring only authorised persons have access to the setting and maintain a written record of all visitors. Practitioners follow a range of comprehensive risk assessments consistently. For example, they take a pre-emptive approach to completing daily safety checks of the environment and planned activities, ensuring potential risks are identified and minimised.

The premises are welcoming, child friendly, and provide flexible, well-organised space and facilities to meet the needs of children successfully. Practitioners follow clear procedures to maintain a clean environment and keep equipment in good condition. They ensure furniture and storage is appropriately sized for the children's age, fostering independence and ensuring comfort during play. Leaders conduct regular fire drills to ensure practitioners and children are confident about what to do in an emergency. All required safety checks for the building are routinely undertaken, and leaders act promptly on any recommendations and advice.

Practitioners provide children with a worthwhile range of clean, age-appropriate resources that are well maintained and stored where children can access them independently. They ensure play areas offer a beneficial range of opportunities for children to be active and independent. The indoor space offers stimulating play areas alongside calm zones for reading and relaxation. There is a good range of Welsh, multi-cultural and natural sustainable resources available for children's independent use, such as Welsh reading books and dressing up clothes. Sensory toys with varied lights, sounds, and textures encourage children's exploration. Practitioners celebrate children's creativity by displaying their work and photos and include family pictures which helps to foster a strong sense of belonging.

Practitioners have developed a small secure, outdoor play space that offers children a broad range of valuable learning experiences. They make effective use of this area to offer children rich opportunities to enhance their physical development and engage in imaginative play.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for creating a safe, nurturing environment where children are happy and make good progress in their learning and development. Children's wellbeing sits at the heart of all decisions, and this commitment is evident in the calm, positive atmosphere across the setting. Leaders inspire staff to be their best and foster a strong sense of belonging. They are approachable and considerate of their staff's well-being needs which is highly appreciated.

The setting's statement of purpose is appropriate and meets regulatory requirements. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are comprehensive, reviewed regularly and implemented effectively. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and well understood by staff, supported by clear guidance and thorough induction processes. Risk assessments are detailed and used consistently to help maintain a safe environment.

Leaders carry out thorough and safe recruitment processes. They complete appropriate suitability checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before practitioners start in post. Leaders organise practitioners effectively ensuring they are fully aware of their roles and meet children's needs. They hold regular staff and team meetings. Practitioners receive annual appraisals and formal supervisions, providing support and an opportunity to discuss any issues that may arise. Practitioners report they feel happy and supported and have opportunities for professional development. Professional dialogue is a strong feature of practice, supported by a stable team who collaborate effectively and reflect on children's progress regularly.

Self-evaluation processes draw on a wide range of evidence that help leaders to identify the settings strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. For example, leaders have recognised the need to improve how they use observations of children play and learning to inform their future plans. While leaders have engaged with external advice and are beginning to trial new strategies, these improvements are at an early stage of development.

Leaders manage resources appropriately and allocate funding to meet children's needs and support improvement priorities well. They make good use of grants to enhance provision, such as developing outdoor play areas and purchasing resources that promote physical development. They are responsive to children's interests and consider these suitably when making plans for any future enhancements to the learning environments.

Partnerships with parents and the wider community are strong. Leaders communicate effectively through newsletters, questionnaires and informal discussions. Parents appreciate the nurturing ethos and proactive support for their children's individual needs. Leaders have developed effective transition arrangements with the local school. These help children to move onto their next stage of learning confidently.

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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Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

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