



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Plas Gogerddan Nursery**

**Plas Gogerddan  
Penrhyncoch  
Aberystwyth  
Ceredigion  
SY23 3EB**

**Date of inspection: November 2024**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh**

## About Plas Gogerddan Nursery

Name of setting	Plas Gogerddan Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Gogerddan Childcare Ltd
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Emma Healy
Person in charge	Emma Healy
Number of places	58
Age range of children	0 – 4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	13
Number of children funded for early education	13
Opening days / times	8 – 6, Monday to Friday
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	Bilingual
Is this setting implementing the Childcare Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service strives significantly to promote the use of the Welsh language and it's culture or is working towards being a bilingual service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	July 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	September 2016
Date(s) of this/these inspection visit(s)	12/11/2024
The setting has consistently excelled over the years and is a perfect example of how to maintain high quality.	

## Summary

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

## **Non-compliance**

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

## **Recommendations**

R1 Continue to implement its extremely effective practice for supporting the development, welfare and education of children.

## **What happens next**

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to education in the woodland area for dissemination on their websites.

## Main findings

### Well-being: Excellent

Children feel happy and very safe in the setting and know that every practitioner respects them. They have a very strong sense of belonging and a very strong voice in regards to how they want to use the environment. For example, they have made an exceptional contribution towards what they want to learn and the way they want to play. They choose their own resources independently and this enables them to develop their creative play skills. For example, they concentrate well when using spades to move soil from the flower pots to the wheelbarrow and then to the mud area in the garden. Children express their personal needs very effectively from a very young age, whilst developing their own way of communicating by using effective movements rather than words when needed. For example, nearly all children make decisions such as reaching for a book and passing it to a practitioner when they want a story, before settling on their lap. The children decide where and when they want to play whilst using the indoor and outdoor learning environments very effectively and creatively.

Children of every age settle exceptionally quickly at the start of every session and feel very happy whilst playing confidently alongside their friends. Nearly all children enjoy their play with great excitement. For example, a group of children play imaginatively on wooden bridges before jumping into the water and climbing out quickly before the crocodile arrives.

Children of every age interact highly effectively with each other and the practitioners. Many show kindness towards each other and are thoughtful of the needs of others. For example, a child helped their friend to wear gloves and a hat before going to the woods. Most children have a strong interest in what their friends are doing and offer help. For example, a child was holding hands with their friend whilst walking with each other up the slippery slope of wet leaves in the woods, before celebrating reaching the top with a smile and full of excitement. A number of children are confident and inquisitive when there are visitors present. They ask for their names and invite them to their play.

Almost all children are active and learn effectively by playing. They are very inquisitive and experiment with their interest in water and mud. They enjoy regular opportunities to develop their physical skills, such as balancing whilst walking along wooden planks to reach the other side. Children show good problem solving skills. For example, a child re-thinks how to wear his wet weather trousers as his shoe does not fit through and perseveres and tries again. He smiles when he manages to wear the wet weather trousers.

Nearly all children are developing independent learning skills very well. They serve food on their own plates before passing the serving spoon to their friends. They also take very good responsibility for their personal hygiene and use the toilet independently throughout the day and wash and dry their hands.

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

Nearly all children are making exceptional progress from their individual starting point and develop a variety of skills very effectively while playing and learning. They are adventurous, confident and curious learners.

Nearly all children are making very strong progress whilst developing their communicating skills during their time at the setting. They listen carefully to the practitioners and other children and respond confidently when speaking with visitors. Most of them enjoy stories and are able to listen carefully for extended periods. They know how to handle books as readers and understand that there is a meaning to the words and pictures. For example, children use cooking books to research for their cooking sessions. Most of the children use a specific vocabulary to describe what they are doing when playing.

Children have numerous and various opportunities to develop their mark making skills. Almost all children use a wide range of equipment skilfully. For example, children look for a pencil and paper independently to create a list of the children's names. Most of the children join in enthusiastically when singing Welsh and English songs. They use the Welsh language in their daily routines, for example, when answering the register or when choosing between water or milk during snack time.

Most children make good progress in their mathematical development. They use mathematical language correctly whilst they play and develop a firm understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, when filling pots with soil they explain if the pot is full or empty. The majority of children can count to 10 in Welsh and English. For example, they count how many children go through the gate to the woods by using their fingers and gloves to help them.

Nearly all children are developing their physical skills exceptionally well. They use a range of outdoor equipment skilfully to improve their coordination and balancing skills when crossing a cargo net whilst hanging in the woods or digging in the garden. Nearly all children are developing their fine motor skills successfully, for example, whilst adding ingredients to make a pizza or whilst using tongs to lift small pieces of wood.

Most children consider how to problem solve and persevere to complete tasks. For example, when struggling to wear their wet weather clothes over their shoes, they consider pulling their shoes off first before persevering with the task. Nearly all children develop strong creative skills. For example, they create colourful and detailed pictures of fireworks with flour, paint and glitter.

Nearly all children develop excellent digital skills by using a wide variety of equipment. For example, they are confident in using cameras to photograph other children working, and use a sequencing board to wear their clothes for wet weather play. They use a computer to order fruit and vegetables from the local farm.

### **Care and development: Excellent**

Practitioners support the children's health and well-being very effectively. They respond very conscientiously and effectively to an appropriate variety of professional learning activities which has a positive effect on the children's development. They make sure that the policies are in place very effectively. They have excellent understanding and knowledge in regards to safeguarding children. They know what to do if they have concerns about the safety of a child and take prompt action when needed. Practitioners carefully considers every aspect of hygiene. They encourage children to eat and drink healthily and to take part in physical activities daily. They ensure that any of the children's allergies and dietary needs are recorded to ensure that everyone can enjoy their meals safely. Practitioners keep clear and effective records of what the children achieve daily and share the most recent information with the parents consistently. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and pose no cause for concern.

The practitioners are excellent role models. They have a very close relationship with the children and greet them in a happy and loving way as they arrive at the setting, whilst giving them enough time to settle and play. They behave in a thoughtful, calm and gentle way when in the company of children and they always use behaviour management strategies in a positive, gentle and caring manner. As a result, practitioners support the children very well and meet their individual needs very successfully. They speak with the children in a sensitive manner and praise them effectively for doing their best and finishing their tasks. This encourages the children to persevere with their tasks for extended periods. Practitioners are paying very close attention to children's needs. For example, they quickly realise when children need to wipe their noses and they ask for their consent before helping them. They remind the staff of simple rules, such as to be careful not to splash their friends with the water and to wear aprons to ensure they do not get paint on their clothes. They interact highly effectively and know when to take a step back a give the children the opportunity to discover things for themselves. This is a very effective aspect of the practitioners work.

Practitioners promote children's play, learning and development very effectively by using humour and encouragement continuously. They are very skilful when planning responsively by following the children's interests and ideas effectively for each activity. They know the children very well and show pride and passion when discussing the achievements of those they work as key workers for. One of the practitioners strengths is the way they address each child's need individually, including those with additional learning needs. They have a very productive partnership with the parents. They discuss their child's needs and achievements with them regularly so that each of them can gain a robust understanding of the child's needs. This has a very positive impact on the care that the children receive and their development.

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

Practitioners have a very sound understanding of child development and the principles of the curriculum for young children. They use this information successfully to plan activities based on the children's ideas and through this, they develop their

early numeracy and literacy skills very effectively. As a result, nearly all children make strong progress in their learning.

Practitioners plan in an effective manner so that the children can gain appropriate and up to date knowledge and understanding. They know exactly when to offer help and when to encourage the children's independence. They offer natural, stimulating and interesting opportunities so that children can develop their curiosity in a very exciting, natural and creative environment. For example, children spend time in the woods climbing, digging, cooking and building dens daily.

Practitioners allow the children to take appropriate risks when playing in the different areas. For example, whilst using a hammer to place the nails in the wood, or whilst walking along a rope that was tied between two trees. This enables them to become confident explorers in their surroundings. Whilst concentrating on what the children say and so, practitioners create exciting tasks that develop the children's understanding of the world around them.

Practitioners collect information about the children from their parents before they start at the setting. Each child has a key worker who keeps a close eye on their development and who knows the next steps in their learning. They revise the children's development regularly and treat and discuss their progress with each other. This is very effective practice, as the practitioners are well aware of the children's needs and interests. Practitioners ensure that the children's next steps meet their needs and interests, including offering additional support when needed. The practitioners provide information to parents regularly about what their children achieve during the day, as well as the progress they make in particular areas. They encourage parents to inform them of any particular events in the children's lives.

The practitioners promote the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills very successfully. They develop activities that encourages them to use their curiosity and to concentrate on the wonders of the world around them. For example, they offer opportunities for children to learn about nature whilst observing worms in the wormery or by exploring roots whilst planting strawberries. Practitioners concentrate exceptionally well on encouraging honesty, fairness and respect whilst ensuring that the children understand the need to treat each other, their environment and resources carefully. They encourage children to develop their social skills continuously and as a result, there is very rarely any conflict between them. Practitioners encourage children to help each other or to take turns during activities.

Practitioners have high expectations of the children. They know the children very well and have a good understanding of their needs. They offer beneficial opportunities for children to learn about the lives of other children in the setting and to celebrate different practices and beliefs as well as learn about the Welsh heritage and culture. For example, they celebrate St David's Day and Saint Dwynwen's Day and visit Welsh shows.

### **Environment: Excellent**

The leaders have effective and comprehensive measures, policies and procedures in place to ensure that all practitioners understand their responsibilities fully. They ensure that the environment is secure and very well maintained, both indoors and



outdoors. The hygiene practices are consistently good which reduces all risks to health. Practitioners ensure the children are safe by completing and prioritising very effective general risk assessments and fire risk assessments, which they review consistently. They consider the risk of every activity, such as the open fire place in the forest school, in relation to any possible risks. The ratios between the practitioners and children are always suitable for all areas. The outdoor and indoor areas are very safe and offer different playing areas for the children, including sheltered areas when needed. As some of the doors are always open to the children, and as they can move between areas freely, the leaders ensure that there are high levels of supervision and communication to ensure they are all safe.

The managers ensure that the environment is safe, clean and welcoming and very well maintained. There is a wide range of furniture and other resources of outstanding quality available that the children can get hold of indoors and outdoors, which stimulates their interests and imagination continuously. Equality and cultural awareness are promoted purposefully. The indoor areas are clean and are decorated in neutral colours. Leaders and practitioners plan the environment purposefully whilst offering a wide range of purposeful and stimulating opportunities to provide rich learning experiences for the children in different rooms and encouraging them to be inquisitive and confident learners.

One of the service's special feature is the forest school, which is a lovely and exciting setting in a woodland area, a stone's throw away from the nursery. It is possible to access the area through a gate that opens into a large and sheltered space and offers a rich and exciting learning environment, including a hiding-place, shelters, building resources and a purposeful and enclosed compost toilet. Leaders and practitioners consider and monitor every aspect of the area's safety very carefully and regularly. These excellent opportunities inspires the children's curiosity and promote their skills successfully.

Practitioners ensure that the areas ignite the children's imagination and offers various experiences. For example, the children start to walk barefoot on a sensible path of sand, small rocks, bark and water in the woods to experience different textures. Children are also given opportunities to cook, build, take part in arts and crafts and numeracy activities and imaginative play as well as using a comfortable area to relax during quiet time, including a hammock in the woods and comfortable mats on the floor.

### **Leadership and management: Excellent**

Leaders ensure that the children's welfare is at the heart of everything they do. They have a clear vision for the setting that they share with the practitioners, the parents and the wider community. This ensures that everyone who visits the setting understands that there are high expectations and that the setting aims for the highest standard in every aspect of it's work.

The setting's statement of purpose offers an accurate picture to parents of what the setting has to offer. Leaders succeed in creating a caring and friendly ethos where children thrive and reach their potential. There is a focus on ensuring that children are building confidence to lead their play in a very creative, natural and happy environment. Leaders have high expectations of practitioners and children. They lead

by example and take an active part in every aspect of the setting's life. This means, as well as providing inspirational leadership, they monitor the provision continuously and ensure that every aspect of the setting's work meets their high standards.

There is a strong emphasis on promoting a culture of safeguarding and safety in the settings. Leaders revise the procedures regularly and take action quickly to make any improvements that are noted. They follow safe recruitment procedures when appointing new practitioners.

Leaders make excellent use of the grants that are available. For example, the setting invested funding to adapt areas of the service for the practitioners and children's benefit and to develop the woodland area. They make very effective use of funding to employ practitioners and to buy high quality resources.

One of the setting's strengths is the standard of the team work amongst practitioners and leaders. All practitioners fully commit to continuous professional learning experiences. Leaders provide regular opportunities of high standard so that practitioners can develop their skills and gain qualifications. As a result, practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and take action very successfully with regard to the setting's aims, plans and strategic responsibilities. This ensures that the setting is a very happy place where practitioners feel that they are valued and respected.

Leaders have developed a range of strong partnerships which benefit the children. They have strong links with the parents and inform them continuously on their child's experiences through an app. Leaders are approachable and supportive and are keen to work with parents to ensure that the children are happy and settle well. Leaders work effectively with local schools to ensure that there are effective transition arrangements in place and work closely with the local authority's development officer. The setting benefits from close links with the local community and this helps leaders to provide rich and interesting learning experiences for the children. For example, children visit an elderly group and take part in joint projects, such as knitting clothes for the dolls in the setting. Also, parents, practitioners and children order fruit and vegetables from the local farm who uses the setting as a place to distribute their products. They use vegetables that parents and practitioners contribute to make soup for a charity that helps underprivileged people in the nearby town.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point rating scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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