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For learners, for Wales



Arolygiaeth Gofal
Cymru
Care Inspectorate
Wales

A report on

Craig y Don Playschool

Community Centre
Queens Rd
Craig Y Don
LL30 1TE

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Craig y Don Playschool

Name of setting	Craig y Don Playschool
Category of care provided	Full Day care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Kathryn Phillips
Person in charge	Kathryn Phillips
Number of places	26
Age range of children	2 -4 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	15
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	Setting is open 5 days a week for 50 weeks of the year.
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is making a significant effort to promote the use of the Welsh language and culture or is working towards being a bilingual service.
Date of previous CIW inspection	17 January 2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection	January 2018
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	10/02/2026
Additional information	

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	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Make better use of the resources in the outdoor area to provide more purposeful opportunities for children's learning and play experiences
- R2 Develop further opportunities for children to solve problems independently

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

Most children choose their own resources which enable them to make effective choices and develop their play well. Younger children put on their waterproofs independently and take pride in their achievement. Most children communicate their needs successfully as they know practitioners respect their choices and listen to their ideas.

Nearly all children settle well and feel secure as they play alongside their friends confidently. They enjoy their play and are happy to demonstrate their skills, showing proudly how fast they can cycle. Most children join in with simple songs both in English and in Welsh and show their enjoyment by smiling and clapping.

Nearly all children interact with each other and practitioners well. For example, they work together tidying up their resources effectively. Most children are interested in what their friends are doing and join the imaginary game in the house. They make good suggestions to add to the potion in the mud kitchen they are creating for magic spells. Children are aware of the simple rules of the setting and follow them well. For example, taking care when sitting next to their friends to listen to a story. Most children are beginning to develop a sense of right and wrong and are learning to manage their behaviour successfully. They are beginning to take turns in their play, such as when counting and sorting cars together.

Most children are active, engaged and curious learners, which is reflected well when children investigate the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, building towers and making cards with glue and paper shapes. Nearly all children persevere for an appropriate amount of time, such as when they use paint to make marks confidently, mixing different colours together to make patterns. They maintain interest in activities for sustained periods of time effectively. This results in most children gaining a sense of achievement from what they do successfully.

Most children develop emotionally, physically, socially and creatively throughout the sessions and in their time at the setting effectively. This is reflected well in their progress. As a result, most children become effective learners. They find out about the world around them by taking walks in the local area and visit places of interest in the community.

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

Practitioners support children's health and well-being effectively. They place children's needs at the centre of their practice. Practitioners maintain high standards of hygiene, such as wearing aprons and gloves to prevent cross infection. Practitioners record children's allergies carefully to ensure that everyone can enjoy their food safely. They maintain comprehensive records such as children's individual details and health care plans, which enables them to provide an appropriate level of care. Practitioners, complete attendance registers and note minor injuries accurately, informing parents and carers appropriately. They attend suitable training and follow safeguarding procedures carefully. They understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. As a result, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners work effectively in line with the setting's behaviour management policy. They are consistent in their approach with individual children and apply agreed strategies carefully to support individual children. Practitioners model positive, respectful and caring behaviours across the setting, they are calm and gentle in their interactions with children. They give praise purposefully and encourage children to engage in play and provide appropriate support, which helps them sustain their involvement enabling them to enjoy positive outcomes. Practitioners are vigilant and remind children of simple rules such as not to ride their bicycle too fast as it may cause a crash.

Practitioners build relationships with children successfully and are sensitive and nurturing in their approach. They adapt provision to respond to children's individual needs effectively and use this information to provide an environment and experiences that reflect their interests. They ensure children have easy access to a range of high-quality resources and equipment both indoors and outdoors to develop their play. However, most resources outdoors are used for unstructured play and therefore practitioners miss purposeful opportunities to develop children's skills.

Practitioners build successful relationships with parents. They know the children and are sensitive and nurturing in their approach to enable children to develop well. Practitioners understand and respond to meeting children's individual needs successfully. The setting offers children with additional learning needs full access to all areas of learning. Practitioners conduct regular reviews of children's progress that include parents and

carers and all relevant multi-agencies when necessary. The use of and contribution from specialist services such as Flying Start Additional Learning Needs officer, health, portage and social services is therefore effective, and this includes visits to the setting from speech and language therapists. As a result, practitioners provide a good level of care for the children which helps them thrive.

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

Practitioners' sensible and caring teaching methods motivate children to engage well in their learning. This has a positive impact on the development of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Practitioners provide activities that encourage children to work together effectively and to develop their social skills successfully. For example, they encourage children to compare different sizes of leaves and to take turns while rolling cars through cylinders.

Practitioners promote and encourage interesting discussions with children during learning and play experiences. For example, when encouraging children to release penguins from ice cubes using salt and the warmth of their own hands. However, practitioners at times overdirect activities and do not always provide sufficient opportunities for children to think for themselves or to solve problems independently.

Practitioners plan an interesting and relevant curriculum, which takes account of children's interests effectively. They adapt their planning sensibly to maintain children's interest and enthusiasm. This ensures that children learn through a variety of interesting experiences.

Practitioners plan engaging opportunities to develop children's literacy skills and use purposeful questioning during play, particularly in the indoor environment. Practitioners develop children's Welsh oracy skills appropriately and provide regular opportunities for children to sing traditional Welsh rhymes. They develop children's numeracy and digital skills effectively. They challenge children purposefully to sort and count dishes and kitchen utensils in the home corner and to compare big, small and medium sized boxes. They encourage children to take photographs with a camera and programme electronic toys with adult support.

Practitioners use their observations of children's learning effectively to record their progress and to plan the next steps. This helps them to provide parents and carers with beneficial information about their children's progress. Practitioners encourage children to experiment and take risks in their play, which develops their physical skills successfully. They provide children with a range of creative and artistic activities, such as experimenting with different rhythms using drums while dancing and singing.

Practitioners develop children's spiritual, moral and social skills effectively. They promote Welsh culture well, by celebrating St David's Day and through exploring the local area, such as visiting the nearby beach. They provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about different communities and the world around them. This includes discussing books about children from other countries and by comparing foods from different cultures. They also provide good opportunities for children to learn about various festivals, such as the Chinese New Year.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure the premises are welcoming, friendly and provide a positive environment for play. They ensure that, the building is secure, and children are supervised well. Leaders implement effective risk assessments to identify any potential hazards and keep children safe. Cleaning schedule and good attention to infection control means the setting is clean, and leaders ensure an effective level of hygiene.

Leaders provide an effective yet calming environment using neutral colours and materials. There is plenty of space to move around with children's work and photographs displayed to give them a sense of achievement. A wall display of children's self-portraits ensures children have a sense of belonging. Low storage means children can access resources independently and develop their play. The effective spaces indoors offer stimulating challenges, risks and opportunities for children to experiment and learn well. These areas provide good play opportunities and the use of a wide range of sustainable materials that is promoted successfully. Suitable low level wooden tables, chairs, rugs and cushions enable everyone to play at their level of choice and enjoy their learning together. The playroom and garden areas provide opportunities for children to take appropriate risks safely. This ensures that there is a good balance between the need to promote children's safety and protect them from harm.

Leaders ensure the setting is organised to provide fully inclusive provision where all children have individual access to activities and areas of the provision. Leaders make sure children are well cared for in a supportive and relaxing learning environment, which considers children's individual needs well. Resources are of good quality with many recycled. There are loose parts for building, and a kitchen complete with metal utensils, pots and pans which add an authentic element to the children's play. A diverse community is reflected effectively by visits in the local area, figures, stories and celebrating a few traditions from different countries.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders use effective strategies that focus directly on improving provision and children's outcomes. They have a clear vision and work together conscientiously to provide effective care and support, which enhance children's learning beneficially. As a result of their

positive attitudes and caring practices, leaders ensure a positive learning environment that provides purposeful experiences for children, particularly indoors.

Leaders ensure that practitioners provide children with strong and positive pastoral care. This creates a strong sense of belonging within the setting. The caring and nurturing ethos encourages children to do their best and persevere during learning and play sessions. Leaders and practitioners work together well as a team and attend appropriate training to improve their teaching and care practices. As a result, they are motivated and eager to succeed.

Leaders ensure they update the setting's statutory documents, policies, and practices regularly and they follow safe recruitment processes thoroughly. The Statement of Purpose is accurate and reflects the setting correctly. Leaders ensure that processes for supervising, evaluating and appraising the work and development of all practitioners are effective.

Leaders focus on introducing well-planned improvements to develop the provision further. They undertake effective self-evaluation processes, which lead to accurate targets for improvement. This helps them to identify strengths and areas that need attention purposefully. For example, they have focused recently on supporting children with additional learning needs and to continue to develop the effectiveness of practitioners' assessment and observation practices. Leaders consider the views of everyone who is involved with the setting effectively. This includes parents and carers with whom they maintain regular contact about their children's development. They hold beneficial discussions with all stakeholders to improve provision, and act well upon advice from support agencies. As a result, leaders have adapted their use of social media and provide information booklets for parents with relevant information about their children's achievements.

Leaders allocate resources efficiently and use the budget and grant funding carefully by prioritising expenditure against the setting's priorities well. For example, they have improved the provision in the indoor learning areas and provided an effective range of digital resources for children.

Leaders have established a range of beneficial partnerships to help support children's understanding of their 'cynefin' or local area. For example, the setting visits the nearby beach, park and local shops and businesses. Additionally, the emergency services visit the setting occasionally to discuss their roles within the community. Practitioners work effectively with the local school's staff to facilitate the process of transition as children move to the next stage in 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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