A Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru Care Inspectorate Wales report on

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

Sychdyn Playgroup

Sychdyn CP School
Vownog Road
Sychdyn
Flintshire
CH7 6ED

Date of inspection: June 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Sychdyn Playgroup

Name of setting	Sychdyn Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Sychdyn Playgroup
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Jane Edwards
Person in charge	Jessica Evans
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 ¼ to 4 years of age
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	17
Number of children who receive funding for early education	8
Opening days / times	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh Language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	Not applicable
Date of previous Estyn inspection	May 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/06/2023
There are no children with English as an additional language or with Additional Learning Needs. There are no children from Welsh speaking homes.	

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)**	**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 Increase involvement of the management committee to support and monitor learning and teaching

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 children's independence, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children develop independence skills well above expectations. For example, they drop off bags and lunch boxes when they arrive and change into their aprons for painting and wellies to go outside without support. Children look at books they have created with photographs of their homes and families pointing out places and who the different people are independently. They decide which snack to have later from their lunch bag and find their box with their name on themselves. The language of even the youngest children is developing highly effectively and children can recite their name spelling out letters. They join in with songs and show they are happy by spontaneously putting on a show independently. They wash their hands before eating and when coming in from outside without help. Most do this without being reminded by an adult. Children visit the nature garden where the hens live and independently risk assess when it is safe to stroke them.

Young children enjoy making decisions that involve exploring their environment and the resources available., For example, they indicate when they want to play outside having finished what they were doing inside, and practitioners respect their choices and listen to their ideas.

Nearly all children, including the youngest, settle well and feel secure. They play alongside their friends confidently. All enjoy outdoor play and plan what they are going to do. For example, they play enthusiastically in the sand when trying to cover

Lizzie the lizard. The youngest children can explain why they are doing this and ask visitors if they can still see her tail. Children as young as two and a half, speak confidently about their interests, and demonstrate their skills, such as using the remote-control toy with dexterity. It is clear to see their sense of achievement in the way that they respond when they move it successfully.

Nearly all children interact with each other and practitioners exceptionally well. They take photographs of their friends asking them to say either ‘sausages’ or ‘cheese’ to encourage them to smile. The youngest children cooperate well together. For example, they share resources when they create shapes in the sand. They are extremely kind and thoughtful towards each other. For example, they willingly change places without prompting so two friends can sit together at the table. When a friend is upset by a noise outside, they calmly tell a member of staff and ask for help on their behalf. Most children are intrigued by what their friends are doing and even the youngest make constructive comments. They are inquisitive and ask questions at lunch time, such as what makes sausages so spicy?

Nearly all children are active and eager to learn through play. They are very considerate, and their enjoyment is apparent when taking part in a range of activities. For example, when they pretend they are riding in a bus, they work together to move the crates around until everyone has a seat and is happy. They decide the shape the bus is going to be and ask their friends if it is right for them. They enjoy opportunities to develop physical strength by carrying water together to where it is needed in the garden.

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 during their time at the setting, particularly in the development of their communication skills. Nearly all children express themselves clearly using words and simple sentences. For example, they explain how to take a photograph with a camera. Nearly all children join in with songs at whole group music time and suggest changing the words in familiar rhymes. Many children use appropriate language in their play and exploration, for example when describing the bee they have drawn as ‘fuzzy’. Nearly all children listen well to stories read by an adult and on the CD player. Most enjoy looking at books, turn pages independently, and talk about what they see in the pictures. Most children experiment positively with mark-making with different media such as pencils, paint and chalks, for example to draw pictures of themselves and their family.

Most children develop mathematical skills well. They use the language of short and tall when building a tower with large blocks. Nearly all children are familiar with the routine of the session and understand that, when the lunchtime staff arrive, lunch is imminent. Nearly all children join in when singing number rhymes such as ‘Five little spacemen’. A majority of children are beginning to recognise patterns around them, such as stripes on their clothes. Most children select and use appropriate mathematical ideas, equipment and materials to solve practical problems. For example, they select a small measuring cylinder to pour water from the large pot.

All children sing Welsh songs enthusiastically at whole group time and are beginning to repeat simple words. For example, they copy the adult and say ‘broga’ when playing with the frogs.

Most children’s physical skills are developing well. They use pencils, playdough, tools and scissors skilfully in their learning, showing good fine motor skills. Many children are active in their play. For example, they run and use wheeled toys outdoors. Many children develop their imagination well, such as when they build a house outdoors with crates.

Most children develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use them valuably in their play. For example, many children independently take photographs using a camera and can retrieve the image.

Many children develop personal skills well, such as putting on an apron before painting and wellies to go outside. Many children develop effective social and emotional skills and co-operate well with each in their play.

A majority of children show perseverance and resilience. For example, when they build a sandcastle and decorate with sticks of different sizes, they discover that some sticks are too heavy and their sandcastle collapses.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners support children's health and well-being effectively. They attend a suitable range of courses and follow good practice relating to safeguarding children. They know what to do if they have concerns about a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners ensure that children wash their hands at appropriate times. However, most do not need a reminder. Practitioners ensure that water is available as children bring their own snacks and packed lunches. Children’s records such as their individual details are fully complete, including health care needs. Practitioners complete a register detailing attendance, and minor injuries are noted and brought to the attention of parents and carers suitably.

Practitioners are sensitive and thoughtful. They are calm and gentle with the children. Practitioners are patient and always use positive behaviour management strategies effectively. As a result, they support children and meet their individual needs successfully. They use praise well. For example, they compliment the children for good problem solving, which encourages the children to persevere longer with their task.

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents. They allow plenty of time at the start and end of the session to speak to parents and update any information about the children. They adapt the provision to respond effectively to the children's individual needs. For example, a child did not want to go outside so practitioners stayed indoors and they played together making the child feel very relaxed and happy. Practitioners know the children very well and provide an exceptional level of care for them. They know instinctively when to stand back and allow children to

discover on their own and when to intervene with a teaching moment, such as showing children how the feathers of the hens are smooth. Practitioners promote children's play, learning and development well, often using good humour and jokes to the delight of the children.

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

Provision to support children's literacy and numeracy skills is effective. For example, practitioners develop children's knowledge of number rhymes when they encourage them to sing '5 little spacemen' on the outdoor stage. Practitioners provide a broad range of experiences, such as making different sized sandcastles in the sandpit and using chalks on the large blackboard. These activities develop children's awareness of size and their mark making skills effectively. Practitioners take account of unusual experiences, for example when they encourage children to predict where the aeroplane that they spot outdoors is likely to be going.

Practitioners plan interesting and worthwhile experiences that cover all areas of learning effectively over time. For example, they provide regular opportunities for children to use recycled materials to create an obstacle course outside. This impacts well on children's physical development as they use this to balance and travel across.

All practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn through play and are gaining confidence in implementing the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. Practitioners make good use of indoor and outdoor resources to support learning, and children have uninterrupted access to the outdoors throughout the session. As a result, nearly all children sustain interest in their play for significant periods of time. Practitioners model activities well, playing alongside the children in the different areas of provision. They support children's oracy development purposefully through asking probing questions and modelling vocabulary. For example, practitioners ask the children to describe what they have created in the art area.

Practitioners use songs and stories in Welsh during whole group activities. However, they do not use Welsh consistently throughout the session. Children have suitable opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, they celebrate St David's Day and make daffodils.

Practitioners make beneficial use of visits beyond the setting to enhance children's learning experiences. For example, children have enjoyed visits to the nearby park and, as a result, are confident to run, climb and balance. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about the natural world around them. For example, they visit the school's chicken coop, and encourage children to stomp in and collect leaves and make marks in the snow. However, there are very few opportunities for them to grow and care for plants. Practitioners plan appropriate learning experiences that promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well. For example, they foster a sense of awe and wonder when searching for minibeasts and finding apples growing on the trees.

The setting has a range of useful assessment procedures. Practitioners observe and identify what children can already do during their first few weeks at the setting. They record valuable observations to show children's progress, which are shared with parents. Practitioners use assessments effectively to inform future experiences and to support the child's next steps in learning.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that the environment is safe for the children. For example, the building is secure and children are supervised well. Risk assessments effectively identify any potential hazards and keep children safe, for example when they visit the local shop. A cleaning schedule and good attention to infection control means the setting is exceptionally clean, and leaders ensure an excellent level of hygiene daily. Regular fire drills are carried out and recorded, which show that leaders and practitioners are aware of how to evacuate and keep the children safe in the event of an emergency.

Leaders provide an effective learning environment with plenty of space to move around. Children's work is displayed on one wall to give them a sense of achievement and belonging. Leaders ensure that the setting is organised to provide a fully inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities and areas of the provision. Leaders make sure that children are well cared for in a highly supportive and relaxing learning environment, which considers children's interests and their individual needs well.

A diverse community is reflected appropriately by toy figures, stories and books. Practitioners ensure the effective use of resources to keep children's interests and maintain an uncluttered environment highly effectively.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide an environment for children to have fun and make friends. The setting's statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting and there is a range of useful policies, procedures and risk assessments, which are effectively applied in practice.

The management committee have a reasonable understanding of their responsibilities. However, they do not yet support and challenge the practitioners sufficiently. Overall, the setting makes good use of practitioners and resources to support children's well-being, learning and play. All practitioners are well qualified, and they have appropriate job descriptions, ensuring that they have a good understanding of their role in the setting. There is a strong commitment to teamwork. The setting has safe and appropriate processes for recruitment and deployment of practitioners.

The setting's self-evaluation processes are suitable. The practitioners have identified strengths and useful areas to develop, such as improving children's physical opportunities in the outdoors. They are beginning to include stakeholders in the process, such as the local authority advisory teacher and parents.

Nearly all practitioners have engaged in worthwhile training opportunities, such as responsive planning to enhance children's learning. The practitioners value the support from the local authority advisory teacher such as developing the environment and new assessment arrangements. Effective use is made of available grants. For example, leaders have prioritised expenditure against the setting's improvement targets well. As a result, children have a wide range of purposeful experiences in the outdoors.

Practitioners build strong links with parents and share information with them purposefully. Parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and value the regular exchange of information they receive about their child through day-to-day contact and via social media. There are beneficial links with the school, which support children's transition to the next stage in their education.

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.

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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

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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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