



Childcare Inspection Report on

St Aubin Nursery Cowbridge

**St Aubin Nursery
Old Health Centre, High Street
Old Hall
Cowbridge
CF71 7AH**



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Description of the service

St Aubin Nursery Cowbridge is located in a single storey building in Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan. St Aubin Nurseries Limited is registered to provide the service. Susan Shepherd-Evans has been nominated as the Responsible Individual on behalf of the limited company, and Marie Anslow is the Person in Charge on a day to day basis. A child care manager also supports the nursery and the Person in Charge. The nursery is registered to care for up to 161 children. This nursery is one of a group of child care services operated by the limited company and has been registered since May 2011. The service is offered through the English language with the inclusion of the Welsh language thanks to several fluent Welsh speakers on staff.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are cared for in a very high quality environment, where an excellent range of resources have been well thought out by staff to ensure they meet the needs of the children and encourage them to develop their own play and learning. Children have a strong voice in this service and they are cared for by a staff team who respect the children, their views and their choices. Children benefit from skilled and experienced staff who are committed to making a positive difference to children's experiences. Sound and pro-active leadership and management of the service supports this and ensures a reliable, very high quality service for children and parents.

2. Improvements

The service has recently invested in a secure electronic system to update parents during the day as to their child's day. The garden has been a focus of development. The extensive gardens have been partitioned to create designated play spaces for each age group of children, allowing them to use the gardens freely when they wish and tailor the spaces to the needs of each age group. The service has shown that it is dedicated to the ongoing professional development of the staff group and this has continued to be a priority since the last inspection.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We found the service to be compliant with the regulations, and have made just one recommendation, which relates to the environment.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children benefit from an excellent play, leisure and care environment in which they have formed secure relationships with staff and positive friendships with other children, and this contributes significantly to their well-being. All children in this service are able to engage in activities of their choosing and are free to develop that play in collaboration with their peers. They are listened to well and their views are taken into account.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children are able to make choices and decisions and they have opportunities to speak and express themselves. All children are able to move freely between the activities available to them. In the baby unit and toddler unit, the rooms available to children have been opened up to allow them to move more freely between them and follow their own interests through the day. The large, open-plan pre-school unit also allows for this very well. The activities available to the children in the nursery are planned by staff based on children's interests and how they enjoyed an activity. We saw that 'follow on' sheets have been implemented which staff use to note down children's like and dislikes and evaluate the activities available so that this can be used to inform the activities that are provided to children the following day or week. Activities are also provided in response to what children ask for on the day. We observed the toddlers playing outside and staff told us that all of the activities they had made available in the toddler garden that day had been asked for by the children that morning during circle time. These included dinosaurs, silly foam and drawing, as well as a selection of books on a blanket in the shade under a tree, which we saw children and staff sharing together. Rolling snack is also employed across the service and this allows children choice of if and when they want to pause their play to have snack, rather than all play being stopped by staff at a set time, which could ruin lovely play opportunities. Staff are conscious to give children time to express themselves and we saw children happily chatting with staff throughout our visits.

Children have a very strong voice in this service and this allows them to have good influence over their experiences and guide their own play.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children are secure, comfortable, happy and relaxed in the care of staff with whom they have developed warm relationships. This allowed the children to explore their environment and engage with activities as they wished, and we saw all children happily and enthusiastically engage in their play. Children have clearly developed

bonds of affection with the staff. They are happy and confident to approach them, are affectionate towards them and are confident to seek comfort when necessary. We also saw that they were keen to interact with staff and include them in their play. In the baby room, we saw a child playing with a musical instrument. He banged the instrument and staff praised him. He babbled contentedly and smiled broadly with the member of staff. The children are happy and they smile and laugh whilst they are playing. Some children are beginning to form friendships with their peers, and we saw them seek out others to play with, asking for each other by name. We also saw some children negotiate their play between themselves, deciding on roles and attempting to share and take turns with the resources. Some of the children at the service are too young to be able to play co-operatively with their peers but these children were confident to initiate their own play and were also very content. Staff are polite and respectful to the children and the children are happy to approach staff for assistance.

Children in this service are well settled, very happy and confident. They are forming friendships and feel valued.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children are learning to co-operate, take turns and share, as well as becoming sensitive to the emotions of others. We saw children negotiate their play well and play co-operatively. For example, in the toddler garden two children wanted to play with the toy lawn mower. We saw them settle back to play quickly when a staff member explained they needed to take turns and they accepted that one of them would have to wait. One child went on to play with a pushchair as an alternative. Children are developing an understanding of the impact they have on others and most of the children were considerate of one another when playing. We observed no issues of unwanted behaviour except for small occurrences which were to be expected for the age of children, and which were dealt with effectively with gentle reminders from staff.

Children are developing their skills as part of a group, and are working on becoming self disciplined

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children are interested and excited in the play based activities in which they engage. We saw that children were active and curious throughout the inspection. They were happy and confident to move between activities freely, but also held a sustained interest in activities of their choosing as well. Much of the children's play was outdoors during our visit as it was a particularly nice day. We observed children engage very enthusiastically in the activities made available to them, such as messy play water play. Children enjoyed water painting, using water, paint brushes and spray bottles to

'paint' on walls, floors and furniture in the garden. A small group of children chose to put on the wellies that were available in the outdoor classroom and they decided that wellies need puddles, so with the help of staff they filled buckets with water and created puddles in the garden to stomp in in their wellies, which they thoroughly enjoyed. In the toddler unit, the children joined a member of staff on a bug hunt and were very excited when they found a slug under their water tray.

Children at this service enjoy their play and learning very much. They are able to sustain interest in their play and gain a sense of achievement from it.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children are developing well across a range of skills. The records of development that staff maintain about each child demonstrate that children are making appropriate progress, and staff spoke very knowledgeably of the children and the progress they had made since starting. The Person in Charge told us that a key worker system is in place and that the key worker is responsible for monitoring and recording the development of their key children, although all staff have a good understanding of the children across the board. As well as planned activities, we noted that children benefit from spontaneous activities which are well supported by staff. We observed a member of staff engage toddler aged children in a lovely discussion about what they could observe in the garden. They noticed planes flying over head, and then that there were lots of birds in their tree. They counted the birds and noticed they were eating berries, which sparked further discussion. Children are able to follow their own interests and develop their own play due to the freedom of movement they have within the nursery and the layout. We saw a child exploring a selection of very large spools that were in the garden, and one of them moved. This interested her and she experimented with how they moved. She rolled one on the flat, then down a hill and was pleased that this was an improvement. She also enjoyed it when it rolled over a grate as this made a noise and she did this several times. Children can access most resources independently, as well as their bags and coats, water bottles and the bathrooms, and so they have opportunities to develop their independence. We saw children to be confident and content with this independence.

Children have lots of good quality opportunities to learn, follow interests and develop skills, and are encouraged to gain independence and self-help skills.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Children and parents benefit from skilled staff who have a good understanding of child development and want to make a positive difference to the children in their care. Staff are responsive and respect the children in their care and the decisions they make. Children remain safe and healthy because staff understand their responsibilities and are aware of the policies and procedures in place to support them in their roles. All staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs and this helps to ensure that those needs are well met.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff ensure that the service's policies and procedures are well implemented to support the health, safety and well-being of the children in their care. The staff we spoke to were able to speak knowledgeably about the service's Child Protection policy and their individual roles in implementing it to keep children safe. We examined accident records and found that they included the required information, and all of the staff hold current paediatric first aid certificates. Good hygiene is promoted at the service and the Infection Control Audit Tool is used to help in this. All children were encouraged to wash their hands before meal times and after using the bathroom. There is a very robust system in place to manage food and food allergies within the nursery. The service is registered with Environmental Health as a food business and has been awarded a 5-star food hygiene rating. The service promotes healthy lifestyles by providing a balanced menu for the children, in line with Welsh Government guidance. Children's views are sought on the food provision and these influence what is included on the menus. The service has achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award and is working through the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-schools scheme. It also participates in the Designed To Smile scheme promoting oral hygiene. The nursery sets out a 'rolling snack' morning and afternoon which allows children to choose when they want to stop their play and sit with a member of staff for a snack.

Staff have a sound understanding of the policies and procedures to follow to keep children safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff set realistic boundaries, are good role models and use a consistent approach to managing behaviour, taking into account children's age and understanding. We observed that staff were all very positive and warm in their guiding of behaviour. They praised the children when they behaved well, thereby reinforcing good behaviour.

Children were familiar with the routines of the nursery day and this helped to give some predictability for them which also helped to manage behaviour. We saw staff be very respectful of the children and give them due warning of when activities or tasks were going to change and this also helped to make the children's time at nursery more predictable and less unsettling for them. No significant issues of unwanted behaviour occurred during the inspection. Staff managed small behavioural issues, such as snatching, with gentle verbal reminders and this was sufficient. All staff had a calm and relaxed manner when interacting with the children and this had a positive effect on the way they responded.

Staff are able to manage interactions well and this has a positive impact of children's experiences at the service.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff provide a nurturing and caring environment in which children's development is well promoted. We saw that the children were very comfortable to interact with staff whilst playing together and that they responded to them with affection. Staff spoke with the children in a consistently calm and reassuring manner, and this helped to ensure that the service remained a calm and pleasant play environment. We observed staff to be considerate of the children's views and conscious to give the young children time to communicate their wishes. We often saw them listening carefully to what the children were saying, which helped to make the children feel valued. As a part of this, children's feelings are respected in this service.

All staff at the service have a good understanding of individual children and their needs and abilities. A key worker system is in place to support relationships between staff, children and families. The Person in Charge told us that, because around a quarter of the staff group were confident Welsh speakers, they are also able to offer the key worker system through the medium of Welsh, and we saw a strong and imbedded inclusion of Welsh across the nursery.

Staff deliver the ethos of the Foundation Phase curriculum at this service. Staff across the service plan activities based on the children's interests and how the children engaged with the activities that had been available. The activity provision is therefore reactive to the children's developing interests and abilities. It is also set up as 'continuous provision', allowing the children to choose to interact with the activities available freely. Staff are aware of the principles of the Foundation Phase curriculum and were able to speak knowledgeably to us about the different skills they were hoping to develop in the children through the various activities they provided. It was

clear through our observations that they take into account children's interest and abilities to plan for the next steps in their learning, because the children responded well to the activities provided and were interested and engaged.

Staff promote children's development and well-being very well through the play and care provided.

3. Environment

Summary

Children benefit from an environment which is of a very high standard, clean and welcoming, and where risk is well managed. The indoor play spaces have been very well developed to ensure they are interesting and engaging for children, and allow them freedom to follow their interests. Children have access to very well appointed gardens and benefit from an excellent range of high quality resources which are appropriately maintained.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

Children are cared for in an environment which is clean, safe and secure. We saw that the areas to which children have access were very well maintained and decorated. The security of the service is good, with a secure external doors controlled by staff to restrict access to the children. The provider ensures that the cleaning routines at the service reflect good hygiene practice and effective infection control, including the regular cleaning of toys and resources on a rolling programme. We reviewed safety records and found that the service's Public Liability Insurance, periodic electrical safety certificate and annual gas safety certificate were up to date. A fire risk assessment is in place and records show that fire drills have been conducted on a regular basis. The Person in Charge showed us that she ensures staff respond dynamically when practicing evacuations by mocking up exits blocked by fire to challenge them to evacuate by alternative routes. Staff also practice reverse evacuations with the children in the event that children need to be evacuated from the gardens back into the nursery. The service has identified and addressed risks on the premises. We examined the risk assessments in place for the service and found them to be thorough and kept under review. We identified one risk which had not been considered by the service: children were not restricted from the rose bushes in the pre-school garden. The Responsible Individual confirmed this would be addressed immediately. We also noted a mild musty smell in the cot room and recommend the air flow in the room be improved to help alleviate this.

Children are cared for in a clean and secure environment which benefits from good maintenance and hygiene practices.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

Children benefit from an environment that is welcoming and friendly, and which supports a sense of belonging in the service. We found the indoor environment to be well decorated, warm and welcoming. Much of the decoration is children's own

creative work, as well as decorative pictures and displays. Most resources are stored at low levels and in containers which are of a manageable size for children to handle and this means that they can access most of the resources in the service independently, supporting their free choice. We saw children confidently bringing out stored resources of their choosing during the inspection. Child-sized tables and chairs are available for the children to do activities. Activity stations have been created in all play spaces to give purpose and some predictability to areas, such as a mark making table where mark making resources are always available, or a painting area where paints are always freely available. Staff we spoke to told us they felt this development of the space had made a positive difference to children's experiences, freeing up more space in play rooms and giving predictability and purpose to the areas.

Children in the service benefit from three very well developed and resourced outdoor play spaces which had recently been further improved. We saw children in each age group make very good use of the gardens throughout our visit because for much of the day they were allowed to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play spaces. The gardens had been developed to provide a wide range of age appropriate activities. An attractive outdoor classroom was available in the pre-school garden, as well as a well developed mud kitchen, climbing equipment, and wall mounted pipework for pouring and filling activities. A covered area had recently been installed in the toddler garden and they also benefit from a large grassed area and climbing equipment.

Children benefit from a very well developed environment with plenty of space to play and learn.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Children benefit from a very good selection of toys and equipment that are appropriate and suitable to their needs, and which help to engage them in meaningful play. We saw that the resources at the service covered a very wide range of play opportunities, and that children could freely access many of the stored resources. Books were available in both English and Welsh. The resourcing included a very good selection natural, sustainable materials and real life items, and in many areas, selections of resources were displayed attractively to help demonstrate to children what was available and to make them appealing. Role play resources included lots of real life objects such as office stationary, packaging, and house plants. Small world and construction resources were presented in a very fun and attractive way to encourage children's interest. The outdoor environment is well resourced and during the inspection we saw children thoroughly enjoy their time spent outdoors. Children were able to play on ride-on toys, with messy play and with small world toys. They also loved water in particular as it was a very warm day.

Children benefit from an excellent range of resources and equipment that promotes their all-round development and helps to ensure they have a really fun and engaging time at the service.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Parents and children receive a consistent, reliable, high quality service which is well run, with due regard paid to the regulations and National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare. The provider is dedicated to improving outcomes for children, reflecting on practice and is proactive in planning for improvements to the service and for the continuing professional development of staff. The service is also proactive in engaging with families and in sharing information with them about their child.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Children and parents benefit from a very well run and planned service. The service has a Statement of Purpose in place which the Responsible Individual told us is shared with the parents. This Statement of Purpose contains the information required by the regulations, is clear, and is kept under review to ensure it is always an accurate reflection of the service provided. We examined the service's policies and found them to be appropriate and thorough, and records also showed that they are kept under review and updated as needed. The records we saw showed that staff record accidents and incidents appropriately. Staff also record any existing injuries children have when attending the service. Medication records contained the necessary information and parents sign both to give permission for the medication to be administered as well as afterwards to acknowledge the entry. The registers of children's attendance contained all of the necessary information and are completed in a timely manner. Children's records also contained the necessary information to ensure staff are able to meet the children's needs.

Parents can be confident the provision is well run through good leadership and management, and with due care and attention paid to the regulations and National Minimum Standards.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Children and parents benefit from a service which is committed to high standards and improving outcomes for children, and they are actively involved in defining and measuring the quality of the service. There is a very robust system in place to ensure that a formal self evaluation of the service is undertaken on at least an annual basis. The Quality of Care report demonstrated that the service consults with parents, staff, children and relevant external agencies in order to review the quality of the service, and uses that information to set an action plan intended to improve the service over the following 12 months. There are also systems in place to encourage managers to

be reflective of their practice and the service provision, as well as helping staff to be reflective practitioners. The Person in Charge conducts an audit of the service and the equipment twice a year, and all of these elements feed into rigorous planning for improvements for the service.

The service draws on first hand evidence and the views of staff, parents, children and external agencies to evaluate the service, and is committed to providing a service which is of the highest standard.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

The service is effective in managing staff, their time and prioritising activities responsively to ensure that children's needs are met in a timely manner. We observed staff to be well organised and we saw that this allowed them to remain calm whilst delivering care. An example of this included having a designated person each day to prepare snack and serve the rolling snack. This calm and relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure the persons caring for children are suitable and qualified to do so. There is a system in place to ensure that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and mandatory training is renewed as necessary. We examined a sample of staff files and found that they contained all necessary pre-employment checks. Records showed that staff induction is undertaken in a planned manner, supervisions are conducted with each member of staff monthly and appraisals are undertaken annually. The service has shown a commitment to promoting the continuing professional development of its staff by encouraging them to undertake training courses to further improve their understanding of childcare and related matters.

The service is very well organised and this has a positive impact on children's experiences.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Parents' and children's expectations about the service are matched by their experience. Children have their needs and preferences identified and parents know how these will be met. A child record form is completed for each child by their parent so that the service has all the information necessary to be able to provide care to the children and meet their needs, such as the child's likes and dislikes, routines and development. There are appropriate policies in place which outline how the service operates and copies of all policies are available to parents. Parents are kept involved

and informed about their child's activities. Staff are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each day to inform them of how the child has been. The service has also recently invested in a secure electronic system that staff can use to update parents during the day (if they have provided consent) as to how their child is, how much they've eaten, when they've napped etc. and share photos of activities they have been undertaking. Parents who responded to CIW questionnaires all confirmed they were satisfied with the communication in place between the service and themselves. The service hosts an open evening once each year to encourage parents to be a part of their children's experience at the service. There is also a joined up approach taken to working with external agencies who may be involved with children who attend the service to ensure children and families receive the necessary support.

Children's needs are identified to ensure a very good quality of care can be provided, and parents have all the information they need to make an informed choice about using this service.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Children's access to rose brushes in the pre-school garden should be restricted; and
- the air flow in the cot room should be improved to help alleviate a mild musty smell in the room.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections.

- Two inspectors undertook an unannounced visit to the service. We visited the nursery for one day to observe children and the care they received. Observations were carried out in each occupied room within the nursery, as well as outdoors. Our SOFI 2 tool was used to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff;
- we reviewed information held by CIW;
- we undertook a visual inspection of the premises;
- we spoke to a number of children throughout the day. We also spoke to most staff members who were present. Staff and parents provided written feedback to CSSIW by completing and returning questionnaires;
- we looked at a wide range of records. These included the Statement of Purpose, staff files, health and safety records, children's files, activity planning and developmental records.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Susan Shepherd-Evans
Person in charge	Marie Anslow
Registered maximum number of places	161
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Opening hours	7:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	Both
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	04/08/2015
Dates of this inspection visit	21/06/2018
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and operates as a bilingual service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's <i>'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'</i> .
Additional Information:	