



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

A report on

Homestead Day Nursery Ltd

**Old Wrexham Road
Gresford
Wrexham
LL12 8UA**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Homestead Day Nursery Ltd

Name of setting	Homestead Day Nursery Ltd
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Rachel Anne Lloyd and Kim Lesley Jones
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Rachel Lloyd, Amanda Jones and Zoe Johnson
Number of places	146
Age range of children	0 – 12 Years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	68
Number of children who receive funding for early education	19
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 7.30 – 18.00
Flying start service	Yes
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 Welsh language or culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	01/09/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection	No previous inspection.
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	05/03/2024
All children attending have English as their first language.	

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)	Excellent
Care and development	Excellent
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Excellent
Environment	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that practitioners use simple Welsh phrases and vocabulary so that children develop their understanding

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 case studies on its work in relation to creating a rich and stimulating learning environment to support children's independence as well as using findings from research to create a personalised approach to provision, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Children communicate very confidently using appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues. They make themselves understood using a combination of hand gestures and a growing range of appropriate vocabulary. They ask questions and discuss their interests maturely, knowing they are listened to and that their contributions are highly valued. Children express themselves well and make fully informed decisions about where and what they want to play as they move around the indoor and outdoor environments. They make good use of free access to the outdoor areas and move between the two with ease. Children share their needs and interests with practitioners effectively and know they will be acted on.

Children have a strong sense of belonging to the setting and are very familiar with daily routines. As a result, they cope extremely well with separation. Children form very strong, secure relationships with adults and a morning greeting from a familiar practitioner helps them develop excellent connections. They form valued friendships that support them to feel relaxed and ready to enjoy their time at the setting. Children feel very comfortable in their surroundings which supports them to play and learn successfully. For example, when a child spills their lunch, they feel calm and confident in the knowledge that practitioners will guide and support them.

Children interact enthusiastically with others. They participate well in group activities and are developing their ability to concentrate for longer periods of time. They are beginning to understand the concept of sharing, co-operate well with their peers and show a growing ability to take turns. For example, when investigating the outdoor area with their friends, they play and wait patiently for their turn before climbing the slope to the tree house. Children work together well. For example, when building an obstacle course from recycled materials they confidently support each other to complete their construction successfully. Children show good respect for property and use resources appropriately. They are careful when using hammers and saws, showing a good understanding of being safe.

Children show a high level of motivation towards their play. They become actively involved in exciting and stimulating learning opportunities, allowing them to learn from their mistakes. They explore their environment independently, and follow their interests freely, successfully gaining confidence as they access indoor and outdoor activities. Children become fully engaged in their activities and focus for an appropriate length of time for their age and stage of development, for example when experimenting with an exciting array of items to mix potions in the mud kitchen. They join in with songs and rhymes, smiling and laughing as they complete the actions.

Children are confident when investigating and trying things out for themselves. They have good awareness of their environment, access resources independently and show a high level of resilience. As they progress through the setting, children become increasingly self-reliant, play at being adults and relish the responsibility that is given to them. For example, in the café, very young children independently serve themselves lunch from bowls provided on the tables and older children collect their plates and serve themselves from a central station before taking their plates to their chosen seats.

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

Nearly all children including those with additional learning needs make very good progress from their starting point. Children develop very good communication skills and form excellent interpersonal skills with their peers. As they develop, children increase in their confidence to communicate with adults and quickly form respectful relationships with visitors. They show a good ability to communicate using basic sentence structures and many speak with increasingly mature sentences during meaningful conversations. They show a natural ability to respond to social cues and a few children with developing vocabulary communicate successfully using basic words and gestures.

Nearly all children listen well during story time and show very good understanding of the content. They display a natural love for books, and reach for book bags independently, understanding that the characters inside all relate to that book. They express concern when a character is missing and try looking for it in other story sacks. They show a good understanding of stories, for example when re-enacting parts of *The Gruffalo* as they play together. Children enjoy singing and joining in Welsh songs and listen well to Welsh stories during their 'Together Time' session. A

minority of children are developing in their confidence to use Welsh words for a few colours in their play. However, their understanding of a wider range of basic Welsh vocabulary is limited.

Nearly all children use their curiosity to develop good mark-making skills and consolidate their skills well, for example by drawing around their hands with highlighter pens on black shiny paper. A few children use small writing pads to record people's names using early writing representations and others develop good hand-eye co-ordination as they paint the outside walls with water. A few children are beginning to show an interest in letter shapes and formation. They can see the similarity between the letter 's' and the number '5' and are beginning to differentiate between them.

Nearly all children use mathematical language well to explore and understand the world around them. For example, when learning about bones, they compare sizes and discuss the longest and the shortest. They show good early understanding of many basic mathematical concepts such as 3D shapes and symmetry. For example, while investigating with building blocks they create symmetrical constructions of buildings. Many develop a good early understanding of capacity as they become totally immersed in pouring shiny beads from one container to another. They begin to understand the concept of full and empty and that pouring the beads is quicker than carrying the beads from one container to another. Children show awe and wonder as different sized images of bubbles are projected onto the wall. They quickly understand the difference between big bubbles and small bubbles and share this enthusiastically with their peers. As a result, children learn well from each other. They are beginning to show an early understanding of number, for example when placing wooden candles onto a cake and corresponding the number of candles to their age. A very few use their understanding further to add and subtract numbers up to 5.

Nearly all children develop good fine motor skills, for example when manipulating a hole punch in their play. They show good hand-eye coordination as they hammer nails into blocks of wood and saw planks in the tool school. They also develop good gross motor skills as they climb trees confidently, balance along branches and run up and down slopes. Children develop their balancing skills well as they travel gingerly along a wobbly plank of wood, assessing their own ability and taking responsible risk. They develop these skills further as they challenge themselves to climb ladders and stopping independently at a height that is comfortable to them.

Nearly all children use their imagination well to construct freely without preconceived end results. They develop great fascination as they use torches to create their own dance shows, wear coloured lensed glasses to change the world around them and look for magic in dancing lights projected from a glitter ball. Conversations held during children's creative play enable them to develop a rich vocabulary and advanced imagination.

Nearly all children show good problem-solving skills, for example when working together to build a bus during block play. They are equally confident when working independently, for example when working out how to carry water up a ladder before finally pouring it down a tube in the outdoor area. Children's digital skills are

developing well as they use small, battery powered metal detectors confidently to search for treasure in the sand.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners have a good knowledge of safeguarding and know the procedure to follow if they have concerns about a child. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Practitioners implement positive strategies to ensure that they keep children safe, including regular fire drill practice. As a result, adults and the children are aware of the procedure to follow in an emergency. Practitioners conduct effective risk assessments before embarking on outings to ensure that children are safe. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of risk benefits and ensuring that children manage their own risks, whilst being safely and effectively supervised.

Nearly all practitioners follow appropriate hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of germs. Children are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and nappy changing is completed appropriately. Some children are provided with soapy flannels before and after mealtimes rather than soap and running water and a communal towel is used. Practitioners fully support and successfully encourage children to have a healthy lifestyle, offering nutritious food consistently. The food choices are precisely thought out to meet the individual needs of the children. For example, babies sometimes have different food choices to ensure that they fully meet their developmental needs and requirements.

Practitioners ensure that all children have access to quality outdoor facilities that inspire them to be creative and active in the open air. These experiences help children to learn about the world around them and to develop an enjoyment of being outside and to appreciate nature. For example, a few enjoy the opportunity to sleep outside in cosy beds and sleeping bags. Practitioners implement an effective and appropriate behaviour management policy and use consistent, age-appropriate strategies to encourage positive interactions. For example, they delicately encourage children to share with each other if they are reluctant to do so but understand that this may be a sensitive issue for the children involved.

Practitioners are excellent role models for the children, show genuine interest and listen responsively to children, demonstrating warmth and kindness. This encourages children to be confident communicators and freely express themselves. For example, practitioners sit with children in the cosy area, talking to them about what they are doing, what others are doing and other interests such as their family. Practitioners successfully use an extensive range of strategies to support children to develop their speech and language. They work closely with outside agencies to implement effective practice and support. This includes using sign language consistently and effectively to support children with their speech and language and ensuring that they make eye contact and use clear language, so children understand what is being said to them. Practitioners use praise very successfully to encourage children and help them feel proud of their achievements and develop their self-esteem.

Leaders and practitioners have extensive knowledge of child development and use this information productively to plan innovative opportunities for the children. They provide an interesting and purposeful range of activities to support children in becoming curious and active learners. Practitioners consider children's development and interests consistently and comprehensively to provide a holistic learning environment. For example, they inspire children to experiment independently in the water play area by introducing large metal containers filled with different coloured water to see what other colours can be made. All practitioners consider children's interests very effectively when planning activities and resources. They observe children regularly and know what they enjoy and what skills they need to develop further. This means that planning is highly effective in providing stimulating experiences for all children that have a positive impact on their development. Practitioners cater well for children with additional learning needs. They provide tailored support to ensure that their needs are met and that they are fully involved in all activities and routines, ensuring that they develop to the best of their abilities and are involved in a full range of experiences.

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

Practitioners have an excellent understanding of the importance of learning through play and follow children's interests well. They provide high-quality real-life opportunities for learning through a very well-planned environment. Practitioners make good use of the well-resourced outdoor area to develop children's physical, creative, problem-solving and social skills. For example, they plan extensive opportunities for children to develop their skills in the wooded area where children become fully involved in story time around an open fire and explore their ability to climb, swing and balance. Practitioners make good use of these activities to further develop children's numeracy and literacy skills, as well as providing excellent opportunities for them to work as part of a team and solve problems together.

Practitioners motivate children well. They plan an interesting and varied curriculum that inspires children to be inquisitive and eager to learn. Practitioners work well with the children in a way that allows them to immerse themselves in a world of exciting and inspirational resources that is rich in upcycled and recycled materials, which they utilise creatively. They provide opportunities for children to explore the resources freely without preconceived end results. The environment offers children the opportunity to use their imaginations and develop their problem-solving skills very effectively. The interior and exterior learning areas interlink seamlessly, enabling children to have the freedom to explore the learning environment throughout the day and to develop their skills progressively.

Staff plan interesting learning experiences that encourage and support children's natural instinctive sense to create and be creative. The residential artist provides rich opportunities for children to experiment with different forms of media such as paints and charcoal. The artist supports and enhances children's interests effectively, such as exploring the effect of light in a methodical and unrushed manner and allowing the children space and time to observe, gather knowledge and become absorbed in their environment.

Practitioners are excellent language role models. They make very effective use of questioning to encourage children to articulate their thinking, solve problems and learn from mistakes. They provide children with useful opportunities to develop their communication skills and respond well to children's interest in books and stories as they read familiar stories to them when requested. However, their ability to support and develop children's ability in the use of the Welsh language is limited. They help children to develop an appropriate awareness of Welsh culture and belonging through celebrating events such as St Davids Day. Practitioners provide interesting activities and resources that help develop children's curiosity and early mathematical skills with opportunities to measure, count and sort objects both indoors and outdoors.

Practitioners offer a range of worthwhile experiences to support children in the development of their fine motor and early mark-making skills. They introduce children to the digital world effectively through an array of resources such as digital books, projectors, and metal detectors. Practitioners promote children's social, moral, cultural, and spiritual development well. They offer children appropriate opportunities to learn about festivals and cultures from around the world and provide a range of books and resources to ignite children's interests in their lives and the lives of others. They provide a calm and relaxed sensory space to allow children opportunities to be quiet and reflect, as well as to develop a sense of curiosity.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to visit the local community. Trips to the local library and walks around the local lake provide useful opportunities to encourage children to recognise local birds and develop a sense of belonging to their local environment.

Leaders have excellent understanding of child development. They respond well to children's interests and stage of development and record valuable observations to show children's progress. They plan future activities intelligently so that they meet the children's needs and develop their fascinations. Practitioners regularly make instant adaptations to their provision in response to children's learning. This flexibility allows for bespoke opportunities to enhance children's progress. Regular discussions with parents provide staff with a better understanding of their child's strengths and areas of development.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders are motivated and dedicated to providing an environment that is both innovative and stimulating. They have implemented effective risk assessments and appropriate security measures with controlled access to ensure that it is a safe and secure space for children. The environment is well maintained, and hazards are eliminated as far as reasonably possible. Leaders are forward thinking and highly creative in providing an environment that is safe and secure, which successfully allows children to experiment and take risks.

Leaders provide an environment that is inspirational and creatively designed, where all areas are utilised to their full potential. For example, a room that was previously a storage cupboard has been developed to create a water play area. It includes a

variety of different resources such as a large sink and several shower heads, which children enjoy exploring. Leaders give due consideration to all aspects of the environment and, as a result, they provide warm, welcoming spaces that inspire children's excitement and anticipation. Neutral colours, natural materials and a variety of plants provide children with areas where they can focus and become involved in their activities. Decorated corners that represent a forest and wildlife evoke children's imagination well and creative mood lighting further enhances the environment. Direct access to secure outdoor play spaces with sheltered areas provides creative spaces that allow children to freely investigate and learn. For example, tree stumps and branches encourage children to explore and take risks while a tunnel provides a different dimension to children's learning.

Leaders have a clear vision for the environment. They provide purposeful resources that support children's holistic development in an exciting and innovative way. Leaders consider children's development well and ensure appropriate access to activities that extended build upon individuals' abilities very effectively as they move through the setting. They use vintage furniture, plants and mirrors creatively and successfully to create a warm and homely environment where children, practitioners and visitors feel relaxed. The environment is further enhanced with a range of imaginative resources that stimulates children's senses extremely well. For example, fresh and dehydrated fruits, real fresh herbs and musical areas with a disused piano with its functions exposed are used effectively to inspire curiosity. They use re-cycled and natural materials extensively throughout to effectively enhance children's play and learning. For example, babies loved feeling and smelling the fruits that were freely available, developing their senses and curiosity. They offer a unique environment equipped with a vast array of imaginative, exciting, and creative resources that self-motivate children to become independent learners. This is a strength of the environment.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders have created a warm, caring, and homely atmosphere at the setting. They have a clear vision that focuses closely on establishing a holistic approach to the well-being and progress of every child. Key to their success is the way in which leaders have given detailed consideration to every room, ensuring that every stage of a child's development is catered for to the best possible standard. Leaders base their provision on the most up-to-date research, which ensures that every child has the best possible start to their education. They identify the setting's strengths and areas for development accurately and use findings from their research, visits and from working alongside educationalist to create a setting that is unique and personalised. This is an outstanding feature of the setting.

Leaders evaluate the work of the setting well and improvement planning is effective and has a positive impact. They gather information from regular walk-round observations, which focus on areas such the effectiveness of the environment in supporting children's learning. As a result, leaders have made changes to the provision that support children as they transition from one room to another. Leaders prioritise funding appropriately to address any identified areas for improvement. This has a positive impact on children's learning in the setting.

Leaders foster a strong sense of commitment and collaboration within the team. They value and respect all practitioners and encourage them to contribute to many important aspects of the setting's work. Staff appraisals, check-ins and monthly reviews with new staff help to ensure that everyone is supported and that all staff develop in their roles appropriately. Leaders make good use of in-house experience to upskill staff. For example, they use the residential artist's skills to mentor and up-skill staff. As a result, staff develop a cohesive understanding of why rooms are organised in a specific way and how to best use resources to develop children's curiosity and desire to learn. Well-considered and co-ordinated professional learning for practitioners across the setting demonstrates leaders' commitment to extending practitioners' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, they offer teaching and learning experiences of the highest quality to all children.

Leaders have fostered a strong sense of collaboration within the staff. A notable example of this is the way in which all practitioners contribute effectively to regular meetings where they evaluate children's progress and plan for their next steps. Leaders play an important role in ensuring that these discussions focus appropriately on the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding.

Leaders work well with other settings. They share their practice during training days and use their understanding of the new non-maintained curriculum to improve the confidence of its implementation with others. Practitioners have close relationships with parents and carers, who feel welcomed at the setting. Parents complete a profile all about their child, their likes, dislikes and how they can be best supported on entry to the setting. This provides leaders with valuable information, which helps them plan how they can best support individual children's needs. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress throughout the year and valuable information is shared securely via an electronic platform. Further general information is shared to a wider audience on their social media page.

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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Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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