Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Saplings Out of School Care

Evenlode Primary School, Evenlode Avenue, Penarth, CF64 3PD

07983835953

www.evenlodeschool.co.uk

The inspection visit took place on 30/07/2026

Service Information:

Operated by:	The Commitee of Saplings Out of School Care
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	90
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 is not promoting the Welsh language and culture needs of people, and this requires improvement.

Ratings:

Well-being	Good
Care & Development	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership & Management	Adequate

Summary:

Children are happy, confident and fully engaged in the life of the club. They make meaningful choices, enjoy positive relationships with staff and peers, and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of activities. Children demonstrate strong independence, social skills and a clear sense of belonging within the inclusive environment.

Staff provide effective care and support, helping children feel safe, valued and confident. Positive relationships, consistent behaviour management and inclusive practice enable children to thrive. Staff offer a wide range of engaging activities, promote independence and wellbeing, and adapt support to meet individual needs, creating a warm and nurturing environment.

Leaders provide a safe, welcoming and well-organised environment that supports children's play, learning and development. Indoor and outdoor spaces are used effectively to offer a broad range of experiences. Resources are plentiful, engaging and well maintained, helping children develop independence, confidence and a strong sense of belonging.

Leaders have a clear vision for the service and foster a positive culture where staff feel supported, valued and motivated. Effective communication with families, strong teamwork and a commitment to continuous improvement contribute positively to children's experiences. Leaders reflect on practice, identify areas for development and are taking steps to further strengthen staff skills and knowledge.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Children have a strong voice within the setting and make meaningful choices about their play and daily experiences. They move freely between different areas, choose from a wide range of activities and can request additional resources to support their interests. Children confidently express their views and preferences, and staff respond positively. We saw children asking for resources from storage cupboards and choosing whether to play in the main hall, a quieter area or outdoors. A child proudly showed us around the club, explaining routines and activities, demonstrating their confidence and sense of belonging.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy attending the club. They arrive confidently, quickly joining friends and activities of their choice. Children clearly have warm relationships with staff, approaching them naturally for support, conversation and enjoyment. They told us they would feel comfortable asking staff for support if needed. The setting promotes an inclusive environment where children are supported to participate fully, regardless of their individual needs.

Children interact well with each other and demonstrate positive social skills. They form strong friendships, play cooperatively and show respect towards others. We observed children working together to build dens, create loom band designs and participate in games. Friends encouraged one another during air hockey and pool games, and children of different ages mixed confidently. A minor disagreement over cricket equipment outdoors was resolved successfully by the children themselves, showing growing independence and respect for others. Throughout the visit, the atmosphere was relaxed, respectful and sociable.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and remain engaged for sustained periods. There is a good balance of freely chosen and adult-supported activities, enabling children to follow their interests while benefiting from staff support when needed. Children enthusiastically participated in construction activities, crafts, imaginative play, sports, den building and bracelet making. Outdoors, children were fully engaged in activities such as cricket, football, swing ball and gymnastics. They remained focused and interested throughout the session and appeared relaxed and confident in their surroundings.

Children develop their independence successfully. They understand daily routines, help tidy away resources, wash their hands independently and access their own lunch boxes. Children confidently seek resources and support when needed and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging within the club. The popular "Scout Bear" initiative encourages children to share achievements and experiences from home, helping to build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Care & Development — Good

Staff promote children's health, safety and wellbeing effectively. They know the children and families well and use this knowledge to provide consistent support tailored to individual needs. Staffing levels meet requirements, and staff are deployed effectively across the provision to ensure children are well supervised while enjoying opportunities for independence. Staff carry out daily and activity-specific risk assessments and carefully consider potential hazards when planning experiences. For example, they supported children to take managed risks during tree climbing activities by providing guidance and clearly identifying safe climbing heights. Whilst arrangements to support children's health are generally effective, some procedures require further development to ensure a consistent approach to promoting children's wellbeing. Whilst staff generally follow safe practices, the service relies on medication information and systems provided by the school rather than maintaining its own robust arrangements.
In addition, although a basic sun protection policy is in place, procedures do not clearly set out how staff will ensure children are consistently protected from excessive sun exposure, including access to shade, suitable headwear and sunscreen where required.

Staff manage interactions highly effectively and create a warm, nurturing atmosphere. Relationships between staff and children are positive and respectful, with many children confidently approaching staff for support, conversation and play. Staff engage enthusiastically in children's activities, joining games, crafts and den-building experiences while allowing children to lead their own play. They respond sensitively to individual needs, helping children settle and make social connections. For example, staff supported children to find friends to play with and suggested alternative activities while they waited. Staff communicate calmly and respectfully, modelling kindness, cooperation and good manners. Expectations are consistently reinforced through established routines, gentle reminders and positive encouragement. Reward initiatives, including the Scout Bear and Rainbow Reward Box, further promote positive behaviour, confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour is managed effectively through supportive interactions.

Staff promote children's play, learning and development well. They provide a broad range of activities that reflect children's interests and stages of development. Staff observe children's preferences and use this information to plan engaging experiences, including crafts, construction activities, board games, den building and outdoor play. They actively support children's curiosity by asking questions, extending conversations and encouraging problem solving. Inclusion is a particular strength of the service. Staff know children with additional learning needs and physical needs well and adapt activities to ensure they can participate fully alongside their peers. They also promote children's independence through daily routines and play opportunities. Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable, with staff encouraging children to manage tasks for themselves while remaining available to offer support when needed. Staff are beginning to increase the use of Welsh language throughout the provision, using simple phrases naturally during routines and play.

Environment — Good

Leaders provide a safe, welcoming and purposeful environment that supports children's play, learning and development. They make effective use of the space available within the school to create a range of experiences that meet children's differing needs, interests and preferences. Children move freely between the old and new halls, enabling them to access a broad variety of play opportunities throughout the session. Leaders organise the environment thoughtfully, using the old hall for quieter play experiences and the larger hall for physical play, den building and role play. This thoughtful approach ensures children can engage in activities that support their individual interests and developmental needs.

Leaders maintain the premises well and take appropriate steps to keep children safe. Staff understand and follow the setting's procedures and supervise children effectively throughout the indoor and outdoor environment. Leaders support a positive balance between keeping children safe and allowing them to experience appropriate challenge and managed risk. For example, children have opportunities to climb trees within agreed boundaries, helping them build confidence and develop physical skills. Leaders ensure the premises remain secure through locked entrance doors, controlled access arrangements and clear signing-in procedures. Current gas and electrical safety certification and fire safety equipment further promote children's safety and well-being.

Leaders make particularly good use of the outdoor environment to extend children's learning and play experiences. They provide access to playing fields, trees and large open spaces that encourage children to be active, explore and play together. Leaders have carefully selected a variety of outdoor resources, including sports equipment, colouring materials, loose play materials and equipment to support physical development. This enables staff to offer a broad range of active, creative and social experiences and helps ensure children benefit from varied opportunities to play and learn outdoors.

Leaders provide a wide range of resources that support children's interests and development. Resources are organised thoughtfully to encourage independence and choice, with additional equipment rotated regularly to maintain children's engagement and introduce variety. Leaders select resources that enable staff to provide rich opportunities for creative, physical, construction, role-play and social play. Resources are clean, well maintained and sufficient for the number of children attending. Displays of children's artwork and photographs throughout the setting contribute to a welcoming environment where children feel valued and develop a strong sense of belonging.

Leadership & Management — Adequate

Leaders have a clear vision for the service and communicate their aims appropriately. The Statement of Purpose provides an accurate description of the setting and outlines leaders' commitment to ensuring children are happy, play safely and receive childcare that meets the needs of families. Leaders have established a suitable range of policies and procedures, which they review regularly. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and contribute to a positive culture where children feel valued and supported. Leaders have also identified workforce development as a priority and are taking steps to strengthen Playwork practice through planned training and qualification opportunities.

Leaders evaluate the quality of the service appropriately and identify priorities for improvement. The annual Quality of Care Review demonstrates reflection on practice and includes actions to revisit the service's vision and objectives, introduce peer observations, enhance staff knowledge of behaviour management and develop in-house Playwork training. Leaders seek feedback from children, families and staff and use this information to inform service development. The deputy manager is developing capacity to deliver Playwork training within the setting, demonstrating a commitment to improving staff knowledge and skills. Leaders complete daily safety checks and monitor the environment regularly. However, leaders have not recently undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the whole childcare premises to ensure all potential hazards across the environment are formally identified in order to minimise risks to children.

Leaders manage staff and resources suitably. Staffing arrangements are flexible and reflect children's attendance patterns and needs. Staff describe positive working relationships with leaders and feel supported through regular meetings, supervision and appraisal arrangements. Long-serving staff demonstrate extensive knowledge of the children and the operation of the service. Leaders also have appropriate recruitment processes in place and complete the necessary employment checks before new staff commence work. Children's records are organised appropriately and contain the required information. Leaders have identified safeguarding training as an area requiring further development. At the time of inspection, staff had completed Group A safeguarding training. However, staff working directly with children had not completed the Group B safeguarding training required for their role, and leaders with day-to-day responsibility for the service had not completed Group C training, in line with current safeguarding guidance.
. Outcomes for children require improvement because leaders do not ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role. We expect the provider to make improvements.

Partnerships with families are a strength of the service. Leaders make good use of a digital communication platform, alongside email, social media and daily conversations, to ensure families receive timely information and remain involved in the life of the service. Parents speak positively about the service and value both the activities provided and the consistency of staffing.

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 may be at risk if staff have not completed safeguarding training at the level appropriate to their role.	30/07/26

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)
Standard 11 - Medication	Review and strengthen medication procedures to ensure all staff understand and consistently follow them, and that medicines are stored securely and safely at all times.
Standard 10 - Healthcare	Review sun protection procedures to ensure staff consistently implement appropriate measures, including access to shade, suitable clothing and the use of sunscreen where required.
Standard 24 - Safety	Review and develop the premises risk assessment to ensure it identifies key hazards within the environment and clearly outlines the actions required to minimise risks to children.

Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2026.
You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk
You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.