

A report on

3 @ Cradoc

Ysgol Golwg Pen y Fan
Cradoc Campus
Cradoc
Brecon
Powys
LD3 9LR

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About 3 @ Cradoc

Name of setting	3 @ Cradoc
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Sarah CourtBethan Roberts
Person in charge	Teresa Davies
Number of places	19
Age range of children	3 years – 5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	7
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9am – 15.30pm term-time only
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	24 August 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	October 2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	25/11/2025
Additional information	

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 on their improvement journey.

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: Excellent

Nearly all children are exceptionally happy and show an enthusiasm for learning throughout the session. They confidently follow their own interests, make decisions around where they play and what they wish to explore. They are extremely comfortable in their surroundings and know that practitioners actively listen to them and are genuinely interested in what they have to say.

Children are given the time and support they need to cope with separation from their parents and caregivers successfully. They develop confidence to play and explore as they know practitioners treat them with kindness and patience. They are at ease with practitioners and form secure attachments allowing them to build good relationships with their peers. Nearly all children benefit from a strong sense of belonging and build a clear understanding of their place within the local community. For example, they create colourful images of local landmarks when painting pictures of Brecon Museum.

Nearly all children are forming friendship groups but are also happy to play confidently on their own. They play sensitively together, demonstrating kindness and consideration, and are learning to show patience when turn-taking and sharing resources. Their interactions with one another are kind and considerate. For example, they put their arms around their friends as they look at books together in the cosy corner.

Nearly all children are enthusiastic and engaged learners who express wonder and delight in their learning. For example, when children listen to a story it is clear that they are transported wholeheartedly into that world, expressing emotions and joy as the story unfolds. Through purposeful play, and stimulating conversations with practitioners, they develop curiosity about the world around them. When a child asks, "Why is an orange, orange?" the practitioner and children discuss this observation querying "Why isn't a lemon called a yellow?" This led to an interesting and playful exchange about fruits and their colours, in both English and Welsh.

Nearly all children develop their independence skills enthusiastically and achieve very good self-sufficiency skills during their time at the setting. They take pride in putting their own wellingtons, hats and scarves on to go outside, and make good attempts with their coats and jumpers. Children have easy and direct access to toilet facilities, which successfully supports their personal care and development of good hygiene habits. After mealtimes they return their lunch boxes and place any waste in the bin unprompted, learning to respect their environment and keep it tidy.

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

Nearly all children enjoy listening to stories that practitioners read aloud. They love curling up with a book in the cosy reading tent, where they choose books independently and turn pages carefully, taking their time to look through each page. Many children enjoy sharing their favourite books with practitioners, where they talk about the illustrations and comment on how the characters are feeling. Nearly all children recognise their names when they self-register each morning. A minority of children recognise the letters in their names in the environment and those of their friends.

Nearly all children develop their mark-making skills effectively and use these successfully during their imaginative play. For example, writing notes to patients when role playing doctors. Most children attempt to form familiar letters with increasing control, such as those in their names. They hold pencils and pens with a correct pincer grip and are beginning to understand that letters combine to make words.

Nearly all children develop their oracy skills well. They talk confidently with practitioners and friends as they play, asking questions naturally and describing what they are doing with enthusiasm. Most children respond eagerly to practitioners' questions and take turns to speak. They talk animatedly about events that interest them, such as their visit to the Winter Fair or their new gloves and hats for the cold weather. Nearly all children listen attentively to instructions and follow them successfully. For example, they climb apparatus in the outdoor area placing their feet carefully so as not to fall.

Nearly all children join in number songs and rhymes with enthusiasm. They are beginning to develop a secure understanding of number through their play and exploration. For example, when searching for numbered space men in the outdoor area they successfully match these to the corresponding numeral on the number line. Most children work together to solve problems successfully, such as working out how to join shapes together to make a model. Most children begin to use mathematical vocabulary in their play confidently. They describe their models as taller and shorter and ask for one more when counting items. A few children classify and sort objects accurately, selecting the same-coloured marbles to play with.

Nearly all children develop their core strength, balance and agility effectively. They use these strong physical skills to help them climb outdoor resources with control and balance. They enjoy reaching and stretching for scarves that they throw in the air during music time. Nearly all children strengthen their fine motor skills as they pinch and roll playdough, use small tools and pick up beads with precision to decorate models successfully.

Nearly all children develop their digital skills well. They understand the role that digital devices have in the world. For example, when role playing, they use a smart phone to contact the police to rescue the tractor that is stuck in the mud. They understand the cause and effect of pressing buttons to make things work. For example, they programme toys to move, press buttons to retrieve messages, and use calculators to look at numbers confidently.

Nearly all children develop their creative skills effectively. They play imaginatively with their friends taking on different roles in their play, gathering resources from around the setting to enhance their play further. Most children enjoy participating freely in creative activities, such as drawing and painting pictures. Nearly all children join in singing a wide range of songs and rhymes enthusiastically, where they begin to play percussion instruments in time to the rhythm of the music.

Many children develop their Welsh language skills successfully. They appropriately respond when greeted by practitioners, and follow instructions given to them in Welsh throughout the session. Many children are beginning to understand and use Welsh vocabulary such as colours and numbers.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners are highly motivated, skilled and passionate in providing excellent care and supporting children to reach their full potential. They adhere diligently to the setting's policies and procedures in relation to hygiene, health and safety. For example, they encourage regular hand washing and are attentive when children play with water, mopping up spills to prevent slips and falls. Practitioners encourage children to develop healthy eating habits ensuring food is nutritious and includes a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Practitioners ensure that children have free access to milk and water so they remain hydrated. They promote healthy lifestyle choices and provide frequent opportunities for outdoor play, giving children access to plenty of fresh air and exercise. They provide regular opportunities to socialise with older children, which greatly supports transitions into the school setting. Practitioners follow effective procedures and work closely with parents to support children with allergies and dietary needs. They keep detailed records of accidents and incidents and respond quickly to eliminate possible risks to children. Leaders and practitioners have a thorough knowledge of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns about their welfare. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners work seamlessly together, role-modelling politeness and collaboration effectively. They are highly responsive to children's attempts to communicate, and value each child's efforts, which promotes children's self-esteem successfully. Practitioners

manage children's behaviour through praise and encouragement exceptionally well. This results in a positive ethos throughout the setting and supports children to build good relationships and act effectively within a social group. Practitioners use a range of positive behaviour techniques successfully. For example, they talk to the children sensitively and use positive praise for doing their best and succeeding at tasks such as sharing. Practitioners are highly successful in promoting children's feelings of security and emotional well-being. They are skilled in knowing when and when not to intervene in children's play and consistently provide stimulating opportunities that encourage children to remain engaged and curious in their play and learning.

Practitioners are highly responsive to children's needs and understand their individual fascinations and interests well. They use children's ideas skilfully in their planning and make effective use of observations to promote children's progress. Leaders have robust procedures in place to support children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and practitioners work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure best outcomes for children. Practitioners promote equal opportunities and diversity well and recognise the importance of inclusive practice. They ensure that incidental Welsh is used throughout all play and learning experiences and instil children with a strong sense of their Welsh culture and heritage.

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

Across the setting, practitioners develop exceptionally warm, caring and trusting relationships with children. They know them well, showing genuine interest in their families, experiences and individual personalities. This strong knowledge enables practitioners to plan learning experiences that meet children's individual needs flexibly and responsively.

Practitioners understand the importance of allowing children time to lead their own learning. They respond sensitively to children's emerging interests and fascinations and use these interactions skilfully to extend children's knowledge and understanding. Practitioners are highly effective language role models. They build naturally on children's ideas during play using questions to prompt children's thinking, introduce new vocabulary and encourage them to describe, explain and expand on their ideas.

Practitioners have a sound understanding of children's next steps in learning and use this knowledge skilfully to support children's early skill development. They understand when is best to intervene and when to stand back to allow children time and space to explore independently. This thoughtful approach to practice supports children to take risks and develop as curious learners.

Practitioners take note of what children have learnt and experienced throughout the day and use this information to plan future activities and experiences successfully.

Practitioners have developed a manageable approach to gathering observations that provides them with information which informs them of children's progress in learning effectively. Practitioners communicate consistently with one another throughout the session, supporting each other to respond swiftly to teachable moments during children's play. They use this information effectively to create termly reports of children's progress which they share with parents and carers. This alongside informal daily conversations help families understand the progress their children make when at the setting.

Practitioners create an effective environment that sparks children's curiosity and engagement. These are often linked to a weekly focus or arise from children's current interests, ensuring that what is on offer to children is meaningful and stimulating. They have a sound understanding of the curriculum and have adapted their practices to find an approach that works best for them.

Practitioners 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. When reading stories, practitioners take time to show illustrations and ask purposeful questions that deepen children's comprehension and enjoyment. Practitioners embed mathematics into everyday activities purposefully. They help children to count objects, compare numbers and size and use mathematical language in their play. They ensure that children have regular access to digital resources to purposefully enhance their learning.

The setting supports children's Welsh language skills well. Practitioners model simple Welsh songs and rhymes and use basic phrases and vocabulary throughout the session. They provide suitable opportunities for children to understand the culture of Wales. During special events such as Welsh week, children have worthwhile opportunities to celebrate Welsh cultural events such as St Davids Day and meet important Welsh personalities such as local rugby players. Practitioners support children to develop a strong sense of belonging to their local area by encouraging children to bring in and share photographs of activities they have experienced with their families. For example, life on the farm or walks around the local area.

Practitioners support children's creative and physical skills effectively. They provide children with a wide range of experiences and resources that encourage their creativity successfully. They plan opportunities for children to engage in music and dance during sessions and use visitors to expand children's experiences further, such as a percussion workshop where children explore how percussion musical instruments work.

Practitioners support children to develop an understanding of different cultures appropriately. They provide beneficial opportunities for children to engage in cultural activities, which are often inspired by seasonal themes or cultural celebrations. Through these activities practitioners introduce children to stories, music and food that are celebrated during these events.

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 respond to the changes of the seasons and the weather, for example exploring ice that was formed on the grass and leaves. These experiences support children to develop a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and secure. They operate a robust entry system so that any visitors are identified and recorded, keeping the entrance to the setting locked and supervised at all times. Leaders have effective procedures in place to ensure that practitioners know their responsibilities in caring for children, keeping them safe and promoting their all-round development. Practitioners implement highly effective and comprehensive risk assessments and review them regularly. They complete daily safety checks of the environment and are skilled at identifying any emerging risks. Leaders and practitioners take prompt action to address any issues which may arise as a result of these checks. Practitioners undertake regular fire drills with children, so that everyone knows what to do in an emergency. These robust procedures ensure that risks are minimised and that children can play and learn within a safe environment. Leaders ensure the environment is kept clean, fresh and well-maintained. They follow consistent hygiene procedures, such as sanitising tables and encourage regular handwashing.

Leaders provide children with appropriately sized furniture and equipment for their age and stage of development. They ensure that 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. Outside play is easily accessible and is spacious and well equipped.

Leaders and practitioners set up the environment so that it offers highly effective, rich learning experiences. They create a calm atmosphere which allows children to concentrate, learn and develop their imagination and creativity. There is an emphasis on high-quality resources which prompts children's curiosity and exploration. Children have independent access to resources that are of interest to them, engaging them throughout the session and encouraging them to investigate further. For example, children excitedly

learn how to turn on the programmable robot, using the switch to 'wake him up' so that they can play with it.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders work together effectively, and the setting leaders keep the management team well informed about daily practice and provision. Responsible individuals make regular formal and informal visits to the setting to monitor practitioners' well-being and evaluate the quality of the learning experiences. They share important and beneficial information promptly through regular meetings and updates. In addition, leaders and the management team provide worthwhile opportunities for practitioners to work collaboratively and share effective practice with other settings.

Leaders have a clear and purposeful vision to provide a safe, community-centred setting that places children's well-being at the heart of their work. This vision is shared effectively with practitioners and families, and they work diligently to deliver on this aim successfully. The settings statement of purpose is clear and reviewed regularly. It provides an accurate picture of the setting. This helps families to make informed choices about where they access care and early education.

Leaders conduct a range of worthwhile self-evaluation activities that help them better understand the setting's strengths and areas for development. They use the views of the children, parents and carers along with external partners to help them prioritise the most important areas for development within the setting.

Leaders ensure that practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and they have a good understanding of their work at the setting. They make effective use of practitioners' skills to support children's well-being, learning and play. Practitioners are well qualified and have appropriate job descriptions that reflect their responsibilities accurately. Leaders operate suitable supervision and appraisal systems that help practitioners recognise their strengths and identify areas for future development. This ensures that practitioners feel valued, demonstrate a strong commitment to teamwork and support one another in their roles effectively.

Leaders ensure that practitioners develop their own knowledge and practice through a range of beneficial professional learning opportunities. They align this training with identified needs accurately. Leaders value the support they receive from external agencies such as the local authority advisory teacher, which helps them to improve their practice. Leaders use this information to reflect on their practices and implement any necessary changes. This contributes to a culture of continuous improvement within the setting.

The setting makes highly effective use of the range of partnerships within the local community. Leaders work well with the local primary school and provide opportunities for

children to take part in events and often take advantage of visitors to enhance their learning experiences. Leaders encourage families to take part in community activities such as the Harvest collection for the local food bank. These events help children to develop a strong sense of belonging to their local area and empathy for others, supporting a smooth transition into the primary school. Leaders use grants purposefully to enhance the outdoor learning environment for children. For example, the purchase of sails to shelter children from the sun in the warmer months allows children to access the outdoor provision for longer periods of time.

Leaders work well with families to identify children's needs and preferences before and during their time at the setting. They provide parents with regular updates through a digital platform, termly reports and informal daily discussions. They offer 'stay and play' sessions which provide families with valuable opportunities to see their children at play and better understand the learning experiences on offer. These sessions also strengthen connections between the setting and children's homelife.

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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