



**Estyn**

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

**A report on**

**Shirenewton Playgroup**

**Shirenewton Recreation Hall  
Shirenewton  
Monmouthshire  
NP16 6RQ**

**Date of inspection: March 2022**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Shirenewton Playgroup

Name of setting	Shirenewton Playgroup
Category of care provided	Day care
Registered person(s)	Beverly Lindsay
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Beverly Lindsay
Number of places	26
Age range of children	Two and a half to four years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	8
Number of children funded for up to five terms	3
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 09.30-12.30
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	No
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people /children who use, or intend to use their service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	10th of April 2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	July 2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	22/03/2022
<p>The group is a pack away setting meaning that provision must be cleared away at the end of each session and re-set in the morning.</p> <p>Children attending the setting all have English as their first language.</p>	

## **Non-compliance**

**We identified serious non-compliance in relation to the environment and we have issued a priority action notice to the provider.**

**Information on all non-compliance is included in the Action and Improvement Summary report, which will be sent separate to the report by CIW.**

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that observations of all children identify learning clearly and are considered when planning to challenge children and move their learning forward
- R2 Ensure that required policies and procedures records are appropriately dated and contain all necessary information
- R3 Ensure that there are effective systems to identify key areas requiring development and to plan for improvement

## **What happens next**

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. CIW will undertake a follow up non-compliance inspection to evidence compliance with the regulations.

## Main findings

### Well-being:

Most children make appropriate choices and decisions about their care and play. They move between the two rooms and to different activities confidently. For example, many children started playing with the cars and garage before moving to other areas of interest. They make confident decisions at snack time about what they want to eat and drink. Many children express their views and ideas assertively, knowing that practitioners will listen and value what they say. During sessions and throughout the year, many children share their view with practitioners about activities and themes they enjoy to improve the provision.

All children cope very well as they separate from their parents and carers. Most are happy and smiling on arrival and are eager to hang their coat up, wash their hands and start playing. Most children have strong attachments with their key worker and other practitioners. For example, at story time a child sat on a practitioner's lap, enjoying the closeness of a familiar adult. Children are getting to know the new practitioners and are happy to approach them or seek their help during play. Children form close relationships with their peers and some preschool children show kindness to their younger friends. For example, they tenderly touch a child's face when talking with them and offer to get them a beaker at snack time and pour them some water.

Most children behave appropriately for their age and stage of development. They share resources well and are beginning to understand how to take turns, for example when using the zip wire in the nature garden and waiting to wash their hands. Most children know the daily routines well and respond to gentle warnings when it is nearly snack time or time to go outside. Preschool children prepare well for their transition to school through topic related activities. For example, they create a role play classroom with school uniforms to dress up in and read stories about starting school as well as visits to the local school.

Many children have fun, are active and motivated in their play. They show great enthusiasm in exploring the outdoor area and are curious to check on the progress of the tadpoles in the tank each day. Most children have great fun walking along balance beams and negotiating steppingstones. They jump up and down and clap with pride at their achievements. Most children concentrate well at chosen tasks. For example, at the dough table, children spend long periods designing and making insects, such as spiders, using a variety of materials. Younger children happily squeeze and press the dough while watching older children making insects. This entices them to create their own designs and they sustain their interest in doing this effectively.

All children develop good independence skills during daily routines. At snack time, children pour their own drinks and take responsibility for scraping any excess food into the food recycling bin and place their plates and cups on the tray. All children self-register on arrival by finding their name card, with staff on hand to support if needed. Children develop a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through interesting activities.

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

Most children make good progress from their starting points. Many develop communication and literacy skills well. They listen attentively at story time, follow stories read to them and comment on what happens in the story. They respond positively to instructions given directly to them. Most children speak well, they chat freely to each other and to adults and use appropriate language in play. For example, they use correct vocabulary for the tools in the woodwork area. Many show an interest in books, handling them skillfully, turning pages correctly from the front to back cover and using pictures to help them to explain facts from real-life experiences. A few children are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) for communication when they use a tablet to take photographs, which they then talk about with adults. They listen carefully to instructions about how to position the tablet to take an appropriate photograph.

Most children develop their physical skills well. They develop their gross motor skills through crawling and jumping, and take risks confidently in the garden area where they leap from tree stumps. Most children also develop effective fine motor skills. They make models in the dough and clay, which become increasingly more intricate, and they use screwdrivers appropriately in the woodwork area. They experiment with mark making confidently, using writing tools such as pens, highlighters, pencils and their own fingers to make marks on paper and in sand. With support, they attempt to write their name on their work and a majority are developing an effective pencil grip.

Most children engage well with activities that develop their creative skills. They draw confidently, making recognisable drawings, and explain their work. They express themselves through painting activities, where they choose the colours that they would like to use. Most children join in with songs and rhymes independently and express themselves through music by using instruments and singing nursery rhymes. Children engage well in role play activities, such as the home corner and the shop where they dress up and look after baby dolls.

Many children develop good mathematical skills and use simple mathematical language in their play with support, for example identifying the shape of a piece of wood on the woodworking table. They use the language of full and empty when catching overflowing water in the garden. Around half of the children count to 10 confidently in number songs and rhymes and a few children count to 20, a few are beginning to count the number of children present accurately in English and Welsh during circle time.

Nearly all children choose where they would like to play and select materials and resources needed to complete a task. Around half are beginning to solve simple problems, such as how to manoeuvre a ride on tractor around a hill and transfer mud from the water area to the mud kitchen. They persevere to complete a task, such as joining two pieces of wood on the woodworking table. A few children make intricate connections and work out where best to put the screw to join more than one piece of wood.

Many children understand and respond to simple Welsh commands to wash their hands for snack. Around half of the children confidently join in Welsh songs. A few

more able children count to 5 or 10 in Welsh with support. However, very few children use the Welsh language independently.

### **Care and development:**

Practitioners know their responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy and follow the setting's policies and procedures appropriately. For example, they meet the needs of children with allergies effectively and understand their responsibility to safeguard and protect children from harm and report child welfare concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. There is no policy in place should a child not be collected, although leaders are clear of suitable action to take. Most accident forms are completed consistently and shared with parents. There are appropriate infection control measures to ensure a hygienic environment and to minimise cross contamination.

Practitioners supervise the children closely and encourage them to play safely, whilst also allowing them to take some risks, for example showing a child how to carry scissors safely and reminding children to wear their safety glasses when playing at the woodwork table.

Practitioners adopt a calm, positive approach to managing children's behaviour and are good role models. They provide children with clear, age-appropriate directions and praise them consistently for kindness and good behaviour. Practitioners make good use of stickers, the 'kindness board' and certificates to reward children's achievements and nurture their confidence and self-esteem. All practitioners encourage good manners. This helps support children to manage their own behaviour and develop good social skills.

Most practitioners know the children well and have a clear understanding of their individual needs and the starting points in their learning. Practitioners use information collected before children start at the setting well. Arrangements to support children with additional learning needs are thorough. For example, reviewing children's individual development plans, health plans and personal information helps them plan how to care for each child effectively.

Practitioners provide a nurturing and caring environment where the needs of the children come first. For example, they are mindful of children's family circumstances and adapt their approach to suit. Settling in routines for new children are flexible to allow children to settle at their own pace. Gentle support and reassurance from practitioners helps to reassure children. Practitioners provide children with worthwhile activities and play experiences, both inside and outside, daily that interest and engage the children. They respond well to children's interests. For example, when a child brought in seeds from a sycamore tree, the child and practitioner thought of games they could play to add to the activity planning. Appropriate observations and assessments are in place for the preschool children to monitor their learning. Records show that these are being completed for the younger children but are not consistent to help monitor their development, identify gaps and plan for their future learning.

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

Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of child development and the requirements of the curriculum. They have a sound understanding of the importance of play and make effective use of the child's own experience to enhance learning, for example when making bridges in the block area. However, observations of children's learning are not always used well enough to ensure that children's learning is challenged appropriately and they reach their full potential, particularly for more able children.

Planning is child led and practitioners collaborate effectively through discussion to plan activities in response to children's interests and fascinations.

Most practitioners know the children well and monitor their well-being and engagement in learning purposefully to ensure that they are fully engaged in activities. Practitioners support less confident children effectively by encouraging and playing alongside them. All practitioners use praise and celebration of children's achievements effectively.

Worthwhile outdoor activities encourage children to take risks and become confident explorers of their environment. Practitioners encourage children to become independent learners and to find the appropriate equipment to complete a task. For example, they collect and mix sand and water to use in the mud kitchen. All practitioners value the process of creativity over the end product and encourage children to be creative. They provide valuable opportunities for children to learn about the world around them and to show care and respect for living things. For example, children look after plants in the garden.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to use their language, numeracy and ICT skills appropriately. They encourage children to listen carefully and to join in with discussion and conversation, extending their language by introducing new vocabulary, such as the names of the tools in the woodwork area. Many practitioners support children in using number skills, for example encouraging them to count as they build with blocks. Around half of practitioners intervene sensitively in children's play and are skilled at using open-ended questions to develop children's thinking and extend their ideas.

Practitioners use Welsh at snack time when they offer children water or milk. However, not all practitioners are confident in the use of Welsh language. Practitioners plan worthwhile opportunities to promote children's understanding of the traditions and culture of Wales. For example, they celebrate St David's Day by eating Welsh foods at snack time and dressing up in traditional Welsh costume.

Practitioners plan authentic and worthwhile activities to support spiritual, moral and cultural development in a meaningful way. They are good role models, encouraging children to be kind and to show respect for each other. They encourage children to be curious about the lives and beliefs of others, for example exploring Chinese food provided by a parent at Chinese New Year. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about recycling by sorting items appropriately.

Practitioners observe children regularly. They build a picture of the child's response to learning activities. However, they do not always identify the learning taking place to help them to plan future learning. Practitioners use assessments of children's development in literacy, numeracy and Welsh skills to inform parents of their child's development and ways in which they can help at home. However they do not use these well enough to plan activities that move learning forward and, as a result, practitioners do not always challenge children effectively.

### **Environment:**

Leaders have clear systems to ensure that the premises are safe and secure and that practitioners implement these effectively. For example, they complete daily safety checks of the premises and outdoor nature area before children arrive. Suitable risk assessments are in place and leaders review these periodically. Some required records are in place, including fire risk assessments, but the gas safety check has expired and the five-year electrical safety check was not available. Practitioners ensure that fire exits are clear, that the main door is secure and that children can move between rooms safely. Practitioners supervise the arrival and collection of children closely and ensure that all children leave with a parent, carer or nominated person. Regular fire drill practices ensure that all practitioners and children know how to evacuate the premises safely in the event of an emergency.

The premises are welcoming and well organised and offer children ample space in which to play and learn. The indoor and outdoor play areas provide a rich learning environment for children to explore and learn, and practitioners adapt the provision and resources in response to children's interests. Play spaces offer suitable opportunities for risk taking, with the introduction of the wood working area and opportunities to climb, balance and use a simple zip line in the garden. However, the playrooms are not adequately heated and rarely reach the minimum temperature for children to play comfortably. This is placing children's health and well-being at risk. Practitioners display children's artwork and creations on doors and windowsills in the main playroom, giving them a sense of belonging and valuing their achievements.

Leaders offer a good range of quality toys and resources to stimulate children's curiosity and interest and support their skills and learning. For example, tweezers, thick pencils and thin pencils help to promote children's hand-eye coordination and pencil control effectively. They have ensured that children have access to a suitable range of accessible reading materials, for example books in a cosy book area and posters and non-fiction books on the interest table. Play materials promote cultural awareness, including Welsh heritage and equal opportunities, successfully. This ensures that children gain a good understanding of the world they live in. Leaders provide children with suitably sized furniture, such as tables and chairs, as well as other equipment to promote their physical development and independence skills successfully. Leaders frequently review the quality and cleanliness of toys and resources, and dispose of any broken items promptly. They ensure that toilets and nappy changing facilities are clean and comply with hygiene requirements.

### **Leadership and management:**

The person in charge takes an active role in setting life. Both she and the deputy work closely with practitioners and, as a result, practitioners feel well supported and



valued. There is a positive, happy ethos throughout the setting. All practitioners and nearly all parents feel comfortable in approaching leaders with concerns or suggestions for improvement. Practitioners regularly discuss ways to amend the provision in response to children's interests.

An effective system of appraisal encourages practitioners to review their practice to agree targets for development and identify any professional learning requirements. All leaders and practitioners value professional development opportunities highly and external training is attended regularly. They record their learning and any ideas to improve the setting. These are discussed at regular staff meetings and short term action plans are devised where appropriate. The setting works closely with the local authority advisory teacher, responding well to advice.

All policies and procedures are dated. However, dates do not accurately reflect annual reviews. Attendance registers do not clearly identify who is present at any one time. The person in charge ensures that the statement of purpose provides a true picture of what the setting has to offer. Self-evaluation processes draw appropriately on first-hand evidence to identify the setting's strengths. Leaders take good account of the views of practitioners, parents and children. Practitioners understand their roles in helping to achieve the setting's goals. However, the setting's processes for identifying areas to improve and planning to implement these are not robust enough and, as a result, work to bring about required improvements is limited.

Leaders have suitable recruitment procedures and provide good support for the induction of new practitioners. There are additional practitioners available during the session, funded through the early years development grant. This exceeds recommended ratios and is having a positive impact on the welfare of the children.

The setting has close relationships with parents and carers. Practitioners communicate regularly via doorstep conversations and a closed social media group where photographs are uploaded of the daily activities. This has a positive impact on relationships as it helps parents to start discussions with their child about their time at the setting. Leaders send regular newsletters to parents to inform them of the activities planned for the following week, and this supports parents and carers in engaging in the life of the setting.

Leaders implement effective transition arrangements that support children effectively as they prepare to move to the local primary school. Practitioners walk the children to the local school in the summer term, where they have a story, snack and meet their new teacher who also visits the setting to meet the children.

## 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))

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