

A report on

St Gwynan's Pre-school

**Early Years Unit
Ysgol Capelulo
Treforis Road
Dwygyfylchi
LL34 6RA**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About St Gwynan's Pre-school

Name of setting	St. Gwynan's Pre-School
Category of care provided	Sessional Day Care
Registered person(s)	Marie Packham
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Marie Packham
Number of places	26
Age range of children	2-4
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	19
Number of children who receive funding for early education	6
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday: 9am – 1pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	23/05/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	10/01/2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03/06/2025
<p>The setting offers a wide range of activities that are planned to suit children's age, stage and individual needs. They plan using a 'rolling' system, which take account of the children's interests and includes child led, adult led and next step activities. All activities are risk assessed and children are encouraged to contribute to any review or evaluation of their experiences, as they are able and willing.</p>	

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	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1. Provide more opportunities to develop children's independence particularly around food and drink times
- R2. Ensure that the kitchen conforms to environmental health and food safety regulations

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

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at St. Gwynan's Pre-School and settle quickly and happily on arrival. Many children are confident and enthusiastic communicators and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. For example, children were keen to engage with inspectors, chatting enthusiastically with them, involving them in their play and proudly pointing out their displayed works of art. They confidently ask practitioners for help and assistance when needed and non-verbal children effectively communicate their needs. Children have good opportunities to make choices and decisions about what affects them. For example, they choose what activities to engage with and decide to play indoors or outdoors. Many children are developing the ability to express how they are feeling effectively knowing that practitioners will respond and listen to them respectfully.

Nearly all children enter the setting eagerly and are individually and warmly greeted by practitioners. Children are keen to share their news with practitioners who listen attentively and show genuine interest in what they are doing. Children look pleased and feel valued knowing that practitioners take a genuine interest in them and in their lives outside the setting. Children cope well with separation from their parents and settle quickly into familiar routines. For example, they find their coat peg on arrival and sit on a 'spot' to await registration. Nearly all children are active and express enjoyment. For example, children shrieked with delight when the bubble machine was brought out and enthusiastically cheered when their dinner arrived from the school kitchen. Children who are upset receive attentive and nurturing support and quickly settle and resume their play and daily activities.

Children's interactions with practitioners are consistently positive. They constantly chatter away to practitioners and are relaxed in their company. Children invite practitioners to join in with their play and clearly benefit from these interactions. For example, children developed their imagination as a practitioner rocked their 'boat' during a storm and immersed themselves in the story of their play. Children are establishing strong friendships and are effectively developing the skills of sharing and turn taking. A few children are developing appropriate empathy towards others. For example, during imaginative play, they ensured that all the astronauts on board the rocket had a seat prior to take off. Many children follow instructions from practitioners readily, such as helping at tidy up time and waiting for their colour to be called before starting their play.

Nearly all children have fun, are active and motivated in their play and learning. They enjoy a very good range of interesting opportunities, sometimes linked to stories they have

enjoyed, inside and outside. Children confidently explore the environment and enthusiastically engage with activities which interest them. For example, many children concentrate for a long time as they immerse themselves in a multi-sensory 'cement' making activity. They enjoy exploring the textures of foam and sand and the effects of mixing them together. Children enjoy a good balance of free play and adult led activities. Nearly all children sustain focus and concentration for an age-appropriate amount of time.

Nearly all children have some opportunities to develop their skills of independence. For example, children access toys and activities confidently and are developing independence around self-care such as accessing the toilet facilities and hand washing. Children are supported in transitions helping them to become confident with new routines, for example some children are accompanied to the school canteen to eat their lunch in preparation for a new routine next term.

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 have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They implement policies and procedures consistently and are confident in their roles and responsibilities. Practitioners are aware of the procedure to follow in an emergency and practise regular fire drills with the children. Practitioners follow the medication policy competently, record accidents and incidents appropriately and collect information relating to food allergies prior to children starting at the setting. They employ good hygiene practices consistently, encouraging children to wash their hands and deal with intimate care such as nappy changing with a high regard for infection control. Practitioners support and encourage children to follow healthy lifestyles, for example participating in daily outdoor play and offering healthy choices for snacks and drinks at food times. However, practitioners don't always take advantage of opportunities to further develop children's independence particularly around food and drink times.

Practitioners have a good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm, including how to respond to any child protection concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Thorough daily handovers between practitioners and parents ensure key information regarding children's care is exchanged.

Practitioners are patient, nurturing and caring. They communicate warmly with children, often with humour, creating a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Practitioners are positive role models and interact competently with children during their play activities. They successfully implement the positive behaviour management policy using a range of strategies to support children's behaviour and helping them to develop skills such as sharing. Practitioners use positive praise effectively and consistently. They know the children extremely well and use their knowledge of their likes and interests to initiate meaningful conversations, listening carefully and providing genuine responses. This is a real strength of the setting. Practitioners support children ably in their play and recognise opportunities to further extend learning. For example, staff ask open questions during a multi-sensory activity such as 'what does it feel like?' and 'what does it smell like?' which elicits some delightful responses from the children.

Practitioners follow effective procedures to support children with additional learning needs and provide nurturing and tailored care. They reflect professionally on effective strategies, training opportunities and the impact on their individual practice and the developmental progress made by children. Practitioners track children's progress effectively and have a secure understanding of their stages of development.

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

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and how children learn. They have high expectations and understand children's individual strengths and needs extremely well. They regularly observe children at play and provide a wide range of stimulating learning experiences to encourage their curiosity consistently.

Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities to develop children's numeracy skills. For example, they encourage children to compare the amount of water in their potion jars and support children to recite numbers forwards and backwards to sixteen during registration. Through skilful discussions, practitioners introduce the concept of measurement effectively during construction and investigative play. Practitioners provide a range of experiences for children to develop their digital skills by using digital devices and toys effectively. As a result, children are beginning to choose equipment independently and are starting to understand the purpose of digital technology.

Practitioners use questioning skilfully to enhance children's problem-solving and thinking skills. They are also very skilful at understanding when to intervene and when to step back to give children time to work things out for themselves. Practitioners encourage children to think for themselves, asking open ended questions to challenge further consideration. However, opportunities to develop children's independence skills are sometimes missed, for example, during registration.

Practitioners make effective use of the Welsh language with the children. They speak clearly and take opportunities to introduce new vocabulary purposefully, encouraging children to develop their understanding of simple words and phrases. They encourage children to join in singing a range of Welsh songs and rhymes and use incidental Welsh to give instructions and congratulate them when they have done well. However, children's independent use of Welsh is at an early stage of development.

Practitioners are good role models for developing children's communication skills. For example, they share books with children, model how to read a book correctly and discuss the story enthusiastically. As a result, children develop an early enjoyment of reading. Practitioners encourage children to engage in purposeful mark making experiences such as writing shopping lists to buy ingredients for potions in the mud kitchen.

Practitioners plan an engaging breadth of learning and play activities that enable children to develop a range of skills progressively in all areas. Practitioners ensure that many activities are child initiated and come from children's interests. For example, they provide exciting opportunities for children to become pirates after reading a story about a pirate and his 'Golden Pants.' Children develop their physical and problem-solving skills as they build a pirate ship and an obstacle course to find the pirates' treasure. Practitioners carry out regular observations of children's play and use the information well to identify next steps in learning.

Practitioners plan a range of experiences that enable children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. They provide children with a range of multicultural books, toys and small world figures to begin to learn about diverse cultures and their traditions. Practitioners provide children with meaningful opportunities to learn about their Welsh identity and culture through celebrating St David's Day, tasting traditional Welsh foods and learning Welsh folk dances.

Practitioners provide informative displays of families and local features helping children develop a sense of community. Practitioners make effective use of the local school to enrich children's learning and work with the local church to raise money for a local hospice. This fosters a sense of belonging and enriches children's knowledge of their locality and traditions.

Environment: Good

The setting is safe and well maintained. The locked entrance gate and well managed arrival and departure procedures, ensures that only authorised access is granted by staff. Leaders provide an extensive range of regularly reviewed risk assessments to support safety within the environment. Practitioners keep children safe by implementing risk assessments and completing daily checks to identify, and where possible, eliminate risks

to children's safety. The setting is clean and practitioners complete daily cleaning tasks to ensure that the setting and resources are maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. However, despite persistent efforts by practitioners' to arrange repairs, an area of peeling paint and damp staining above a food preparation surface in the kitchen cannot be effectively cleaned. Robust infection control practices successfully minimise any risk to children's health. Children's toilets and nappy changing facilities are clean and well maintained. Children confidently access soap and hand drying facilities.

Leaders provide children with a welcoming and attractive environment, decorated in bright colours and an array of textures. Children enjoy ample space inside to play, learn and move around independently. The playroom is attractively zoned, providing children with opportunities and choice when deciding where to play and what to play with. For example, children can access a well-resourced home corner, dressing up area, a comfortable reading area and a very popular 'salon' area. Children can relax and enjoy quiet times in areas with soft cushions and peaceful music. Practitioners decorate the environment with examples of children's work and photographs of their families. Children enjoy looking at their work and photographs and this provides them with a strong connection to the space, a sense of belonging and a feeling of pride in what they have achieved. Further displays remind children of visitors to the setting such as firefighters and police officers. Children regularly dress up in police and firefighter uniforms reinforcing previous learning experiences.

The outside area, although modest in size is thoughtfully and well laid out. Children easily access the outside area as free flow play is encouraged. Varied outdoor resources and interesting, zoned areas, challenge and stimulate children's curiosity and interest. For example, children become immersed in making potions in the mud kitchen. Children naturally challenge themselves to integrate a small ramp in a variety of ways into their play, using it to develop physical skills as something to climb and jump off or creatively by turning it upside down and making a boat. Children can access some of the neighbouring school's grounds which provides them with space for greater physical, outdoor play.

Leaders provide very good quality and developmentally appropriate play and learning resources to promote a wide range of variety and choice for children. They combine natural and real-world resources, that inspire curiosity and provide opportunities for imaginative play that enhance children's learning. For example, providing flasks, herbs and flowers for children to use when concocting magic potions in the mud kitchen.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have high expectations of themselves, practitioners and children. They provide practitioners with strong leadership and have high aspirations for them, empowering them to lead and make decisions for the benefit of children. This clear vision and ethos leads to

effective teamwork and successful co-operation among practitioners. Leaders have a clear statement of purpose which provides an accurate picture of the setting, and relevant policies are regularly reviewed and shared with parents and practitioners. This creates a safe and caring environment in which children can thrive. As a result, children enjoy attending the setting and make good progress.

Leaders have established good self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures that consider the views of a range of stakeholders. Leaders consult with practitioners, parents and carers to seek their views about the setting and what needs to be improved. Leaders use this information purposefully to plan for improvement. They have established a positive culture of continuous evaluation, aiming for provision of the highest standard for children in their care.

Leaders use budgets and grants effectively and prioritise expenditure purposefully against targets. They enhance children's learning experiences by investing in valuable resources, such as new furniture, which allows children to access resources more easily, and the outdoor playhouses that provide shelter for a greater range of activities. For example, the potion station and maths shop have been set up in the playhouses to encourage and develop children's mathematical and communication skills. This thoughtful arrangement encourages active participation and ensures that children are fully engaged in their play and learning.

Leaders follow effective arrangements to supervise and monitor practitioners performance. Together, they reflect on their roles and responsibilities and identify sensible targets for improvement and organise valuable, good quality training as necessary. For example, the whole team have received purposeful training to support their ability to follow children's immediate interests along with strategies to improve children language and communication skills. This has led to the provision of more enriched learning experiences for children and increased opportunities to develop their confidence and social skills.

Leaders foster a range of effective partnerships that support and extend children's learning successfully. There are strong links with parents, outside agencies and the local education authority. They provide parents with regular information about their children's progress, and the range of activities that they enjoy while at the setting. They ensure regular opportunities for parents to discuss their child's experiences and celebrate their progress in different skills. Leaders are developing positive links with the local school and, as a result, there are suitable arrangements in place to ensure that children transition to the next stage of their education smoothly.

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