A report on

Cynfran Pre-School

Ysgol Cynfran
Dolwen Road
Llysfaen
Conwy
LL29 8SS

Date of inspection: February 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Cynfran Pre-School

Name of setting	Cynfran Preschool
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Bethan Watkins
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Bethan Watkins
Person in charge	Andrea Knight
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2-4 years old
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	6
Number of children who receive funding for early education	1
Opening days / times	11.30am- 3pm Mon and Tue9.00am - 3pm Wed- Friday
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	11/01/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection	June 2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	18/02/2025
No children have English as an additional 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)**	
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	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Good**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Improve practitioners use of incidental Welsh throughout the session to further develop children's Welsh language skills.

R2. Improve opportunities for professional development to further strengthen the teaching and learning.

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 are happy, settled and have a strong voice. They make choices and decisions about what affects them. For example, they choose activities and resources they wish to play with indoors or outdoors. Nearly all children are curious, active learners who engage well in their play. For example, they enjoy participating in water play, where they explore how to fill and pour water into different vessels. This helps them develop skills and knowledge through opportunities that interest them.

Children express themselves through verbal and non-verbal communication well, as they know practitioners listen and respond to them positively. They have strong, close relationships with practitioners and receive support and comfort if needed. This helps them to feel safe and valued at the setting. Most children cope well when separating from parents and carers and quickly settle and engage in play. Many children are confident communicators and talk about their day and past events to practitioners readily. For example, they proudly talk about 'Ticw', the settings teddy's visit to their home and the adventures that they undertook. 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 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. This helps them understand what is right and wrong.

Children have good opportunities to develop their self-help skills. They serve their own snacks and drinks and begin to use knives to spread butter independently and take responsibility to tidy up and dispose of their food waste after snack time. Nearly all children take responsibility for their belongings and take care of equipment and resources at the setting effectively. For example, they put away their lunch box and put plates and cups into a washing up bowl following mealtimes. 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):

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

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. Leaders and practitioners work together well to keep children safe and healthy. They follow the settings thorough procedures in relation to hygiene, health, and safety. The setting has effective policies in place, which undergo regular review. Practitioners supervise children well and complete all relevant records in relation to accidents, incidents, and medication appropriately, which are countersigned by parents and leaders. Leaders undertake regular fire evacuation and lockdown drills, which means practitioners and children know what to do in an emergency. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Leaders have effective systems in place to support children who have allergies and dietary needs. Practitioners promote healthy eating and provide healthy snacks for children, alongside water to drink. They promote physical activity through providing children space to run and play with balls, ride balance bikes, and move objects using a wheelbarrow. This has a beneficial effect on developing children's physical skills.

Practitioners are kind and caring. They nurture and interact with children in a warm, gentle manner. This creates a very positive, happy, calm, and engaging atmosphere. A consistent, small tight-knit team, promote strong secure attachments. All practitioners know the children and their families well, and a result, children and families feel safe and happy. The setting's behaviour management policy supports practitioners to develop positive relationships with children. They give praise to children for good behaviour. Consequently, nearly all children demonstrate respectful behaviour and manners.

Practitioners engage and interact with children throughout their play well. They are good language role models and engage with children through meaningful conversations effectively. They often use questions to prompt children's recollections of previous learning. For example, when discussing a previous topic about eggs, they encourage children to remember about how long a chicken sits on an egg and what happens as a result. Practitioners regularly share books with children. They ask questions and discuss stories, which helps to develop children's interest in books.

Practitioners have a suitable awareness of additional learning needs and promote inclusive practices at the setting. They attend beneficial training which helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding of how best to support children with additional learning needs. In addition, they collaborate with local authority teachers to implement effective strategies, particularly for children with speech, language, and communication delays.

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

Practitioners know their children well and have a good understanding of the importance of giving children the freedom to explore and play. Leaders ensure that practitioners work together to plan engaging and meaningful experiences that meet children's needs effectively. They share ideas, carefully plan activities, and provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their skills in both the indoor and outdoor environments. This beneficial

play-based approach to learning develops children's communication and numeracy skills effectively.

Practitioners use a range of good quality real-life resources to enhance the learning environment and experiences for children. For example, they use food mixers and utensils to model how to cook in the role play kitchen. They encourage children to take risks and develop problem solving skills in their play. They allow children time to solve problems independently, for example when working out which keys open locks in the building area. Practitioners provide children with a range of worthwhile resources to explore mark making and develop their early writing skills. For example, they encourage children to record which birds they observe on the school grounds when taking part in a bird survey.

The provision ensures suitable experiences to support children's mathematical understanding and vocabulary. For example, they encourage children to count the number of full pipettes required to fill a container at the water station when playing in the water tray. In addition, they plan beneficial opportunities for children to develop and use their digital skills purposefully to support their learning.

Practitioners follow children's interests well. For example, following children's surprise that robin eggs are blue, they plan worthwhile activities for children to learn and find out about different types of eggs. Such experiences give children valuable opportunities to explore and extend their learning further and wonder at the beauty of nature.

Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to develop their physical skills appropriately. They encourage children to take suitable risks in their play, such as riding bikes and climbing. They plan purposeful activities to develop children's fine motor skills through a wide range of resources, such as tweezers for picking up coloured rice to create a picture of the Welsh flag.

Practitioners at times model simple Welsh language suitably to children, such as counting objects or describing objects by size and colour. They plan a few beneficial opportunities for children to join in and play Welsh games. However, overall practitioners do not use and model Welsh sufficiently often enough throughout the session for children to develop their Welsh oracy skills appropriately.

Practitioners plan for children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development effectively. For example, they plan worthwhile activities which encourage children to think about the world around them and how different countries celebrate festivals and traditions. Practitioners promote the Welsh culture appropriately, for example they talk about the castles of Wales and create love spoons from dough to celebrate for St Dwynwen's day.

Practitioners make worthwhile observations on learning and use these effectively to plan for children's next steps in their learning. These are shared regularly with parents and carers.

Environment: Excellent

The highly enabling environment provides children with a wide range of innovative and varied learning and play opportunities. For example, in the outdoor environment the designated learning areas support the development of children's physical, numeracy, literacy

and creative skills exceptionally well. Children have independent access to the engaging, creative spaces, throughout the session. This helps them to develop their creative skills effectively.

Leaders ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and secure. They have comprehensive and effective procedures in place to ensure that all staff know their responsibilities. They implement highly effective and comprehensive risk assessments for all areas and review them regularly. Leaders take prompt action to address any issues which may arise as a result of these checks. They ensure all required safety checks are fulfilled effectively and follow rigid procedures in relation to visitors accessing the setting. Leaders undertake regular drills with children, so that everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

The premises are clean and maintained to a high standard. Practitioners follow hygiene procedures, such as sanitising tables and regular hand-washing consistently. These robust procedures ensure that risks are minimised.

The setting offers a highly effective, rich learning environment, which is light, bright and spacious. There is an emphasis on neutral furnishings and high-quality resources which create a calm atmosphere for children to learn and play. Leaders and practitioners consider thoughtfully the importance of the quality of the resources they provide and the impact this has on prompting children's curiosity and exploration, for example, they include resources to reflect the natural environment and contain real life items such as fresh vegetables in the home corner and metal tea sets in the water play area. These resources help spark children's curiosity and encourage them to investigate further. Leaders provide children with appropriately sized furniture and equipment for their age and stage of development and all resources are displayed at low level, which allows children to be independent in their play. Toileting facilities are easily accessible, which promotes children's increasing independence.

Leaders provide designated areas for children to store their personal belongings and display children's artwork and experiences attractively across the setting. Displays show photographs of the children, playing and visiting areas of local interest, which support a sense of belonging and promote children's self-esteem creatively. Leaders use a variety of play materials to promote children's cultural awareness, Welsh heritage and knowledge of diversity well. For example, leaders provide an extensive range of dressing up clothes for children to wear, such as traditional clothing associated with China and Wales. Leaders and practitioners encourage children to recycle their rubbish in clearly labelled bins, which helps them learn how to protect the environment.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have developed a strong sense of teamwork which has succeeded in creating a caring and friendly environment at the setting. Leaders have a clear shared vision for children, to ensure they have purposeful, rich experiences to support their learning in a nurturing environment.

Leaders actively involve all team members in meaningful discussions about planning learning experiences. As a result, practitioners are confident in their day-to-day responsibilities which ensures that the setting runs efficiently.

Leaders have effective self-evaluation procedures which are shared with all practitioners. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to self-reflect on their own practice as well as make suggestions for improving the provision. Improvement priorities are divided into manageable steps and are evaluated regularly. Leaders make effective use of grants to fund suitable professional

development opportunities which appropriately align with the setting's priorities. Leaders ensure that safe recruitment processes are in place and evaluation of staff performance takes place regularly. Policies and procedures, including comprehensive risk assessments, are well organised, updated regularly, and used effectively.

Leaders develop strong relationships with parents and carers. They communicate with them regularly about their children's progress through informal daily conversations as well as the settings social media App. They use this digital platform to share important information and policies with parents. This ensures that parents are up to date with safeguarding procedures and information about school admissions. Leaders actively engage parents and carers in their child's learning through regular stay and play sessions. They arrange engaging seasonal activities such as making Christmas cards and decorations which fosters meaningful opportunities for parents and carers to participate in their child's development.

Leaders have developed useful community links. For example, they have visited the local community centre to learn about the 'Warm Hub Scheme'. This supports children in developing an interest in their local area and learning about how the community supports the people who live there. Leaders arrange suitable transition visits with the local school which help prepare the children for the next stage in their education. They work well with partners, including the local authority, to promote the setting in the community.

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.

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