A report on

Standing To Grow Playgroup

Nantyffyllon Miners Institute
Bangor Terrace
Maesteg
Birdgend
CF34 0HU

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Standing To Grow Playgroup

Name of setting	Standing To Grow Playgroup
Category of care provided	Sessional day care
Registered person(s)	Amanda Standing
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Gemma Davies
Number of places	32
Age range of children	2-4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	15
Number of children who receive funding for early education	15
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8.30-12.20
Flying start service	Registered for Flying Start funding
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 Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	23 January 2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	22 November 2019
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	24/06/2025

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. Formalise the setting's systems for staff supervisions

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to supporting children with additional learning needs for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Good

Nearly all children are happy, settled and have a strong voice. They make appropriate choices and decisions about what affects them. For example, they choose activities and resources they wish to play with indoors or outdoors. Children express themselves through verbal and non-verbal communication well. For example, when invited to play they clearly say no or shake their heads if they do not wish to join the activity.

Children have close relationships with practitioners and receive support and comfort if needed. Nearly all children cope well when separating from parents and carers and quickly settle and engage in play. Nearly all children are familiar with the daily routines and know to wash their hands before eating. Younger children feel calm having their nappy changed as practitioners reassure them by chatting to them.

Nearly all children interact and play alongside others appropriately for their stage of development. They are beginning to share toys and take turns in their play with others. Children concentrate for an appropriate amount of time, for example when measuring and mixing ingredients for playdough. Nearly all children enjoy the social occasion of snack time. They sit at the table appropriately and practise good manners.

Children enjoy their play and learning activities. Nearly all children are engaged in their selected activities. They show respect for toys and resources by carefully placing them in the correct baskets at tidy up time. Most children respond well to practitioners who remind them of the setting's rules sensitively, such as the need to use kind hands when playing with their friends and to share. This helps them understand what is right and wrong.

Nearly all children are developing well through the variety of activities on offer. For instance, children enjoy messy play in the craft corner, taking time to explore different paints before creating their own artwork using vegetable stamps. A few children enjoy mark making and many eagerly explore the vegetables and fruit at circle time. During outdoor play, children develop their physical skills and natural curiosity effectively. For example, they practise their balancing skills climbing up the wooden slide frame and use a variety of orange and lemon zest to mix in bowls of water, whilst predicting whether the fruit will sink or float.

Children have good opportunities to develop their self-help skills and independence. They visit the toilets and wash their hands with none or little support from practitioners. They independently begin to use knives to cut vegetables and fruit or spread toppings on their crackers. A few children spontaneously visit the tissue station to wipe their nose. These regular routines help children to gain the confidence to attempt tasks independently before asking for help from practitioners.

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

Most children make good progress from their starting points at the setting. They enjoy accessing a wide range of stimulating materials and make decisions independently about

where they would like to play. Most children listen well and develop confidence to express themselves and speak clearly in a range of different contexts during play. For example, as they play in the outdoor area in the rain, they answer the phone to have an interesting discussion with their mum. Children who are not yet expressing themselves through language use signing and visual cues to share their feelings with practitioners. There is a highly effective culture of enjoying books and stories at the setting. Children enjoy looking at story books and sit together listening attentively as the story develops. Other children play, whilst also listening to the story, accessing the experience in their own way.

Most children enjoy making marks with a range of different materials. They express themselves confidently on the large blackboard at the centre of the playroom, making shapes with different coloured chalks. Many show well developed fine motor skills, handling resources and utensils skilfully, for example when cutting up food at snack time. Most children are making appropriate progress with their understanding of the Welsh language. In response to prompts by practitioners, they understand a range of vocabulary and respond to instructions appropriately. For example, in the outdoor areas children enjoy counting in Welsh during their play. They sing familiar songs, which encourages their understanding of a broadening range of vocabulary.

Most children's mathematical skills are developing well in line with their stage of development. They access different colour coded resources, and many recognise numbers with increasing confidence. Many are familiar with the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and show a good understanding of concepts such as full and empty through using different containers. For example, they measure flour and water ready to mix the dough. Most children's digital skills are developing well. They enjoy using graphic software to make sketches, demonstrating good control. They chat on the phone during role play, developing their confidence when speaking in different contexts, and use metal detectors accurately to discover different small metal objects in the sand.

Most pupils demonstrate good creativity using different materials confidently to express their ideas. They create lovely pictures using a range of media such as paints, crayons and pencils. During planting week, they create detailed designs of leaves and include a range of materials for effect. As part of their celebrations of the Chinese New Year they design their own Chinese symbols. Many children have well-developed physical skills. They play confidently with a good range of equipment and toys, showing good balance and co-ordination. In the outdoor areas they ride bikes and climb up the ladder confidently before travelling quickly down the slide, enjoying the feeling of materials on different parts of their body.

Care and development: Good

Leaders and practitioners have a good understanding of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and shared responsibility across the setting. This leads to a positive working environment, which ensures a happy setting for children and practitioners. Practitioners follow the setting's thorough procedures in relation to safeguarding, hygiene, health and safety. Leaders and practitioners work together well to keep children safe and promote a healthy lifestyle. For instance, they encourage tooth brushing, provide fresh snacks and plenty of opportunities

for children to be active and play outdoors in the fresh air. Practitioners make sure that fresh drinking water and cups are readily available at the water stations. They supervise children well and complete all relevant records such as registers, accidents and incidents. Practitioners undertake regular fire evacuation and lockdown drills, which means that both they and the children know what to do in an emergency. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners are kind and caring. They implement effective strategies to ensure that children settle, and their play and learning experiences are positive. They nurture and interact with children in a very warm and gentle manner. Practitioners know the children very well and, as a result, the children feel safe and happy. This creates a very positive and engaging atmosphere, which promote strong secure attachments. The setting's behaviour management policy supports practitioners to develop positive relationships with children. They praise children for good behaviour and manners, for example when children use kind hands. Practitioners provide sensitive support for all children including those with additional learning needs.

Practitioners engage and interact with children throughout their play well and are good role models. They have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. They organise interesting play and learning experiences, which are led by the children's choices enabling children to collaborate and build confidence. Practitioners ensure that they take time to get to know each child and their families well. They have developed highly effective procedures to support children with additional learning needs and have effective partnerships with a range of support agencies. This is having a very positive impact on children's progress and well-being. Practitioners assess and observe children closely and use this information to plan a rich learning environment.

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

Practitioners plan a broad and effective range of activities for children. They have developed their approaches to planning in line with the non-maintained curriculum. They plan learning opportunities to support and develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding, and support their confidence and independence.

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the gradual way in which different individuals develop confidence and skills over time. This allows the team to collaborate well together to support children's learning. This is demonstrated in the highly effective provision for children who may have an additional learning need. They strike an effective balance of allowing children extended sessions of uninterrupted play, alongside the need to teach specific skills. Practitioners are skilled in the way they question children, suggesting ways in which the child could possibly develop their ideas. They control interactions well, encouraging children to play together, and listen to their ideas.

Practitioners plan effective opportunities to develop children's oracy skills. For example, practitioners use a range of visual resources to support children's understanding, ensuring accessibility for all. They encourage children to express themselves in their own way, and support children's needs well.

There is a strong culture of encouraging enjoyment through reading at the setting, with a good range of books and story sacks displayed and available to children. This approach develops the children's enjoyment in reading and establishes a positive attitude towards stories. Across the provision practitioners provide a good range of letters and elementary bilingual vocabulary, encouraging children to start to recognise words. Equally, children enjoy regular opportunities to develop their early writing skills, making marks in different contexts, and beginning to create simple letter shapes.

Across the setting there is a wealth of resources to support children's mathematical skills. Children are encouraged to build confidence when counting, during songs and rhymes, and when playing together. Practitioners provide an effective range of resources to develop children's digital skills. For example, children learn to control different programmable toys with confidence. There is a good range of resources accessible to support children's physical skills. Practitioners work together diligently to ensure a consistency of approach in using the Welsh language with the children. For example, they discuss colours, count and sing Welsh songs, such as 'clap clap un dau tri.'

There is effective provision to develop children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. For example, they learn about cultural celebrations such as Diwali, and develop their own Chinese designs using symbols and colours.

Practitioners fulfil a key worker role for a specific number of children and record significant milestones in a child's development. They know the children very well and understand how best to support the learning. For example, they challenge more confident children to extend their skills, whilst also providing highly effective support for children when required for them to gain confidence.

The staff share information with parents and carers about the children's experience at the setting through an useful digital application.

Environment: Good

Leaders are dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment for children to play and learn. The environment indoors and outdoors is secure. Leaders provide an inviting and welcoming environment that is clean and well maintained. There are effective risk assessments in place and practitioners monitor the environment effectively through regular visual checks.

Leaders ensure that the layout of the play areas promotes children's independence successfully, enabling them to access good quality toys and resources with ease. There is a variety of recycled and natural resources to develop children's sensory, language, numeracy and self-awareness skills. Children's craft work and photographs are displayed, which helps children to develop a strong sense of belonging. There are ample toys, resources and furniture suitable for the ages cared for. The environment is divided into different play areas for various activities such as messy play area, reading area, numeracy area, role play area and table top area. A separate quiet room is available, where any child can enter for some quiet time and relaxation. It is filled with sensory toys, soft furnishings and is a comfortable relaxing area, which is used flexibly to suit the needs of all children. Toileting facilities are easily accessible, which promotes children's increasing independence.

Leaders have created an inviting outdoor environment, which allows children to use resources in a variety of ways. For example, a sand pit area for discovery play and a covered corner which allow children to develop their communication skills effectively. The outdoor kitchen area provides children with opportunities to experiment and use authentic utensils and cooking resources. Leaders ensure that children have opportunities to learn about the natural world and have organised areas for them to plant and grow items to develop their nurturing skills. Leaders ensure that the whole environment is used well and that children have independent choice to play indoors or outdoors in all weathers.

Leaders effectively equip the environment with stimulating resources and areas of learning. They provide a beneficial range of resources that support children to develop their skills effectively. The successful use of authentic resources enhances children's experiences and inspires their curiosity and learning, such as real electronic and IT equipment. Leaders ensure that there is a diverse range of multi-cultural resources, including dolls, books, small world figures and puzzles. Leaders ensure that different festivals are celebrated, to help children learn about different beliefs and cultures and promote their awareness about the world around them.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision for a provision which is based on supporting children's learning within a highly supportive environment. They have high expectations of all staff, and work together diligently to maintain and constantly improve all aspects of the provision. All staff are passionate about ensuring the best possible experiences for the children in their care. Leaders maintain a clear statement of purpose, which accurately reflects the provision. They ensure a suitable range of relevant policies, procedures and documentation, which adhere to regulatory requirements.

Leaders have established effective processes to evaluate different aspects of the provision at the setting. They include all stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation, to ensure that they have a broad range of views about all aspects of the provision. Improvement plans include a range of appropriate actions, and arrangements to monitor and evaluate impact and progress over time. Staff are confident and work together well as a team. They have worked successfully to develop their approach to the curriculum for Wales, responsive planning and the balance of child led and adult initiated activities. Leaders evaluate the impact of changes that they have introduced on children's progress and well-being.

Leaders have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners are suitably qualified for their roles, and that all aspects of staff's files provide an effective record of relevant training activities. Staff are fully involved in the effective annual appraisal process and have opportunities to share their professional learning needs to support them in their role at the setting. For example, they have had valuable opportunities to develop their approach to adapting the learning environment to support children with additional learning needs. There is an appropriate informal system in place where leaders undertake supervisions of all staff. This provides leaders with a consistent flow of information about staff performance and development needs and supports individuals in their roles. However, this system is not fully formalised.

Leaders have established and maintained a number of strong partnerships with a range of local community groups and businesses, which provides beneficial learning opportunities and practical support for the setting. For example, they have good links with the local fire service and visit the station to learn about the importance of fire safety. There is an effective working relationship with the local authority's early years advisory team, which supports practitioners' professional development successfully. Leaders maintain a close relationship with a number of local primary schools, and with the local special school to support children upon transition to the next stage in their learning.

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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