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**Arolygiaeth Gofal**  
**Cymru**  
**Care Inspectorate**  
**Wales**

**A report on**

**Dragon's Daycare**

**The School House**  
**Tanyfron Road**  
**Wrexham**  
**LL11 5SA**

**Date of inspection: February 2026**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Dragon's Daycare

Name of setting	Dragon's Daycare
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Katie Cleverley
Person in charge	Katie Cleverley
Number of places	31
Age range of children	3 – 4 year olds
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	11
Number of children who receive funding for early education	6
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 5.30pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	09/06/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection	15/06/2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	24/02/2026

## Summary

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Well-being</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Learning</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care and development</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and assessment</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

## **Non-compliance**

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure children's accidents and incident forms are signed by parents and carers to evidence they have been kept informed
- R2 Continue to strengthen monitoring and assessment processes to have a stronger understanding of children's progress over time against the developmental pathways
- R3 Regularly review and update policies and procedures in line with current statutory legislation and guidance

## **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 enjoy introducing themselves and showing what they like to play with. They approach practitioners with confidence to make their requests and know they will be listened to.

Nearly all children cope extremely well with separation from their parents and carers. This is because daily routines support their individual needs, and they are greeted warmly by practitioners. Nearly all children are familiar with daily routines, for example, they place their photograph in the wooden toy house to show their attendance and organise their personal items on a peg.

Nearly all children have a strong sense of belonging and form positive relationships. Many children enjoy the social occasion of mealtimes. They sit at the table maturely, practising good manners and many are learning to take turns, share and co-operate well. They take turns to use cameras, share arts and crafts materials and co-operate to tidy up their toys. Many children show kindness to their friends and enjoy caring for their baby dolls. Nearly all children express enthusiasm and enjoyment in the company of their friends during story time and join in enthusiastically.

Nearly all children are active and curious learners. They are self-motivated to choose their toys and resources to direct their play. For example, children develop their innovation skills as they transport water using a variety of containers and take interest to explore a stem of broccoli. During outdoor play, children develop their physical skills and natural curiosity effectively. They show great enjoyment in exploring the garden area. They take interest in exploring plants with a magnifier and confidently walk up and down the rugged bank.

Nearly all children respond well to opportunities to develop their independence. They explore their play area safely, making choices to play freely indoors or outdoors. Many children are confident to pour their own drinks. Many children sustain their concentration well. They take time to consider what craft materials to use to create their artwork. For instance, children enjoyed sitting in the garden making bird nest creations with a variety of natural and recycled materials. Overall, many children manage to accomplish tasks for themselves and this helps them to develop 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): Good**

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their communication and independent skills during their time at the setting. They listen carefully to practitioners and other children and many respond confidently when talking to visitors. Many enjoy stories and listen to them attentively for sustained periods. They know how to handle books as a reader and understand that words and pictures have meaning. A few children independently choose to look at books together and talk about the pictures. Most children develop their vocabulary well and a few use specific vocabulary to describe what they are doing in their play. For example, when making soup in the home area children discuss if they need to chop, slice or mash the vegetables. Children who are reluctant to speak when they arrive at the setting develop their confidence quickly within the nurturing environment.

Many children use a wide range of mark making equipment with confidence and dexterity and make good progress in developing their emerging writing skills. They make notes on chalk boards as reminders for a shopping list during their play in the mud kitchen. Many children play well together and negotiate effectively when sharing resources. For example, children discuss sharing a knife when attempting to cut mushrooms. They discuss harmoniously and agree to take turns, highlighting their growing ability to negotiate and cooperate.

Nearly all children follow simple instructions in Welsh and join in with a wide range of songs and rhymes enthusiastically. A few children use Welsh independently in their play and at snack time they respond to questions about what fruit they would like to eat and choice of drink.

Many children make appropriate progress in their mathematical development. They use mathematical language accurately in their play and are developing a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, they describe cups as full or empty when filling them with water. Many children count to 5 confidently and a few count beyond this. For example, they count how many feathers they have rescued from a 'spider's web' and discuss which are longer or shorter. Many children join in enthusiastically with a range of number songs and rhymes.

Many children develop their digital skills purposefully. They use remote control cars confidently and use metal detectors to find bottle tops in the sand. Many children consider how to solve problems and persevere with tasks. They try different methods to solve problems, such as when removing paint from bottles where the pumps had become blocked.

Nearly all develop strong creative skills, for example, they produce imaginative pictures of daffodils and fish. Most children develop their physical skills well. They use a range of equipment skilfully to improve their coordination and balancing skills, such as when they successfully negotiate crossing the outdoor play area, jumping from one tree stump to another.

### **Care and development: Good**

Practitioners know the children well. They praise them consistently for their efforts, celebrating their achievements enthusiastically. Practitioners interact tenderly with children and create a homely and welcoming atmosphere, which promotes children's wellbeing and learning.

Practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They have completed mandatory training suitable for the ages of children that they care for. They implement most policies and procedures well to promote healthy lifestyles. For example, they encourage children to be active and play outdoors in the fresh air. Practitioners create sociable opportunities for children at mealtimes making sure fresh drinking water and milk is readily available. Snacks and drinks offered are healthy, but practitioners do not provide parents and carers with sufficient information about providing children with healthy snack boxes from home. Practitioners encourage children to wash their hands, helping to develop their personal hygiene practice effectively. Nappy changing procedures are in line with current infection control guidance. Practitioners record children's and their own daily hours of attendance consistently. They complete accident and incident records accurately, however they do not ensure that these are signed by parents and carers to evidence they have been informed. Practitioners ensure fire drills are conducted to make sure children know what to do if they have to leave the premises in the event of an emergency. The setting's arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners are responsive and sensitive to the individual needs of children. They follow appropriate arrangements to support children who may have an additional need. They work in partnership with parents, carers and professionals to implement effective strategies to ensure children settle and their play and learning experiences are positive. Practitioners create an inclusive environment and manage interactions exceptionally well. They have a good understanding of positive behaviour management strategies and encourage children to take turns, share and co-operate. Practitioners consistently encourage children to be kind to their friends, increasing their awareness of feelings and friendships.

Practitioners collaborate well to build children's confidence. They organise interesting play and learning experiences and are responsive to the children's wishes and

fascinations. Practitioners track children's daily progress appropriately and draw on these observations to create meaningful play and learning opportunities. Practitioners provide children with varied and valuable opportunities to learn about the world around them. For instance, photographs show children celebrating festivals by participating in a variety of related craft, music and storytelling activities. Practitioners actively use the Welsh language throughout the session to develop children's understanding and use of the language. They provide good opportunities for children to learn about the natural world by exploring insects and making jam with homegrown fruits.

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

Practitioners have high expectations of themselves and a sound understanding of child development and how children learn. They have good knowledge of the children's individual strengths and needs and use this knowledge well to plan a wide range of stimulating learning experiences. For example, they provide opportunities for children to develop their mathematical and literacy skills when counting and describing natural materials children had collected for creating birds' nests. As a result, teaching engages children's interests purposefully and develops their independence successfully. Currently practitioners' procedures to accurately measure children's progress over time to share with parents is at an early stage of development.

Practitioners play alongside the children, listening attentively to their stories, respecting their ideas and developing their understanding. They manage interactions well, and praise children for their efforts with positive language.

Practitioners provide a high quality learning environment with a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities that encourage children to take risks and become confident explorers. They skilfully use children's interests to plan meaningful opportunities, such as creating obstacle courses with ladders and tree stumps to explore the garden area or to develop a bird-watching area with binoculars, books and creative materials. As a result, children choose where to learn independently and extend their interests into other areas of play through problem-solving and creative exploration.

Practitioners are good role models for developing children's communication skills. They share books with the children, model how to read correctly and discuss the story enthusiastically. This helps develop children's enjoyment of reading. Practitioners observe play and intervene skilfully to support children's learning. They often use effective questioning techniques to encourage children to think for themselves and develop their imagination as they play.

Practitioners make effective use of the local area to enrich children's learning. They visit the local Post Office to post letters and buy fruit for snack. They walk to a nearby farm to

see horses, sheep and alpacas and visit the local park for picnics. Valuable opportunities such as this foster a sense of belonging to the local community and enrich children's knowledge of Welsh history and traditions.

Practitioners plan high quality experiences that enable children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, they collect biscuits and prepare food hampers for the Harvest Festival, write thoughtful notes to accompany them, and distribute them to houses in the village as acts of random kindness.

### **Environment: Good**

Leaders provide a welcoming, safe and clean environment where children can play independently. The environment is extremely well maintained both indoors and outdoors. Leaders make sure the play environment sparks children's interests and curiosity. They ensure the environment meets children's needs and enables them to reach their full potential.

Leaders make sure risk assessments identify potential hazards appropriately and implement procedures to manage these risks. They follow good cleaning routines, 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 clear information is available to parents about how emergencies are dealt with. Leaders make sure practitioners supervise children well throughout their play and learning experiences.

Leaders make sure the layout of the play area promotes children's independence, successfully enabling them to access toys and resources with ease. There is a good selection of recycled and natural resources to develop children's curiosity and 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 provide resources to promote children's awareness about the world around them. For example, there are dolls, small world figures showing people from wider cultures and engaging colourful wall displays celebrating Welsh heritage.

Leaders have organised a designated area for children to store their personal items and this creates a sense of belonging. They present children's artwork attractively and this shows children their efforts are valued. There is a good variety of books on offer and these are displayed well to invite children to read them.

Leaders enrich children's outdoor play and learning experiences. They ensure children have free-flow access to the outdoors throughout the session. Leaders extend children's knowledge and development in the outdoors by offering an extensive range of resources which challenge and consistently stimulates their curiosity and interest. Leaders provide a

broad range of equipment to aid children's balancing skills and good quality art and mark making equipment is readily available to develop children's creative skills and imagination.

Leaders make sure children have opportunities to learn about the natural world and have organised areas to develop their gardening skills. Additionally, they make good use of materials which have been recycled and reused, to develop children's innovative skills. For example, children make scarecrows from a variety of recycled and natural materials.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate**

Leaders have high expectations of themselves, practitioners and children. The setting leader provides suitable leadership for practitioners and has high aspirations for them, empowering them to lead and make decisions in the best interests of the children. They have a clear vision of being an integral part of the community. This vision and ethos leads to successful teamwork and collaboration among practitioners and creates a stimulating and exciting environment for children to flourish. Leaders ensure that the Statement of Purpose is appropriate and provides useful information to parents.

Leaders focus on providing quality professional development for practitioners, for example, language development and assessment methodology courses. They ensure there are regular worthwhile opportunities for practitioners to work together and to benefit from learning from each other. This approach to professional development ensures that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard throughout the setting and, as a result, children make good progress in many areas. New supervision and appraisal procedures are at an early stage of development, and practitioners are beginning to have opportunities to reflect appropriately on their own practice.

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 and share this information regularly through opportunities such as staff meetings and informal weekly meetings. Leaders also consult with parents to gain their views on the setting. They use all this information beneficially to plan for improvement. However, self-evaluation processes do not always identify the most important areas for improvement, such as the need to regularly update policies and procedures in line with current statutory legislation.

Leaders have established highly beneficial partnership links that have a positive effect on the provision and outcomes for children. Practitioners work well with outside agencies, including the local authority improvement partner and the speech and language service. This has had a positive impact on the overall progress of the setting and the children in their care.

Leaders manage and allocate resources purposefully to make improvements. They make effective use of grants and other funding to develop the provision at the setting and to provide more learning opportunities for children. For example, they have provided training for practitioners on outdoor learning and the use of 'loose parts' and natural materials, which has increased opportunities to develop children's communication, creative, risk taking and problem solving skills.

Leaders have established good links with parents and carers. They share information about children during drop-offs and pick-ups which parents value. There are good procedures for the children's transition from home to the setting and from the setting into school. For example, all parents are invited to join their children in the setting while they settle. This enables parents and children to get to know the setting's arrangements and establishes beneficial relationships between parents and practitioners that have a positive impact on children's well-being and learning.

## 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))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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