A report on

Berriew Pre-school

c/o Berriew CP School
Berriew
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8BA

Date of inspection: March 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Berriew Pre-school

Name of setting	Berriew Pre-school
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Berriew pre-school
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Jackie Pryce and Rebecca James
Person in charge	Claire Munslow
Number of places	24
Age range of children	2 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	22
Number of children who receive funding for early education	21
Opening days / times	08:45 – 15:30
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	Working towards
Date of previous CIW inspection	April 2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection	05/12/2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	03/03/2026

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Care and development	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 To continue the setting's on-going development journey.

What happens next

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare case studies on its work in relation to developing children's schematic play and how it uses grant funding for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Children are safe and happy and have an exceptionally strong voice. They have excellent opportunities to make choices and decisions throughout their time at the pre-school. This begins as they arrive for the day when they use their registration name log to vote for the story they would like to hear later. Children purposefully choose what they would like to do from a wide range of attractive and engaging resources and activities. Each carefully set up area offers further opportunities to make decisions about how they play. Children can play inside or outside during the whole session, and they choose when they would like to eat their snack within the window of time it is available, which means there is no set time they need to stop their play or activities. Children are confident communicators with many expressing their ideas and thoughts verbally, such as when wondering how they are going to get down from the balance bridge or asking where the door into Buckingham Palace is when looking at a picture of it. They know practitioners will value what they say and help them work things out.

Children benefit from visiting the pre-school during weekly stay and play sessions alongside their parents ahead of their start date. They also benefit from a phased approach when preparing to attend full days as they become three. As a result, children feel settled and cope exceptionally well with separation and transitions.

Children develop a thorough understanding of routines and follow these with increasing independence. For example, they know exactly what they can do after lunch and understand the importance of washing their hands before snack, with the older children taking the initiative to follow daily routines without being prompted. This helps them develop a sense of belonging which is further supported in a variety of ways. For example, children have their own cup for snack, bring in plants for the garden and a book of family photos to look at and enjoy whenever they choose.

Children have warm, close relationships with each other and practitioners. Many friendships are blossoming as children discuss which paints to mix when creating their pictures or settle into the cosy reading nook together, sharing favourite books. Others play alongside each other as is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Children learn to share, take turns and think about others. They independently use large sand timers to help themselves wait or happily finish what they are doing with a cheery ‘your turn now’.

Older children help their younger peers to settle especially when they are new. They take the younger ones by the hand, encouraging them to join in with play activities. The space and time children have available to play, along with the variety of exciting opportunities and experiences on offer, contributes successfully to their exemplary behaviour.

Children are extremely active learners. They show enthusiasm and purpose in their play and are self-motivated to learn. They spend a considerable length of time engaging in activities they choose for themselves, concentrating well, for example when exploring the paint shed or participating in block play. They are skilful at leading their own play and learning, looking to practitioners for help when they need it. As a result, they make very good progress in all areas of their learning and development.

Children develop increasing independence and self-help skills. Many independently put on and take off their shoes and clothing, as well as managing their own personal care. Many cut up fruit confidently, spread butter and pour drinks during snack time. They take care with china crockery and clear their plates, cups and cutlery to the washing up bowl. Children learn to return equipment such as tricycles to their storage place when they have finished with them. Children develop excellent self-esteem through learning to do things for themselves.

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

Nearly all children develop their oracy skills exceptionally well. They speak confidently with one another, adults and visitors, readily sharing ideas about their play and experiences. Most children use a rich and varied vocabulary during play, for example when naming the specific parts of models they construct outdoors. Nearly all children listen attentively and respond thoughtfully to practitioners' questions and prompts. They sustain meaningful conversations with others and build well on each other's ideas.

Nearly all children show a strong enthusiasm for books and stories. They explore books confidently across the learning environment and listen attentively when practitioners share stories. Children take an active role in selecting stories, voting for their favourites to be read at the end of the session. Nearly all join in enthusiastically with familiar stories and actions, responding to pictures with curiosity and enjoyment.

Nearly all children develop their early writing skills very confidently through the wide range of mark-making opportunities across the setting. They draw increasingly detailed pictures, with a few beginning to write familiar letters such as those found in their own names. Most children begin to understand that marks carry meaning, for example when writing addresses on envelopes and writing names on pictures for family and friends.

Nearly all children develop their early mathematical skills highly effectively through purposeful play and exploration. They confidently use a range of mathematical language as they describe size, count scoops to fill containers and classify small-world resources. Many apply their developing understanding of number, shape and space during construction play, selecting appropriate blocks and planks and persevering to solve problems when building structures. They test ideas and adjust their designs thoughtfully, for example when creating ramps and enclosures for small world animals.

Nearly all children develop their creative skills highly successfully through the stimulating learning environment. They explore a wide range of materials confidently, for example printing with natural objects and using different brushes to create marks on paper and leaves. Many children enjoy engaging in imaginative role play, taking on roles such as café owners and farmers. Nearly all children use the environment imaginatively, moving resources independently to extend their play and sustain their interest.

Most children develop their digital skills well. They use tablets confidently to find photographs of their families or to search for answers to their questions. For example, they undertake research to find out if Buckingham Palace has a front door. They begin to master programmable toys selecting the number of moves needed for the toy to reach its destination with increasing accuracy.

The setting's well-resourced environment enables nearly all children to develop their physical skills exceptionally well. They demonstrate strong balance, coordination and core strength as they swing on hoops, balance on obstacle courses they construct from planks and crates, and pedal bikes skilfully whilst avoiding obstacles. Nearly all children approach these activities with confidence and perseverance, adapting their movements as they play. Nearly all children develop their fine motor skills well. For example, they use a precise pincer grip when holding nails to hammer into wooden blocks and carefully stretch elastic bands around nails to create shapes, positioning them accurately.

Many children develop their Welsh language skills successfully. They begin to count in Welsh, greet their friends and use simple vocabulary and sentence patterns. Many begin to understand and follow Welsh instructions and commands given to them by practitioners.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners are dedicated and professional. They successfully keep children safe and healthy. All practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of the settings safeguarding procedures and are confident in knowing what to do should they have any concerns. Leaders have developed and regularly review effective policies and procedures relating to hygiene, health and safety which practitioners follow diligently. Practitioners complete relevant records in relation to accidents, incidents and medication which they ensure parents sign. Practitioners are deployed effectively, supervising and caring for children extremely well.

All Practitioners hold a current Paediatric First Aid qualification and know how to respond appropriately and confidently in case of an emergency. They know the importance of practising fire evacuation drills regularly and ensuring these are properly recorded each time. Practitioners prepare a range of healthy snacks and encourage children to suggest what they would like to eat. They discuss what is healthy and if appropriate include children's choices in the menu. Leaders have effective procedures to support children with allergies, dietary requirement and medical needs which are clearly understood by all. Practitioners follow detailed care plans and risk assessments which are developed with parents and, where necessary, in consultation with relevant medical professionals. Practitioners ensure children have many opportunities to be physically active and spend lots of time outside. The pre-schools arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners interact with children in a consistently warm and supportive manner, creating a positive, calm and happy atmosphere. They implement a positive behaviour management policy effectively, giving lots of praise for good behaviour and celebrating kindness with a pompom in the jar. This leads to special rewards when the jar is full. Practitioners prompt children gently to follow rules such as wearing goggles in the woodwork area. As a result, children learn to behave extremely well.

Practitioners are highly successful in meeting children's needs, including identifying those who may have emerging additional learning needs (ALN). They complete a one-page profile for all children which provides them with knowledge about children's interests and helps them support individual children successfully. The pre-school has an additional learning needs coordinator who writes effective plans for children with emerging ALN. Leaders and practitioners observe children and review these plans regularly to assess whether they are

still making progress. They seek external support for children when needed, working closely with a range of outside agencies as appropriate.

Practitioners are extremely responsive to children and offer them purposeful support during their play whilst also knowing when to stand back. They are enthusiastic and engage with children sensitively to promote their all-round development. Practitioners know children extremely well. They use their knowledge to identify each child's interests and fascinations which they incorporate skilfully into their planning. Practitioners successfully promote awareness of diversity and cultural awareness, including opportunities for children to learn about the culture of Wales. They plan outings into the local community including to the shop, park or woodland walk and further afield visit larger amenities such as castles or gardens. This effectively helps children gain an understanding of community and the wider world.

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

Practitioners know children and their families exceptionally well and develop warm and caring relationships that create a strong sense of trust across the setting. They have an excellent understanding of child development and how young children learn. Practitioners use this knowledge skilfully to plan stimulating learning experiences and respond sensitively to children's emerging interests and fascinations. They recognise the importance of allowing children time to lead their own learning so they become deeply engaged in their play. Practitioners judge carefully when to intervene to extend children's thinking and when to step back and observe.

Practitioners are highly effective in supporting children's play and language development. They build naturally on children's ideas as they play, introducing new vocabulary and challenging children's thinking through their skilful questioning. They ensure that children have plentiful opportunities to develop their early literacy skills throughout the learning environment. They encourage children to write for a purpose, providing many opportunities for them to develop their early writing skills. Practitioners read stories with expression and enjoyment, taking time to ask questions and talk about the illustrations. They provide a wide range of opportunities for children to embed their mathematical understanding purposefully. They help children to count, sort and classify objects and recognise shape and size within the environment. They ensure that children have regular access to digital resources to purposefully enhance their learning. Practitioners value children's creative, imaginative and physical attempts highly, showing pride in their creations and endeavours.

Practitioners use Welsh regularly during the day as they chat with the children. They model simple vocabulary and sentence patterns during play, enabling many children to understand and respond appropriately. Children learn about Welsh culture through meaningful experiences, such as celebrating St David's Day and Santes Dwynwen, where they explore national symbols and cook traditional foods. Practitioners plan regular opportunities for children to learn about and experience important cultural events and celebrations, helping them develop an understanding of the diverse people and traditions of Wales.

Planning for learning across the setting is highly effective. Practitioners draw on their detailed knowledge of children's interests, fascinations and repeated patterns of play to plan a wide range of engaging experiences across all areas of the curriculum. Practitioners take a

perceptive and highly purposeful approach to observing and assessing children's learning. They observe children's play carefully and use this information skilfully to adapt the environment and plan appropriate next steps. This approach enables practitioners to gain a deep understanding of each child's strengths and developmental needs. Practitioners share these observations regularly with parents and carers through learning stories, helping them develop a clear understanding of the progress their child makes over time.

Practitioners create an effective environment that sparks children's curiosity, engagement and risk-taking. They help children develop a respect for the natural world, through caring for plants, observing insects and recycling materials appropriately during daily routines. Visits and experiences in the local community, including trips to shops, seasonal events and local landmarks help children develop a strong understanding of their locality, helping to strengthen their sense of belonging.

Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. Practitioners communicate regularly with families through daily discussions, digital platforms and detailed learning stories. Leaders gather beneficial information about children's interests and needs before they start at the setting enabling practitioners to tailor experiences and interactions effectively from the outset. Events such as family craft sessions and community celebrations further strengthen relationships between the setting and families.

Practitioners support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Through their kind and gentle interactions, they model to children how to share, take turns and care for each other and living things. They provide beneficial opportunities for children to explore the natural world, for example, observing birds through binoculars in the bird hide. These experiences help children develop a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders provide an inspiring and exciting environment where children play, learn and develop extremely well. They ensure all areas are safe and secure with comprehensive risk assessments in place which practitioners follow well. Leaders and practitioners consistently carry out daily and monthly checks to ensure the on-going safety of the pre-school. They record visitors to the premises and keep records of the attendance of both children and staff. The local authority is responsible for the maintenance of the building and leaders ensure they have records of relevant safety checks. The premises are very clean, and practitioners ensure they remain so throughout the day.

Leaders and practitioners provide a rich and innovative environment of play and learning experiences for all children both inside and outside. The vast range of learning areas, resources and equipment are highly effective in promoting children's learning and development. Each area provides a wealth of learning opportunities. For example, children learn to solve problems, and use their imagination, cognitive and physical skills. They work together with practitioners to build ramps and dens from crates, planks and cushions or look for answers to their questions using the large, interactive whiteboard. Innovative ideas such as a paint shed allow children to explore, mix and use colours as they wish during their creative artwork. Leaders have developed a movement room with a wooden frame and robust, clear plastic walls. This truly brings the outside in and allows children space for physical play in even the worst weather. The outside play areas, which are a real strength of

the pre-school environment, wrap around the building with gates connecting them together allowing some or all to be used at any time. Additionally, leaders have developed a large grass area known as the field which provides a vegetable patch, a large apple tree and further rich play opportunities. Children benefit still further from a weekly forest school session on the field.

Children enter the pre-school through a large cloakroom which has ample space to store coats and belongings. Children's names and photos, a story voting station and a Welsh display all support a sense of belonging.

Nearly all resources reflect the natural world, and leaders make excellent use of real objects in the extensive home corner and throughout the setting. Relevant books are used throughout the environment both inside and outside to support learning and spark interest. There is an emphasis on open-ended resources that can be used flexibly in a variety of ways, sparking children's imagination. A variety of resources, including a photo book of children and their families, successfully promote children's awareness of diversity and cultural differences. Practitioners differentiate the resources between the morning and afternoon sessions which is highly effective in ensuring children of all ages access suitable provision for their ages and stages of development.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders have established a clear vision for the setting and communicate this effectively to all members of the team. They have developed a confident and professional staff team who place children's best interests at the centre of their work. Leaders set high expectations for staff and demonstrate strong care for their well-being. Practitioners feel valued in their roles and understand their responsibilities well. Leaders promote an inclusive working environment where staff collaborate effectively and feel confident to share their ideas and professional opinions.

Leaders draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence to identify the settings strengths and areas for development honestly and objectively. They reflect thoughtfully on valuable information gathered from observations of children's play and discussions with staff to evaluate the setting's work and identify priorities for improvement.

The setting has robust procedures for the safe recruitment and induction of staff. Leaders ensure that practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and well understood. They deploy practitioners' skilfully to support children's well-being, learning and play. Practitioners are well qualified and have clear job descriptions that reflect their responsibilities accurately. Leaders implement robust supervision and appraisal systems that help practitioners reflect on their practice, identify meaningful areas for professional development and recognise the valuable contribution practitioners make. Leaders provide beneficial mentoring and take a proactive approach to supporting practitioners' professional development. As a result, practitioners feel highly valued, demonstrate a

strong commitment to teamwork and support one another exceptionally well in their roles.

Leaders ensure that practitioners continually develop their own knowledge and skills through a wide range of highly beneficial professional learning opportunities. They align this training closely with the setting's identified priorities and practitioners' development needs.

Leaders make excellent use of support from external agencies, such as the local authority advisory teacher, to strengthen provision further. They actively seek new ideas and reflect carefully on advice and guidance to improve the setting's practice. This creates a strong culture of professional learning and continuous improvement that has a highly positive impact on children's experiences and progress.

Leaders provide staff with suitable time to reflect and contribute to professional discussion through regular staff meetings. This helps practitioners refine their observations of children's learning, identify appropriate next steps and collaborate effectively on whole-setting priorities and improvement objectives.

The setting's work is underpinned by a comprehensive range of clear, up-to-date policies that provide useful guidance for staff and parents. These ensure that key procedures are implemented consistently and support the smooth running of the setting. The statement of purpose provides a clear summary of the setting's aims, objectives and daily practice, helping parents make informed decisions about placing their child.

Leaders make highly effective use of financial resources, including grant funding to support the setting's vision and priorities. They allocate funding thoughtfully to enhance children's experiences, for example by providing opportunities for nature-based learning, expressive arts activities and visits to local attractions. These experiences broaden children's learning and help them develop curiosity and confidence. In addition, leaders use funding to support weekly stay-and-play sessions, which give parents and carers valuable opportunities to learn alongside their children and gain practical ideas to support learning at home. These experiences strengthen partnerships with families and enrich children's learning experiences successfully.

Leaders and practitioners develop strong and trusting relationships with parents and carers. The setting's online app keeps parents well informed about their child's daily experiences, and detailed learning stories help them understand the progress their child makes over time. The setting works in close partnership with parents, carers, the local school and health professionals to ensure children transition smoothly to the next stage of their education.

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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