Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

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

A report on

Hopscotch Nursery

Gilwern Primary
New School Road
Gilwern
NP7 0AY

Date of inspection: December 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Hopscotch Nursery

Name of setting	Hopscotch Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Carly PowellKrystyna Lewis
Person in charge	Lucy ParsonsVicki Trevett
Number of places	20
Age range of children	2½ - 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	27
Number of children who receive funding for early education	21
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9:00am until 3:00pm
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	First inspection
Date of previous Estyn inspection	22/09/2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	12/03/2024

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	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Good**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Develop practitioners' implementation of the Welsh language and culture

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 effective parental engagement to promote children's learning and development, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Nearly all children have an extremely strong voice and are confident to express themselves. They have excellent opportunities to make choices and decide how they spend their time. For example, children vote to decide what they will cook during cookery sessions and for which design should be carved into the Halloween pumpkin. Nearly all children are eager to express themselves and follow their interests and ideas independently. They are very confident in their interactions with practitioners as they know they will listen to them and respond well to their ideas and comments. Children's preferences are monitored to ensure that their keyworker is a member of staff that the child favours.

Nearly all children separate from parents and carers exceptionally well. They enter the setting eagerly and immediately start to play and explore the environment with practitioners and friends. Nearly all children are beginning to develop an understanding of their emotions and use this knowledge to identify and respond sensitively to the feelings of others. Nearly all children take delight in seeing their achievements displayed on the settings 'WOW' board. They feel extremely proud when receiving their own letter to their family home, explaining their achievements and goals.

Nearly all children form close, friendly relationships with practitioners and readily seek them out to share their ideas or for support if needed. They have numerous worthwhile opportunities to practise and develop their social skills and play in friendship groups, which they engage in with real pleasure and enthusiasm. Nearly

all children enjoy participating in activities which encourage them to play collaboratively. For example, they really enjoy working together to build a house using large magnetic boards and working out where the blocks best fit.

Nearly all children are active, engaged learners who greatly enjoy the exciting opportunities to play and learn. They are curious about the world around them and enthusiastically persevere to complete tasks and solve problems well. For example, most children enjoy playing with and exploring the properties of ice, using hammers from the woodwork area to break the ice and free the animals trapped inside. They have valuable opportunities to join in with adult led activities in both large and small groups or play alone or alongside their friends in the indoor and outdoor environments.

Nearly all children develop excellent self-care skills and are confident in making independent choices. For example, during snack times, children serve their own food and drinks and collect any remaining food to recycle in the settings wormery. Nearly all children develop very effective self-help skills that provide them with resilience and a confidence in their own abilities to explore and learn from the world around them.

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

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in the development of their communication and physical skills. For example, they discuss confidently the roles they will take on when engaging in imaginary play scenarios. Most children acquire new skills and knowledge readily and explore their environment and learning experiences enthusiastically.

Most children develop their literacy and communication skills well. They talk readily with one another and the adults around them and share their views on things that interest them effectively. For example, they talk about the Christmas decorations they have at home and what their favourite meals are. They enjoy singing familiar rhymes and respond to simple questions as they play happily. Many children enjoy looking at books and handle them appropriately. They listen to stories read to them by adults in small groups and join in with familiar sections successfully. Many children develop making marks skills appropriately. For example, they use a variety of implements to draw and paint pictures of themselves.

Many children are beginning to use simple Welsh words and phrases during whole group sessions appropriately. They greet adults, identify the weather, sing simple songs and count to ten confidently.

Many children use mathematical language during their play and exploration confidently. They recognise shapes around them such as square magnetic panels and round bird feeders. They talk about heavy and light blocks and small and big polar bears in the ice tray. Many children enjoy exploring numbers and count items around them appropriately. For example, they count spoonsful of ingredients when making playdough and use a height chart to find how tall they are.

Many children are beginning to develop their digital skills effectively as they play and explore. They operate pre-programmable toys skilfully and use an interactive board to draw pictures and play educational games appropriately.

Many children naturally solve problems as they play with their friends. For example, they discover which tools will crack ice and determine the best way to build a house using large magnetic panels. Most children develop their physical skills well and enjoy being active. They ride bikes and scooters with increasing control and co-ordination and use a climbing wall and bridge with agility and confidence. They develop strength and dexterity effectively, such as when using tongs to pick up pieces of banana and pipettes to add water to ice.

Many children develop their creative skills successfully. For example, they make frosty pictures using collage materials and add beads and screws to pieces of wood.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners have an excellent understanding of the settings procedures and implement them very effectively ensuring they place children's health, safety and development at the centre of their practice. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about them or their colleagues. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners thoroughly and consistently record accidents and incidents at home and at the setting alongside the administration of medications and share this information with parents. These records are comprehensively monitored to ensure that they consider and respond appropriately to any emerging patterns of concern. They know children's individual needs exceptionally well and follow safe practices, managing any allergies or intolerances. They supervise children extremely well, allowing children freedom to express themselves and learn from their actions. Practitioners follow excellent hygiene procedures in relation to food preparation and nappy changing. They offer very healthy food options at snack-time and ensure that children have access to water to remain hydrated. They support children's personal hygiene habits extremely well and encourage children to wash their hands after using the toilet or after their nappy has been changed. Practitioners promote healthy lifestyle choices and provide lots of opportunities to be physically active and participate regularly in outside play. In addition, they take children on interesting and informative walks around the local area to observe signs of nature.

Practitioners are nurturing, kind and patient and excellent role models. They show genuine affection towards the children. They ensure that all children are welcomed, included and celebrated. Practitioners implement a wide range of positive behaviour strategies consistently and kindly. For example, the use of a visual timer, star charts and nursery rules such as kind hands. Practitioners understand the importance of children being able to communicate effectively to lower their own frustration levels and improve behaviours. Therefore, for example, all children participate in weekly sign-along sessions so that they can communicate with their peers. Children are given many tangible ways of expressing their emotions, for example through using colour charts and puppets. These approaches ensure that children are clear about the expectations for their own behaviour and develop an ability to express their emotions. Practitioners praise children's efforts and achievements sincerely. As a

result, children are beginning to develop suitable ways to regulate their own behaviour.

Practitioners use observations of children's interests to identify and plan a rich learning environment with creative experiences. Practitioners meet the needs of all children, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), highly successfully. For example, recorded videos of children's preferred methods of communication are shared with the school to aid their transitions to primary school. The provision for children with ALN is a strength of the setting and as a result they make excellent progress from their starting points.

Practitioners assess and observe children closely, completing thorough records to support children's development. Practitioners encourage children's sense of awe in the world around them whilst taking them on nature walks. For example, children look closely at trees and do bark rubbings and are asked to consider the impact of weather and the seasons on their surroundings.

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 good understanding of how children learn through play and exploration. They provide valuable opportunities for them to explore a wide range of stimulating activities in the indoor and outdoor areas. There is an effective emphasis on learning through play and first-hand experiences for children. Practitioners provide interesting resources that spark curiosity and encourage independent exploration. For example, children use trays of flour and utensils to replicate footprints they observed in the snow. Practitioners allow children sufficient time to become engrossed in what they are doing and seize opportunities to extend their learning. They ask questions that promote their thinking skills well, such as identifying the best way to spread tomato paste onto pizzas. Practitioners work well as a team and communicate effectively and make decisions together. This leads to a happy nurturing environment for all children and practitioners.

Practitioners are good language role models, and they actively encourage children to respond to questions and express their views and opinions, such as when choosing different types of toy animals to form a line. Practitioners provide cosy reading areas, where children relax and enjoy listening to stories alone or with others. They encourage children to participate in meaningful mark making activities, such as drawing with pencils using chalks on large boards. Practitioners support children to speak Welsh during whole group sessions effectively. They promote the cultural heritage of Wales suitably by celebrating St David's Day, and resources such as flags and photographs of the local areas are displayed throughout the setting. However, practitioners do not always take full advantage of the opportunities to develop children's Welsh language skills as they play or during the daily routines of the setting. In addition they do not plan well enough experiences for children to develop their understanding of Welsh heritage and culture.

Practitioners provide children with valuable opportunities to develop their mathematical and numeracy skills in meaningful ways such as counting toys and dough utensils. Practitioners encourage children to use mathematical vocabulary as they, play and explore, for example by discussing the long and short worms they

create with dough. Practitioners promote children's digital skills well, encouraging them to use an interactive board for drawing and a tablet computer to retrieve information.

Practitioners provide valuable activities and resources that allow children to be physically active and develop their physical skills effectively. For example, there are beneficial opportunities for children to use hammers, screwdrivers, and tongs, which promotes their manipulative skills well.

Practitioners support the development of children's spiritual, moral and cultural development very well. They provide a range of cultural resources, dolls and books that celebrate festivals from a range of cultures and beliefs. These experiences help to support children's understanding of people's lives and beliefs that may be different from their own. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children as they encourage them to observe different birds outside and plant fruit and vegetables and watch them grow. They encourage children to show consideration for living creatures, such as putting out food for birds to eat in the winter.

Practitioners have developed valuable ways to make regular observations of children's play. They use this information effectively to evaluate how well they are progressing in their learning and development. This helps them to identify and respond to children's next steps in learning successfully. In addition, it provides useful information on children's interests which they incorporate into their plans successfully. Practitioners make highly effective use of the local environment to enrich children's experiences, such as going on nature walks to look for signs of different seasons. Practitioners note what interests children on these walks and use this information to plan valuable learning opportunities afterwards. For example, after observing frost, they froze animals in ice for children to explore and provided materials for them to make winter collages.

Practitioners provide parents and carers with beneficial information about their child's progress and well-being through daily updates and useful end of year reports.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders are highly motivated and dedicated in providing a safe, enriching learning environment for all children. They have very effective risk assessments and constantly monitor and evaluate the play space to eliminate unnecessary risks. Leaders ensure that the environment is very well maintained, and all required safety checks are completed promptly. All visitors are greeted and signed in, and practitioners oversee the safe handover of children. Practitioners complete well-managed registers so that they know who is in the building and are clear about the children they are responsible for. They undertake regular drills with children, to escape the building in the event of a fire, and reverse drills to access the building quickly from outside, so that everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

Leaders provide extremely warm and welcoming spaces that make children feel safe and inspire their curiosity and imagination. They have developed very stimulating play areas to encourage children's exploration and curiosity well. Toileting facilities are easily accessible, which promotes children's increasing independence. Leaders have developed an exceptionally well-resourced outdoor play space, which contains

sheltered areas and freely accessible resources. Comfortable places enable children to rest and relax and the inside environment is calm and soothing. For example, there is low lighting and neutral colours as a backdrop to the resources and displays of children's work.

Leaders have a very clear vision for the environment and use feedback and the interest of the children to support this. For example, they have identified the potential to utilise the side of a storage shed as an exciting stage space for children to sing, dance and perform outside. The resources and equipment are of a very high standard and ensure that the environment is child focused and reflects their interests. Communication between leaders, practitioners and children is excellent, and constant evaluation of activities and resources ensures that children remain engaged and stimulated by the rich learning environment they access.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders are extremely dedicated, conscientious and innovative. They strive to make the setting the best it can be. They have a clear vision to support families and nurture, inspire and empower children to grow. They share this vision with parents and carers successfully. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, children, and practitioners, which creates a happy ethos where children learn and develop in a warm and nurturing environment. They create and maintain a strong team ethic, where practitioners feel highly valued. For example, they support individual practitioners to develop new activities such as cooking and sewing, which has a positive impact on the children's skills.

All leaders and practitioners engage in a wide range of worthwhile training opportunities to develop their practice and provide children with a highly creative range of learning experiences. For example, recent training on developing children's creative and physical skills through activities such as woodwork, sewing, clay modelling and cooking has had a particularly positive impact at the setting.

Leaders evaluate all aspects of the work of the setting well and are highly focused on making improvements that contribute to children's overall learning and development. They collect and use the views from external organisations, parents and carers, children and practitioners and act on their views appropriately. Leaders make effective use of grants to contribute to priority areas in the setting improvement plans. For example, they purchased a new shed for woodwork activities and resources to promote children's independence in the mud kitchen.

There is a clear and comprehensive statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture of the setting. Leaders have developed highly effective policies and procedures, which are shared well. There are enough suitably qualified practitioners at the setting and a well-developed recruitment and induction process. Leaders have devised effective appraisal systems that give practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their work.

Leaders provide valuable information for families, such as daily updates and observations about children's well-being and learning using a social media app. They

hold regular face-to face meetings such as ‘Coffee, Curriculum and Cake’ evenings, where they inform parents and carers of the setting’s learning approaches. Practitioners provide valuable written reports on children’s progress. They invite parents on trips and to events such as sports days and teddy bears picnics.

A key strength of the setting is how leaders actively engage parents and carers in their child’s learning through home cooking activities. Leaders provide families with recipes based on children’s interests and seasonal themes such as making hedgehog bread rolls in autumn or pizzas inspired by role-play kitchen activities. The activities promote children’s learning effectively, with practitioners providing parents and carers with useful information, utensils, and recipes to make the recipes at home. This approach fosters a strong partnership in supporting children’s learning and offers parents and carers enjoyable and meaningful opportunities to participate in their child’s development.

Leaders have beneficial links with a range of healthcare professionals and act on their guidance to support the development of children with ALN effectively. Links with the local school are well established and children have beneficial opportunities to visit the pond and use the school field for physical play. Children visit the school before starting and teaching staff pay reciprocal visits to them in the setting and information is shared about each child. This ensures a smooth transition for all children to their next stage of learning.

Practitioners take children on visits to the library, pharmacy, and the pumpkin patch in autumn. Visitors such as members of the local church read stories at Christmas time and a local farming family bring in lambs at springtime. These opportunities are highly effective in supporting children to feel a sense of belonging to their local neighbourhoods and develop an understanding of the world and community around them.

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.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	

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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