



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

A report on

**Holywell Childcare Ltd
Bagillt Road
Bagillt
Flintshire
CH6 6JB**

Date of inspection: January 2017

by

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Context

Holywell Childcare Ltd is an English medium, privately owned setting, which serves the local community of Holywell. It is located in a detached converted house over two floors, with the pre-school unit having sole use of the upper floor. There are 15 members of staff employed, three of whom work with the three-year-olds. All are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The post of pre-school room leader is shared. One member of staff has been in the position for three years and the other for four and a half years.

The setting is open from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday, for 51 weeks a year. It is registered for up to 41 children aged 0–12 years and provides wrap around care with a breakfast club, after school care and holiday clubs. The pre-school room can take up to 17 children and, at the time of the inspection there were 12 three-year-olds on roll, of which four are funded by the local authority. These sessions take place Monday to Thursday from 9.00 am to 11.30 am. Nearly all children speak English as their first language. There are very few children with additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in December 2016 and by Estyn October 2010.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Good
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Practitioners provide engaging learning opportunities that meet the needs of young children successfully
- Planning is based firmly on the Foundation Phase principles of learning through good quality first-hand experiences
- The setting places a strong emphasis on the development of children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills
- Routines and practices are well established and this helps to promote a calm and purposeful learning environment
- All practitioners have high expectations of how children should behave and what they can achieve
- The setting provides a happy and homely environment and is very welcoming, and children feel valued and settle in quickly
- The setting develops children's sense of awe and wonder and curiosity in a meaningful way
- The setting is safe and secure and makes effective use of all available space, both indoors and outdoors

Prospects for improvement

The settings prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting manager and practitioners have a strong vision for a happy and caring environment where each child's individual needs are recognised
- Relationships between staff, parents and children are positive and contribute to a real sense of community
- There is a reflective team-based approach to evaluating and improving the setting's provision and this contributes well to raising standards
- Partnerships with parents are strong
- Regular visits to and visitors from the local community, are used well to enhance the work of the setting
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning successfully
- As a result of the setting's good provision and reflective leadership, the setting provides good value for money

Recommendations

- R1 Plan regular opportunities to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills systematically
- R2 Improve provision for children's understanding of different beliefs and traditions in Wales and the wider world

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	N/A
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Standards: N/A

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners meet the needs of young children successfully. They are very flexible and adapt learning activities according to children's interests effectively. They plan interesting learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, which engage children well. Planning is based firmly on the Foundation Phase principles of learning through good quality first-hand experiences.

The setting places a strong emphasis on the development of children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills, utilising both their indoor and outdoor space to good effect. As a result, children's speaking, early mark making and number skills are developing appropriately. However, opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills are not always planned for well enough across the areas of learning.

Routines and practices are well established and this helps to promote a calm and purposeful learning environment. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children. As a result, children are becoming more independent, are able to think for themselves and readily experiment with new learning experiences. For example, when building towers and rockets with magnetic blocks, many show good levels of perseverance and a determination to build the tallest one, even if when it collapses.

The setting promotes the Welsh language effectively, and uses daily focused sessions at the start of the day well. Practitioners and a child helper, model the Welsh phrases of the week successfully. They record themselves and then play it back to their peers. Children have suitable opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through a range of visits to a local heritage site and when celebrating St David's Day.

There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling, with empty boxes and cardboard tubes being used to make models. Practitioners make worthwhile use of visitors and the local environment to enrich children's learning experiences. These include visits to a local coach company and regular nature walks along a nearby heritage trail.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners work effectively as a team to create a positive and caring ethos at the setting. Their use of ongoing praise encourages children to persevere for suitable lengths of time and promotes positive behaviours. They develop children's curiosity to try new experiences successfully. For example, when experimenting with torches in a den in the outdoor area, practitioners respond well to children's suggestions and ideas.

All practitioners have high expectations of how children should behave and what they can achieve. They make very good use of their questioning skills to fully engage the children from the start of the day and to check children's understanding. They develop children's thinking skills effectively when encouraging them to work out how to get the toy boats to float to the top of a tall tube in the water tray.

Practitioners intervene in play and learning situations sensitively in order to move children's learning on. They are exceptionally good language role models. This is helping to develop children's communication skills and particularly enhances their Welsh and mathematical vocabulary.

The setting has solid procedures for observing and assessing children through regular focused activities. They use a broad range of ongoing assessments to help plan individual children's next steps in learning. Their 'traffic light' system enables practitioners to record the level of ease with which children complete an activity. This informs future planning purposefully. As a result, the setting is starting to use this information to measure children's progress accurately over time.

The setting keeps parents well informed about their child's progress through informal daily feedback, and parents appreciate this 'open door' policy.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides a happy and homely environment and children feel valued and settle in quickly. All practitioners promote children's understanding of healthy living well. For example, there is daily access to a range of physical activities such as bikes and balancing beams. This encourages children to use apparatus confidently and promotes their understanding of the importance of co-operation and turn taking successfully. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating food and after being outside and to brush their teeth daily. This helps them to become responsible for their personal hygiene.

A broad range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual and moral skills effectively. They study the lifecycle of a butterfly and take nature walks over the different seasons. This develops children's sense of awe and wonder and curiosity in a meaningful way. Children learn about the importance of caring for the environment by growing flowers. However, the setting's development of children's understanding of different beliefs and cultural traditions in Wales and the wider world, is less well developed.

Practitioners identify children's learning and emotional needs promptly and work hard to meet these needs. There are clear procedures to support children with additional learning needs, and the setting uses its strong links to outside agencies to gain advice when necessary. As a result, they well cater for the differing needs of children identified as requiring extra support.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities. All children feel safe and enjoy talking to visitors. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. There are plenty of good quality resources for most areas of learning and practitioners ensure that they match children's needs closely.

The setting is safe and secure and makes effective use of all available space, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners plan activities carefully to allow children to experiment in order to widen their interests and to encourage them to be inquisitive.

An appropriate range of children's work and educational displays, enhance the learning environment. Children enjoy pointing out and talking about their work to visitors. The setting uses its outdoor space well to develop children's early mark making, number and physical skills. For example, practitioners use interesting ideas such as mark making with truck wheels in paint, to engage reluctant boy writers successfully.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The setting manager and practitioners have a strong vision for a happy and caring environment, where each child's individual needs are recognised. They share this vision effectively with parents through newsletters and regular updates via social media. The manager and practitioners ensure that clear aims, plans and policies are in place to enable the setting to encourage children to achieve the best they can. Relationships between practitioners, parents and children are positive, and contribute to a real sense of community.

All practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff appraisal procedures identify practitioners' training needs appropriately and they are well supported in accessing a range of beneficial external training opportunities. As a result, practitioners adapt their planning to place a stronger focus on developing children's thinking and Welsh language skills.

The setting manager communicates high expectations, which supports the strong ethos of self-improvement evident within the setting. As well as ongoing informal discussions about the quality of the provision, practitioners also engage in regular assessments of each other's work, including observations of teaching. This encourages a reflective team-based approach to evaluating and improving the setting's provision and contributes well to raising standards.

The setting works well with the local authority advisory teacher to ensure that it meets priorities and acts on local and national educational initiatives. It develops its provision successfully in response to suggestions and advice. For example, practitioners now use the outdoors effectively to support the development of children's speaking and early writing skills.

Improving quality: Good

The setting manager has put in place useful systems to ensure the regular review of the setting's work. This includes gauging the views of parents frequently and taking into account advice from the local authority advisory teacher. The positive attitude of all practitioners towards improvement activities is evident throughout the setting. As a result, the manager and staff have a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.

The setting's self-evaluation report is a useful document that contains an accurate reflection of its work. Leaders use targets identified in this process to produce a useful setting improvement plan, which focuses well on improving provision and raising outcomes for children. The setting creates effective plans to address any areas of development. These contain clear aims, appropriate timescales and indicate which members of staff are responsible for them. Overall, the setting is developing a sound track record of improvement. The recent focus on raising the children's numeracy skills, developing the use of the outdoor provision and strengthening children's Welsh language skills, is having a beneficial impact.

The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. In particular, it has worked hard to develop good links with the community that are impacting positively on the children's development and enriching their learning experiences.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has developed a wide range of beneficial partnerships. Partnerships with parents are strong. Practitioners keep them well informed about developments at the setting and the progress that their child is making. Parents take part in regular meetings to review their child's progress and to provide information for the Foundation Phase profile records. Leaders frequently seek parents' views on how well the setting is supporting their child, and takes their suggestions for improvement seriously.

The setting has well established links with the local feeder primary schools. Regular visits to the setting by teaching staff are useful in ensuring that children develop a positive relationship with their new teachers. This helps to smooth the process of transition to their new school. Practitioners make effective use of support from the local authority advisory teacher, to seek advice, to access training and to evaluate the quality of their work. This is beneficial in supporting the setting's improvement processes.

Regular visits to and visitors from the local community, are used well to enhance the work of the setting. The children visit a local heritage park regularly to develop their physical skills and knowledge of their local community. Visits from the local lollipop lady are beneficial in improving children's understanding of road safety. The setting regularly hosts adults from a nearby day centre for people with additional learning needs. This widens the children's acceptance of people from different backgrounds and with differing needs.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning successfully. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well-trained practitioners.

The setting manager and practitioners are firmly committed to self-improvement through attending training, seeking the advice of the local authority and reflecting on their own practice. They use professional development opportunities well, for example to ensure the effective introduction of new resources to improve children's standards in numeracy.

Managers have an appropriate understanding of the setting's finances and have suitable systems in place for keeping spending under review. The setting makes good use of the Welsh Government Early Years Deprivation Grant funding to purchase resources and access training. This supports the development of children's numeracy skills well.

As a result of the setting's effective provision, good quality teaching and reflective leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team – delete as appropriate

Susan Davies	Reporting Inspector
Jonathan Wright	Team Inspector

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.