A report on

Playdays Nursery

The Spinney
Fronhir
Knighton
Powys
LD7 1HT

Date of inspection: October 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Playdays Nursery

Name of setting	Playdays Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Hannah Price
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Caryn Lewis; Lehanne Healy; Jemma Croker; Hannah Price
Number of places	32
Age range of children	3 months to 4 years (school age)
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	18
Number of children who receive funding for early education	12
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8am to 5.30pm
Flying start service	No
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	22 January 2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection	22 January 2020
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/10/2025
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. Further develop opportunities to learn about and experience other cultures

R2. Review and embed regular one to one staff supervision meetings

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's wishes and preferences are respected. They share their ideas, needs and experiences with others confidently using verbal and non-verbal communication. They know they will be listened and responded to by staff, helping them gain confidence to communicate. For example, the children's interests are recorded and used as part of the activity planning. Nearly all children move freely around their environment, happily making choices and decisions about where and what they want to play with. They can choose if they would like to play inside or outside with free flow encouraged at some parts of the day.

Nearly all children are settled and cope well with separation. Those who are unsettled promptly receive support and reassurance from practitioners. They express enthusiasm and enjoyment. For example, they smile, laugh, sing and positively join in with the day's activities. Children have a strong sense of belonging and are very familiar with routines. For instance, younger children knew that it was snack time when the buzzer rang, they announced, 'it's snack' and began tidying up. Nearly all children feel valued and respected as they receive care that supports them and their needs. They enjoy looking at pictures of their experiences and sharing it with practitioners.

Nearly all children interact very well for their age and stage of development. They listen to others during story time and are learning to share when playing with toys. The interactions between children, their peers and practitioners are positive. For example, children enthusiastically greet practitioners as they arrive to work saying "hello there" or sharing news with practitioners about things that happened the day before. Most children happily play alongside each other or together, showing an interest in what other children are doing. Clear friendships and bonds of affection are forming, and older children are starting to show concern for others. For instance, when a child was waiting to go down the slide, they asked another friend to move away from the bottom of the slide, so they didn't bump into them.

Nearly all children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. They vocalise their enjoyment and eagerly share their play with people around them. For example, after playing with a garage and cars, a child took it over to the practitioner to show her how the cars went down the ramp and to ask her to take part. They are engaged for an appropriate amount of time for their age. Nearly all children are interested in their play and show curiosity towards the resources, activities and areas of play available to them. They benefit from a good variety of age-appropriate play and learning resources across the nursery. Children have opportunities to engage in adult led activities as well as independent play. We saw a group of children choosing to listen and join in with a story session while others looked at books independently.

Nearly all children are given a range of opportunities to develop their skills, play and learning. They are confident to move around their environment independently making choices as to what they want to play with. Many children are encouraged to use their manners, and they use simple Welsh words with a few simple prompts from practitioners. For example, they ask for a drink and say 'diolch' (thank you). Children have good

opportunities to develop their independence skills. They are encouraged to wash their hands and serve themselves snack.

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

Nearly all children thrive in a safe, nurturing environment where practitioners value the importance of play. As a result, nearly all children make good progress from their different starting points. Many express themselves clearly using simple sentences, words and gestures. For example, they confidently talk about their family photographs displayed in the home corner. Nearly all children listen to practitioners with increasing concentration, and respond to simple instructions, for example when it's time to sit to have their snack. Many children are developing good Welsh language skills. For example, a few use Welsh independently in their play when counting pumpkins on the balance scales.

Many children develop their early literacy skills appropriately. Most children enjoy looking at books; they turn the pages independently and engage in conversations about the pictures in the stories. At mealtimes, around half of the children independently find their name on their place mat. Most experiment positively with mark making, using different media such as paint, chalks, pens and pencils, to draw pictures.

Most children develop good mathematical skills and many spontaneously use mathematical language in their play. For example, they discuss the different sized pumpkins and are curious about which one might be the heaviest. Whilst scooping the seeds out of the pumpkins, many children count them and explore which pumpkins are full and empty with the purple potion they had added earlier.

Many children develop effective digital skills and use them well in their play. For example, around half of the children explore and experiment casting shadows in the reading den using the torches, turning them off and on to observe the changes in light and dark. A few are supported to use the microphones and speaker to perform their favourite songs in the outdoor learning area.

Nearly all children acquire strong physical skills. Around half of children skilfully ride balance bikes around the garden, navigating obstacles and different surfaces. In the outdoors, nearly all children confidently explore their environment by carrying heavy pumpkins, mixing potions and transporting water in heavy buckets. Nearly all children develop their fine motor skills successfully; during snack time, they handle small knives with increasing control and show immense pleasure in preparing snacks for their friends.

Many children develop good personal skills, such as putting on their shoes and washing their hands before snack time. Many develop effective social and emotional skills and cooperate well with each other during their play. For example, they help each other on and off the large net swing before pushing each other to enjoy swinging back and forth.

Care and development: Good

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They promote healthy lifestyles effectively. For example, they

follow good hygiene procedures and encourage children to wash their hands, helping to develop their personal hygiene practices effectively. Practitioners understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children. They have good knowledge of the safeguarding policy and procedures in place, which enables them to promote the welfare of children effectively. Accidents, incidents, existing injuries, and the administration of medication are all recorded by practitioners and countersigned by parents. They confidently explained what they would do if they had any child protection concerns. Nearly all practitioners follow the setting's policies and ensure daily cleaning and safety checks are undertaken and recorded. They gather information about children's individual needs and permissions in order to support children effectively. Practitioners work well as a team, sharing messages from parents and talking to each other as they move around the play areas. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Nearly all practitioners support children effectively to encourage positive interactions and behaviour. They use praise consistently, which encourages children to follow the rules and helps them feel a sense of pride. For example, when some children lined up by the door to wait to go outside, practitioners gave lots of praise, which encouraged the other children to stand by the door. Most practitioners show interest and ask appropriate questions, helping children feel confident to interact. They act as good role models and use distraction, questions or offering alternatives to encourage the behaviour they want to see. Practitioners have a strong understanding and knowledge of children's development, which is reflected in how they manage children's behaviour. They are consistently responsive; they genuinely listen and engage making the children feel proud and valued.

Nearly all practitioners know children well and understand their individual needs and preferences. They use observations to support children's development and plan for their next steps. Practitioners share children's development and work together to plan when children are ready to transition from one room to the next. Nearly all practitioners are committed to providing a good and broad range of play and learning activities. They carry out assessments of children's learning and engagement with toys, resources and activities to help plan for future activities. This information, as well as children's interests, next steps and celebrations are used to help plan future play and learning. Most practitioners record and share children's achievements and activities with parents. There are effective processes in place to support children with additional needs. Practitioners have a clear understanding of the process to follow if they had any concerns about children's development.

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

Practitioners know children's individual needs and strengths well and demonstrate a sound understanding of child development. Through observation and assessments, they effectively identify where children require additional support or challenge and plan appropriate individual support. Practitioners keep parents well informed about their child's progress using an online tool.

Practitioners provide children with a broad and effective range of practical and meaningful experiences. Staff follow children's interests and fascinations skilfully. As a result, there are

plentiful opportunities for authentic experiences which allow children to develop their independence and enjoy uninterrupted play. Practitioners model activities well and effectively support children's oracy development by modelling vocabulary such as "slimy" when scooping out the pumpkins.

Practitioners create a warm and supportive environment where children's successes are celebrated. They engage in play alongside children, adeptly judging when to offer guidance and when to allow independence. This approach fosters confidence and empowers children to explore new experiences with enthusiasm.

Practitioners work together to consider and respond to children's interests. For example, they respond to children's enthusiasm for making different coloured potions, capably using this as a problem-solving opportunity of how to mix colours and create lighter and darker shades. Practitioners provide opportunities to ensure new skills are introduced through real life experiences. For example, the allotment allows children to grow vegetables like cucumber and sprouts. These hands-on experiences encourage children to care for their environment and respect the world around them.

All practitioners are gaining confidence in implementing the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales. They make good use of indoor and outdoor resources to support learning, ensuring children have the freedom to choose activities for themselves and to make decisions about where they want to play. As a result, nearly all children sustain interest in their play for significant periods of time. The room is thoughtfully laid out to provide a wide range of areas and resources to stimulate children's interests. In addition, there are cosy spaces for children to relax, look at books and have quiet conversations.

Practitioners use appropriate words and phrases in Welsh such as 'bore da' to greet children on arrival. Children have useful opportunities to learn about Welsh culture celebrating St. David's Day and taking visits to local places of interest like the fire station, park, library and rugby club. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to enjoy celebrating aspects of other cultures through the use of appropriate resources. However, this aspect of the setting's provision is not fully developed.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that the environment is safe, secure, and well maintained. Thorough cleaning routines are in place, which ensure that infection prevention and control procedures are well managed. Daily checks of the environment are completed to ensure and identify any possible new hazards before the children arrive. Entrance to the setting is controlled and visitors are recorded. The outdoor areas used by the children are surrounded by secure fencing and gates are kept locked, which prevents unauthorised access and ensures that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. A range of risk assessments are in place, including general and fire assessments alongside specific risk assessments for activities and outings. Leaders carry our regular maintenance and safety checks as well as undertaking regular fire drills.

The environment is spacious and includes a good range of rooms where children can access a variety of engaging activities and experiences. All playrooms have access to suitable facilities and provide plenty of floor space to promote physical play and activities. For

example, children can explore climbing equipment and soft play blocks. Leaders ensure that the environment is well maintained and decorated in calming and relaxing colours. Children's work is attractively displayed, giving children a sense of belonging. The outdoor spaces are utilised well and give children a good range of experiences and opportunities. Children access suitable toilets and an appropriate nappy changing area is available. A quiet dedicated sleep room allows for younger children to rest safely, away from where children play. Children can access toys and resources easily, as they are stored at low level or within their reach. This promotes children's decision making and independence.

Leaders provide suitable quality, developmentally appropriate play and learning resources. They provide resources for all ages and stages of development, which contribute to the children's all-round development. For example, children develop a range of skills through role play, construction play, sensory and creative activities. They provide some basic resources and learning opportunities, which promote children's curiosity about wider society and cultural awareness. Children can access good quality furniture and equipment to promote their independence.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting which they share with practitioners, parents and partner organisations. This ensures that everyone involved understands what leaders expect. It is clear that they place the well-being of children at the centre of everything they do. They have established a positive, supportive and welcoming environment, which ensures a happy setting for both children and practitioners. Leaders have established comprehensive policies and procedures, which contribute effectively to the smooth running of the setting. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork, and this impacts well on outcomes for children. For example, staff have developed different areas of the garden using their own strengths and areas of interest.

The setting's statement of purpose is clear and provides an accurate picture of the setting. This supports parents to make informed decisions about the suitability of the setting for their child. Leaders have a good range of policies and procedures to ensure the service operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Leaders carry out thorough and safe recruitment processes. They complete appropriate suitability checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before practitioners start in post. Leaders organise practitioners effectively ensuring they are fully aware of their roles and meet children's needs. They hold regular staff and team meetings. Practitioners report they feel happy and supported and have opportunities for professional development. They receive annual appraisals and formal supervisions, providing support and an opportunity to discuss any issues that may arise. However, leaders are not always able to monitor and manage staff development as supervision meetings are not always carried out regularly and are not always recorded.

Leaders have established effective self-evaluation procedures. They use a wide range of evidence to evaluate the work of the setting and identify strengths and areas for development well. The setting's improvement plans include a sensible range of targets and priorities, which allows leaders to improve the work of the setting appropriately.

There are effective procedures for the children's transition from home to the setting and from the setting into schools. For example, bespoke settling in visits enable parents and children to get to know the setting's routines and foster beneficial relationships between parents and practitioners. This has a positive impact on children's learning and their sense of belonging. Practitioners value the support from the local authority advisory teacher, such as help in developing the environment and implementing the new assessment arrangements.

Leaders and practitioners build strong links with parents and carers and share purposeful information about their child's progress. Parents and carers feel welcome at the setting and value the regular exchange of information via an electronic app, where practitioners share photographs and accompanying explanations of what children have been doing.

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 significantly developed the outdoor area, which has increased opportunities for exploration and engaging with nature.

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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Publication date: 19/12/2025

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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