Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

St Aubin, The lodge

The Lodge, Romilly Park, Barry, CF62 6RN

01446 742 953

www.staubinnurseries.co.uk

The inspection visit took place on 19/08/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	St Aubin Nurseries Limited
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	40
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	No
Receive funding to provide early years part time education:	No
Promotion of Welsh language and culture:	The provider makes an effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards a bilingual service.

Ratings:

Well-being	Excellent
Care & Development	Excellent
Environment	Excellent
Leadership & Management	Excellent

Summary:

Children are very happy, settle quickly and thrive at the setting. The children have warm relationships with staff who know them extremely well. They have excellent opportunities to develop their skills, and they thoroughly enjoy their play. All children engage in activities of their choosing and are free to develop their play independently or in collaboration with their peers and staff. They are listened to, and their views are taken into account.

Staff are well qualified, professional and have a very good understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They are extremely responsive and respect the children in their care and the decisions they make. Staff are very warm and have an exceptionally good understanding of children's individual needs, and this helps to ensure that those needs are well met.

Children benefit from a very well-developed environment. It is clean, spacious and well organised. Staff follow robust procedures to ensure the environment is safe and suitable. An extensive range

of toys and equipment both indoors and outdoors promote children's play very well, providing lots of varied opportunities for activities of their choosing. Resources are of a very good quality, including many natural resources and provided in suitable quantities. Resources are stored at low level enabling children to access them independently and determine their own play.

Leadership and management of the service is strong. Leadership is highly effective and pro-active, and this ensures a reliable, very high-quality service for children and parents. Leaders are committed to improving outcomes for children, reflecting on practice and planning for improvements to the service. They support staff very well, providing good development opportunities to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Parents are very complimentary and speak highly of the staff and the care their children receive.

Findings:

Well-being — Excellent

Children have extensive choices, and a strong voice in this setting. They move freely around their play space, making choices and decisions about what they want to engage with from an excellent variety of exciting and enjoyable resources. We saw children delight in their play with construction and role play. Children are confident to communicate their thoughts and ideas, as they know staff will listen and show interest. Children's likes and interests influence the activities that are provided. This week's theme is pirates and children asked for this based on what they had been enjoying the week before. We saw lots of lovely conversations going on between children and staff; it is clear children know their communication is valued. They join in enthusiastically and confidently with activities because they know staff will respect and pay attention to them.

Children feel safe, happy and valued at the setting. They enjoy being in the company of other children and are developing very warm relationships with staff and peers. Children approach staff spontaneously to seek reassurance or support and enjoy receiving praise and recognition for their efforts. Children are comfortable in the familiar routines and activities of the setting. They are confident to explore the play space, bringing out resources as they wish.

Children co-operate, take turns and share, and they are developing sensitivity to the emotions of others. They demonstrate a good understanding of what is expected of them. Children are learning to negotiate their play, and they look to staff to help them with conflict. They interact well with staff and other children, developing a sense of right and wrong, and of themselves.

Children are active, curious and excited by the play-based activities on offer to them. They are happy and confident to move between activities freely but also sustain interest in activities of their choosing. Groups of children played 'hide and seek' and 'find the hidden treasure' with staff in the garden and they were thrilled to outwit the staff, laughing and running about delightedly. Children have lots of space to run around and play with movement and amuse themselves and others. Children benefit from a good balance of organised and free-choice play activities. Children told us they love their time at nursery, that they *"love to play police, and goodies and baddies, and do painting and arts and crafts"*.

Children develop a wide range of skills as they play. For example, children are practicing problem solving and perseverance. A child built a fort with toy bricks and tried for some minutes to fit the last brick, which would not go. Eventually they decided, *"This can be our door"*, and carried on happily with their play. They have many opportunities to become independent by the nature of the environment and play ethos. They serve themselves at mealtimes and are very happy to be independent in the setting and enjoy the freedom of choice allowed them.

Care & Development — Excellent

Children benefit from very skilled and experienced staff who are committed to making a positive difference to children's experiences. Staff have an excellent understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe and healthy. They follow clear hygiene practices such as cleaning tables before and after snack times. They manage allergies effectively by following a clear and exceptionally well thought out policy and implement individual health plans where required. Meals and snacks are healthy and nutritious, provided in good portions, and children enjoy their food and their mealtimes. They also have a good opportunity to serve themselves, developing many independence and fine motor skills. Staff provide children access to physical exercise and time outdoors for play is included every day, often as free-flow between indoors and outdoors. There are procedures for recording the administering of medication, accidents, incidents and existing injuries. Leaders monitor these records monthly to identify any trends in accidents sustained at the nursery, and ways to minimise the risk of these happening again are recorded and acted upon. Staff speak confidently about safeguarding procedures and know that leaders will be responsive to any concerns they raise. Leaders ensure staff receive up to date training in child protection, Prevent (anti-radicalisation) and paediatric first aid, as well as training to assist them in their roles.

Staff work exceptionally well together to support and promote children's social behaviour. They are very good and positive role models for children in their care, treating each other and the children with respect and kindness. Staff take time to give clear instructions and explain what is expected, or what is about to happen. They also respect the children by giving them time once they have said something to them. They are very encouraging of children's effort and praise this. Staff have a very calm manner when managing behaviour, striking an excellent balance between playful and clear.

Staff provide an extremely nurturing environment in which children's play and well-being are very well promoted. All staff have a relaxed, happy and caring nature when interacting with the children. They are very warm and understanding, providing comfort to any child who is unsettled, and we saw staff interact with such care and patience to help children when they needed it. They are keen to ensure they are good facilitators of play and development. They are genuinely playful and enthusiastic with the children. All staff spoke passionately about their desire to improve outcomes for the children. They are unwaveringly considerate of the children's enjoyment and conscious to give the young children options and choices, especially when the young children cannot express their wishes verbally. Staff engage excellently with small groups of children during play, meaning children can interact with them and staff can sensitively support play and development, when appropriate. They are also skilful at allowing children to play independently. Staff are attuned to children's individual needs and additional needs are well supported in this service. They have a good understanding of the services and agencies they can involve to ensure the best outcomes for children. Some incidental Welsh language is included in the provision, as well as Welsh language books, and the service is working towards the 'Welsh Promise'.

Environment — Excellent

The environment is safe and very well maintained. The entrance is secure and staff monitor locked gates to ensure only authorised access. Staff are vigilant and supervise children well at all times. They keep children safe because leaders regularly review risk assessments for all areas of the setting and any outings undertaken. Staff complete comprehensive daily safety checks of the environment to identify and eliminate risks to children's safety. Registers of children's attendance contain the necessary information and are completed in a timely manner. Staff attendance times are recorded alongside, and it is recorded when children are offsite. Leaders have a system in place to ensure safety certificates for the building are up to date, including electrical testing and fire safety checks. Staff and children practice fire drills monthly and these are recorded.

Leaders and staff ensure regular cleaning of toys and equipment is undertaken, and resources are of excellent quality. The setting has suitable furniture and resources to support children's independence, such as age-appropriate tables and chairs. There are a suitable number of children's toilets and nappy changing facilities available, which are clean and fresh.

Leaders and staff ensure the premises provide an exceptionally rich and stimulating environment for children to play and learn. It is well maintained and in good decorative order. The environment is welcoming and child friendly. The indoor play space is several rooms opened up to make one large continuous area, allowing children space and freedom to move around as they play. The playroom is organised to promote all areas of children's development, with a very good range of resources, including real life items, natural items and books. One room is dedicated to role play, and another to construction and exploration. Children love playing here and make imaginative use of the resources available. They bring out baskets of shells to use as treasure, and they use large toy bricks to build pirate ships to sit in with their treasure. Wall displays include the children's artwork and mark making, and photos of them and their families. This celebrates their achievements, and their photos can give them a sense of belonging. Children can access most resources freely because they are displayed for children attractively, allowing them to extend and develop their play as they wish.

The outdoor area has been well developed to suit the younger age range of children now cared for at this setting. A suitable range of equipment for the age of the children is available, such as a mud kitchen, a stage, playhouses, and a 'treasure area' with items they have found on their walks, such as pebbles and shells. The area has been partially covered by a canopy to provide some shade in the warm weather. During the inspection, all children had the chance to play outside as they wished as staff had set up the space to allow for children to move freely between indoors and outdoors throughout the day. Children love playing outdoors with the resources available, as well as simply running around and laughing with their friends.

Leadership & Management — Excellent

Leaders are skilled and highly experienced and manage the setting to a very high standard. They ensure a clear vision for the setting, reflected in the statement of purpose. There are clear policies and procedures which reflect the current practice, and leaders have a robust system to ensure they are reviewed regularly, are up to date, and staff are familiarised with any changes. Staff work consistently in line with these to support the smooth running of the setting. Operational records contain the necessary information and records of children's information are complete. Leaders employ an appropriate number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to care for the children. They have high expectations of staff and support and challenge them to do their best.

Children and parents benefit from a setting which is strongly committed to improving outcomes for children and families. Leaders compose a thorough quality of care report detailing what the setting does well and an action plan of what they want to improve. They undertake this review annually as required, and take into account the views of children, parents, staff and external agencies. As a larger childcare group, leaders were clear that any feedback for improvements or lessons learnt in one of their services would be shared and implemented in a way that works for each setting in the group to ensure a drive for improvements across the board. Leaders work hard to ensure they deliver high-quality care.

Leaders are exceptionally effective in overseeing staff, managing their time and prioritising activities responsively to ensure that children's needs are met in a timely manner. Staff are very well organised, and the resulting relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. Staff confirmed they enjoy working at the setting and feel passionately about the service they provide for children and families. Leaders undertake robust recruitment procedures, ensuring that suitable staff are employed to work with children. They ensure mandatory training is kept up to date and staff benefit from extensive opportunities for additional development training. Staff receive regular supervisions and appraisals to reflect on their practice. Staff told us they feel very well supported by leaders, and that their work and contribution is valued.

Positive relationships with the community are valued at this setting. Staff told us the partnerships they have built with parents are very important to the team and they are keen to ensure parents feel they can approach them at any time. Parents are very complimentary about the setting and are confident to leave their children there. Leaders ensure parents have all the information they need to make an informed choice about using this service, and on an ongoing basis; the foyer is set up to provide substantial information for parents and families, including policies and procedures, information about children's activities, and quality reviews so all information is easily accessible.

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.

National Minimum Standards

Where we find the provider is not meeting the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care but there is no immediate or significant risk for people using the service, we highlight these as Recommendations to Meet National Minimum Standards.

We expect the provider to take action to address these and we will follow these up at the next inspection.

Standard	Recommendation(s)
	No NMS Recommendations were identified at this inspection

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