



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

A report on

Llanfairfechan Playgroup

**Ysgol Babanod Llanfairfechan
Village Road
Llanfairfechan
Conwy
LL33 0AA**

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Llanfairfechan Playgroup

Name of setting	Llanfairfechan Playgroup
Category of care provided	SDC
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Karen Hall
Person in charge	Karen Hall, Kirsty Evans
Number of places	23
Age range of children	2 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	12
Number of children who receive funding for early education	12
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 09:05 – 11:45 and 13:00 – 15:00
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	Bilingual
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	Post registration inspection
Date of previous Estyn inspection	09/06/2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	09/05/2023
Many children come from English speaking homes.	

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)	Good
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 Ensure that fresh drinking water is available as required by children
- R2 Strengthen the setting's approach to planning and monitoring progress
- R3 Ensure that children have more opportunities to develop their independence skills
- R4 Strengthen the use of risk assessments to include all water play activities and resources

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

Nearly all children make choices about what they would like to play with, and the language in which they communicate. They play freely indoors and outdoors and are happy to wait their turn sometimes when activities such as the water play are busy. Most find it easy to express their views verbally. Very few use a variety of non-verbal strategies to be understood such as pointing and basic sign language and are praised for their attempts at words, or for repeating them correctly. All are listened to and supported very well in relation to developing their communication skills. Their ideas for activities are noted on a communications wall, and successfully built into weekly activities.

Nearly all children settle well, and cope with separation from their parents or carers. The majority run into the setting and are eager to play. Those needing reassurance are given plenty of attention and are easily distracted when they come in through the door. Nearly all children form strong and positive attachments with others, including key workers. Interactions are consistently good and promote their self-esteem and a sense of feeling valued and respected. Children happily hold hands with practitioners when on the big playground, and chat with them about things which interest them.

Nearly all children benefit from consistently good interactions. Their behaviour is very good for their age and stage of development. Nearly all are kind to others and are beginning to consider their feelings as well as their own. All respond appropriately to any intervention from practitioners, when asked not to run, to be kind, and to share nicely. Nearly all like to receive praise and encouragement, and to receive comments such as “that makes me so happy to see you sharing”. Nearly all are keen to help tidy up.

Nearly all children are confident, enthusiastic, and curious learners. All learn through interesting and stimulating play and make good progress in all areas of learning. Most concentrate well for their age and stage of development and sit still and quiet for rhyme and song activities, stories, and show and tell. Most persevere with learning Welsh and English, and with their creative artwork, making collages with small loose parts. A few children with additional learning needs are extremely well supported to focus on tasks and to develop their speech. One-page profiles with targets are agreed with parents and specialist agencies. All children are proud of their achievements, which are shared with parents on social media and displayed on walls.

Nearly all children develop their independence through their play and routines. All children learn to tidy up after free play and snack, wash their hands and to dress for outdoor play. Children’s independence skills could be strengthened by allowing them to pour their own drinks.

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

Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points. Most children develop their language skills well, expressing themselves through gesture or speech. They use old telephones to pretend to make a call, pressing the buttons and talking to each other. Many children develop their listening skills well. They enjoy familiar stories read by adults such and are eager to predict what might happen next, and join in with familiar phrases.

Around half the children choose to look at books independently. For example, they love looking at the story of the Hungry caterpillar while watching caterpillars growing on the interest table. They turn pages confidently and, with support, attempt to count the number of fruits that the caterpillar ate in the story.

Many children are beginning to develop their mark making skills well and a few are beginning to develop an appropriate grip when they use different pens. Many make recognisable marks on the interactive whiteboard with a digital ‘pen’ and enjoy a challenge as they try to work out how to change the colour.

The majority of children are beginning to join in with simple Welsh songs at circle time. They say ‘dyma fi’ when responding to the register and they count to three when waiting to sing a song. They respond appropriately to simple instructions. Nearly all children who come from Welsh speaking backgrounds understand when

practitioners chat to them about where they would like to play and give more complex instructions.

Nearly all children demonstrate confidence with physical skills. They are able to kick a ball and are learning to roll hoops. They use large spades confidently in the outdoor sand pit to move sand to a small digger. They enjoy using large pieces of fabric and ribbons to dance with. A few children are becoming confident with scissors, making snips in dough. They manipulate feathers, gems, and pipe cleaners confidently to decorate a monster they have created or to create pictures in the outdoors.

Many children develop appropriate numeracy skills. They solve problems such as choosing the best materials to build a home for the Gruffalo, depending on whether they are heavy or light. They use the language of big and small in play and recall numbers that are important to them. For example, they know they are three and that they have 5 caterpillars growing. They match colours accurately when creating pictures with lollipop sticks and pom poms and confidently take photographs of their creation with a tablet.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners safeguard all children effectively. They implement the setting's policies and procedures and adhere to risk assessments appropriately. Practitioners successfully promote children's well-being through healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and personal safety. For example, all are trained in safeguarding, with very few waiting to update their first aid qualification. They are knowledgeable and administer first aid and medication effectively and keep good records. The setting's safeguarding officer works well with the school, health visitors and local authority. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners encourage parents to send in healthy snacks, whilst leaders provide a fresh carton of milk for each child daily. Leaders ensure that recruitment is robust and that practitioners are suitable to work with children. Arrangements in place, in partnership with the school, for site security and safety are good.

Overall, the care given to children promotes warm relationships, security, self-esteem, independence and confidence. Consequently, children's behaviour is very good. A minority of practitioners have attended 'Autism Awareness' sessions and manage all children's behaviour in a way that respects their rights and keeps them safe. All practitioners make eye contact with children, speak to them at their level and indicate how much time children have before their activity will come to an end. This ensures that all children know what is expected of them. Practitioners model good behaviour and are inclusive and calm when dealing with the occasional unwanted behaviour and frustration of very few children.

Nearly all practitioners support children to communicate well and are sensitive to their needs and experiences which will extend their learning. For example, a child was interested in using a spray nozzle and wanted to know how the water was drawn up through the nozzle. They concentrated and managed to work it themselves. Practitioners agreed 'responsive planning' is being developed but understand how

following children's interests will promote children's learning. Practitioners effectively seek advice from and work with parents and specialist services to support children with additional needs.

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

Most practitioners have a good understanding of child development and how children learn through play. Children with additional learning needs are supported well. Practitioners work in partnership with parents and outside agencies to support children, particularly with speech and language development. They provide children with an effective range of resources in the indoor and outdoor environment and allow them to make choices about where they would like to play. As a result, most children show interest in their learning and play for appropriate periods of time.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills appropriately; they encourage them to listen to stories and join in with familiar parts. They encourage the appropriate use of pencils and scissors to create collages using small loose parts. They provide suitable opportunities for the development of physical skills by offering equipment for such as balls, slides and large spades for digging. Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for the development of children's numeracy skills. For example, they encourage children to count items in a favourite book and use the language of size appropriately when they build with blocks. Most practitioners ask relevant questions during play. However, they do not always challenge children well enough and there are some missed opportunities to extend the children's learning, particularly with development of independence skills.

All practitioners support children's social skills suitably. They remind the children to wash their hands before snack time and be kind to their friends. Valuable opportunities are provided for children to learn about living things. For example, they encourage children to watch the caterpillars grow over time and remind them to keep them safe.

A majority of practitioners use Welsh confidently and a few respond to children's needs by using more complex language where Welsh is the child's first language. Valuable opportunities are provided for children to celebrate the history and culture of Wales. For example, practitioners talk to the children about local sites such as Conwy castle and provide Welsh cakes for them to try on St David's Day. Children are encouraged to look for the Welsh flag when out with their family and a book of photographs has been provided for the reading area. Practitioners make beneficial use of the locality. For example, they take the children on a visit to a local woodland to search for the Gruffalo after reading the story.

The setting is in the early stages of a more responsive planning approach. Practitioners work together diligently to plan opportunities for play and respond to children's interests by adapting provision when they ask for a different resource. However, practitioners do not monitor children's development closely enough or adapt provision to support their learning.

Environment: Good

Leaders and practitioners ensure that children are cared for in a safe, clean, and secure environment. Visitors are asked to show identification badges, sign in, and listen to fire evacuation procedures. High fences surround all outdoor play areas, and gates can be padlocked. Steps leading into the building are edged with yellow paint, so they stand out. External doors are locked and have thumb locks to allow a quick exit from indoors. Risk assessments for the building, facilities used by children, outings, and risky activities are reviewed annually. Leaders are fully aware of the benefits of risk and incorporate them into their assessments. They recently made alterations to the large sandpit and a new cover was ordered. However, there were no risk assessments for water play, the risks attributed to water collecting in unused equipment, and the safe use of water butts.

Leaders and practitioners provide a welcoming and rich environment, which supports children's needs, and enables them to learn through play and reach their potential. Indoor areas are welcoming, spacious and brightly decorated, and include a main playroom, messy playroom, kitchen, cloakroom, entrance area and toilet and nappy changing facilities. There are sufficient bilingual posters, signs and labels displayed. Outdoors is a stimulating, secure and partly covered play area with an adjoining school playground and forest school area. Leaders do not have an office area or staff room, so practitioners are encouraged to leave the premises during their lunch break, when children attend the unregistered 'lunch club'. Practitioners return to the playgroup to care for nursery plus children attending during the afternoon. Confidential documents are safely stored in lockable filing cabinets. If leaders need to speak to parents, they usually do so, as discretely as possible, on the school yard.

Leaders ensure that furnishings and equipment used are of a good quality, well maintained and age appropriate. Good quality resources in all areas extend children's knowledge and development and stimulate their curiosity and interest. They are easily accessible to all children. Children access a variety of natural materials to use in their mud kitchen, and containers, waterwheels and utensils in their water trough. Their pirate ship was loaded with soft cushions, drapes and a collection of topic related books and their garden area with plants, watering cans and magnifying glasses. Leaders also ensure that children have space to use a small slide and rocker safely. An appropriate selection of multi-cultural and traditional Welsh resources is available.

Leaders promote recycling and the use of sustainable items, which they collect. They are beginning to use authentic play items in their home corner, and to replace plastic play items such as kitchen furniture with wooden alternatives.

Leadership and management: Good

The setting has a clear statement of purpose which outlines how the setting operates. Practitioners are suitably qualified and have a wealth of experience in working with young children. They are developing a sound understanding of the Curriculum for Wales and are developing their teaching methods in line with the guidance.

The setting leader is effective in her role. She leads the setting well creating a positive and happy ethos for children, practitioners and parents. Practitioners work closely with her, and they are supported effectively. They feel highly valued and are comfortable in approaching the leader with concerns or queries. The setting leader has an effective system for evaluating staff performance and practitioners are committed to ongoing training. For example, they are in the process of completing some professional learning to develop their confidence in using Welsh with the children and, as a result, children's understanding of Welsh has improved.

Leaders have established robust processes for self-evaluation and the setting leader reflects often on the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. She has a good understanding of the setting's development needs, drawing on the views of staff, parents and carers. She implements purposeful development processes, which are successful in improving learning opportunities for children. She communicates her vision to the practitioners and as a result everyone understands the key priorities for improvement.

Leaders make very good use of available grants to improve the learning environment and resources. For example, the setting has recently had a new door fitted, which has created direct access to the outdoor area resulting in more children accessing outdoor learning when they choose.

The setting leader and practitioners work successfully with outside agencies such as health visitors and the child development team. They benefit greatly from the support offered by the local authority advisory teacher. They work closely with the Healthy Pre-school Scheme and are working towards delivering the Welsh active offer.

The setting is based within the local primary school and the consistent communication between practitioners and school staff supports transition effectively. The playgroup children attend concerts at the school and get to know the early years staff well as they see them regularly.

Practitioners use an online platform to share information with parents and carers about their child's day at playgroup. They share photos of children enjoying a broad range of engaging activities. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through informal chats with the setting leader at the start and end of the session. The setting leader supports families very well, offering information and advice, particularly for children with additional learning needs. This is a particular strength of 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

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

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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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