

A report on

Llangollen Playgroup

**Youth Club
Willow Hill
Llangollen
LL20 8HH**

Date of inspection: June 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Llangollen Playgroup

Name of setting	Llangollen Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Maria Williams
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Maria Williams and Emma Byars
Number of places	19
Age range of children	Playgroup Age 2-4 Summer club 3-11
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	25
Number of children who receive funding for early education	1
Opening days / times	Term Time - Monday to Friday 8.00-14:45 Summer club- Monday to Friday 9:00-15:00
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Governments 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	04.11.2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	Feb 2014

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Dates of this inspection visit(s)	07/06/2022
second inspection date 08/06/2022	

Non-compliance

We notified the provider of Areas for Improvement where the setting was not compliant with the regulations under Care and Development and Leadership and Management. A notice was not issued, but these are identified as areas for improvement, and the RP/RI must address these.

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 CIW inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements, we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice. Information on all non-compliance will be included in an Action Improvement Summary, which will be published on CIW's website only.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop continuous and enhanced provision, indoors and outdoors, to ensure that it maintains children's interest and supports them to develop their play and exploration independently
- R2 Ensure that all policies and procedures including those for safeguarding are followed effectively
- R3 Ensure that regular appraisal and supervision provides practitioners, including those who are regular volunteers, with effective opportunities for them to reflect on their practice and identify targets for improvement
- R4 Address the non-compliance identified at the time of the inspection

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:

Nearly all children are developing their personal and social skills well. Most children interact with each other successfully and are developing firm friendships. They co-operate with others effectively, such as when they create flower collages together or make a den with saris. Nearly all children feel a sense of belonging. For example, they look at a book of playgroup photos with interest and show joy when they find a picture of themselves. Nearly all children are developing an understanding of what is right or wrong and a few are showing an awareness of their own and others' feelings. For example, they promote kindness independently as they explain that 'caring is sharing'.

Nearly all children make purposeful choices and move freely between activities confidently. For example, they choose to play with the bakery resources in the home corner or decide to play in the sand. Most children express their views clearly and confidently, such as when they tell practitioners they need more paper when painting. They feel secure and are happy with routines they are familiar with, such as story time and snack time.

Most children enter the setting eagerly and cope well with separation from parents and carers. They form close bonds with practitioners. Children in need of reassurance respond well to support and have comforters from home which help them settle. All children are aware that practitioners will listen and respond positively to them. For example, they share a piece of artwork with a practitioner and ask them to keep it safe.

Nearly all children show purpose and curiosity as they engage in a range of activities appropriate to their stage of development. For example, they successfully count bugs into a jar before counting the total once the jar is full. Most children speak confidently to friends and practitioners. They chat happily about favourite dinosaurs or a family holiday. Overall, they listen to and follow instructions well, such as when they are reminded to use 'walking feet' rather than running when indoors.

Nearly all children develop their self-help skills effectively which enables them to develop their independence well. For example, they collect their plates at snack time, pour their own drinks and help themselves to fruit with little support. Nearly all children are making good progress and feel a sense of achievement and pride as they succeed in completing activities. For example, they are delighted when they receive praise from a friend for good counting.

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:

Overall, practitioners implement the setting's policies and procedures to keep children safe and healthy appropriately. They are clear about their responsibilities in reporting any child protection concerns and have suitable guidance to support this. All practitioners have completed safeguarding training, and a minority have completed training on the Prevent duty.

Practitioners complete accident and incident records appropriately and ensure they are shared with parents and carers. However, on a few occasions, records are not completed promptly enough. Practitioners are aware of the procedure to follow in an emergency and undertake regular fire drills with the children. Mechanisms for staff to sign in and out of the building are in place. However, on occasion, practitioners do not sign themselves out when leaving the premises. All practitioners have undertaken recent training in emergency first aid at work and can demonstrate their knowledge in dealing with emergency situations. However, they have not attended the required paediatric first aid training. Therefore, all important policies and procedures designed to keep children safe are not followed consistently. As a result, Area of Improvements are identified because the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not fully meet requirements

Practitioners practice good hygiene procedures consistently, washing their hands regularly and dealing with intimate care such as toileting and nappy changing appropriately. Children's dietary and medical needs are recognised with appropriate arrangements in place.

Practitioners promote healthy lifestyles by ensuring that children have access to nutritious food and milk or water to drink. They act as good role models and gently prompt and support children to wash their hands when necessary. Practitioners support children's physical development well, by providing regular and varied opportunities to engage in physical play.

Practitioners are very caring and supportive. They are positive role models and communicate with children in a warm, friendly manner. For example, they sit with children during snack time, modelling positive social and communication skills and promoting good manners. Practitioners manage children's behaviour well, using a kind and nurturing approach to their interactions. They praise children for sharing resources and taking turns and use distraction techniques to reduce unwanted behaviour effectively.

Nearly all practitioners take a holistic approach to children's development and support children's interests well. For example, when children decide to go on a bug hunt in the garden, practitioners provide bug hunt sheets to help them identify creatures they find.

Nearly all practitioners and volunteers know the children well and identify children's individual needs and interests successfully. They plan and evaluate children's play experiences well. They work effectively with outside agencies and access training to ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding to support children with additional learning needs effectively. Practitioners promote equal opportunities and diversity well and are continuing to develop children's use of basic Welsh language.

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

The setting provides a range of learning experiences that support children's learning and development effectively. Practitioners are flexible in their approach and adapt their planning in response to children's interests well. For example, they support children to research minibeasts on the internet after they find a spider in the outdoor area. Practitioners provide many beneficial opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things, such as when they support children to be gentle as they handle slugs and woodlice they find in the garden.

Practitioners develop children's numeracy and physical skills well through their play and exploration. For example, children begin to develop an early understanding of fractions, and develop their coordination as they cut play food in the role-play bakery. A few learning experiences develop children's understanding of mathematical concepts very well. For example, practitioners show children the size of a T-Rex's teeth by comparing them to the length of a ruler. The setting's provision to support children's digital skills is effective. Many children use tablet computers to develop their numeracy skills successfully and show delight as they learn to control battery operated cars.

Nearly all practitioners support children's communication and literacy skills well. For example, they introduce new vocabulary such as 'thermometer' and 'temperature' as children observe a snail in its heated tank. The setting promotes the development of children's Welsh language skills appropriately through modelling a few simple words and phrases and encouraging children to join in with a few songs. Practitioners build on children's interest and knowledge of books well. They share favourite books children bring from home and respond readily when children ask to be read to during the session. Experiences such as drawing with chalk and felt pens help children to develop their mark making skills successfully.

A range of learning experiences promote children's creative, moral, spiritual and cultural development well. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder successfully when they encourage children to observe and care for a giant African snail. They develop children's creative expression well, as they encourage them to paint spirals and swirls after looking carefully at the snail's shell. However, only small paper is provided for painting and collage activities, which limits opportunities for children to express themselves on a large scale.

Practitioners' interactions with children are positive and encouraging. They explain things clearly and model activities well. For example, they encourage children to persist when making challenging dinosaur figures and model how to use a battery-operated screwdriver to fix pieces together. Experiences such as making models with recycled materials support children's problem solving and concentration successfully. For example, they try different approaches as they make holes in egg trays or join tubes together when making a bug hotel.

Practitioners are committed to supporting learning through child-led play and exploration. They provide ample time for children to choose where they play and what they play with in the indoor environment. However, overall, areas of provision including the outdoors are underdeveloped, and this limits opportunities for children

to experiment and develop their ideas independently. This results in a minority of children losing interest in the provision available towards the end of the session.

The setting has effective procedures to observe children and assess their progress across the curriculum. Practitioners know children well and monitor their progress effectively over time. A home learning initiative has enabled parents to work in collaboration with the setting to support children's development successfully.

Environment:

Overall, leaders ensure that indoor and outdoor environments are safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are in place, including daily checks of the environment and health and safety procedures regarding COVID-19. However, hazards are not always identified. For example, doors to the outdoor area are not properly secured when open. All required safety checks are completed within the required timescales, including fire and electrical tests.

Visitors cannot access the setting unless admitted by a staff member and all visitors sign in upon arrival and out on departure. The premises are clean and all practitioners practice effective hygiene procedures. They wipe down tables before serving food and wear appropriate protective clothing. The toilet and nappy changing facilities are appropriate, and practitioners follow guidelines to promote children's privacy and dignity.

The premises are welcoming and provide a spacious environment for children to play and move freely. Leaders provide a suitable range of toys and resources. Children have access to appropriately sized furniture and areas which provide a range of effective learning opportunities. However, the learning environment does not always enable pupils to access or select their own resources and develop their independence. For example, in the creative area, children ask practitioners for more paper. Most resources are clean and well maintained. However, a very few pieces of equipment are in need of repair or show signs of wear and tear.

Leaders provide a designated area for children to store their personal items which supports a sense of belonging. They make sure children's artwork is attractively presented on new display boards. Annotations about what they have made or achieved show children that their efforts are valued. There are sufficient play materials to promote cultural awareness, including Welsh heritage and diversity. This ensures that children gain a good understanding of the world they live in. Leaders encourage outdoor play through the use of a small outdoor play area, which is accessed from the playroom. However, outdoor provision is generally underdeveloped.

Leadership and management:

The setting has experienced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, they provide warm and welcoming provision for all children. Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to provide high quality provision with a family feel that enables all children to reach their full potential. Overall, they work with practitioners and volunteers suitably to support the care and development of children. Leaders communicate regularly with practitioners, resulting in the smooth running of

the setting. There is an up-to-date statement of purpose, which ensures that parents can make an informed choice about using the service.

An effective range of policies are in place, and these are shared appropriately with parents. However, a few important policies and procedures such as those designed to safeguard children are not followed consistently. For example, the arrangements leaders have to recruit staff safely are not followed robustly enough. As a result, an Area of Improvement is identified because the setting does not comply with all relevant regulations.

Overall, arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement are successful and leaders are committed to improving quality. The setting makes beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process, such as a parent questionnaire. This information is used well. For example, after requests from parents to open earlier, the setting has extended its opening hours. Most practitioners know what the setting does well and have a suitable understanding of areas identified for improvement. For example, they explain how new ICT resources have developed children's digital skills.

Many leaders and practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact, such as developing practitioners' understanding of the importance of child-led play. However, in a few cases, leaders have not ensured that all mandatory training is completed. For example, the setting does not meet requirements for paediatric first aid training.

Leaders communicate appropriately with practitioners and volunteers to improve their practice. A minority of practitioners receive effective appraisal and supervision, which identifies strengths and areas to develop. However, systems for supervision and appraisal are not followed consistently. As a result, an Area of Improvement is identified because a majority of practitioners and volunteers do not have effective opportunities to reflect on their work and identify suitable targets for improvement.

Leaders have developed an effective range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. For example, leaders work effectively with the local authority, and this ensures that they meet children's additional learning needs effectively. Leaders provide useful updates for parents and carers to inform them about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing through a communication application and informal updates.

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)