

A report on

Giggles Playgroup

**Gwaunmiskin Road
Beddau
Pontypridd
CF38 2AU**

Date of inspection: April 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Giggles Playgroup

Name of setting	Giggles Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Samantha Hastings
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Samantha Hastings
Number of places	18
Age range of children	2 – 5 years old
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	6
Number of children who receive funding for early education	3
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	05/11/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection	09/11/2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	01/04/2025
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 inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.	

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)	
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	Excellent
Leadership and management	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1. Develop Welsh language skills
- R2. Increase consistency in practitioners' use of familiar Welsh words and phrases in order to develop children's understanding

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: Excellent

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting and their happiness and voice are the driving force of the provision. Many children are confident communicators and make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. They confidently ask practitioners for help when needed and non-verbal children communicate their needs effectively. Children respond confidently to excellent opportunities when making choices about what affects them. For example, they choose when to come in for morning snack, ensuring that they finish their play tasks when it suits them. Many are developing emotional literacy and are comfortable to share how they feel with practitioners on arrival.

Nearly all children enter the setting happily and are warmly greeted by staff. Children are excited to seek out their friends and look pleased and valued when staff tell them that they have been missed. They cope well with separation from their parents and settle quickly into the familiar routines. Practitioners provide attentive and nurturing support, helping children to settle into their play and daily activities. Nearly all children are active and express enthusiasm and enjoyment. For example, they laugh delightedly when they make monster noises and 'frighten' a practitioner. Children's interests are highly valued and acted upon. Children ask for resources and activities they would like to engage with when they return the next day.

Children's interactions are consistently positive. They constantly chatter away to practitioners and are relaxed in their company. Children invite practitioners to join in with their play and clearly enjoy these interactions. They are developing strong friendships and learning to share and take turns. A minority of children display empathy towards each other, for example ensuring that their friend has chosen a book they like and helping a child with their coat. Many children follow instructions from practitioners readily, such as washing hands before snack time and brushing their teeth until the sand timer runs out.

Nearly all children have fun, and are active and motivated in their play and learning. They enjoy a wide range of interesting and stimulating opportunities inside and outside. Children explore their environment enthusiastically and engage with activities which interest them. For example, they engage with an activity that elicits some delightful discussion amongst them. They use tongs to carefully move toy insects and worms from the earth to collection points, asking each other about what they have found and what they should do with them. Children giggle as they move the creatures and help each other to master the use of the tongs, a skill which is later consolidated at snack time. A few children engage practitioners in their play while others are happy to immerse themselves in their own self-directed play. Children enjoy an excellent balance of free play and adult led activities. Nearly all children sustain focus and concentration for an age-appropriate amount of time and respond positively to consistent praise.

Nearly all children develop their independence skills appropriately. A majority are developing independence around self-care skills, for example washing hands before mealtimes and accessing the toilet facilities with varying levels of support. During mealtimes they choose where to sit, serve snacks and pour their drinks and carefully clear away their dishes. Children are self-sufficient during teeth brushing, following instructions well and competently completing the steps associated with this activity.

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: Good

Practitioners have a sound understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They implement policies and procedures consistently and are confident in their roles and responsibilities. They are aware of the procedure to follow in an emergency as they practise regular fire drills with the children. Practitioners follow the medication policy competently, record accidents and incidents appropriately and meet the needs of children with allergies safely. They employ good hygiene practices consistently, encouraging children to wash their hands and dealing with intimate care such as nappy changing with a high regard for infection control. Practitioners support and encourage children to follow healthy lifestyles, for example participating in sustained daily outdoor play and offering healthy choices for snacks and drinks.

Practitioners have a very good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm, including how to respond to any child protection concerns. The setting implements robust safeguarding arrangements that meet all requirements. Practitioners exchange key information about children's care and well-being through daily handovers and individual daily diaries. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners are patient, nurturing and caring. They communicate warmly with children, often with humour, creating a fun, calm and relaxed atmosphere. Practitioners are positive role models and interact competently with children during their play activities. They use a range of positive behaviour management strategies to support children as they learn to share and take turns. For example, practitioners use a sand timer when managing the use of the bikes and children are quick to remind them when the sands run out meaning it is now their turn. Practitioners raise children's self-esteem and confidence by consistently using praise and encouragement. For example, they praise a child for sharing her ideas about how best to get the seeds out of a vegetable, building her self-confidence. Practitioners support children skilfully during their play and recognise opportunities to extend learning. For example, during role play they use open questions to encourage discussion, allow thinking time and recall prior activities linked to the discussion. As a result, children correctly identify seeds and compare them to the different seeds they previously planted.

The setting implements effective procedures to support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners support children's emotional needs well, building their independence and self-confidence. They reflect professionally on effective strategies, beneficial training opportunities and the progress made by children. Practitioners keep parents well informed about their child's progress. They carefully track children's progress and demonstrate a secure understanding of developmental stages.

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 calm and safe environment for children to play and learn. They know the children well and have an excellent understanding of child development and the importance of giving children options to choose what and how they learn. Practitioners plan a beneficial range of experiences that support children's learning and development effectively both indoors and outdoors.

Practitioners work well together to consider and respond to the interests of the children. For example, they respond to the children's interests in growing and planting kidney beans. As a result, children learn to care for the young plants daily and are keen to plant other seeds. Practitioners ensure that new skills are introduced to the children through real life experiences. For example, children learn to use a knife safely to cut seeds and then measure them using a ruler. Across all areas of provision, there are opportunities for children to engage with numbers in real life contexts, such as recognising numbers on the clock in the home corner.

Most children develop appropriate digital skills. For example, they effectively use digital screens to mark make in different areas of the provision.

Practitioners model language well, engaging children in worthwhile conversations that help develop their language skill successfully. For example, children develop their vocabulary well as they talk with practitioners about releasing animals from the ice during an investigation. Practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to engage with books and develop their early literacy skills. Many children enjoy listening to stories and are starting to share ideas about the different characters. They also show appropriate fine motor skills when making marks with a range of different resources. Many practitioners know when to intervene in children's play. However, at times there are missed opportunities to fully extend children's learning.

Practitioners are developing children's independence and creativity effectively. For example, they use positive descriptive language to encourage children to create their own tribal paintings, using shape and colour. Practitioners encourage children to experiment and take risks in their play, which develops their physical skills successfully. For example, they support children to climb and balance on beams and ride on bikes.

Practitioners provide interesting opportunities that motivate children to show an interest in the lives of others. For example, many children enjoy the colour and excitement of learning about the Chinese New Year and Diwali festival. Practitioners also provide a wide range of artefacts that reflect people of the world around them. Leaders make highly effective use of visitors from the local area such as soldiers and local shop workers to support children's understanding of their locality and people who help them.

Practitioners promote the Welsh culture by celebrating specific events such as St David's Day. There are familiar Welsh words and phrases on displays around the different areas of provision. They encourage children to use a few familiar Welsh words during activities. However, practitioners are inconsistent in their use of Welsh and this impacts on the children's understanding of the language.

Practitioners use observations and assessment effectively to record progress and plan the next steps in the children's learning. This also helps them to provide parents and carers with valuable information about their children's achievements in a variety of ways, which includes a daily learning journal.

Environment: Excellent

Practitioners ensure that the setting is safe and well maintained. The entrance is secure, and practitioners manage arrival and departure procedures effectively. Leaders provide an extensive range of regularly reviewed risk assessments to support safety at the setting. They implement risk assessments and complete daily checks to eliminate potential risks, ensuring children's safety at the setting. Practitioners involve children in daily safety checks. Children proudly fulfil their roles as 'Safety Rangers' and enthusiastically accompany practitioners to check on the suitability of their environment, wearing high visibility jackets and completing child friendly checklists. The setting is very clean. Practitioners complete daily cleaning tasks and have well-established systems in place to ensure that allocated areas and resources receive regular deep cleans. Robust infection control practices successfully minimise any risk to children's health.

The indoor environment is extremely welcoming and very child friendly. It provides spacious, inviting and exciting areas for children to explore and develop a sense of awe and wonder. Children move freely in a space that is imaginative, stimulating and designed to engage them in their play and learning. Children benefit from rooms that are divided into well-resourced areas, which they explore enthusiastically. For example, a comfy den filled with books and sensory toys and a stimulating home corner laden with resources promote children's curiosity successfully. Practitioners use the space flexibly, changing the areas to suit the needs and interests of the children.

Practitioners display children's work purposefully, which strengthens the children's connection to their learning environment successfully. Children proudly show visitors their pictures and enthusiastically describe the colours they used. Practitioners ensure that the environment motivates and inspires children, which enhances their play opportunities very well. For example, a fruit and vegetable shop supports children in their imaginative play as they take on the roles of shop keepers and customers.

Practitioners ensure that the outdoor play space is used as often as possible and is a very effective extension to the indoor learning environment. Children enjoy free flow play and easily move to areas which interest them. Varied outdoor resources and play equipment challenge and stimulate children's curiosity and spark their interest. For example, children use water pumps to draw up water, aim and shoot at a chalk picture of a bean stalk, 'watering' the plant as they have previously learnt that plants need water to survive. The children's own bean plants are within their sightline so they can check daily on their growth and progress.

Practitioners provide high quality and developmentally appropriate play and learning resources to promote variety and choice for children. They have embraced the curiosity approach, providing children with authentic, open-ended resources to explore, investigate and incorporate into their play. For example, the fruit and vegetable shop is filled with real fruit and vegetables, weighing scales and other items that facilitate exploration and play. Children's independence is supported as resources are within easy reach and appropriately sized furniture ensures that children are comfortable as they play.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting based on the well-being of all children. They provide a warm, caring and nurturing environment that allows children to progress. Leaders have a strong commitment to teamwork and shared responsibility across the setting. This leads to a positive working environment, which ensures a happy setting for children and practitioners. There is a clear statement of purpose, which accurately reflects the provision.

Leaders have established effective self-evaluation processes, which lead to agreeing accurate improvement priorities at the setting. They focus on well-planned targets designed to develop the experiences provided for children. They include all practitioners in the improvement process and work together well to improve different aspects of the provision. They evaluate the impact of their work over time. For example, after highlighting diversity as a target for improvement, leaders developed the provision, ensuring that children have access to a wide variety of resources and real life experiences such as tasting foods from around the world.

Leaders ensure that all practitioners have designated roles and responsibilities. They undertake effective induction, supervision and appraisal processes with practitioners. They ensure that staff are provided with beneficial professional development opportunities to enhance their skills as practitioners. For example, staff attended speech and language training designed to develop their expertise in supporting children's communication skills. As a result, practitioners have grown in confidence when implementing strategies to support children with additional learning needs.

Leaders ensure that they update the settings statutory documents, policies and practices regularly. However, registration for the data protection regulator had not been renewed during the inspection.

Leaders communicate with parents through social media and daily learning journals. They share photographs and write comments about the children's learning and activities during the day. As a result, parents feel well informed about the progress that their children are making at the setting. Leaders also plan regular 'stay and play' sessions, which allows parents to learn alongside their children.

Leaders have established a range of beneficial partnerships in the community that improve the learning and well-being of children. For example, a bicycle technician came to talk to the children about staying safe on bicycles. Leaders also have strong links with the local primary school and regular visits facilitate successful transition when the children move to the next stage of their learning.

Leaders manage funding and resources effectively. They are proactive in seeking additional funding to enhance children's experiences at 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