

A report on

Meadowbank Day Nursery

**Unit 1 Castle Meadows Park
Merthyr Road
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 7RZ**

Date of inspection: September 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Meadowbank Day Nursery

Name of setting	Meadowbank Day Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Not applicable
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Claire Pudney
Person in charge	Claire Pudney Cheryl Brimble Lindsey Hadley Nicola Pritchard
Number of places	92
Age range of children	0-5 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	31
Number of children who receive funding for early education	19
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers the ,Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	16/04/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	Not applicable
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	27/09/2022
Service has recently been accepted onto the Flying Start framework with Monmouthshire County Council however they are waiting for an ECERS observation before they have Flying Start children attending.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that opportunities to develop information and communication technology are developed throughout the setting
- R2 Ensure that children hear and have good opportunities to respond to or use Welsh across the nursery

What happens next

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the new non-maintained curriculum planning, for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being:

Nearly all children are happy and settled, and have excellent interactions with practitioners and visitors. For example, a child in the baby room greets us with 'hia' and a wave and a child in the toddler room asks us our names. Nearly all children move between different activities on offer to them with confidence. Most children express their feelings clearly and make choices about where and who to play with. For example, they choose to paint rather than engage in a threading activity. Nearly all children show resilience and perseverance in their play and learning and respond eagerly to the challenge and support of practitioners.

Nearly all children cope very well when they separate from their parents and carers. They form positive attachments with practitioners. This has a very good impact on their well-being and desire to learn. The children's voice is captured very effectively through planning and practitioners follow their likes and wishes. For example, activities and resources that children show an interest in and enjoy engaging with are immediately added to the planning. Most children trust the staff and are confident that they will value their interactions. Nearly all children feel safe and invite their friends to join in their play. Nearly all gain a strong sense of belonging at the setting. For example, children's artwork is displayed throughout the nursery, along with photographs of them in their play and with their family members.

Nearly all children have excellent independence skills and show exceptional self-help skills at mealtimes. For example, children in the baby room independently help themselves to finger foods at snack time and older children serve their own food at lunch time using a variety of utensils such as tongs and spoons. Older children take off their coats, store their bags and access the toilet independently. Nearly all children have exemplary behaviour and treat practitioners and their friends with respect. Nearly all children play very well together. For example, older children play and take turns with each other, filling and pouring water beads while smiling and laughing with each other in the outdoor water area.

Nearly all children take pride in their ability to demonstrate new skills as they explore a wide variety of learning opportunities. They use large play equipment such as a climbing wall, slide and bikes with very good control. This develops their confidence and self-esteem.

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

Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points. They talk about their play with enthusiasm and make useful decisions about where they play during sessions. They speak to each other and to adults confidently. During child led experiences nearly all children play co-operatively to develop their understanding of the world. For example, they talk about different birds in the outdoors enthusiastically, and when making nests from a variety of natural materials they had found. They demonstrate strong well developed physical skills that enable them to jump, climb, water plants and paint outdoors with confidence. Nearly all children

handle small tools with increasing accuracy and control, such as when buttering their own toast or using magnifying glasses and binoculars.

Nearly all children enjoy handling books and listening to stories. They respond to thought provoking questions during interesting discussions about autumn leaves. They express themselves well and most children describe in detail what they see in their play, for example when looking at sunflower seeds and playing with mud they describe how they make soup. They handle small tools with increasing confidence, for example using scissors to cut leaves and flowers, or sticky tape and pens to hold their seeds. Nearly all children enjoy experimenting with mark-making, for example mixing water from a water butt into containers of mud then painting with large brushes. They use pencils and chalks to draw circles that represent the shape of nests and talk about their experiences with enthusiasm.

Children develop a strong understanding of nature and take an active interest in the world around them. They show genuine enjoyment when using the outdoors and engage in valuable learning experiences that are exciting and challenging. For example, they plant vegetables and wild flowers and regularly water them independently. Most children enjoy experimenting with a range of messy play resources, such as clay, dough, paints, mud and water beads. They handle these with confidence and enjoyment, asking useful questions and making purposeful decisions. For example, when handling clay they use their imagination to make potatoes, cutting them to make pretend potato soup. When handling lavender the children enjoy smelling it and talking about different smells, this develops their communication skills well.

Nearly all children count and use numbers in their play, for example counting the conkers in a nest or the glass pebbles, lids and lolly sticks when making pictures of butterflies and flowers. They count with increasing confidence and use mathematical language in their play, for example when making models using dough and lavender and talking about their 'very tall towers' when using blocks. Nearly all children are confident to make useful and purposeful choices about their play and ask questions to develop their understanding. This supports their confidence and personal and social development well. Most children develop strong resilience during their learning experiences, for example when using their body weight and feet to snap sticks and when using screw drivers and spanners to undo bolts and screws. This encourages the children to face challenges with increasing confidence.

Most children make progress in acquiring Welsh language skills, for example they count to 10 with accuracy. They sing a simple Welsh song with sign language enthusiastically during circle time. Most children use the listening station, to hear songs and stories. They use headphones and look at the corresponding story book. However, opportunities to develop ICT skills throughout the setting are limited and prevent children gaining confidence and understanding in this area.

Care and development:

Practitioners have an exceptional understanding of their roles and responsibilities and provide high quality experiences for children to develop and thrive at the setting. They follow thorough procedures for keeping children safe. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for

concern. All practitioners have up to date first aid certificates, which is a reflection on the strong emphasis that is placed on safety. Practitioners promote good practices for ensuring that children stay healthy by encouraging them to wash their hands regularly, particularly before snack time. They keep appropriate records of concerns, accidents, incidents and important information in one secure place. Leaders undertake monthly monitoring to ensure that any trends in accidents and/or incidents are addressed and, as far as possible, eliminated.

Nearly all practitioners manage interactions with children very well and there is a superb relationship between staff and children. Practitioners have very good experience of supporting children to make friends and manage their feelings. They support children exceptionally well by talking calmly and naturally to the children in their play and during group times such as circle time and snack time. Practitioners are exceptional role models for the children as to how to treat each other with respect and courtesy.

Practitioners have excellent knowledge of children's individual needs. They carry out observations as part of the daily session and use the information gathered to inform their planning and the next steps in children's individual learning. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of every child's needs, including those with emerging or additional learning needs. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) provides effective advice and leadership on all issues relating to ALN. Practitioners make excellent use of the links formed with specialist services such as the local authority's Early Years ALN Lead Officer and speech and language professionals. Practitioners engage very well with parents when identifying children's individual targets and reviewing their progress.

Practitioners promote children's awareness of the world around them and the importance of treating people from all cultural backgrounds with the utmost respect and tolerance. They develop their awareness and understanding by learning about celebrations such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Dydd Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day. Practitioners use Welsh throughout the nursery. However, opportunities for this are limited.

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

Nearly all practitioners provide an exciting range of stimulating learning experiences that meet the needs and interests of the children effectively. They use a well-resourced outdoor play area to build on children's skills effectively. For example, practitioners challenge children to run, dig, pour, plant, and climb and this improves their physical skills which they use with increasing confidence. This develops children's strength and balance as they work together purposefully. Practitioners encourage the children to understand the world around them, for example identifying birds, leaves and trees.

Practitioners provide useful opportunities for children to develop their literacy skills in their play. For example, children create and make marks on envelopes independently. This supports children to understand the purpose of writing well. Practitioners build on children's interests and knowledge of books well by reading

stories that are relevant to the children's experiences. For example, when discussing leaves and trees and the seasons, the practitioner read a story related to autumn.

Children are encouraged to develop their fine motor skills, for example using magnifying glasses, binoculars and scissors to cut leaves and flowers in the outdoors. Practitioners encourage children to smell herbs and flowers, such as lavender and sunflowers, and they allow them to handle them and to ask useful questions when looking closely at them. This encourages children to use their language skills to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Practitioners provide purposeful opportunities for children to develop their physical and numeracy skills through challenging opportunities that are fun and exciting. For example, children develop their ability to build ramps and slopes for cars and dinosaurs with obvious enjoyment and use counting naturally within their play. They encourage children to experiment, for example when creating their own birds' nests, when mixing mud or when filling containers at the water butt.

A useful range of learning experiences promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development well. Practitioners use the outdoors to enhance play opportunities and the environment promotes a sense of curiosity and useful exploration. For example, practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children successfully when they plant seeds and water their vegetables. They encourage children to celebrate diversity and their understanding of Welsh culture through experiences related to St David's Day, Santes Dwynwen and Diwali.

Practitioners have a strong understanding of child development and support children to develop in all areas. They explain things clearly and allow children time to think and make choices about their play. Practitioners provide a stimulating session that includes a range of useful, exciting experiences both indoors and outdoors, for example painting and printing on foil, and using glass pebbles and feathers to make attractive pictures. Children are able to lead their learning and develop their independent skills well, they are able to decide where they want to play and this allows them to follow their interests well. They are confident learners and engage successfully in the opportunities provided by practitioners.

Practitioners know the children well and support their interests successfully to build upon children's existing knowledge skills and understanding. Assessments are thorough and children make good progress from their starting points. Practitioners use detailed observations to identify next steps in children's learning and they have an excellent understanding of how planning can support every child to make progress.

Environment:

The nursery environment is of high quality and provides thought provoking and challenging opportunities for the children. Practitioners organise the learning environments very well to capture the children's imagination and create a sense of awe and wonder, for example providing magnifying glasses for children to look closely at leaves. The environment is welcoming and celebrates the children's

creativity and successes by displaying their work and photographs of them in their play. This gives the children a sense of pride, ownership and belonging.

Practitioners ensure children are safe and healthy by following a good range of clear, comprehensive policies. Risk assessments for the whole of the nursery are completed to a high standard and practitioners carry out daily risk assessment checklists. They practise fire drills regularly so that staff and children are familiar with these arrangements. The setting is clean and very well maintained. Practitioners follow rigorous hygiene procedures and infection control is given a high priority.

Children access furniture, equipment, toys, and resources that are appropriate for their age, of a high standard and well-maintained. Resources are kept on low level, open shelving, relevant to the age of the children in each room. This ensures that every child is able to reach equipment easily and make independent decisions about their play. There is a wide range of resources to promote cultural awareness including books, dolls and small world figures.

The quality of the outdoor area is excellent. The large area offers exciting opportunities for children to spend time playing, learning and relaxing. Children enjoy using and experimenting with a large variety of resources in an exceptionally stimulating environment. Children have access to a forest area where they grow their own vegetables to taste at the setting. This gives children a very good understanding of looking after living things.

Leadership and management:

The manager shares a clear vision for the setting to develop happy children through a caring, safe environment where they learn through exciting play experiences. She is passionate about the progress the children make, and how families and staff are supported. Her passion and strong leadership is clearly evident through her understanding of how children learn and how to manage a busy setting effectively. The manager ensures that practitioners provide an engaging environment that enables children to develop their physical, social and intellectual skills effectively. Practitioners work together closely and share information through regular meetings. This enables all staff to feel valued and well informed about the needs of the children.

The manager has high expectations and an enthusiasm to develop the work of supporting children's development in all areas. There are effective arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement. For example, practitioners have identified the outdoors as an area to develop, this has enabled the children to participate in engaging, exciting experiences in the outdoors.

Practitioners make effective use of daily handover times to communicate with parents and to share the experiences the children have engaged with. They enjoy positive relationships with parents, speaking to them regularly and ensuring they are aware of events at the setting through an app. The setting has open days and individual meetings with parents and carers that ensure the needs of the children are discussed and addressed. Practitioners share information with the local school, ensuring that children's individual needs are identified and that they are supported well in their transition to full time education.

The setting works well with a range of partners to support children's learning and well-being. For example, the children visit a care home where they sing and spend valuable moments interacting with the residents. There is a strong and effective relationship with the local authority advisory teacher and practitioners respond effectively to recommendations for improvement. Arrangements to support children's needs is a strength of the setting as leaders sensitively and empathetically work with children with additional learning needs (ALN). They involve agencies and work to establish positive routines and experiences that support children's progress.

The setting makes excellent use of the areas and resources available. This allows children to develop their confidence, knowledge, understanding and skills effectively under the guidance of a well organised setting. There are thorough and effective policies and procedures that ensure that the setting meets regulatory requirements.. Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities, working well as a team.

Leaders support and encourage practitioners to improve their performance through training opportunities that support their continued professional development. This has a positive impact on children's learning, such as, in their transition to the new curriculum. Practitioners are knowledgeable about the Curriculum for Wales. They plan with the needs of the child at the heart of their work. This provides an excellent opportunity for all practitioners to play an active role in the planning process that ensures all children make progress.

Leaders and practitioners make good use of the appraisal process to identify practitioners' strengths within the setting and set targets for improvement. Leaders manage a range of staff challenges with ease. Leaders and practitioners work well as a team and are excellent role models for the children in their care.

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)