A report on

Little Lambs Day Nursery

St. Asaph Avenue
Kimnel Bay
LL18 5EG

Date of inspection: April 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Little Lambs Day Nursery

Name of setting	Little Lambs Day Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Samantha Maitland-Price
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Samantha Maitland-Price, Emma Rafferty and Laura Bennett
Number of places	68
Age range of children	6 weeks – 11 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	26
Number of children who receive funding for early education	18
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 07:15- 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 is making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards being a bilingual service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	15 October 2025
Date of previous Estyn inspection	June 2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	28/04/2026
Additional information	

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)**	**Good**
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 for children to develop their independent skills around mealtimes

R2 Strengthen hand hygiene practices to ensure practitioners consistently wash their hands between each nappy change, in line with Public Health Wales' guidance 'Health Protection in Children and Young People Settings (Including Education)'

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Most children have a strong and meaningful voice within the setting. They make choices confidently throughout the day, particularly during free play where they select activities that interest them. Most children communicate their needs clearly, both verbally and non-verbally, and these are respected consistently. All children are listened to when they show they are full or would like more food or drink. Most children's interests naturally guide and enrich their learning experiences. For instance, when children express curiosity about insects discovered in the outdoor area, this often leads to extended learning opportunities focused on minibeasts. Easy access to resources enables most children, including the youngest, to initiate and lead their own play independently.

Most children feel safe, happy and valued. They settle quickly on arrival and show high levels of comfort and emotional security, including babies who sit calmly at the beginning of the day eating their snack. Most children demonstrate positive, trusting relationships with practitioners through seeking reassurance, enjoying close contact and approaching them confidently. Many children actively invite practitioners to share their play, such as asking them to watch balancing activities or join in games. Familiar and predictable routines during nappy changing, handwashing and tooth brushing, helps boost children's confidence and sense of security by knowing what happens next.

Most children interact positively with others. They communicate warmly with their peers and babies smile and engage when spoken to. Most children respond well to instructions during daily routines. They engage positively when asked to tidy away resources, get ready to come indoors, or manage their personal belongings throughout the day. This provides meaningful opportunities for them to demonstrate growing self-regulation, and they are developing respect for others. Most children are beginning to share resources such as trikes and balls, and this positive behaviour shows understanding of turn-taking. A few older children are beginning to resolve minor disagreements independently during play.

Most children show high levels of enjoyment and engagement in their play and learning. They follow their own interests and explore the environment with curiosity. Young children concentrate well as they stack cups, investigate sounds and make potions. Many children demonstrate determination and physical confidence when climbing and using outdoor equipment. Many play imaginatively, enjoy problem-solving activities and participate enthusiastically when joining in with familiar songs and stories.

Most children develop well across a range of areas, including their social, emotional, physical, and early learning skills. Most develop independence as they play in different areas of the setting. They manage personal care routines appropriately for their age, including feeding themselves, pouring drinks and brushing their teeth. They independently access and return their coats to named baskets and many show early recognition of their names. After handwashing, they dispose of paper towels with a little prompting and are learning to take pride in doing things for themselves. However, older children do not always have enough opportunities to further develop their independence during mealtimes.

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

Most children make good progress in developing their communication and numeracy 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 attentively for sustained periods. They know how to handle books as a reader and understand that words and pictures have meaning. A few children choose to look at books together and talk about the pictures. Most develop their vocabulary well and a few use specific words and phrases 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 or mash the ingredients. Children who are reluctant to speak when they arrive at the setting develop confidence quickly, within the nurturing environment.

Many children use a wide range of mark making equipment with confidence and make good progress in developing their emerging writing skills. They make notes on chalk boards as reminders for ingredients they need for making coffee during their play in the mud kitchen. Many children play well together and negotiate effectively when sharing resources. For example, children discuss sharing tweezers when attempting to pick up a worm outside. They discuss maturely and agree to take turns, highlighting their growing ability to negotiate and cooperate.

Many children follow simple instructions in Welsh and join in with a range of songs and rhymes enthusiastically. A few use Welsh words or phrases independently in their play. Many children make appropriate progress in their mathematical development. They use mathematical language accurately and are developing a sound understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, they describe cups as full, half 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 ‘wriggly worms’ have been rescued from the ‘muddy swamp’ and discuss which are longer or shorter.

A majority of children make appropriate progress in their digital skills, using simple equipment to take pictures and metal detectors to find cars in the sand. Many consider how to solve problems and persevere with tasks, such as when trying to get water into plastic bottles with very narrow necks.

Nearly all children develop strong creative skills, producing imaginative pictures of the Earth on World Earth Day and creating representations of turkeys for Thanksgiving. Most develop their physical skills well. They use a range of equipment skilfully to improve their coordination and balancing skills, such as when riding bikes and navigating the outdoor area by jumping from one tree stump to another.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners promote children’s safety, health and well-being effectively. Adult-to-child ratios are met consistently, and practitioners work confidently within clear staffing arrangements across all rooms. Practitioners apply appropriate policies and procedures that promote healthy lifestyles. They offer healthy food and drinks, and oral-health routines, such as tooth brushing, are well established. Attendance records for children and practitioners

are completed accurately through the setting's electronic system, which supports effective daily oversight. Practitioners mostly follow suitable cleaning and hygiene routines, including regular cleaning of surfaces and resources. They respond promptly to children's personal care needs by sensitively wiping children's noses and supporting them to use the toilet, promoting good hygiene. However, infection prevention practice during nappy changing is not carried out with appropriate consistency. Although practitioners change gloves between each child, they do not always wash their hands in between individual nappy changes.

Safeguarding arrangements are suitable and practitioners understand reporting procedures and know how to respond appropriately to concerns. Most practitioners have received face to face Safeguarding training and hold a full paediatric first aid certificate. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Accident and incident records are completed well, with clear evidence of follow-up where parental acknowledgements are missing. Practitioners apply school collection procedures consistently and appropriately.

Practitioners manage interactions confidently and positively. Most use well-judged behaviour management strategies that recognise children's feelings and promote fairness and cooperation. Practitioners act as calm, nurturing role models and are skilful in diffusing situations, managing conflict with sensitivity. For example, when two children want the same toy, practitioners explain turn-taking clearly, supporting both children to reach a fair outcome.

Practitioners support children effectively and provide kind, nurturing care. They respond sensitively to children's individual needs and build warm, trusting relationships. For example, practitioners provide gentle encouragement during transitions to activities or mealtimes, respect children's preferences and offer additional support to help children regulate their emotions or manage new experiences. Practitioners plan engaging learning experiences that reflect children's interests, and in the majority of rooms, they use tracking systems well to monitor children's progress. However, within the non-funded rising 4 years provision, leaders do not have arrangements in place to identify children's next steps or to track their play, learning and progress. As a result, children's development is not monitored as effectively in this part of the provision.

Practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of children with Additional Learning Needs and work effectively with parents and external professionals to provide suitable support.

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 beneficial opportunities for children to develop their mathematical and literacy skills when counting and describing natural materials children had collected to make magical potions. Practitioners engage children's interests purposefully and develop their independence successfully. They 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 build on children's interests to create rich, meaningful learning opportunities. For example, when children discover worms outdoors, they extend this curiosity by helping them design a worm habitat, provide equipment for closer observation and books to deepen their knowledge. They also provide creative materials so that children can represent their ideas through drawing and making. As a result, children develop confidence to 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 with expression 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 library, retail park and walk to a nearby park and beach for picnics. They provide pictures of local buildings in the block area for children to copy. This fosters a strong sense of belonging to the local community and enriches children's knowledge of Welsh history and traditions.

Practitioners promote the Welsh language and culture well throughout the setting. They use simple Welsh words and phrases consistently during play, routines, songs and stories, which supports children's familiarity with everyday Welsh language.

Practitioners plan high quality experiences that enable children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, they make poppies for Remembrance Day, make lanterns for Chinese New Year and create displays and books about child and practitioners' families.

Environment: Good

Leaders have addressed the Priority Action Notice issued at the previous Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection relating to premises security. Appropriate arrangements are now in place and implemented consistently. For example, practitioners ensure the main entrance remains locked throughout the day and they manage access to the building carefully. Practitioners follow clear sign-in procedures for visitors, reinforcing safeguarding arrangements, and outdoor areas are secure and well managed. Cleaning routines are followed appropriately and support a hygienic environment, with practitioners taking responsibility for maintaining clean play spaces throughout the day. Risk assessments are detailed, reviewed regularly and include all areas of the setting, including the newly introduced cabin. The premises are well maintained and provide a safe space for children to play and learn.

The layout and organisation of the premises support children's learning, development and well-being successfully. For example, furniture and resources are arranged thoughtfully, with consideration given to the different age groups, supporting children's independence and engagement. Outdoor learning is prioritised and space across the setting is used very effectively to benefit children, with all age groups having access to their own designated outdoor spaces, which they access frequently.

Rooms are light, welcoming and child-centred, with children's work displayed attractively which helps develop pride in their work and a sense of belonging. Designated sleep and rest areas are calm, well organised and suitably resourced, offering babies and younger children comfortable spaces to rest. Resources are stored within easy reach, enabling children to help themselves confidently and return items independently. The newly added, purpose-built cabin and the new outdoor area are well equipped and provide additional learning spaces for children to play and learn.

Leaders provide a broad range of resources and equipment to enhance children's play and learning experiences. Practitioners encourage children to access resources to explore, problem solve and take managed risks. For example, children balance across ramps, and construct platforms using crates. Practitioners ensure that children have access to a balanced mix of natural and manufactured materials, providing good choice and variety and supporting sustained, enjoyable play. Resources are clean, well maintained and carefully chosen. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity and culture well through stories, artwork and celebration activities.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders provide a clear strategic direction and set realistic expectations that focus firmly on creating an environment in which children can thrive. They foster a strong ethos of co-operation and ensure that all members of the team understand and are committed to the setting's vision and aims. Practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and a clear statement of purpose ensures parents understand the provision offered by the setting. There are useful policies and procedures in place, which are mostly followed consistently by practitioners. As a result, practitioners work together effectively, share ideas and respond sensitively to children's changing needs.

Leaders focus on providing high quality professional development opportunities for practitioners, focusing on aspects such as responsive planning, language development and assessment methodology. 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 is particularly effective within the funded 3–4-year-old provision, where teaching is of a consistently high standard and children make good progress across many areas. Leaders provide appropriate supervision and appraisal procedures which encourage practitioners to reflect on their own practice. Robust recruitment processes are in place to ensure that all practitioners undergo safe recruitment checks prior to appointment.

Leaders have established effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes that consider the views of a wide range of stakeholders. Practitioners have regular opportunities to reflect on what works well and what could be improved, including through staff meetings

and informal discussions. Leaders also seek and use the views of parents to inform improvement planning. Leaders have taken appropriate action to address all regulatory issues raised at the previous CIW inspection.

Leaders have established highly effective partnership links that have a positive impact 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 approach 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 which has increased opportunities to develop children's communication, creative, risk taking and problem-solving skills.

Leaders have established very good links with parents and carers. They share information about children during drop-offs and pick-ups and through a digital app which parents value. This establishes beneficial relationships between parents and practitioners that have a positive impact on children's well-being and learning. There are strong transition arrangements with local schools and as a result, children move onto the next stage in 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

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Areas identified for improvement

Where we identify **Areas for Improvement** but we have not found outcomes for people to be at immediate or significant risk, we discuss these with the provider. We expect the provider to take action and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Where we find outcomes for people **require significant improvement** and/or there is risk to people's well-being we identify areas for **Priority Action**. In these circumstances we issue a Priority Action Notice(s) to the Provider, and they must take immediate steps to make improvements. We will inspect again within six months to check improvements have been made and outcomes for people have improved.

CIW has no areas for improvement identified following this inspection.

CIW has not issued any Priority action notices following this inspection.

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