

A report on

St Mary's Pre-School

**Wrexham District Scout Hut
Station Approach
Wrexham
LL11 2AA**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About St Mary's Pre-School

Name of setting	St Marys Pre-school
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Deborah Williams
Person in charge	Gwendoline Sydenham
Number of places	19
Age range of children	22 months to 4-years old
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	4 three-year-olds and 4 four-year olds
Number of children who receive funding for early education	4
Opening days / times	Monday to Thursday from 9:15am to 3:00pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and intends to become a bilingual service or demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	This is the first inspection since re-registration.
Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first inspection since re-registration.

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Dates of this inspection visit(s)	18/03/2025
From cohort of children attending there are 14 languages spoken. None of the children speak Welsh at home.	

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)	
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)	Good
Environment	Good
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 responsible individual (RI) must address these.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that risk assessments are fully reflective of all aspects of the environment and activities, these are completed and reviewed regularly, especially when there are any changes to the premises or the needs of children
- R2 Ensure that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and include reference to current Welsh legislation and guidance
- R3 Strengthen and formalise the supervision and appraisal system
- R4 Address the non-compliance identified during the inspection

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 are confident communicators and express themselves well. For example, children enjoy introducing themselves and showing what they like to play with. Nearly all children approach practitioners with confidence to make their requests such as using the electronic light board to draw on. Nearly all children make choices with confidence. They move from the indoors to the outdoor play area independently and sustain interest for extended periods of time. A few children express their wishes through gestures and facial expressions and their requests are noticed by responsive practitioners.

Nearly all children demonstrate a high level of resilience as they cope extremely well with separation from their parents and carers. This is because daily routines recognise and support their individual needs well. Nearly all children are familiar with the daily routines. For example, children wash their hands before and after eating. Younger children feel calm having their nappy changed as practitioners reassure them by chatting to them.

Nearly all children have a strong sense of belonging forming positive relationships. They express enthusiasm and enjoyment in the company of their friends and practitioners. For example, friends match colourful patterned socks and help one another to peg them onto the washing line. Nearly all children enjoy the social occasion of snack time. They sit at the table maturely and practise using good manners.

Throughout their play and learning activities, nearly all children are fully engaged and consistently show respect for their toys, resources and each other. They are continuously involved in making decisions about what they want to do and show good awareness of rules, which keep others safe.

Nearly all children have considerable freedom to explore their environment safely. They are self-motivated to choose their own play and guide their activities. For example, they take turns to operate the remote-control cars and develop their imagination well as they gather their friends together to hunt for a crocodile. Nearly all children develop their creativity well through a variety of craft activities on offer. For instance, children enjoyed quiet time in the craft corner, taking time to explore the daffodils before creating their own floral paintings. A few children enjoy mark making and decorating their playdough creations with pinecones and glass beads. During outdoor play, children develop their physical skills and natural curiosity effectively. For example, they practise their balancing skills walking across wooden planks and use a variety of scented spices and natural ingredients to mix and mash in bowls of soil.

Nearly all children respond well to opportunities to develop independence. For example, during snack time, they pour their own drinks and use a knife proficiently. A few children enjoy watering the flowers, taking note of their bright colours. They enjoy scooping up bubbles with their hands and explore how they glisten in the sunshine. Nearly all children do things for themselves successfully. As a result, children develop their self-help skills and build on their creativity to experiment and be imaginative.

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: Good

Practitioners know children well. Their interactions are positive, demonstrating warmth and kindness. Practitioners praise children consistently for their efforts and celebrate their achievements.

Practitioners understand their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe and healthy. They implement appropriate policies and procedures well to promote healthy lifestyles. For example, they organise plenty of opportunities for children to be active and play outdoors in the fresh air. Practitioners encourage children to brush their teeth and wash their hands and this helps to develop their personal hygiene practice effectively. They create sociable opportunities for children at mealtimes and encourage healthy eating, making sure fresh drinking water and milk is readily available. Practitioners complete most accident and incident records accurately and these are signed by parents and carers to evidence they are kept informed. They record the daily hours of children's attendance and those caring for them. Practitioners conduct fire drills to make sure that children know what to do if they have to leave the premises in the event of an emergency. Nappy changing procedures are in line with current infection control guidance. Practitioners have completed mandatory training suitable for the ages of children cared for. They are confident about implementing their learned knowledge about safeguarding procedures appropriately into practice. The setting's arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners have a good understanding of positive behaviour management strategies, they encourage children to take turns, share and be kind to their friends. They are responsive to children's requests and focus on children's interests, their individual needs and development. Practitioners provide sensitive support for all children including those with additional learning needs. They implement effective strategies to ensure that children settle and their play and learning experiences are positive.

Practitioners collaborate well to build children's confidence. They organise interesting play and learning experiences, which are led by the children's choices. Practitioners track children's progress appropriately and draw on these observations to create meaningful play and learning activities. They plan appropriately for the next steps in children's development and review progress regularly. Practitioners organise innovative and enriching activities that inspire children's creativity. For instance, they provide a still life art area, encouraging children to observe and note the beauty of daffodils or the form and textures of large pieces of driftwood.

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 how children learn through play and exploration. They plan a wide range of stimulating activities promoting children's natural curiosity well. Practitioners are developing a responsive approach to planning based on regular observations of children to identify their needs and interests. They organise activities to fully engage children and provide them with worthwhile resources to follow their fascinations. For example, following a visit to the local train station, practitioners provide a range of train related resources for children to make their own train stations.

Practitioners are good role models and show children how to use resources appropriately. For example, they model how to use a manual juicer to squeeze limes and lemons to make cakes and potions and how to use a metal detector to find treasure. They model language effectively and introduce children to new vocabulary during their play. For example, when making mud cakes in the outdoor kitchen, they introduce new vocabulary such as 'sprinkle', 'squeezing' and 'ingredients.'

Practitioners plan engaging opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills in all areas of the provision. They strive consistently to develop children's understanding by questioning them skilfully while they play. For example, while children use metal detectors to search for treasure in the sand tray, practitioners encourage them to sort their treasure into groups and count them. They challenge children to decide which group is biggest or smallest. Practitioners also provide regular opportunities to develop children's early digital skills effectively. They encourage children, across the setting, to use electronic tablets, digital microphones, torches and remote-controlled toys

Practitioners implement confident teaching methods encouraging children to persevere purposefully with their tasks. This has a positive effect on their knowledge and understanding. Practitioners prompt children to try independently when solving problems and, as a result, children develop their problem-solving skills well. For example, they motivate children to flow water through pipes and gutters, while trying to avoid spilling any water. Practitioners intervene skilfully during activities. They encourage children

thoughtfully to experiment during play and as a result, most children develop as confident learners.

Practitioners ensure children develop their physical skills successfully, such as encouraging them to make obstacle courses with large crates, tyres and planks. They encourage children to negotiate uneven surfaces and climb onto a swing made with tyres. Practitioners organise experiences to develop children's creativity effectively. For instance, they encourage children to create rhythms with tambourines, pots, pans and develop their construction skills by building towers to different heights.

Practitioners develop children's spiritual, moral and social skills effectively. They promote Welsh culture well by celebrating St David's and St Dwynwen's Days and tasting traditional Welsh foods. They introduce basic Welsh words to children throughout their play and learning activities to develop their understanding and use of the language. Practitioners celebrate diversity successfully by learning about the customs of the Chinese New Year and Diwali. They have provided a wide range of culturally diverse books and toys across the setting. Practitioners provide children with opportunities to paint and make poppies out of paper plates while learning about Remembrance Day and why people hold a minute's silence. They encourage children to think about how they can support others who need help and organise related activities to support events such as Comic Relief.

Practitioners provide parents and carers with beneficial information about their children's development and achievements through social media, detailed written reports and sharing of children's learning journals.

Environment: Good

Leaders provide a safe, clean and interesting environment where children can play independently. The environment is well maintained both indoors and outdoors. Leaders ensure that the environment meets children's needs and enables nearly all children to reach their full potential.

Leaders make sure most of the risk assessments identify potential hazards and implement procedures to manage these risks appropriately. However, the outdoor play area and activities have not been fully risk assessed. Leaders make sure that staff follow good hygiene practices which help to minimise any risks to children's health and safety. Leaders make sure everyone understands their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. They ensure that clear information is available to everyone about how emergencies are dealt with. Leaders make sure that practitioners supervise children well throughout their play and learning experiences.

Leaders ensure that the layout of the play areas promotes children's independence successfully, enabling them to access good quality toys and resources with ease. There is a

variety of recycled and natural resources to develop children's sensory, language, numeracy and self-awareness skills. Attractive cosy corners enable children to rest and have some quiet time. There are ample toys, resources and furniture suitable for the ages cared for. Leaders promote children's awareness about the world around them and their community purposefully. For example, there are books, dolls and small world figures showing people from different cultures. Leaders provide a designated area for children's personal items, creating a sense of belonging. They present children's artwork well, showing children that their efforts are valued. Leaders ensure books are displayed attractively, encouraging children to read them.

Leaders have successfully used grant monies to develop an exciting outdoor play area, giving children more opportunities to play in the fresh air in all weathers. This area is accessible for children to use freely throughout the day. Leaders extend children's knowledge and development in the outdoors by offering a good range of resources, which develops their natural curiosity, physical and sensory skills well. For example, the forest school area provides children with opportunities to take positive risks such as developing their confidence to use the tyre swing and climb the rugged, uneven bank. Leaders have organised exploration and discovery areas creatively. For example, the enchanting fairy garden, adorned with tiny furniture and delicate fairy and woodland animal figures, fosters children's imagination. The outdoor kitchen area provides children with opportunities to use authentic crockery, utensils and cooking resources. For instance, children sprinkle scented spices and squeeze lemon and lime zest into their soil concoctions. Leaders make sure that children have opportunities to learn about the natural world and have organised areas for them to plant and grow flowers to develop their caring skills.

Leadership and management: Adequate

Leaders have a clear vision for developing the provision, making sure that relationships with parents, carers and professionals are positive. They have created a setting where children's well-being and progress are at the centre of everything they do. This vision is based on ensuring equity of provision for all children. They have built a strong practitioner team, who work together well. Overall, leaders manage the service appropriately. However, improvements are required to meet with regulations and standards.

Leaders have written an appropriate statement of purpose with the required information for parents and carers to make an informed decision about the service. Policies and procedures are in place, but not all of these have been recently reviewed and updated to include reference to current Welsh legislation and guidance. For example, the food and nutrition policy does not contain reference to the Welsh Government best practice guidance in food and nutrition for childcare settings. Leaders are notifying Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of significant events or changes to the setting. They have completed the most recent assessment of service statement.

Leaders have established self-evaluation and improvement planning processes that consider the views of a wide range of stakeholders. Practitioners have appropriate opportunities to consider what works well and what could be improved. Leaders share this information through practitioner meetings and informal weekly discussions. Leaders also consult with parents and carers regularly to gain their views about the provision. They use this information appropriately to plan for improvement. For example, they have developed the outdoor environment effectively to provide an improved range of outdoor learning experiences for children.

Leaders focus on providing quality professional development for practitioners, which look at aspects such as language development and assessment processes. Leaders have provided training for practitioners on outdoor learning and the use of different resources. This has increased opportunities to develop a range of children's skills. There are worthwhile opportunities for practitioners to share practice and learn from each other. This approach to professional development ensures that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard and, as a result, children make very good progress in many areas.

Practitioners value opportunities to discuss the provision with leaders and share any issues relating to the setting or their own health and welfare. Leaders provide support for the team and for one another on a daily basis. They ensure that practitioners are confident about safeguarding procedures. However, a formalised supervision and appraisal system has not been fully embedded into practice and conducted regularly. Satisfactory systems are in place to make sure that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for leaders and practitioners are current. However, leaders have not ensured all the required information has been collated in the practitioner's employment and volunteer files. As a result, they have not fully ascertained the persons suitability for their role in caring for children, as part of the setting's wider safeguarding practices to meet requirements. Leaders have gathered the required information in the children's personal records to ensure that they have the information they need to meet their individual needs.

Leaders have established beneficial partnerships, and this has a positive effect on the provision and outcomes for children. For instance, practitioners work well with professional agencies, such as the local authority and the speech and language therapy service. Leaders have built positive partnerships with parents and carers. There are suitable procedures for children's transition from home to the setting and from the setting into school. For example, all parents and carers are invited to join their children in the setting while they settle. This enables parents, carers and children to get to know the setting's arrangements and supports improved outcomes for 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)

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

This document has been translated by Trosol/Prysg (English to Welsh).