A report on

Once Upon A Time Nursery

Beddau Day Centre
Pen Y Parc
Beddau
Pontypridd
RCT
CF38 2AG

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Once Upon A Time Nursery

Name of setting	Once Upon A Time Nursery
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Andrea Morgan
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Donna Rix
Number of places	62
Age range of children	6 weeks to 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	11
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday7.30am – 6pm
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 not making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	February 2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	April 2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	05/05/2026
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)**	**Adequate**
Care and development	**Adequate**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Adequate**
Environment	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Poor**

Non-compliance

We notified the Registered Person of an Area for Improvement where the setting was not compliant with the Regulations. A notice was not issued, but this is identified as areas for improvement, and the Registered Person must address this.

We identified non-compliance in relation to theme 6 and we have issued a priority action notice to the Registered Person. The Registered Person must take immediate steps to address this and make improvement.

Information on all non-compliance is included in the Action and Improvement Summary report, which will be sent separate to the report by CIW.

Recommendations

R1 Increase opportunities for children to develop self-help and independence skills

R2 Plan for learning experiences which extend children's learning

R3 Ensure children have free and easy access to a variety of resources that develop and promote imaginative play

R4 Address the areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection

What happens next

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Estyn and the Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales are of the opinion that joint follow up is required in relation to this setting. The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn and CIW will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

The setting provides a welcoming environment where nearly all children settle quickly on arrival and separate confidently from their main caregivers. Many children make suitable choices about how they spend their time at the setting. They choose what to play with from the appropriate range of resources available to them. The majority are confident to express themselves, both verbally and non-verbally, and overall, their attempts at communication are responded to with interest. They approach practitioners, communicating their needs in ways appropriate to their stage of development, such as seeking a quiet moment for connection as they sit with a practitioner watching their friends play.

Nearly all children are happy, confident and enjoy attending the setting. Nearly all children form trusting and emotional attachments with practitioners. Many children are familiar with the routines and expectations of the setting, and this adds to their sense of safety and well-being.

Most children are beginning to form friendships at the setting. They are learning to co-operate and share resources, often with support from practitioners. For example, they wait patiently for the opportunity to climb a small ladder supported by a practitioner.

Many children are interested in their play and learning. In the main, they move around the environment freely as they direct their own play, successfully choosing where and what they want to play with. Many enjoy listening to stories and join in enthusiastically when singing familiar songs and rhymes as part of a group.

Most children develop their independent skills appropriately. For example, they begin to pour their own drinks at rolling snack and clear their plates away afterwards. Older children manage personal care tasks, including handwashing and feeding themselves, with minimal support. Children of all ages begin to use cutlery appropriately to feed themselves. Many children make appropriate progress in line with their stage of development. A minority of children are beginning to use Welsh words and respond appropriately to simple instructions.

Many children are beginning to develop a sense of the importance of being kind and respectful and learning to manage their behaviour appropriately, for example when taking turns to play on the rowing boat outdoors. However, a few children become over-zealous in their behaviour, which begins to impact on the play and learning of others. Many children are resilient, and they persevere appropriately to complete tasks, such as when transporting water in the mud kitchen.

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

Many children, including children with additional learning needs, make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Many children listen well to instructions and respond sensibly. They use suitable language in spontaneous and structured play, such as when creating structures in block play and watching the water cascade down the waterfalls they have built. They respond to practitioners' questions competently, especially when speaking about their bug hunt, and playing in the mud kitchen and water area.

Around half of children enjoy listening to stories together, laughing at the content of the book and the illustrations. They explore books with an adult or a friend, turning pages and talking suitably about the content.

Many children use the remote-control toy well and a few express themselves confidently with the digital microphones. They identify numbers on the calculators and use telephones to talk to one another happily in the role play area.

Many children experiment with mark-making opportunities appropriately. They use different objects to create marks in clay and explore shapes and early writing in the construction space and home area. A few children mark make on illuminated writing boards enthusiastically. A few children hold mark making tools suitably and their fine motor skills is improving.

Many children show enjoyment when joining-in with Welsh action songs. They respond to practitioners counting in Welsh and using simple vocabulary as the children play. although this is inconsistent.

Nearly all children develop valuable physical skills during sessions outdoors as well as during independent play. For example, they use large play equipment with great enthusiasm, navigate grassy slopes with confidence and have great fun developing their balancing skills when walking across bridges they have built.

Around half of the children use mathematical language suitably. For example, they count the legs on a spider and use number blocks in the sand. Their numeracy skills are satisfactory, and they can identify if an object is big or small. Around half of children count to 10 with an adult and join in with the actions of Welsh counting songs.

Most children select activities and resources independently. They make decisions about what to use and talk appropriately about what they are doing. Many use a range of different materials and resources competently. They willingly seek help if necessary.

Many children express themselves through media such as art, music, dance and movement. They explore different musical sounds and small movements, move in different ways and enjoy experimenting with colour and pattern when decorating boxes. Around half of the children are developing appropriate problem-solving skills. For example, when the bucket of soil is too heavy to carry, they work collaboratively to carry the heavy bucket, while others use small cups which they found more manageable

Many children make independent decisions about what activities they choose and what equipment they need to undertake certain tasks, such as when they need to find the right colour waterproof boots to wear when splashing in puddles.

Care and development: Adequate

Practitioners build trusting relationships with children and their families. This helps to create a nurturing and supportive atmosphere at the setting. They follow effective hygiene procedures, washing their hands regularly and encouraging children to develop good hygiene habits. Practitioners record accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries accurately and share this information with parents promptly. Leaders monitor these records regularly to identify patterns and trends, should they arise. An appropriate number of practitioners have up to date paediatric first aid and safeguarding training. However, practitioners do not always understand the need to ensure children are always supervised appropriately, including younger children in the baby room.

The setting's safeguarding policy meets requirements and practitioners have a suitable understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe, including how to respond to child protection concerns. However, when practitioners' safeguarding concerns are brought to leaders' attention, they do not always follow their safeguarding procedures consistently to safeguard children appropriately. As a result, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding do not fully meet requirements and are a cause for concern.

Practitioners promote healthy lifestyles effectively. They provide a choice of healthy, freshly prepared food at snack and mealtimes and ensure children have regular access to outdoor play and physical activity. Procedures for managing food allergies and individual dietary requirements are robust and followed consistently. Practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to go outside and benefit from fresh air and exercise. They ensure children have access to water throughout the session and sit with children at mealtimes.

Practitioners are good role models. They demonstrate kindness, care, and patience, which has a positive impact on children's well-being and learning. Practitioners follow the behaviour management policy appropriately and set realistic and clear boundaries for children. They provide children with frequent praise and offer gentle reminders to help children learn the importance of values such as fairness, kindness, and respect. As a result, children are beginning to manage their emotions appropriately during interactions with their peers.

Practitioners respond to children's individual needs, abilities and preferences effectively. The setting has suitable procedures to support children with emerging additional needs. Practitioners undertake beneficial training to equip themselves with relevant skills and knowledge needed to provide a tailored approach. Practitioners work with a range of support agencies, such as health visitors, to ensure they meet children's needs successfully.

Practitioners ensure children have appropriate opportunities to engage in play activities which are developmentally appropriate. They take note of children's progress suitably and are beginning to use information from observations to support immediate interactions. Practitioners identify children's interests and include these in creating learning opportunities. They give children suitable opportunities to develop their self-help and independence skills. The use of Welsh language is promoted positively through songs and greetings.

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

Practitioners' appropriate teaching methods support children to engage suitably in their learning. This has a satisfactory impact on the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Practitioners provide relevant activities that encourage children to work together and develop their social skills. For example, they encourage children to explore different ingredients to attempt to make dough, talking about the smell and texture.

Practitioners use relevant questions to encourage discussions with children, as they play. For example, they talk about the best way of moving the water down a chute and stopping it from spilling onto the floor. Practitioners intervene appropriately during activities but do not always provide suitable resources for children to fully develop their learning independently of adult support. Practitioners encourage children to follow their own interests and, in turn, aim to develop appropriate learning experiences. For example, they provide opportunities for children to experience posting letters and learn about letters and parcels being delivered to their homes. They identify the next step in children's learning; however, opportunities provided do not enable learners to develop their learning through a broad enough range of experiences.

Practitioners plan appropriate opportunities to develop children's literacy skills and question them suitably during play. For example, children discuss different bugs during a bug hunt and explore books to learn more about what they have found in the garden. Practitioners develop children's Welsh oral skills satisfactorily and provide adequate opportunities to sing traditional Welsh rhymes. They develop children's numeracy and digital skills to an appropriate level. They challenge children suitably to count foam blocks in the water and count their fingers when signing Welsh rhymes. However, practitioners do not plan sufficient opportunities or provide a broad enough range of resources to fully develop children's numeracy skills.

Practitioners make appropriate use of their observations of children's achievements to record progress and to consider the next steps in their learning. This also helps them to provide parents and carers with suitable information about their children's achievements via the setting's app which is linked to each child.

Practitioners encourage children to experiment and take risks in their play, which develops their physical skills appropriately. For example, they support children to climb on adventure equipment and explore the different levels in the outdoor space. They also provide appropriate creative activities, such as encouraging children to engage with different styles of music and developing creative movement. As a result, many children remain fully engaged in their play.

Practitioners promote Welsh culture sufficiently, by celebrating St David's Day and developing a sense of belonging in their community. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for children to learn about cultural diversity. As a result, the children do not have enough opportunities to develop an understanding of multiculturalism and inclusivity.

Environment: Good

Practitioners allow only authorised access to the setting. External doors are locked, and the environment is secure from outside entry. Practitioners accurately record the arrival and departure times of visitors and children. Leaders carry out and record regular fire drills, ensuring practitioners and children know what to do in the event of a fire. They ensure that required safety checks for gas, electricity and fire safety equipment are completed as appropriate. Leaders ensure the areas children access directly are clean and organised to enable children's independent, safe access to resources. They put measures in place to maintain the safety of the learning environment and activities. For example, they complete a suitable range of risk assessments for the play areas, resources and activities.

The indoor environment is welcoming and decorated in a way which is inviting to children. The rooms are laid out to provide a suitable variety of areas to stimulate children's interest. However, some areas in the baby room lack resources which are easily accessible to children, to promote natural curiosity and play opportunities. In the pre-school room, play spaces are equipped with suitably sized furniture for the varying ages of children. The layout of the play space supports children to move around freely in their designated areas. Nappy changing facilities, toilets and hand wash basins are suitable and appropriately equipped.

Leaders provide children with an appropriate range of good quality, developmentally appropriate resources, many of which are stored outside the main rooms. There is an adequate range of natural and man-made materials available for children to explore. Leaders provide a suitable range of resources to promote children's awareness of the world around them. Practitioners regularly check toys, equipment, and resources to ensure that they are clean and in good condition

There is a good balance between the need to promote children's safety and the need to support children to take risks in a safe environment, such as in the setting's outdoor play and garden areas. The setting is arranged in multiple rooms and outdoor spaces, with every available space being used to provide appropriate learning opportunities for children.

The indoor environment is used competently to promote skill development, and the layout and design promote children's confidence suitably and are considered from the child's perspective soundly. The outdoor space is arranged in different areas, including a learning garden, large play space and growing area. Access to the outdoor area is well managed for all children in the different rooms, and safety measures are in place for children moving to the outdoor spaces with a practitioner.

Leadership and management: Poor

Leaders ensure that practitioners co-operate competently to improve children's outcomes, through suitable teaching and provision within the setting. The leaders' secure vision focuses on providing relevant experiences and learning opportunities to support children's learning and well-being. Leaders seek to ensure that the setting offers an appropriate quality of provision, to impact on the children's motivation to learn. As a result, the established teaching and care practices focus sufficiently on meeting the children's needs.

Leaders and practitioners do not ensure safeguarding procedures are followed fully in line with their policy to ensure that relevant information is shared with appropriate agencies. The setting has been issued a Priority Action Notice in relation to safeguarding. However, they promote safe practices within the setting in relation to the suitability of resources, ensuring a safe environment and following health and safety procedures. Leaders make competent use of self-evaluation procedures and analyse findings to identify areas for improvement. They are pro-active in seeking and securing funding to enable a safe and secure environment for the children, ensuring additional learning areas can be provided. Leaders allocate resources efficiently and use grants and funding to prioritise expenditure against the setting's priorities. For example, they have improved the outdoor area by creating a growing area and ensuring improved perimeter fencing for setting and child safety.

The setting's statement of purpose is clear and provides a generally accurate picture of what the setting has to offer. Leaders ensure that a suitable range of relevant policies and procedures are in place. They consider the views of those who are involved with the setting effectively. This includes parents and carers, with whom they maintain regular contact about their children's development. Leaders hold beneficial discussions with stakeholders to improve provision, and act upon advice from support agencies. As a result, leaders have adapted their use of an electronic app and provide updates for parents with relevant information about their children's achievements.

Leaders ensure that mandatory training is in place following appropriate recruitment of staff. Staff appraisals and supervisions are carried out successfully and recorded in staff files, which are well maintained with relevant and appropriate information. Leaders are effective in creating a positive ethos ensuring that children and staff feel valued. This is done through establishing successful relationships with staff and being committed to supporting their wellbeing and professional development.

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.

The table(s) below show the area(s) for priority action and/or those for improvement we have identified.

Summary of Areas for Improvement	Date identified
Children are at risk because they are not always effectively supervised .	05/05/26

Summary of areas for Priority Action	Date identified
Children are at significant risk of harm as the safeguarding concerns are not always recognised, recorded, and promptly reporting in line with the safeguarding policy.	05/05/26

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