



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

A report on

Two Counties Creche CIC

**The Old School
The Highway
Croesyceiliog
Cwmbran
NP44 2HF**

Date of inspection: June 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Two Counties Creche CIC

Name of setting	Two Counties Creche CIC
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Lesley Price
Person in charge	Kate Price
Number of places	39
Age range of children	
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	17
Number of children who receive funding for early education	13
Opening days / times	8.00am – 6.00pm
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	04/03/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/11/2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	05/06/2024

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)	Adequate
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)	Adequate
Environment	Adequate
Leadership and management	Adequate

Non-compliance

We notified the provider that the setting was not compliant with the Regulations, a notice was not issued, but these are identified as areas for improvement, and the RP/RI must address these.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the curriculum and planned learning experiences develop children's knowledge and skills more systematically and progressively
- R2 Ensure that practitioners challenge and support children's learning more consistently and effectively
- R3 Develop self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus better on children's learning and address the most important areas for improvement
- R4 Address the areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children are happy and settled, and enjoy attending the setting. They cope well with separation from their parents and carers. Many children arrive happily and settle to play straight away. They form positive emotional attachments with staff, who know them well. Most children seek out assistance and reassurance from staff when they need it, for instance when they get their clothes wet during water play. Nearly all are familiar with the setting's routines and expectations, and this adds to their sense of belonging.

Nearly all children make choices about how they spend their time at the setting confidently and select what to play with from the resources available to them. They move freely and happily between areas in their base rooms, transporting toys and resources to support their play. Most children are confident to talk to staff and express themselves. They know staff listen to their needs and show an interest in what they say. For example, children approach staff members confidently and tell them what they would like to do independently.

Most children play happily alongside others and are learning to co-operate and share appropriately. For example, they play excitedly together, laughing as they roll a ball back and forth. Many children co-operate to share different cutters and resources as they play with dough. Nearly all children sit calmly at the table when eating and respect others considerately.

Most children are enthusiastic and interested in their play and learning. They enjoy both adult led and free play activities. They listen attentively and join in enthusiastically during circle time. They follow their own interests in the garden area and are delighted to see the huge bubbles made by a hoop as they bring it out of a tray of soapy water. Most children are developing their independence well. For example, older children wash their hands seat themselves at mealtimes without support.

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

During their time at the setting, many children make effective progress in developing their speaking, listening and their physical skills. However, in other areas, such as early reading, digital and numeracy skills, children's progress is less strong. A minority of children do not make good enough progress in learning sessions, often due to a lack of challenge and activities that do not focus well enough on developing their knowledge and skills.

Many children speak with adults and each other well. They respond to greetings and questions confidently, such as saying what they would like for snack or communicating what they would like to do. A majority approach others independently to talk with them and ask questions, such as their name and what they are doing. Most listen and focus well when practitioners talk with them, for instance when they explain how to play a game.

A minority of children are developing early reading skills appropriately. They show interest in books in the environment and recognise a few letters and their associated sounds. A few recognise their own name, for instance when written on their water bottle. A minority of children show enthusiasm for mark making. They use chalk or pens to create simple marks on paper or on the yard floor. A few make shapes that represent writing, such as their name. However, overall, there too are few opportunities for children to develop these skills strongly enough throughout the learning environment.

Many children are developing a useful understanding of the Welsh language. They repeat and recall Welsh words with practitioners confidently. For instance, a few identify familiar fruit and count when playing with blocks. They join in happily with Welsh songs and are beginning to respond confidently when answering questions about the weather.

A minority of children use numbers in their play and everyday activities confidently. For example, they show three fingers when adult says the number three and count leaves in the water when playing outdoors. A few count beyond 5 accurately. A majority of children are beginning to use simple mathematical vocabulary when playing, for example recognising plant stalks as longer or shorter and saying which buckets of sand is heavier. A few are beginning to observe and develop an understanding of time passing, for instance identifying that one sand timer empties quicker than another. However, overall children do not make sufficient progress in developing their numeracy skills.

Many children's physical skills are developing well. They use small tools and equipment with increasing control. For example, they use spades to dig in the mud and handle and plant small seeds carefully. Many carry and lift jugs of water and pour it into different containers skilfully. Many children develop larger physical skills effectively. They scooter and trike confidently, steering skilfully between obstacles showing good balance and body control.

A majority of children are developing their creative skills well. A few use dough imaginative to make their own volcano and describe in thoughtful detail how the lava explodes from the top. A few children use different sized blocks thoughtfully to create their own house in the outdoors.

A few children develop digital skills strongly. For example, they recognise that tablet computers can be used to view images and that computers can be used 'for working'. However, many children do not develop strong enough skills or understanding in this area of their learning.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners know children well. They are nurturing and sensitive to the needs of the children in their care. Practitioners observe children when playing and share images with parents via an online system. This helps to ensure that parents are kept up to date with their children's experiences at the setting. Practitioners identify those children who may have an emerging additional learning need appropriately. They work closely with parents, carers, and outside agencies to ensure that these children access beneficial additional support.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour well. They are kind, gentle, and warm in their interactions between themselves and the children in their care. They use praise and encouragement to support children positively. For example, practitioners regularly use phrases such as "Well done" and "Good job!" to encourage children. Practitioners help children to learn to take turns and to share thoughtfully. For example, they chat sensitively with them when several children want to play with a toy.

Practitioners promote health and hygiene at the setting well. They follow good hygiene procedures when changing nappies and encourage and support children to wash their hands before snack. Practitioners help children to learn about having a healthy lifestyle and offer a choice of healthy food at snack and mealtimes. They ensure that children benefit from physical exercise and fresh air and have regular and enjoyable outdoor play experiences.

Practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. They record accidents and incidents well and share this information with parents sensitively. Leaders have begun to develop a system to formally review these records to identify patterns and trends. The setting has clear systems in place to ensure children's safety when managing food allergies. All practitioners have a clear understanding of how to deal with safeguarding issues and understand well their duty to report concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

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

In general, practitioners have suitable up-to-date knowledge of child development and learning. For example, they understand well of the importance of children learning through play and exploration. As a result, they provide appropriate opportunities for children to learn through active involvement in authentic contexts, such as learning about flowers and vegetables by planting and caring for seeds in the outdoors.

Practitioners are good language role models and promote children's language development well. This helps children to talk with others and promotes their willingness to communicate. Many practitioners have appropriate expectations of children. They support children's ideas and facilitate their play appropriately, for example helping them find the right resources and supporting them with their chosen task. However, they do not always challenge children well enough, or encourage their thinking, through discussions and careful questioning. While they follow children's interests, they do not support children to develop and apply their skills effectively enough, such as their early reading and writing skills.

Practitioners provide a suitable environment both inside and outside, which encourages children's involvement appropriately. They are still at the early stages of ensuring that the environment provides strong opportunities for children to develop a wide range of skills, such as numeracy and digital skill in the pre-school learning environment.

Practitioners plan learning experiences that engage children suitably. For example, children enjoy making sea creatures from dough and painting pictures of flowers from life. However, practitioners focus sessions on activities that children can complete and give too little consideration to what skills or knowledge children can develop. Over time, they do not ensure that learning activities build on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the setting. As a result, children do not consistently make sufficient progress in their learning.

Practitioners promote the Welsh language positively. They model language patterns well and ask children questions throughout the day which encourage them to use simple words and phrases in their responses. They sing songs with children that help them learn and repeat phrases confidently, such as those linked with the weather. As a result, many children use the Welsh language positively. However, there are too few opportunities for children to learn about the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales.

Practitioners make regular observations of children during their learning activities. These focus suitably on gathering useful information, such as children's developing independence and what they are currently interested in. In a few cases, they identify how well children's skills are developing. However, overall, their observations are not always helpful enough in evaluating how well children make progress, in particular in the development of their reading, writing and digital skills as they play. In addition, practitioners do not use these evaluations well enough to plan for and support children's future learning.

The setting provides children with an effective range of learning experiences to promote their moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, practitioners support and encourage children to plant flowers and vegetables and identify the importance of planting seeds carefully and looking after them so that they grow.

Practitioners help children to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live and the importance of caring for animals and their habitats. For instance, children celebrate World Turtle Day to help them learn about protecting turtles and tortoises and their disappearing habitats. This also help to develop children's understanding that all living things should be treated with care, respect and concern.

Environment: Adequate

The setting is a welcoming and child friendly environment that provides suitable spaces for children to play and learn. Practitioners organise spaces appropriately to create a homely atmosphere that encourages children to feel at home and to play confidently. For example, the home corner invites children to play co-operatively and purposefully. Practitioners ensure that resources and activities are at children's height to encourage and enable them to access what they want and play freely. The setting uses its communal room thoughtfully. As a result, there are suitable spaces for children to carry out craft and messy activities creatively.

Practitioners use the setting's outdoor area regularly. It is suitable for babies and older children, ensuring all can access the benefits of playing and learning outdoors. It provides children with opportunities to take appropriate risks and experience physical challenges confidently.

The environment is safe and secure. For example, practitioners ensure that doors are locked and oversee access to the setting carefully. They carry out regular safety checks of the environment to identify, and where possible eliminate, any unnecessary risks. However, they do not identify all potential risks within the environment consistently well. Leaders maintain appropriate records to ensure that they provide food safely.

The setting has a suitable quantity of toys and resources to support children's development and choice. The setting has good quality furniture and resources to support children's independence. For example, low level toy storage units and coat pegs for children's belongings encourage children to choose and access resources confidently. Practitioners continue to improve the pre-school learning environment. However, at present it does not provide a rich enough environment to support children's learning, for instance children's early reading, writing or digital skills.

Leadership and management: Adequate

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting, based on providing a caring and nurturing environment for children. There have been a high number of staff changes in the last few years. However, leaders have succeeded in developing a close-knit team who work together supportively and purposefully, and who care for children effectively. Leaders have safe and appropriate processes in place for the recruitment of practitioners and ensure that staff are deployed efficiently. The statement of purpose is generally clear and provides a suitable picture of the setting to help parents make informed choices about its appropriateness for their child.

Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for practitioners to reflect on their own practice through supervisions and more formal appraisals. These allow practitioners to share ideas and concerns and receive helpful feedback from leaders. However, the setting leader does not have regular formal supervisions that allow her to consider her role and share her needs. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from useful professional learning opportunities, such as First Aid and food hygiene. These help to ensure that practitioners keep children safe and prioritise their well-being. However, professional learning for staff who provide education is less effective. While the setting's leader attends an appropriate range of training, other staff do not benefit from this well enough and it does not impact strongly enough practices. As a result, practitioners who provide early education do not always support or challenge children purposefully or consistently enough.

The setting's leader has a developing understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement at the setting. With support from early years advisory staff, the setting is working towards improving areas, such as the learning environment. Leaders allocate funding efficiently to address identified areas in need of improvement, for example to improve the learning environment for pre-school children. However, leaders do not draw on a broad enough range of evidence to allow them to evaluate important areas of the setting's work. For example, there are too few observations and evaluations by leaders to identify where practitioners' strengths and areas for development lie. Self-evaluation procedures do not focus well enough on the progress that children make in their learning. As a result, leaders do not always identify and prioritise the most important areas for improvement. This impacts directly on the quality of practitioners' work and children's progress.

Leaders work thoughtfully with parents and carers to identify the individual needs and preferences of their child before and during their time at the setting. This helps to ensure that practitioners care for children effectively. The setting keeps parents and carers well informed about their child's care and development through regular updates via email, letters and the settings App. They provide termly written reports that let parents know what their children have been doing. These often identify helpfully children's progress in areas, such as their physical skills, confidence and independence. Leaders work thoughtfully with local schools to support children's transition and share with them useful information, such as children's experiences during their time 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

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