A report on

Ysgol Trefonnen Early Years

Ysgol Treffonnen
Trefonnen Lane
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5EP

Date of inspection: May 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Ysgol Trefonnen Early Years

Name of setting	Ysgol Trefonnen Early Years
Category of care provided	Sessional Day Care
Registered person(s)	n/a
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Sioned Hughes
Person in charge	Kim Hamer and Katie Naisbitt
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2 years to 5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	13
Number of children who receive funding for early education	13
Opening days / times	9.15am to 11.45am (Monday to Friday) and 1pm to 3.30pm (Monday to Thursday). Term time only
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	No
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	23/10/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	03/10/2017
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	13/05/2025
The morning session provides Flying Start places for two to three-year-olds and the afternoon session provides early years education for children aged three to four years. Very few children have prior experience of the Welsh language.	

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	**Adequate**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Improve the use of observation and assessment to plan the next steps in children's learning

R2. Develop more robust risk assessments that ensure all hazards are identified and managed appropriately

R3. Strengthen self-evaluation and development planning to focus clearly on actions that will bring about the most improvement

R4. Ensure that all policies and procedures clearly state how practitioners provide safe care and ensure that they reflect the most current 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

Children have a strong voice when making decisions regarding their play. They make meaningful choices, easily accessing activities which interests them, as they move from one activity to another confidently. For example, children take books from inside independently and sit outside to enjoy them. Nearly all children speak or express themselves well and know that practitioners will respond to their wishes. Children regularly express their feelings and needs, such as choosing when to have their snack and drinks.

Children are very well settled and relaxed in the care of the practitioners. They enter the setting happily and immediately start playing with their preferred activities. They are very familiar with the daily routines, and nearly all respond positively to instructions such as when to tidy up and to wash their hands. They seek out cuddles and chat spontaneously with practitioners about topics that interest them, for example the pet snails in the playroom. Children are very content in their environment, frequently looking at pictures and their craft displays, giving them a sense of belonging.

Nearly all children are successfully learning to understand their own feelings and manage their own behaviour very well. Children quickly listen to reminders from practitioners when to share and most do this easily. Children enjoy participating in activities with the practitioners, such as inviting them to be their patient in the doctor's surgery and treating them with bandages. Many share resources happily such as baking in the kitchen and building ramps to balance on outside.

Children enjoy their play and learning, expressing their enjoyment through smiles and laughter, such as squealing with delight as they hide in the book area and then being found by their friends. They have many opportunities to develop skills as they play, for example, pouring water down a chute and catching it in different vessels, developing their curiosity as to which one holds most water. Many children are successfully developing their language skills, including a few words and phrases in Welsh. Children are learning to be resilient and persevere with tasks until they succeed. For example, children spend time painting their hands to create images of bees. Children are curious learners and some show real interest in the setting's giant snails, closely watching them with a magnifying glass.

Children are developing their independence skills well. They are learning good hygiene skills such as using tissues to wipe their own noses and disposing of the tissues appropriately. Children are beginning to understand the importance of protecting themselves from the sun, getting sunhats from their bags and putting them on before going outside to play. They cut up fruit and pour their own drinks at snack time, scraping leftover food into a recycling bin.

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

Nearly all children make decisions about what they want to do and how they are going to approach activities independently. They explore their environment enthusiastically and choose the resources that they need to complete tasks effectively. For example, they select a range of equipment to make an adventure trail outdoors successfully. Most children demonstrate high levels of perseverance and concentration when solving problems, such as when trying to rescue toy characters from blocks of ice.

Most children develop their communication and literacy skills well, talking enthusiastically with one another and with practitioners. For example, they have imaginative conversations on the play telephones, to invite their friends for dinner. A few children enjoy looking at books and handle them appropriately. They listen to stories read to them by adults and join in with discussions about the story eagerly. A few children begin to use their mark making skills during their play, for instance to create a list of patients waiting to be seen in the doctor's surgery.

Many children develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and use mathematical language during their play. For example, they recognise numbers hidden in the sand shed and count to 5 accurately to find out how many characters they have freed from the ice blocks. Many begin to develop their understanding of capacity appropriately by filling and emptying containers in the water tray. Many children use suitable mathematical vocabulary incidentally, for example to describe objects as big or bigger, and use units of time to explain how long it will be until dinner is ready. Many children enjoy exploring patterns and work collaboratively to create repeated patterns accurately using peg boards.

Many children are beginning to develop digital skills as they play and explore. For example, they use a toy laptop when greeting patients in the surgery and speak with patients on the telephone.

Most children are developing their physical skills well. They roll, climb and crawl confidently while using the soft play equipment indoors, and travel skilfully along the assault course outdoors. Most demonstrate good control and coordination when using hammers to chip away at the ice. They handle small tools with control to cut and slice their own banana and cucumber at snack time.

Most children are developing their creative skills well, particularly in their independent play. Many enjoy creating imaginary scenarios that allow them to develop their communication skills when acting out familiar events, such as baking a cake for visitors. A few children become absorbed when playing with toy animals in the water tray.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners are motivated and understand the importance of keeping children safe and healthy. All practitioners have a childcare qualification and have good opportunities to undertake additional training relevant to their role. They all have the appropriate training in safeguarding, food hygiene and paediatric first aid. Practitioners are confident in implementing the settings policies and most policies reflect systems for recording, reporting, and monitoring any issues. Practitioners have secure knowledge of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns, including child protection and any medical needs that children have. Leaders are reviewing policies such as additional learning needs, to reflect current legislation. The setting's arrangement for safeguarding children meets requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners record daily events such as accidents and incidents appropriately and share this information promptly with parents. Practitioners encourage children to understand and develop healthy lifestyle habits. they promote healthy food for snack, remind them to keep themselves hydrated and ensure they get exercise and fresh air for much of the session.

Practitioners implement behaviour strategies very well to support children who need some encouragement to manage their own actions. They know the children well and adapt their practice accordingly. Practitioners work sensitively with children to find solutions and intervene appropriately if necessary. They recognise good behaviour at every opportunity and there is a positive ethos at the centre of what practitioners do. They are consistent, fair and calm, communicating subtly with children to remind them to walk indoors and to help their friends.

Practitioners identify and evaluate children's progress appropriately and seek support for children with any emerging additional learning needs, for example speech and language. Practitioners have a particularly good understanding of children's interests and use this to tailor activities. For example, developing a doctors role play area in a hut outside following a conversation with children who showed an interest. Practitioners organise many opportunities for children to visit the local area such as the shops and car garage. They occasionally use the Welsh language during the sessions, such as asking children to tidy up and wash their hands. Children enjoy singing Welsh songs during circle time and before they go home. Practitioners provide opportunities for children to celebrate cultural events and some play resources and displays reflect a diverse society.

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

Practitioners are adapting the setting's provision to align more closely with the principles and expectations of the curriculum for non-maintained settings in Wales. They place a strong emphasis on enabling children to follow their curiosity and create a stimulating learning environment that provides rich opportunities for children to engage in experiences that interest them. They enable all children to enjoy suitable periods of uninterrupted play and to make free choices about the activities and resources they use. As a result, most children develop as confident explorers of the environment and demonstrate independence in their learning.

Practitioners build friendly relationships with children that help them to feel at ease in the setting. They respond readily to frequent invitations by children to interact in their play and consistently show enthusiasm and a sense of fun that enlivens the children's enjoyment of learning. They generally make helpful use of questioning to model relevant vocabulary and to support children's thinking.

Practitioners make effective use of short, focused sessions to develop children's social and communication skills beneficially. For example, during Amser Cylch, they encourage children to describe how they are feeling and to share personal experiences with their peers. This supports children to express themselves and to listen attentively. Practitioners model these skills well so that most children show respect for others, speak with increasing confidence and feel secure that what they say will be listened to and valued.

Practitioners use the Welsh language during sessions, for instance to give simple instructions and reminders as part of the setting's routine. They support children to become familiar with relevant Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns by encouraging them to respond to simple questions, such as to describe the weather. They organise visits to local amenities, such as the library and park, that help children to develop their knowledge of the local area.

Practitioners develop children's understanding and enjoyment of reading through sharing stories. They provide suitable space and resources for children to explore books independently. However, there opportunities for children to experiment with mark making or to develop their digital skills during their play are less developed. Practitioners make worthwhile use of practical activities to develop children's understanding of a suitable variety of mathematical language and concepts.

Practitioners show a good understanding of the interests of individual children. They are developing the use of observations to reflect on children's learning and to provide experiences that motivate them well. However, they do not assess specific aspects of individual children's development precisely enough to identify what they do well and how they can develop their skills further. This means that practitioners do not always plan experiences that build on children's previous learning as effectively as they could.

The setting provides many worthwhile opportunities for children to be active and to develop their physical, creative and problem-solving skills through practical activities inside and outside. For example, practitioners enable children to develop their strength, agility and co-ordination by using soft play equipment and to take appropriate risks when climbing. They support children to try out their own ideas by experimenting with different materials and resources, including sand and block play. This helps children to think imaginatively and to learn from observing one another. In addition, these experiences foster purposeful interaction between children that helps them to learn how to play co-operatively and to show consideration for their peers.

Environment: Good

Leaders provide an environment that is generally safe and secure. They have policies and procedures in place to ensure that practitioners understand health and safety matters, inside the building and outside. Practitioners implement a robust security procedure, ensuring children enter the setting safely and visitors are routinely recorded and identified

by wearing a lanyard. Leaders have drawn up risk assessments covering many aspects of the setting and activities, but a few risks had not been identified and managed effectively. For example, location of wooden cubes in the outside area, using drawing pins to secure wall displays and wooden resources that had splintered. Practitioners demonstrate good infection control procedures such as cleaning areas before food and using aprons and gloves to change nappies. Leaders liaise with the owners of the building to ensure that the building is well maintained and the required servicing of building systems, such as gas and fire alarms, are up to date. They place reminders such as the fire evacuation procedure, handwashing procedures and health and safety notices in key areas. Practitioners undertake regular fire evacuation drills with the children and are confident with the procedure.

Leaders ensure that the environment is welcoming and suitable for the care of children. Practitioners organise the environment well, placing children's needs and wishes at the forefront of the design. They have direct access to a well-resourced outside area that provides children with exciting opportunities to develop many different skills, for example a hut with sand in it and an interesting water play area. Practitioners supervise children to visit the forest school area within the school boundary. Children can easily use the toilet independently, as the facilities are designed to support them. There are suitable nappy changing facilities, which ensures children's privacy and that dignity is respected. Practitioners prepare snacks in a kitchen area, which is registered with the environmental health department and meets their standards.

Leaders ensure that there are plenty of very good quality resources to create a rich play environment. Practitioners use resources well to stimulate the children's interest and imagination, supporting them to succeed in many aspects of their development. They set up areas to promote children's curiosity, with many natural and 'real life' resources such as kitchen utensils. They make areas inviting and challenging, to sustain children's interest. For example, the home area contains items that make it homely as well as allowing children to take the resources to other areas, further stimulating their imagination through their play. For example, children take bowls and jugs to the water area to measure water to continue their baking. Practitioners provide resources in the 'Cynefin' play area to support children to model buildings and key places of interests in the area. Practitioners set up areas so that children can access all resources independently and children can easily access their own bags and coats from personalised hooks.

Leadership and management: Adequate

Leaders and practitioners share a clear aim to develop the social skills, confidence, self-esteem and independence of children effectively. This aim is promoted well by the team who work energetically together creating a positive ethos that supports the setting's vision in practice. Leaders are in the process of reviewing policies that support practitioners in providing good care for children. A few policies do not clearly reflect how practitioners manage care practices such as managing incidences of biting and food allergies, while others reflect the school procedures. The statement of purpose provides a detailed rationale for the setting's work that matches its provision accurately.

Leaders ensure that the setting has an appropriate number of suitably qualified and vetted practitioners. They have clear job descriptions and a good understand of their roles and

responsibilities. Practitioners work together flexibly to meet the needs of children and collaborate purposefully in reflecting on and enhancing the setting's provision.

Leaders have responded positively to guidance for implementing the curriculum for funded non-maintained settings. For example, practitioners have worked together well to create a stimulating learning environment that fosters children's curiosity and independence successfully. They have adapted provision to provide greater opportunity for children to lead their own learning and to develop the role of practitioners as enabling adults.

Leaders show a good awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, they recognise the need to use observations to inform the provision for children more purposefully. However, self-evaluation processes and planning for development do not identify accurately enough the aspects of practice that need most improvement.

Practitioners show a strong commitment to developing their knowledge and skills to provide the best opportunities for children. They are conscious of aspects of pedagogy to develop and use relevant training and support from the early years advisory teacher to bring about worthwhile improvements in this area. Leaders make appropriate arrangements to manage the performance of practitioners. They generally provide useful appraisals that support practitioners to reflect on their work and facilitate professional learning to develop their knowledge and skills beneficially.

Leaders make good use of the setting's close ties with the primary school and nearby services to enhance its provision. For example, children access the forest school area and practitioners work with primary teachers to facilitate a smooth transition between the setting and the school. Practitioners draw on expertise within the speech and language unit to enhance their own skills and to support the early identification of children's needs.

Practitioners forge strong, positive relationships with parents. Practitioners use a digital app to share examples of children's learning through photographs and invite parents and carers to play alongside their child during regular open sessions each half term. Practitioners use knowledge shared by parents to assist children to enter the setting happily and share helpful information with parents about their child's progress. Because of this, parents are happy with the setting's provision and the progress they feel their child makes.

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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