

A report on

Holywell Child Care Ltd

**Bagillt Road
Bagillt
Flintshire
CH6 6JB**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Holywell Child Care Ltd

Name of setting	Holywell Child Care Ltd
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Holywell Child Care Ltd
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Debra Ratcliffe
Person in charge	Kayleigh Davies
Number of places	45
Age range of children	0 – 12 Years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	29
Number of children who receive funding for early education	6
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 7:00 – 6:00
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	07/11/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	January 2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	18/03/2025
The setting is English medium, and nearly all the children have English first language.	

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)	
Care and development	Adequate
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 practitioners always consider children's dignity when following the nappy changing procedure
- R2. Improve practitioner interactions so that they consistently and effectively support children's learning and development
- R3. Improve the reflective planning process so that observations of what children can do successfully inform next steps in children's learning
- R4. Leaders to strengthen self-evaluation processes to concentrate on the most important areas for development, which includes reflecting those views of all staff

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 have a voice, and their opinions are listened to and valued. They have many opportunities to choose how and where they spend their time. Children move around and explore their indoor and outdoor environment freely. Nearly all children have access to suitable items to play with and choose where they wish to play with them. Nearly all children make choices such as choosing if they would like cereal or toast for breakfast.

Nearly all children settle well and feel safe in their surroundings. They form positive relationships with practitioners, approaching them for comfort, support and reassurance. Children approach practitioners and invite them into their play happily. Nearly all children develop a sense of belonging and feel valued. Their needs are known and catered for and their attempts at communication are listened to in a way that is suitable for their ages. For example, children with limited verbal skills use gestures to communicate their needs to practitioners successfully. This helps them to develop their confidence to express themselves appropriately.

Nearly all children interact well and behave appropriately. They are developing an understanding of the importance of being respectful towards others. Many children play co-operatively and with practitioners' support they are beginning to understand the importance of sharing and taking turns. They develop good manners and learn to say please and thank you at the right times. Nearly all children follow simple instructions and routines happily, such as tidying up play resources before sitting at the table for their lunch. This gives the children a sense of belonging.

Nearly all children engage in their play and learning fully. They focus for an appropriate length of time for their ages and stages of development, for example when concentrating on a balancing activity by trying different ways to put the rings on top of each other. They show determination, which enables them to feel confident because they have the time and space to work things out for themselves. Nearly all children enjoy getting fresh air and taking part in physical activities when playing outside.

Nearly all children follow their interests independently as they have easy access to resources, for example when playing with the dolls and prams and pretending to be mums. They enjoy developing a wide range of skills as they play, such as being creative when painting and making dinosaurs with the dough. Nearly all children learn to be independent. They are confident when completing tasks and routines, such as washing their hands and feeding themselves.

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: Adequate

Practitioners follow clear systems and procedures to ensure that children are safe. Leaders ensure that they and practitioners have up-to-date training, including paediatric first aid and safeguarding. Practitioners have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. Practitioners record and share any accidents or incidents effectively and these are reviewed by leaders regularly to ensure that any patterns or trends are identified and acted upon. Practitioners complete regular fire drills with children, so they know the procedure to follow in an emergency. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Most practitioners promote a healthy lifestyle well. They follow guidance to ensure that they are providing healthy and nutritious snack and meal choices appropriately.

Practitioners ensure that drinking water is made freely available throughout the day so that children remain hydrated. Most practitioners follow clear routines that help them keep the environment clean and assist in preventing cross contamination effectively. However, practitioners do not always follow nappy changing routines that consider the dignity of children consistently. Practitioners provide children with daily access to outdoors, where they can be active and get regular fresh air.

Most practitioners are good role models and provide care in a supportive and caring manner. They play alongside the children and use questioning that supports children to develop their speech and language skills effectively. However, a minority of practitioners do not always interact in a way to support children to think and solve problems by asking open ended questions.

Nearly all practitioners understand the benefits of allowing children to take and manage their own risks. For example, they supported and encouraged the children effectively to use the planks of wood and crates to balance and walk along. Practitioners track children's progress and identify next steps in their learning appropriately. They get to know the individual needs of children and implement strategies to support all children, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). They consistently work with outside agencies to ensure that they are providing effective care that benefits the children.

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

Practitioners provide a welcoming learning environment, which inspires children's engagement successfully. They know their children well and support and encourage them appropriately. Practitioners understand the importance of giving children time to play and there is a suitable balance of child led and adult directed activities. However, there are times when children are kept together as a whole group for too long.

Practitioners plan a good range of exciting and engaging activities, which follow the children's interests, including their repeated patterns of play. For example, after discussing the signs of Spring they set up an area with a nest and eggs with chicks hidden inside. Consequently, children excitedly show each other the eggs and talk about what they think might be inside. Practitioners extend this interest in noticing signs of Spring by encouraging children to plant different seeds such as peas and cress so that they can watch them grow.

Practitioners are beginning to develop an understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales and assessing children's learning to ensure that they make good progress. Practitioners make suitable observations of children's play and record these appropriately. They use these observations to provide a useful initial assessment of children's learning and development. However, this is at an early stage of development and as a result these observations do not always focus clearly enough on learning and what children can do, or inform next steps in planning well.

Practitioners are good language role models in both English and Welsh. They use strategies to support language development, such as commenting on what children are doing and expanding on what they have said consistently well. As a result, children's communication skills are developing well. Practitioners use questions to support the development of children's thinking skills skilfully. For example, when looking at a caterpillar in the garden they make links to a story they had been reading. This helps to prompt children's thinking to consider when it would change into a butterfly.

Provision for developing children's literacy, numeracy and digital skills is good. Practitioners share books from the settings well-resourced library regularly. This helps to develop a love of reading and books with children. As a result, they enjoy repeating familiar phrases from their favourite stories as they play. Practitioners model mathematical vocabulary effectively as children play.

Practitioners plan effectively for the development of children's physical skills. This is a strength at the setting. They provide a wide range of equipment, which helps children to develop their core strength, balance and agility well. Practitioners skilfully support children to take risks in their play and test their physical abilities. They encourage them to 'have a go' and as a result children develop resilience and confidence in their physical skills.

Practitioners make good use of the local community to enrich children's learning and support them to develop a sense of belonging. They plan worthwhile opportunities to build intergenerational links through the regular visits to the local care home where children spend time with the residents singing and sharing books. Practitioners plan beneficial opportunities for children to become familiar with the local beauty spots to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world. For example, they visit the local park and nature area. This supports children to engage with and learn about nature in a real and meaningful way.

Practitioners plan suitable activities to support children to develop an understanding of the celebrations and traditions of Wales and those of other cultures.

Environment: Good

Leaders make sure that the environment is a safe and secure space for children. Attendance registers of practitioners and children are completed, and visitors are recorded so everyone can be accounted for. Practitioners are aware of the setting's health and safety procedures and implement them well. For example, they complete and update risk assessments to manage any potential hazards. Daily checks to the environment are completed before the children arrive so that practitioners can be assured that no new hazards have arisen. Leaders invite relevant health and safety professionals to the setting to make sure that appropriate procedures and equipment are in place and functioning properly. For example, gas safety and fire alarm checks are completed in a timely manner. Leaders have appropriately considered the safety of the children when developing the outdoor area. There is a secure wall surrounding the area and external gates are kept locked, preventing unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised.

Leaders provide an environment that is well decorated and maintained, this creates an atmosphere where children and visitors feel welcome. The attractive displays of children's work help to give them a sense of pride and belonging. Leaders and practitioners use the available space successfully to provide a range of rooms and areas that provides children with a variety of experiences and learning opportunities. For example, the conservatory is used for messy play, such as sand and water, and a room is available for more quiet activities such as looking at books. These experiences give children choices in where to play and space to do so without disrupting others. The recently developed outdoor area is

an inviting and exciting space for children to learn about the world around them and develop their physical skills well. Leaders ensure that practitioners are confident in supporting children in these areas and manage any related risks well.

Leaders have developed rooms that are equipped with a good range of activities and resources that are age appropriate and support children's learning successfully. The variety of natural and loose materials for children to play with freely enhances their experiences and creativity. Leaders and practitioners have created inspiring areas of learning, promoting children's learning through play well. The areas are enhanced with real life resources such as kitchen utensils in the home corner. There are suitably sized toilet facilities and furniture, which successfully support children to learn to be independent and comfortable.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have created a warm, friendly and welcoming ethos. They have a clear vision for the setting, which focuses well on ensuring that children's well-being, care and learning are at the heart of all they do. The setting's statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting and relevant policies and procedures in place.

There are suitable procedures for staff recruitment, ensuring that staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. This means that turnover of staff is low, which provides consistency for the children they care for.

Leaders make use of a suitable range of information when evaluating practices within the setting. They have some understanding of what high quality provision looks like. This can help them to identify any areas for improvement. However, the roles and responsibilities of all leaders are not always clear, which means that the effectiveness of securing and developing these improvements is reduced.

Leaders carry out regular supervision meetings with practitioners, which draw on first hand evidence, and targets are agreed, set and reviewed. However, these targets do not always focus sharply enough on the setting's priority areas for improvement.

Leaders provide practitioners with valuable opportunities to develop their practice. This helps them to feel valued in their roles and this has a positive impact on the work of the setting. For example, following training to support children's speech, language and communication development, practitioners use strategies well to support children to develop their communication skills through play activities.

There are strong links with the local authority and practitioners value the support from the advisory teachers and the Early Years Additional Needs Lead Officer. They act on advice in a timely manner and work hard to secure suggested improvements, such as implementing the new assessment arrangements alongside the Curriculum for Wales. As a result, they have adapted the provision to better reflect the interests of the children and make sure that children with ALN are well supported and have their needs met.

The setting makes good use of available grants to enhance experiences for children. For example, a trip to see animals gave children beneficial first-hand experience to learn about them and develop understanding of caring for other creatures. Leaders have fostered positive relationships with parents. Parents value the service provided and the progress that their child makes at the setting. They are kept suitably informed about their child's development and progress. The setting has developed strong links with local schools, and this supports positive transition when children move to the next stage of the 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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