Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspection Report

Willow Bank Day Nursery

Willow Bank Day Nursery, 4 Willow Bank Top Talwrn Coedpoeth, Wrexham, LL11 3RB

07384448845

Date(s) of inspection visit(s): The inspection visit took place on 26/11/2025

Service Information:

Operated by:	Wendy Brown
Care Type:	Children's Day Care
Registered places:	19
Main language(s):	English
Flying Start service:	Yes
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	Good

Summary:

Children communicate confidently, make independent choices, and express feelings. They manage separation well, form strong attachments, and follow routines that build security. Children interact positively, respect rules, and show empathy. Through play and creative activities, they explore, persist, and develop skills, fostering confidence, curiosity, independence, and a sense of belonging.

Practitioners prioritise safety and well-being through close supervision of children, risk assessments, and regular mandatory safeguarding training. They use positive behaviour strategies, function as good role models, and maintain warm, respectful interactions. Learning is guided by the Curriculum for Wales, with inclusive practices, parental engagement, and tailored additional learning needs support, fostering progress and confidence in children's learning.

Leaders ensure a safe, well-maintained environment indoors and outdoors with clear safety measures, cleaning routines, and regular risk assessments. Spaces are well-organised, spacious,

and accessible, offering varied play opportunities for all ages. High-quality, age-appropriate resources, including natural materials and cultural items, promote independence, creativity, inclusion, and holistic development.

Leaders share a clear vision, maintain compliance, and review key policies regularly. They support staff through supervision, training, and mentoring, ensuring robust recruitment and effective deployment. Self-evaluation and feedback drives improvements, while strong communication with parents and partnerships with professionals create a safe, inclusive, and well-managed setting.

Findings:

Well-being — Good

Nearly all children communicate confidently and know their words, actions, and body language are valued. They are listened to attentively and receive timely responses. They make independent choices, such as selecting paint colours, toys, and deciding whether to play indoors or outdoors. Many children express feelings and preferences when choosing stories, snacks, and drinks, and confidently ask for help when needed, for example, when struggling to put on outdoor clothing.

Nearly all children manage separation from parents well as practitioners often provide reassurance and comfort, such as cuddling babies as they fall asleep. Children show enthusiasm and joy during play. They laugh loudly as they sing songs with a practitioner whilst being rocked in a wooden barrel. Nearly all children form strong attachments with others, cooperating and sharing resources, and helping practitioners to tidy play areas. Most children are old enough to follow familiar routines which help them to feel secure and develop a sense of belonging.

Nearly all children interact positively with others and behave appropriately for their age and stage of development. They respond with enthusiasm and pride when praised for achievements, such as climbing steps up to the playhouse, building block towers, and creating artwork. Nearly all children respect rules, such as keeping feet on the floor when on the playhouse veranda. A few older children show empathy and kindness by comforting peers, demonstrating sensitivity and understanding. Such experiences promote confidence, high self-esteem, and sustained involvement, helping children feel included, valued, secure, and eager to learn and explore.

Children create their own play by freely following their interests, and choosing when to take part in adult led, developmentally appropriate activities. For example, we saw babies explore a variety of sensory play baskets, and older children join in with creative Christmas craft activities. Children are curious, they explore their surroundings and ask questions to extend their learning. For example, during block play, children are easily encouraged to count pieces and to rebuild towers when they fall, demonstrating persistence. Creative activities such as painting and craft work allow children to select colours and materials, experiment with ideas, and express imagination. These experiences help children develop, progress with their skills, achieve success and feel proud of what they accomplish.

Children have good opportunities to develop independence because they are encouraged to learn by having a go and practice new skills. For example, toddlers confidently navigate ladders to their playhouse, showing physical control. Younger children practice self-help skills when eating with cutlery, dressing, and using toilet and hand washing facilities.

Care & Development — Good

Practitioners are committed to keeping children safe and promoting healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and well-being. They manage risks through close supervision, regular fire drills, and up-to-date risk assessments for areas and activities. Communication between rooms is maintained using extension phones. Safeguarding is a priority, including practitioners having recently completed 'Prevent' training to raise awareness of the radicalisation of children and adults, updating paediatric first aid and safeguarding training. Practitioners discuss their safeguarding responsibilities during supervision and appraisal meetings. Scenarios are used in staff meetings to question and reinforce practitioners understanding of child protection and the settings policies and procedures. Cleaning routines are effective; base rooms are clean and tidy, and tables are wiped before lunch. Leaders ensure practitioners follow Welsh Government guidance and engage in ongoing professional development in relation to nutrition, managing allergies, specific medical conditions, diversity, cultural awareness, and additional learning needs (ALN) training, strengthening inclusive practice and health and safety standards.

Most practitioners understand and follow the behaviour management policy, using positive strategies consistently. They praise children for achievements, such as completing puzzles or physical challenges like climbing and balancing. When behaviour needs redirecting, practitioners respond calmly, for example, when children enter restricted areas or use large loose parts or high equipment unsafely. Practitioners act as positive role models, showing respect, kindness, and using encouraging phrases like "well done" and "that was super." Practitioners demonstrate strong knowledge of child development, reassuring children during group play and promoting cooperation when tidying or sharing. Interactions are warm and responsive, with practitioners comforting babies and engaging older children in conversations about their play and ideas. These approaches create a safe, respectful environment where children feel valued and behave positively.

Practitioners understand the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and use observations, learning journals, and messaging apps to plan next steps and share progress with parents. They reassure children when needed, encourage creativity by asking questions like "which colours do you want?" and support imaginative play through role-play and problem-solving activities such as building towers. Inclusion and diversity are promoted through Welsh songs, community Ti a Fi sessions (Welsh medium toddler groups), and basic sign language. Parents are kept informed via "All About Me" profiles, meetings, and photo updates of 'Wow moments.' Children with additional learning needs (ALN) receive tailored support as practitioners use the Welsh Government's ALN Toolkit and monitor progress using the Curriculum in Wales, Developmental Pathways. This positive, responsive approach creates a nurturing environment where children develop skills, confidence, and can reach their potential.

Environment — Good

Leaders make sure the environment is safe, secure, and well maintained both indoors and outdoors. They use clear safety measures, such as using safety gates and displaying fire exit signs and evacuation procedures. Cleaning routines and infection control are strong, with sanitiser stations and regular cleaning of dining areas and toilets helping to reduce health risks. Leaders carry out accurate fire and risk assessments, review them regularly, and share policies and procedures with staff and visitors. Practitioners supervise children well and understand what acceptable risk means. They support safe activities such as using large loose parts such as planks, and exploring sand, water, and mud outdoors. These steps create a safe environment where children can enjoy varied play experiences while risks are managed appropriately.

Leaders create a well-organised, welcoming environment that supports children's play and development. Indoor areas are spacious, allowing children to move freely, and the outdoors is always accessible. The environment is arranged to offer a wide range of play opportunities for all ages. Rooms suit mixed age groups and provide easy access to messy play, sensory, and craft areas. The premises are warm, well-maintained, and properly ventilated. Overall, the layout shows careful planning and a strong focus on safety, engagement, and children's overall development.

Leaders provide a wide range of high-quality, age-appropriate resources for the indoors, and outdoor play spaces. These include child-sized furniture, small world toy sets, natural and sustainable materials like shells, pinecones, branches, and loose parts such as tyres, planks, and logs. Authentic items, such as crockery and kitchen utensils, and essential equipment like buggies for walks and highchairs for mealtimes, are also available. A wide selection of play resources spark children's interest and imagination. Resources are well organised in baskets and easy to access, encouraging independence and varied play. Outdoors, larger play equipment is available for climbing, gardening, mud, sand and water activities, and role play in a playhouse which is situated above the ground. Leaders also ensure they provide resources to promote equality and cultural awareness, creating an inclusive, stimulating environment that supports development and curiosity.

Leadership & Management — Good

Leaders demonstrate a clear vision for the setting, which they share effectively with staff. They maintain an up-to-date statement of purpose and comply with the relevant regulations and National Minimum Standards, showing a strong knowledge of their responsibilities. Leaders review key policies, such as safeguarding, fire safety, and data protection, and ensure these are implemented in practice and communicated to practitioners when changes occur. Practitioners confirmed leaders provide consistent support and felt the team were like a family, ensuring each of them are happy in their roles and providing opportunities to talk about what matters to them. Accurate record-keeping underpins their commitment to quality and compliance, creating a safe, inclusive, and well-managed environment. However, we have made a recommendation to strengthen the use of Welsh at the setting.

Leaders use self-evaluation and feedback to improve practice. They listen to children, parents, and partners, ensuring the setting reflects their views. For example, they respond to children's choices when purchasing new resources and equipment and create areas outdoors which interest the children. Staff performance is reviewed through supervision and appraisals to identify areas for improvement. This reflective approach supports ongoing development and creates a responsive, child-centred environment.

Leaders use robust recruitment processes to safeguard children and ensure suitability checks are updated as needed. Induction procedures follow Social Care Wales guidance and involve checklists to ensure practitioners understand their roles, responsibilities and settings policies and procedures. Performance is managed through regular supervision, annual appraisals, and return-to-work interviews. Leaders encourage practitioners to update mandatory training when required and to keep up to date with new legislation. Leaders set aside time for practitioners to complete courses during the working day. Leaders ensure all practitioners including apprentices are mentored and have opportunities to gain further qualifications, for example NVQ's in childcare and management. Leaders ensure practitioners are deployed effectively to maintain ratios and meet children's needs. Practitioners are deployed where needed, providing opportunities for individuals to engage in activities with children of all ages, and to gain valuable experience.

Leaders keep parents well informed through newsletters, online interactive communication platforms and through sharing learning journals containing photographs and progress updates. Leaders value the positive feedback received during this inspection which confirmed parents are extremely happy with the quality-of-care children receive at the nursery. Leaders build strong links with professionals and stakeholders by attending online conferences and using resources made available on the Welsh Government website. They also encourage parental involvement through seasonal events and craft sessions for example, to get to know families better.



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.

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 16 - Equal opportunities	To continue to develop the use of the Welsh language in the nursery, so as to better meet the needs of Welsh speaking families, and those learning Welsh as a second language.

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