Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Hanmer Playgroup Plus

St. Chads V A School, Hanmer, Whitchurch, SY13 3DG

01948830238

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visit took place on 05/09/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Hanmer Playgroup Plus
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	16
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The service provider is not meeting the Welsh language and culture needs of people and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Good

Summary:

Children feel safe, happy and valued. They make choices, know their views matter, and are listened to. Children play well together, show kindness and resilience, and enjoy learning through play. They are developing their independence, and their emotional well-being is supported, helping them grow and develop with confidence.

Staff are committed to children's safety, following safeguarding and most health procedures effectively. They complete regular training to ensure they understand how to support children's well-being. Interactions are calm and positive, supporting good behaviour and self-esteem. Staff know the children well, plan a range of activities, and support their development through effective observation.

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a safe, secure, and welcoming environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are carried out regularly. The setting is well maintained, with quality

resources and varied play areas indoors and outdoors. Children's ability to make choices and develop a sense of belonging are promoted throughout the environment.

Leaders have a clear vision and communicate it well to staff and parents. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, and leaders use feedback to improve the setting. Staff feel well supported in their roles and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Partnerships with parents and the community are strong, supporting positive outcomes for children.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children's voices are valued, and they make meaningful choices throughout the day. They decide what to play with, where to play, and whether they want to do things by themselves or with support from others. Children know their views matter and staff will listen to them with interest. For example, when a child approached a member of staff with a book, it was read aloud, demonstrating all attempts at communication are acknowledged.

Children feel happy and confident in their environment. They settle well, including those who are new to the setting, which reflects the effective support provided during transitions. Children form emotional bonds with staff and each other and seek comfort when needed. For instance, one child approached a member of staff for a cuddle, which was warmly and sensitively given. A few children confidently invited us into their play, showing they feel safe and secure. Children's preferences are respected. For example, when a child did not want to wear an apron during play, staff accepted this, helping them feel independent and valued.

Most children interact and play cooperatively with one another. They show resilience and manage everyday challenges well. Children are developing an understanding of their feelings and show sensitivity towards others. For example, after handwashing, a child passed a paper towel to another child, showing kindness and awareness of the need of others. Most children take turns and share, encouraged by praise from staff. During outdoor play, we observed a small group of children sharing toy cars, making sure everyone had a turn.

Children enjoy their play and learning. They are active, curious learners who engage enthusiastically in a range of activities. Their enjoyment was evident through laughter and excitement, such as when children pushed tractors to each other in a circle, enjoying the game together. Children sustained interest in water play, exploring pouring and filling with different containers. They gain a sense of achievement from their efforts, with one child proudly shouting "*I did it*" after drawing around their hand.

Children are encouraged to be independent through daily routines such as toileting, handwashing, and eating. However, opportunities to further develop independence during snack and mealtimes are more limited. Nevertheless, children remain motivated and capable, benefiting from a caring environment that helps them grow and develop well.

Care & Development — Good

Staff demonstrate a commitment to keeping children safe and healthy. During the inspection, staff confidently described safeguarding procedures and were able to explain the actions they would take if they had concerns about a child's welfare. They encourage children to wash their hands at appropriate times and ensure tables and eating areas are kept clean. Health and safety procedures, including food hygiene and infection control, are generally followed well. However, there are occasional inconsistencies in practice, and leaders should review these to ensure standards remain consistently high. Fire safety is prioritised, with regular fire drills undertaken and records maintained. All staff hold current paediatric first aid qualifications, enabling them to respond appropriately to accidents or medical needs.

Staff manage interactions with children in a calm, supportive, and consistent manner, following the setting's behaviour management policy. They use positive reinforcement, such as praise and encouragement, to promote good behaviour and build children's self-esteem. Children are regularly praised with phrases such as "*You are a superstar*" and "*Da iawn*", which helps them feel confident and valued. Staff are mindful of individual needs and ensure expectations are clear, helping children to understand what is acceptable through explanations and discussions about consequences. They encourage children to be gentle and use 'kind hands', setting realistic boundaries. Staff act as positive role models, always demonstrating respectful and caring behaviour.

Staff know the children well and pay close attention to their interests and abilities. They support children effectively during play, offering help when needed, stepping back to promote independence, or extending learning through meaningful interactions. For example, discussing colours, encouraging counting, or inviting children to share their views. Staff plan a range of play and learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, to support children's development. Children benefit from regular Forest School sessions which provide valuable opportunities for exploration, problem-solving, and teamwork. Staff promote the Welsh language through incidental use, such as saying "*Amser tacluso*", when it is time to tidy up. Children confidently count in Welsh and say a Welsh prayer before lunch. Staff track children's progress using development records, and observations are used effectively to plan next steps, helping children to make good progress.

Environment — Good

Leaders make sure children are cared for in an environment that is safe, clean, and secure. Access to the premises is well managed, with secure entry systems and a clear process for signing visitors in and out. The perimeter is secure, helping to keep the outdoor play area safe. Leaders are proactive in identifying and removing unnecessary risks. Daily safety checks are carried out, and outdoor equipment is checked at the beginning of every week. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes and to make sure potential hazards are managed effectively.

Leaders ensure the environment is welcoming and well suited to children's play and learning. Rooms are decorated in light, bright colours and benefit from plenty of natural light, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. The main room is spacious and arranged to support a variety of learning experiences. Children can play, explore and relax in clearly defined spaces, such as a home role-play area, dressing-up section, and a cosy book corner. The small outdoor area is well used and provides a free-flow connection with the indoor space. Children also benefit from access to a larger yard and a Forest School area, which enriches their outdoor learning experiences. Facilities are well maintained, with child-friendly toilets, handwashing stations at suitable heights, and nappy changing facilities. There is a designated space for children to store their belongings, helping them to develop independence and a sense of ownership. A small kitchen is available and used to prepare snacks for the children, supporting healthy eating and ensuring food is handled safely.

Leaders make sure children have access to a wide range of quality resources and equipment that are suitable for their age and stage of development, such as low-level tables and chairs. A variety of toys and materials are available, kept clean and in good condition. These include resources that reflect cultural diversity and promote equal opportunities, such as dolls representing different backgrounds and genders. Toys and activities are thoughtfully arranged at child height, encouraging children to make choices and lead their own play. The outdoor areas offer opportunities for active and exploratory play and relaxation, with resources such as ride-on toys, a mud kitchen with authentic utensils, and a wooden train to sit on. These resources provide suitable challenge and support children's physical development. Photographs of children are displayed throughout the setting, helping to create a sense of belonging and celebrating each child's individuality.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders at the setting demonstrate a clear and purposeful vision, which they communicate effectively to staff, parents, and the wider community. Although the Statement of Purpose was initially missing some required details, leaders acted promptly during the inspection to address this. It now provides a clear and accurate overview of the setting. Leaders have developed a wide range of policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practice and current regulations. Parents are kept informed, which promotes openness and partnership.

Leaders have established effective systems for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. They regularly seek the views of children, parents, and staff, and use this feedback to inform developments. Leaders produce an annual quality of care report, showing what has improved during the previous year. The report also identifies clear priorities for further development, for example, the continued enhancement of the outdoor area.

Leaders provide clear direction by defining roles and responsibilities for all staff, ensuring everybody knows how they help achieve the setting's aims. There is an effective system of regular supervisions and appraisals, which includes opportunities for self-reflection and the agreement of future targets. This enables staff to recognise their strengths and identify areas for development, supporting them to fulfil their roles effectively. Leaders also work alongside staff in caring for the children, modelling high expectations and good practice. Staff told us they feel supported, leading to positive outcomes for the children.

Leaders have established strong partnerships with parents and the wider community. Parents spoke very positively during the inspection, highlighting the care and communication they receive from the setting, including daily updates through both face-to-face handovers and a dedicated app. The app is used effectively to keep parents informed about their child's well-being, care, development, and progress. In addition, leaders have developed links with local partners, including the school, church, and other members of the community, which further enriches the experiences and opportunities available to the children.

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.

National Minimum Standards

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.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
Standard 10 - Healthcare	To ensure effective routines are always considered during snack times and nappy changing.

Best Practice

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.

Recommendation(s)
To provide children with more opportunities to develop their independence during mealtimes.

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