



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

**A report on**

**Little Stars Playgroup**

**Scouts and Guides Hall  
Crown Hill  
Llantwit Fardre  
CF38 2NA**

**Date of inspection: May 2023**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Little Stars Playgroup

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Name of setting  | Little Stars Playgroup  |
| Category of care provided                                  | Sessional   |
| Registered person(s)                                       | Eileen Moore  |
| Responsible individual (if applicable)                     | NA  |
| Person in charge   | Eileen Moore.   |
| Number of places   | 32  |
| Age range of children                                      | 2 years to 4 years  |
| Number of 3 and 4 year old children                        | 5   |
| Number of children who receive funding for early education | 5   |
| Opening days / times                                       | 09.00 – 13.00 Monday to Friday  |
| Flying start service                                       | No  |
| Language of the setting                                    | English   |
| Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?         | Yes   |
| Welsh Language Active Offer                                | This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture. |
| Date of previous CIW inspection                            | October 2018  |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection                          | March 2015  |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s)                          | 02/05/2023  |

## Summary

| <b>Theme</b>  | <b>Judgement</b> |
|---|------------------|
| <b>Well-being</b>   | <b>Good</b>      |
| <b>Learning</b><br>(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)                |                  |
| <b>Care and development</b>   | <b>Adequate</b>  |
| <b>Teaching and assessment</b><br>(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting) | <b>Good</b>      |
| <b>Environment</b>  | <b>Adequate</b>  |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>  | <b>Good</b>      |

## Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve provision for developing children's Welsh language skills

R2 Improve the quality of the risk assessment process to better identify and eliminate risks

## 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 enter the setting enthusiastically, where they are pleased to see their friends and quickly settle into familiar routines. Many cope with separation from parents and carers well. All children feel safe and secure and enjoy their time at the setting. They form close bonds with familiar practitioners, and this has a positive impact on their well-being and confidence. All children receive frequent praise for their efforts and achievements which makes them feel happy and valued.

Many children demonstrate a good understanding of what is expected of them whilst they are at the setting. Nearly all children have opportunities to make choices and decisions about how they spend their time, and they choose confidently from the range of activities and resources available to them. They co-operate well and negotiate their play appropriately. For example, children play well together in the role play area, acting as shop keepers and customers, buying vegetables and chatting naturally.

Nearly all children enjoy their play and learning, moving confidently between activities that interest them. They show excitement in play and are inquisitive and curious throughout. They particularly enjoy riding tricycles and water play in the outdoor area. Many children gain a sense of achievement from what they do in the setting. They explain with pride what they are making, for example when drawing a picture to take home for their parents.

Many children express themselves well and talk confidently at length about the things that are important to them, such as their family and friends. Most communicate effectively and are not afraid to share their opinions and ideas because they know practitioners will listen to them.

Nearly all children are developing personal and social skills well. They willingly take turns and share, and many are developing a sensitivity to the emotions of others. Many children are developing an appropriate sense of right and wrong and are becoming self-disciplined. Children interact well with practitioners and peers. They enjoy the praise they receive from practitioners for example for their positive behaviour.

Children are beginning to develop appropriate levels of independence. Many self-register and hang their own coats up on arrival. At mealtimes, children pour their own drinks, peel fruit and put their snack and lunch boxes away with support from practitioners. As a result, children's self-help skills are developing well, which has a positive effect on their self-esteem.

**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 are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have an appropriate level of knowledge to carry out their duties well. They follow robust policies and procedures to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. Practitioners understand and follow procedures for recording the administering of medication, accidents, incidents and existing injuries. The leader monitors records monthly to identify any trends in accidents sustained at the setting, and to eliminate any possible impact to children. However, these procedures and policies have been recently updated. All practitioners have up to date safeguarding training and know the procedures to follow in the event of a concern for a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners provide a nurturing and caring environment, with a focus on the individual needs of the children. They have a relaxed and supportive approach when interacting with children. Practitioners act diligently on information they receive from parents, enabling them to adjust their practice in response to individual needs. The setting has developed appropriate procedures to support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners are beginning to work closely with a range of support agencies to ensure that children's needs are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Practitioners follow appropriate health and safety procedures and policies for example, ensuring resources used by children are cleaned on a rota basis. Practitioners encourage children to wash their hands before and after snack or lunch,

and after messy play activities. They provide suitable opportunities for physical play and exercise. For example, nearly all children have an opportunity to play outdoors every day and many use beams and platforms within the playroom to balance, climb and jump. All practitioners hold food hygiene certificates and whilst the setting does not provide food, they consistently promote healthy eating habits. Practitioners provide information and guidance to parents about healthy eating and as a result, nearly all children bring a healthy snack to the setting.

Practitioners work well together to support and promote children's behaviour. They are positive role models and treat all members of the setting with respect and kindness. They provide clear directions and offer praise and encouragement for good behaviour. They are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and mindful of children's age and stage of development.

Practitioners know children well and understand their preferences and fascinations. They are considerate of the children's views and provide them with a range of options and choices to allow them to express themselves as individuals. Practitioners regularly complete observations, which they use appropriately to monitor progress and identify next steps for learning.

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

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and how children learn through play and exploration. They know their children well. They listen carefully to children's views and take notice of children's interests to plan activities that engage them purposefully in learning. Practitioners support children effectively to develop independence and resilience in daily routines and in their play for example, they encourage children to collect their own snack and pour their own drinks.

Practitioners provide a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences that support children's development appropriately for example performing a puppet show based on a familiar nursery rhyme. Where this works particularly well, practitioners manage the range of choice so that children are not overwhelmed and can engage in extended periods of uninterrupted play.

Practitioners promote children's communication skills well through imaginative play for example creating a beauty salon in the role play area to encourage children to talk to each other with confidence. Practitioners use and model questioning well and encourage children to respond at length to open-ended questions. They know when to step back, and when to provide observations and comments about what children are doing. This has a positive effect on children's thinking and encourages them to explain their ideas to others. For example, when exploring the fastest and slowest routes to the bottom of a water wall, children discuss which route they would take, and why.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills well, particularly early writing skills where they encourage children to use a range of writing implements for a number of purposes during their play, for example to write shopping lists, take notes when they

are on the telephone and write cards to take home. They provide valuable opportunities for children to develop numeracy skills, such as encouraging children to compare the size of leaves they are using to make headbands, counting the number of items they have used to make a collage and ordering numbers to 10 in a puzzle. Children have many opportunities to develop digital skills in their play, for example using an electronic till in the shop and drawing pictures on a tablet.

Practitioners support the development of children's gross motor skills appropriately by encouraging children to walk across a balance beam, jump on and off low platforms and ride scooters, bikes and tricycles. However, the location and size of the outside space limit the range of activities available, particularly for older children.

Practitioners plan suitable activities to promote the culture and heritage of Wales, for example by celebrating St David's Day, and painting flags, leeks and daffodils. They ensure that the Welsh language is visible in displays and Welsh costumes and books are available in the learning environment. However, practitioners do not use Welsh language routinely and, as a result, worthwhile opportunities for children to practise and develop Welsh language skills is limited. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about other religions and cultures through stories, food and celebrations.

Practitioners make effective use of snack and lunchtimes to provide valuable opportunities to develop social skills. They sit with children as they eat their lunch and chat to them encouraging good manners, modelling sharing and listening respectfully to the views and opinions of the children.

Practitioners make appropriate use of summative assessments when children enter the setting to identify individual needs and inform planning. They observe children frequently to monitor progress and track changes in children's interests. Practitioners' observation notes are of good quality and clearly identify the next steps for learning. They use this information well to plan engaging learning experiences for each child.

Practitioners have a developing understanding of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. They have recently adopted a responsive approach to planning to reflect children's needs and interests, adapting the environment and learning experiences suitably to extend and deepen their learning for example creating a doctor's surgery in the role play area and a farm in small world.

### **Environment: Adequate**

Practitioners ensure that the premises provide a secure environment for learning. They maintain the environment appropriately and ensure that children have ample space indoors to play. Practitioners have gone to considerable effort to make what they can control in the environment very welcoming and child-friendly, for example displaying some examples of children's work and free painting. Practitioners provide appropriate supervision for children and the ratio of staff to children meet or exceed those required for current numbers.

Practitioners use a suitable system for managing access into the setting and maintain a record of all visitors. All visitors are required to sign in and out of the building and

their identity is checked. They record children's attendance in registers and record their times of arrival and departure. Practitioners undertake daily safety checks of the areas used by children. However, written risk assessments do not always identify some potential risks in the environment well enough, and as a result these risks are not always addressed or mitigated against in a timely manner. Records show that practitioners conduct suitable fire drills with the children regularly. Health and safety and infection control are managed effectively.

The setting has sufficient facilities and high-quality toys and resources. Furniture is of a suitable size and design for the age of the children. A wide range of good quality resources are presented at low level and in plain sight, allowing children to choose easily what they want to play with. A very attractive and well-resourced role play area is used frequently by children, and an inviting book corner provides a place where they can relax. There is a strong inclusion of sustainable materials in the provision, such as real food items in the shop, and loose parts such as pinecones, leaves and cork. The layout of the indoor room enables children to move around freely.

The outdoor space has several areas of interest set up for children, such as a small sand pit, a water wall and a tricycle, scooter and bike area. Children use this space at set times during the session because limitations in the design of the building and staffing levels do not support free flow activities. Overall, practitioners make appropriate use of the outdoor space available to ensure children benefit from a variety of outdoor learning experiences.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The new leader has established a clear vision for the setting where the needs of children come first, their views are valued, and they feel happy, safe and secure. Practitioners have created a nurturing ethos and a welcoming environment that successfully achieves this vision and supports children well.

Relationships between practitioners and children are strong and based on trust and mutual respect. This has a beneficial impact on children's well-being and enjoyment of learning. Children and parents benefit from a service committed to improving outcomes for children.

Practitioners are experienced, passionate and work hard to provide a quality childcare service. There is a detailed statement of purpose that provides parents with essential information about how the setting runs. Suitable operational procedures are in place to support the smooth running of the setting. An appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff are employed to care for the children. The setting's records contain necessary information and policies are appropriate.

The leader has established an effective self-evaluation process that takes account of the views of a range of stakeholders, including children and parents, and identifies strengths and areas for development appropriately. The leader uses this information effectively to determine what the setting does well and what it needs to do to improve. Planning to secure necessary improvements is thorough in priority areas. The setting has a suitable Quality of Care report which outlines contributions from parents, staff,



children and external agencies and draws on first-hand experience of the quality of care provided.

The leader is effective in managing practitioners' time and prioritising activities to ensure that children's needs are met in a timely manner. The calm and relaxed care environment in the setting has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. Practitioners enjoy working at the setting and benefit from regular supervision meetings to reflect and improve their practice. Leaders have robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure that suitable staff are employed to work with children.

The leader makes good use of grants and other funding to enhance the setting and improve the environment, for example by purchasing equipment to encourage independent learning.

Practitioners communicate effectively with parents and carers. They make good use of a closed social media group to notify parents of upcoming events and share learning experiences. Parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and value the opportunity to exchange information about their child through daily contact.

The leader has established worthwhile partnerships with a range of external agencies such as the Early Years Advisory Teacher. There are strong links between the setting and the feeder school. Opportunities for children to visit the school, and for teachers to visit the setting are an important part of the transition process and have a beneficial impact on how well children settle into school.

## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b> | Very strong, sustained performance and practice                                   |
| <b>Good</b>      | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement           |
| <b>Adequate</b>  | Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required                       |
| <b>Poor</b>      | Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required |

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