A report on

Leeswood Under Fives Playgroup

Ysgol Derwenfa
Leeswood
Flintshire
CH7 4RQ

Date of inspection: January 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Leeswood Under Five's Playgroup

Name of setting	Leeswood Under Fives Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Clare Coleman
Person in charge	Clare Coleman and Jane Looby
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2-12
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	9
Number of children who receive funding for early education	4
Opening days / times	9:00 – 17:30 term time only
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	Post registration inspection
Date of previous Estyn inspection	Post registration inspection
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	20/01/2026
Additional information	

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)**	**n/a**
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

We notified the provider that the setting was not compliant with the Regulations, a notice was not issued, but these are identified as areas for improvement, and the Responsible Individual must address these.

The responsible individual must ensure full compliance with Regulation 38 by conducting regular fire drills and maintaining complete, accessible and up to date records of these fire drills.

Information on all non-compliance is included in the Action and Improvement Summary report, which will be sent separate to the report by CIW.

Recommendations

R1 Address the area of non-compliance identified during the inspection

R2 Strengthen ongoing assessments of children's progress and ensure this is shared with parents/carers more frequently

R3 Strengthen strategic planning to improve practitioners' confidence and increase both practitioners' and children's use of the Welsh language.

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

Most children have a strong voice and express their preferences confidently, both verbally and through gestures. They lead their own play and move between activities easily when something new captures their interest. When children request additional resources such as asking for the sandpit to be uncovered, practitioners respond promptly to their requests. Children benefit from flexible routines that allow them sufficient time to complete tasks and sustain their involvement in activities.

Most children feel safe, happy and valued. They greet practitioners warmly on arrival, often smiling or seeking physical reassurance, demonstrating a sense of belonging and security. Most children cope well with separation from parents and settle quickly, including those children who have attended for only a short period of time. Many children invite practitioners into their play excitedly, asking them to draw pictures together and take on roles when playing in the home corner. Most children join in with familiar routines, such as handwashing and they sing familiar songs. This supports their sense of security well.

Most children interact appropriately with practitioners and each other. Many play happily together and are beginning to form friendships, sharing enjoyment during their play. A few children begin to show empathy and courtesy, actively supporting their peers when using shared resources. Most children begin to share and co-operate with appropriate support from practitioners, for example when taking turns with sand tools or when washing their hands before eating. Most children respond positively to instructions and follow familiar routines, such as nappy changing or sitting together when asked.

Most children enjoy their play and learning experiences and remain focused for appropriate periods of time. They take part in a wide range of activities enthusiastically, such as caring for dolls, exploring dough and using the magnifying glasses. Most children show high levels of enjoyment outdoors when riding wheeled vehicles. A few demonstrate perseverance when faced with challenges. For example, they use spades to fill their buckets with sand, experimenting with how much they need to add to make it feel heavier.

Most children develop well across a range of areas, including their social, emotional, physical, and early learning skills. They move around the environment confidently, know where resources are stored and access what they need independently or with minimal support. With assistance, most manage aspects of personal care such as toileting, handwashing and tidying away resources. Many children are also beginning to take increasing responsibility at snack time. For example, they open their yogurts and place their lids in the bin themselves, showing growing confidence in managing simple routines.

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: Good

Practitioners implement effective procedures that actively encourage healthy lifestyles and promote children's safety and well-being. They provide healthy food and drinks and ensure that children have daily access to the outdoors. Practitioners follow established hygiene routines, including regular handwashing, timely cleaning of tables and maintaining a clean environment. Nappy changing is carried out sensitively and hygienically with practitioners showing careful attention to children's comfort and dignity throughout the process. Attendance records are completed accurately and demonstrate that appropriate adult-to-child ratios are consistently maintained. Accident records include appropriate detail and are routinely shared with parents and carers, and most practitioners hold appropriate Paediatric First Aid training qualifications. Leaders told us they conduct regular fire drills. However, leaders do not ensure fire drill records are readily available.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Most practitioners have completed appropriate safeguarding training. Nearly all practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of the setting's safeguarding procedures. However, leaders do not always ensure that records of low-level concerns are consistently maintained.

Practitioners manage interactions positively and consistently. They act as good role models and promote positive behaviour through calm, respectful communication. Practitioners use praise effectively to recognise children's efforts, for example when they manage everyday routines independently or tidy away resources. When children require guidance, practitioners respond sensitively, explaining expectations clearly and redirecting behaviour skilfully.

Most practitioners manage behaviour effectively, adapting their expectations while maintaining a safe environment for all children. They know children well and understand their individual needs. Registration records contain detailed information that enables practitioners to tailor support successfully. Practitioners support children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) well through agreed strategies and strong partnership working with parents and external professionals. This enables children to make suitable progress from their individual starting points.

Practitioners provide a good balance of child-led and adult-supported experiences and allow children plenty of time to become deeply involved in their play. They promote children's physical development through activities such as balancing on equipment, using ride on toys and handling tools for digging and mark making. Practitioners use a small selection of Welsh language resources and visual prompts in their interactions with children. They begin to use a few simple Welsh phrases suitably during children's play and daily routines, which helps children develop an early awareness of the Welsh language.

Practitioners promote children's communication and language skills well through meaningful conversations as they complete activities. They introduce new vocabulary, such as 'wet', 'dry', 'scoop' and 'pour' during play, for example when discussing seaside themes in the sand area.

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

Practitioners have a very good understanding of child development. They provide a worthwhile range of activities that promote children's all-round development, including those with ALN. This ensures that children progress well in their learning over time. Practitioners develop a range of activities and experiences that reflect children's interests and needs. This allows all practitioners to support individual children appropriately for their stage of development. Practitioners undertake valuable initial observations of children's play and learning which helps them to create a picture of children's development. This alongside beneficial information from parents and carers supports them in getting to know each child's strengths and areas for development. Practitioners know the children well and support their play in an effective way. They understand when to intervene in children's activities, and when to stand back and observe. Practitioners complete assessments and maintain records that identify children's progress, learning needs and next steps. However, the current tracking system does not clearly show how children's learning and development progress over time. This makes it difficult for practitioners to present this information consistently and effectively to parents and carers.

Practitioners provide beneficial activities and resources for children to develop their mark making and early writing skills in the well-equipped areas of provision. Practitioners support children's early reading skills appropriately; they read books to children when sitting together on the mat. They ask questions about the story and discuss the illustrations, modelling how to handle a book and turn the pages correctly. Practitioners develop children's numeracy skills and mathematical vocabulary well through purposeful interactions and the resources provided within the environment. For example, they encourage children to use comparative language such as taller and shorter when building towers with bricks. Practitioners provide a range of digital resources that support children's digital skills appropriately. Practitioners value the process in learning and development, rather than focusing on the end product. For example, they encourage children's individual expression and value their creative attempts when making frosty pictures with glitter and paint.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to explore the outdoor area and develop a sense of awe and wonder. For example, practitioners encourage children to observe ice slowly melting in the tough tray. They recognise beneficial opportunities to extend children's thinking as they play, encouraging them to work out how to solve problems such as how to transport ball bearings and vehicles down guttering. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is suitable. Practitioners provide children with a range of diverse books that reflect different backgrounds, helping children feel included and supporting their sense of belonging. Practitioners encourage the children to look after themselves and others. For example, children role play handwashing in the home corner and put on their own coats and hats. Practitioners foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect, and patiently support children to distinguish right from wrong.

Although practitioners display Welsh vocabulary around the setting and provide a limited range of Welsh resources, they do not use Welsh regularly enough in their interactions with children and often lack confidence to do so. As a result, children make limited progress in the development of their Welsh language skills.

Environment: Good

Leaders maintain a safe and secure environment by implementing a range of robust procedures. The main entrance remains locked, and visitors are required to sign in and provide identification on arrival. Practitioners' complete daily safety checks and thorough written risk assessments which guide their practice and decision making. These arrangements ensure the environment is consistently safe, secure and clean.

The environment is warm and welcoming and has clearly defined areas and well-organised resources that support children's learning and foster curiosity well. For example, there are a wide range of resources that encourage children to explore, create and follow their own interests. Real-life items in the role-play area support imaginative and social play successfully. For example, utensils and crockery are available for cooking, and nappies and clothing are available when dressing the dolls.

Natural light, neutral décor and wooden furniture contribute to a calm, gentle atmosphere and there is sufficient space for active play, quiet activities and rest.

The outdoor provision supports children's physical development well. It provides varied opportunities for children to balance at height, explore sand, kick balls and engage in construction activities. These experiences support the development of children's coordination, balance and confidence effectively. Resources such as vehicles, drainpipes and loose parts encourage children to investigate cause and effect, size and movement. Practitioners provide children with regular opportunities to use the outdoor space daily.

Resources and equipment are good quality, clean and well organised. Most are stored in labelled baskets and on open shelving at child height, enabling children to follow their own lead. For example, children access additional tools and resources from low-level cupboards during mark making activities. Coat pegs are positioned appropriately to support independence, and the toilet area is well organised and age appropriate. Paper towels are positioned at child height with a step to support independence. Toddler seats are available to place over the toilet to help children feel secure, and potties are provided for children who need them.

The environment reflects children's experiences through displays of their artwork and photographs of their family which help create a sense of belonging.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders and practitioners have created a strong, positive team ethos, and all are committed to the aims of the setting. Leaders ensure that there is a clear statement of purpose that fully informs parents about the setting's work and what it has to offer. Practitioners have a strong sense of purpose and understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders are effective in their roles and have created an inclusive and welcoming environment, ensuring children are nurtured and cared for well.

Leaders have a detailed awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for development. They take full account of the views of practitioners, parents or carers, children, and other stakeholders in their decisions. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably qualified. They support

practitioners to undertake qualifications and professional learning that supports them in their roles. The recent training undertaken by the setting has brought positive changes to the setting's environment. Leaders follow robust procedures to update the setting's statutory documents, policies and practices and manage the safe recruitment of staff appropriately

The setting acts on advice from the local authority well. Leaders make effective use of available grants to purchase resources such as those to enhance children's digital skills. There is a well-established system for carrying out staff appraisals that consider the well-being of staff and training needs. However, targets and action plans on the appraisals are not always sufficiently detailed and focused on setting priorities.

Leaders gather parents and carers views and opinions through daily drop off and collection times and questionnaires. They ensure that new children are inducted to the setting successfully. The relocation of the setting into the school building has resulted in better links with the school community. Good transition arrangements are in place to support children who are moving on. There are visits from Nursery class teachers to the setting and children visit the Nursery classroom. Consequently, children are excited and confident about their transitions to school.

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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
The responsible individual could not evidence regular fire drills are taking place. Therefore, we could not be assured they have had sufficient opportunity to practice fire evacuation procedures.	20/01/26

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

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