



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**St Aubin Nursery**

**34 Archer Road  
Penarth  
CF64 3HL**



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## **Description of the service**

St Aubin Nursery is located in Penarth, 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 Nicola Perkins 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 offers 116 places for children aged from six weeks to 12 years. This nursery is one of a group of child care services operated by the limited company and has been operated by Susan Shepherd-Evans since 1989. The service is offered through the English language, with the inclusion of incidental Welsh, and some members of staff are fluent Welsh speakers.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children are cared for in a friendly and welcoming environment, where a good range of resources are available to children, although the environment requires further consideration to ensure it encourages them to develop their own play and learning. Children have a 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, high quality service for children and parents.

### **2. Improvements**

The children's bathrooms downstairs have been totally refurbished following a recommendation on the last inspection report. The garden has continued to be developed, including the addition of a mud kitchen. 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. We have made recommendations in relation to resourcing and the play environment. Since the inspection, the Responsible Individual has confirmed that action has been taken to address the recommendations.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children benefit from a play, leisure and care environment in which they have formed secure relationships with staff and positive friendships with other children, and this contributes 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 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. Children are able to move freely between the activities available to them. Within the toddler unit and pre-school unit, children are able to move freely between the available play rooms as they wish, exploring the activities available across the different spaces and following their own interests through the day. For periods of the day, pre-school and toddler aged children are also able to choose whether they want to play inside or out in the garden, as the garden can be accessed directly from their play rooms. The activities available to the children in the nursery are planned by staff based on children's interests and how they enjoyed activities available previously. We saw that 'follow on' sheets have been implemented which staff use to note down children's likes 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. Staff we spoke to said they felt that this system was helpful and had had a positive impact on the activities provided to children. For the school aged children who attend the service for after school care, the Responsible Individual told us that all activities provided for them are chosen by them. We saw activity records which showed children had added their own ideas and devised the activity provision. Staff are conscious to give all children time to express themselves and we saw children happily chatting with staff throughout our visits. We observed a toddler talking with a member of staff about what she was drawing. She told her it was a horse and showed it to her. The member of staff was encouraging and the child smiled and was clearly proud to show the member of staff what she had done.

Children have a voice in this service which allows them to have influence over their experiences.

### **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 engage in play. We also saw that they were keen to interact with staff and include them in their play. In the after school club, all children were happy to join in the play and leisure opportunities available to them and several hugged staff in greeting when they arrived. They chatted very happily with staff, telling them all about what had happened in school. Some children attending were from Welsh medium schools and some of the full conversations we heard, such as about sports day, were conducted between staff and children in Welsh, which helps to show children their language preferences are valued. Staff engaged well with children and included themselves sensitively in the children's play across all age groups. Children are beginning to form friendships with their peers, according to their age and abilities. Almost all children are well settled, and we saw them to be happy, smiling and laughing whilst they played. Any children who became unsettled were comforted and supported well by staff. A child who arrived at the nursery tired and not quite ready to join in with activities sat on a member of staff's lap and did inset puzzles quietly. After a short while when they felt a little better, something took their interest and she was confident to move away from the member of staff to another activity.

Children in this service are well settled, 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. 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. We observed a group of pre-school children engage very enthusiastically in imaginative play across several role play areas in the pre-school unit. The children played co-operatively and negotiated roles, stories and

actions to drive the play along. They engaged well in this for over 20 minutes and had lot of fun doing so. We also watched younger children enjoy a craft activity in line with their current theme. However, we noted that children did not get as much out of some of the activities as they could have because we found that some activities were too difficult for the children and in some instances, the resourcing and layout of the play spaces hindered. These points were discussed with the Responsible Individual and the Person in Charge and action has been taken to address this.

Children at this service enjoy their play and learning, are able to sustain interest in their play and in the main, gain a sense of achievement from it.

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

Children are developing 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. Staff 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. 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. Children can access resources independently, as well as their bags and coats, water bottles and the bathrooms, and so they have opportunities to develop their independence. Children are encouraged to serve their own lunch from small platters on each table and they can choose their snack when they engage in the rolling snack-time that is made available in the morning and afternoon. We saw children to be confident and content with this independence.

Children have 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. 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. The service has also achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award and the Designed To Smile Gold Award for 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. We saw children eating cut grapes and milk for morning snack, which they enjoyed and we heard many children ask for seconds. We examined accident records and found that they included the required information, and all of the staff hold current paediatric first aid certificates. Records showed that fire drills are practiced with the children monthly so they know what to do in an emergency, as well as reverse evacuation procedures practiced on a regular basis.

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 generally very positive and warm in their guiding of behaviour. They praised the children when they behaved well, thereby reinforcing good behaviour. Children were quite 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 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. Most 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. 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 a '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 some were able to speak to us about the different skills they were hoping to develop in the children through the various activities they provided. Our observations demonstrated that staff take into account children's interest and abilities to plan for the next steps in their learning and in the main, children responded well to the activities provided and were interested and engaged. However, some activities were not pitched at quite the right ability and understanding level. We discussed this



with the Responsible Individual and Person in Charge who explained that all staff are given opportunities to devise activity planning and it had been recognised that some additional support may be needed in this.

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

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Children benefit from a warm, welcoming child care environment. Risk is generally well managed, and play spaces are suitably maintained, although cleanliness in some areas (such as some floors) requires further attention. Both the indoor and outdoor play spaces have been developed to be interesting and engaging for children, allowing them freedom to follow their interests. However, the environment would benefit from reconsideration to ensure that the layout and decoration of the nursery, and the storage of resources are purposeful and enhance children's experiences. In the weeks following the inspection, the nursery provided evidence that this had been acted upon. Children have access to a well appointed garden and benefit from a very broad range of 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 safe and secure, and for the most part, clean. The security of the service is good, with a secure front door controlled by staff to restrict access to the children. We saw that the areas to which children have access were adequately maintained and decorated. The provider has systems in place for cleaning which reflect good hygiene practice and effective infection control, including the regular cleaning of toys and resources on a rolling programme. However, we noted that some areas of the nursery were not adequately cleaned (such as some floor areas) and we discussed this with the Responsible Individual and the Person in Charge who confirmed they would address the matter promptly. 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 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 observed two risks which had not been considered by the service: in the cot room, cots were positioned in such a way that allowed children to reach through from one cot to another; and, several drawstring bags were stored within the reach of children in cots. We asked that children's access to drawstring bags be restricted immediately and this was done. The Responsible Individual also confirmed that one of the cots was also removed immediately to give more space thereby prevent children reaching through.

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment, which benefits from suitable maintenance and hygiene practices. However, cleanliness in some areas should be improved.

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

Children benefit from an environment that is welcoming and friendly. 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. Playdough had been set out on a bench and we saw a two year old find the cutters and rollers she wanted which were stored close by and she enjoyed playing with these. Child-sized tables and chairs are available for the children to do activities. The service benefits from a good sized and well resourced outdoor play space. We saw all ages of children make very good use of the garden throughout our visits. We saw the children go outside to play even when it was raining. Staff had a positive attitude to this and children were happy in their play. The garden had been developed to provide a range of activities outside, including small world play, construction and large equipment for gross motor development.

We noted that although the nursery provides a welcoming and engaging environment which is suitable for the age of the children cared for, the indoor play spaces would benefit from further consideration. We found that the decoration, which filled most of all walls and cupboard doors, as well as some windows, was overwhelming and would not be of benefit to the children. Little of it was the children's own work and we recommend that children be given space to display their own work. We also found that the layout of the play spaces and the ways in which some resources are stored did not work effectively for the children. Each of these should be given further consideration so that they are purposeful and have a positive impact of children's experiences. We discussed this with the Responsible Individual and the Person in Charge who confirmed that redevelopment of the indoor play space featured on the action plan of developments currently ongoing in the nursery. In the weeks following the inspection visits, the Responsible Individual provided evidence that significant action had been taken in the nursery to address this recommendation.

Children benefit from a suitable and engaging 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 natural, sustainable materials and real life items. Role play resources included lots of real life objects such as office stationary, packaging, and house plants. The outdoor environment is well resourced and can be accessed directly from both the toddler unit and the pre-school unit. During the inspection we saw children thoroughly enjoy their time spent outdoors, despite it raining for much of the time. Babies also made good use of the garden and they have a dedicated area which is suitable to their needs, with soft astroturf flooring so that babies who are walking or crawling can safely explore on the floor, and a selection of age appropriate toys. The older children were able to play on ride-on toys, large play equipment, in a mud kitchen, a covered construction area and a fairy garden. We did note that babies were provided with items such as raw rice and glitter to explore as a sensory experience but that inevitably much of this went in the babies mouth. The sorts of items babies are provided with for this play should be reconsidered taking into account this problem.

Children benefit from a very good range of resources and equipment that promotes their all-round development and helps to ensure they have a 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 document 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 and serve the rolling snack. This calm and relaxed care environment has a positive impact on the children's mood and their interactions. We noted that a rigid adherence to staffing ratios was employed within each play room and we discussed with the Responsible Individual and the Person in Charge that, due to how the nursery is structured (children grouped into baby, toddler and pre-school units, with several playroom spaces available freely to children within each unit), staffing ratios must be maintained within each unit but that staff can move flexibly within the rooms in each unit as need requires.

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. 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 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**

- Consider a less rigid approach to staffing ratios to allow greater flexibility for staff within the units can improve experiences;
- consider the age appropriateness of some planned activities;
- further consideration should be given to the resources used for messy and sensory play, particularly for the babies;
- the layout and decoration of the nursery, and the storage of resources should be given further consideration to ensure they are purposeful and enhance children's experiences;
- space should be provided for children to display their own work;
- cleanliness (particularly of floors) must be considered; and
- in the cot room, children should be restricted from reaching into neighbouring cots, and no child should be able to access draw string bags.



## 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, and returned on a second day to provide feedback. 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, plus the Responsible Individual, Person in Charge and Child Care Manager. Staff and parents provided written feedback to CIW 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](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Susan Shepherd-Evans
Person in charge	Nicola Perkins
Registered maximum number of places	116
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Opening hours	7:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	06/11/2015
Dates of this inspection visit	24/05/2018 and 25/05/2018
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:	