



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

A report on

Rhuddlan Playgroup Plus

**Ysgol – y – Castell
Hylas Lane
Rhuddlan
LL18 5AG**

Date of inspection: February 2023

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Rhuddlan Playgroup Plus

Name of setting	Rhuddlan Playgroup plus
Category of care provided	Sessional
Registered person(s)	Abbie Williams
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Ruth Sharp
Number of places	20
Age range of children	2-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	15
Number of children who receive funding for early education	3
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday term time
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	February 2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	June 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	07/02/2023

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Develop the system for managing the performance of practitioners to ensure that leaders identify professional learning needs through the processes of supervision and appraisal

R2 Increase opportunities for parents to be involved with their children's learning

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 the way in which practitioners understand how to develop children's ability to take and manage risks for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being:

Nearly all children choose their own resources from well-placed boxes, which effectively enable them to develop their play. Children enjoy making decisions, for example when they visit the snack bar. They enjoy exploring their environment and the resources available. For example, they, join in with a story about bears, sitting on logs and climbing trees. Practitioners respect their choices and listen to their ideas.

Children feel secure; they sit or play alongside their friends confidently. All are excited to go outdoors, into the forest hunting for a bear. Even when it is cold, children proudly show their woolly hats. Children explain what they are doing, and they talk about their space project and astronauts. They speak excitedly about their interests, and demonstrate their skills, such as balancing, with pride. They have positive relationships with practitioners, whom they happily go to for support and a quick hug when they arrive.

Nearly all children interact with each other exceptionally well. For example, five children work together to make dough, taking turns to stir the mixture and add ingredients such as mint to tingle their noses amid great excitement. They are kind to each other and when a jumper was hit by a cloud of flour they quickly tried to dust the flour off their friend. Most are intrigued by what their friends are doing and make constructive comments about how to improve the 10-legged spider. They listen to practitioners and, when asked, wash their hands when arriving in the setting and before eating. They are happy and busy and say how much they like coming to play.

Nearly all children are active and learn through play. Their delight is apparent when they pretend they are in a house, hiding under blankets telling others that they cannot be seen. They enjoy opportunities to develop physical strength by tying knots and decide the best way to balance on and cross a crate. They work together highly effectively to solve the problem of how to get ropes up to a branch of a tree.

Most children develop independence well and feel at home with the daily routine. They drop off bags and lunch boxes and change into their waterproofs and wellies without help. They look at books together and take orders for the café where they have designed the menu. Their language is developing effectively through interesting activities and conversations with each other and practitioners. Children are becoming increasingly familiar with simple Welsh phrases and vocabulary. They join in with songs and show they are pleased by spontaneously singing their own songs.

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:

Practitioners support children's health and well-being effectively. They attend a suitable range of courses and follow good practice relating to safeguarding children. They know what to do if they have concerns about a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Practitioners ensure that children wash their hands, reminding them gently before snack time. They have a good understanding of a healthy diet and provide fruit and milk. Children's records are fully complete, including elements that relate to their health needs. Practitioners complete a register detailing attendance, and minor injuries are noted and brought to the attention of parents and carers.

Practitioners are exceptionally thoughtful. They are patient and aware of the importance of always using positive behaviour management strategies. As a result, they support children and meet their individual needs. Practitioners are nurturing, calm and gentle with the children. They use quiet voices and make sure all the children understand, especially when counting down the minutes to tidy-up time. Practitioners speak to children sensitively and remind them of simple rules, such as using kind hands. They use praise effectively, for example for good thinking when making playdough.

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents. They allow plenty of time at the start and end of the session to maintain a regular flow of information. They adapt the provision to respond highly effectively to the children's individual needs, for example enabling children to take a favourite toy with them to take part in circle time. Practitioners know the children very well and provide an exceptional level of care for them through a key worker system. They know instinctively when to stand back and allow children to play on their own. They enable children to take risks in their play exceptionally well. Practitioners understand Additional Learning Needs reforms and work closely with other professionals. They promote children's play, learning and development and support their individual needs highly effectively, often using good humour and silly voices, much to the pleasure of the children.

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

Practitioners talk to the children about their interests and plan activities that engage nearly all children successfully. They observe children closely and plan the next steps for the children appropriately, so that the curriculum is meaningful to the children and enables them to progress well.

Practitioners' understanding of how to develop children's ability to take and manage risk is excellent. They allow children to climb trees and run and slide down small banks. They intervene sensitively, promoting children to spot dangers and encouraging them to make their own decisions. For example, when sliding down a mud bank, practitioners use questioning skilfully until the children decide they need a friend to catch them as they land. As a result, children explore the outdoor area, working together to keep each other safe and take appropriate risks. This contributes to their ability to work in a team and challenge themselves physically very well.

Practitioners have a thorough understanding of how children learn through play and exploration. They know when to give children time to explore and work things out for themselves and when to intervene and ask questions that prompt the children to think in different ways. For example, when children are trying to climb a tree, practitioners allow children ample time to work out how to use skipping ropes to help them. After a while, they ask questions that prompt the children to tie the ropes together and loop them over a branch. As a result, children develop their independent problem-solving skills well. Practitioners ensure that children have the speaking and listening skills required for this level of teamwork and always respect the ideas of others.

Practitioners plan activities that allow children to count and understand the concept of less or more, which develops children's numeracy skills appropriately. Practitioners ensure that the 'cosy corner' enables children to have time to share books and read to each other. They support this love of reading through a sensitive and nurturing approach, and by providing a wide range of books that interest the children well.

Practitioners plan for the development of children's Welsh language skills and their knowledge of Wales appropriately. They use Welsh around the setting and activities that support children's understanding of Welsh traditions, such as making Perllan apples to celebrate the new year.

Practitioners promote children's understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately through the celebration of festivals, such as Chinese New Year. They develop children's sense of awe and wonder successfully, such as when talking to the children about stars and planets.

Environment:

Leaders ensure that the environment is safe for the children. For example, the main door and playroom entrance are locked, and the outdoor play area and forest area are secure, making the premises safe from unauthorised access. Risk assessments effectively identify any potential hazards and keep children safe. Leaders ensure a good balance between promoting safety and supporting children to take risks in their play. The setting is clean, and leaders ensure a good level of hygiene. The well-maintained premises have an effective heating system, natural light and bright decoration. Regular fire drills are carried out and recorded, which shows that leaders are aware of how to keep the children safe in the event of an emergency.

Leaders provide an effective learning environment with plenty of space to move around. Children's work is displayed to give them a sense of achievement and belonging. Leaders ensure that the setting is organised to provide a fully inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities and areas of the provision. Leaders make sure that children are well cared for in a highly supportive and relaxing learning environment, which considers children's interests and their individual needs well. A good range of resources is accessible, allowing children to develop their own play and independence by selecting their own toys and equipment confidently. For example, there is effective low-level storage, with photographs taken by the children to identify the contents. The playroom and outdoors are divided into learning areas with a range of toys and equipment, many of which are made from

natural materials, such as wooden fruit for threading, which the children enjoy playing with and find interesting.

Leaders ensure that children have access to a range of resources and equipment that are of good quality, most natural and recycled, such as sand, leaves and cones. They have areas for planting and pipes to transport water, all of which are easily accessible and suit the children's ages and stage of development and make learning fun. A diverse community is reflected effectively by toy figures, stories and celebrating traditions from different countries. Practitioners ensure the effective use of resources to keep children's interests and maintain an uncluttered environment. Practitioners encourage children to follow their interests and develop their curiosity. For example, a child's interest in dough led to a range of learning opportunities, including children making their own dough. Suitable tables, chairs and comfy rugs enable everyone to work at their level of choice and enjoy their play and learning together.

Leadership and management:

The leader has a clear vision for the setting where all children and staff feel valued. Leaders ensure that the setting is cosy and friendly and that all children have space and time to develop in a way that is right for them. Leaders create a positive atmosphere of teamwork throughout the setting and practitioners support each other well.

The setting's self-evaluation processes help leaders to identify what works well and what they need to improve. These include informal reflections at the start of each session that help to inform practitioners of immediate changes that need to take place. Leaders correctly identify what longer term improvement priorities need to be. For example, leaders have identified the importance of increased opportunities for outdoor experiences. They work closely with staff to ensure that they feel confident to support children to challenge themselves outside safely.

The setting statement of purpose is effective at providing an accurate picture of the setting and leaders ensure that a suitable range of relevant policies and procedures are in place. However, the system for practitioners' supervision and appraisal that leads to agreed targets for improvement and identifying training needs is underdeveloped.

Leaders have developed strong links with a range of partners, who fully support and enhance children's learning and development. The family link worker provides useful advice and guidance to families. In addition, the setting has input from specialist services that enable the practitioners to support children with additional learning needs effectively. The setting is located within the local school and a long standing and supportive relationship exists between both providers. This aids transition very effectively. The setting has a close partnership with the teacher who provides support and guidance and takes good account of their advice to improve outcomes. The guidance and support that the reception class teacher provides is highly beneficial.

Links with parents are positive and informal. However, more formalised opportunities for parents to have an input into what the children are learning are at the early stages of development.

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The setting makes appropriate use of available funds to improve provision and outcomes. It is working in collaboration with the new committee to oversee the playgroup's work and to create spending plans. The budget is carefully managed to ensure that the setting is sustainable in the long term.

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)

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