



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**The Mill Day Nursery
Neercwys Road
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 4ED**

Date of inspection: October 2011

by

Mary Dyas

for

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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About the setting

The Mill Day Day Nursery is an English medium setting which meets in a purpose built building in Mold in Flintshire. The setting serves the town of Mold and the surrounding area. The nursery has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. The area served by the nursery is considered to be neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Most children attending the nursery are from the local area and within a ten mile radius and come from a range of social backgrounds. The children attending the nursery come from a range of social-economic backgrounds and all have English as their home language. None of the pre-school children speak Welsh at home and there are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting is open from 7.45am to 5.45pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks a year and takes children from 3 months until they move on to the next stage in their education. The Mill is registered for up to 29 children, comprising nine under two years and twenty over two years old. The pre-school group shares a room with the younger toddler group and has a separate outdoor area for planned activities. At the time of the inspection there were two children in the pre-school group who were not also attending a school nursery for part of the day. There were no children currently in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April 2010 and this is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- Children are happy to come to the setting and are actively involved throughout the sessions
- There is a strong ethos of care for one another, children feel valued and respected and relationships between staff and children are warm and caring
- All children enjoy their learning and make good progress
- All children are well cared for and supported in the setting and this plays a significant part in their progress and in developing their self confidence

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- Staff work together well as a team
- Staff value the setting and are keen to improve
- Targets for improvement have been clearly identified and progress has been made towards their implementation

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

- R1 Improve standards in, and provision for, Welsh language development
- R2 Develop observation and assessment strategies to inform the next steps in children's learning more effectively
- R3 Formalise planning to cater for the individual needs of all children; particularly those who require more challenge
- R4 create closer links with the community in order to enhance children's social and cultural development

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will implement these recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The pre-school leader is solely responsible for the planning and assessment of the children in her care. She works closely with the staff responsible for the younger children who share the room to ensure that all are working towards the same goals and that all are aware of the learning intentions for the week. This ensures that all adults who interact with the pre-school children are able to provide appropriate support. Planning is firmly based on the Foundation Phase learning outcomes and occasionally responds to the immediate interests of the children. A good range of learning experiences is planned and overall there is good provision for the development of children's literacy, mathematical knowledge and skills in ICT. Although there is no formal planning for differentiated activities to meet the needs of individual children, this is carried out informally as staff know the children very well and respond to their individual needs and abilities.

Through their daily play together all children develop strong relationships with one another and with the adults who care for them and demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other. Children celebrate the Welsh culture in a range of ways when they celebrate St David's Day but they do not have enough opportunities to learn about other peoples and cultures. Children are learning about recycling and sustainability when they recycle plastic and paper and accompany staff in small groups to take their recycling to a centre in a local supermarket. Through growing and eating vegetables they are increasing their understanding of the world around them and of the need to respect and take care of it. Provision for Welsh is adequate. It is well used during the morning group time when children enjoy reading stories about Ticw the bear and join in enthusiastically with the story but many opportunities are missed during the rest of the session to develop the children's knowledge and skills by the use of incidental Welsh.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Phase and make good use of resources to enhance learning. They are very pro-active with the children and there is a good mix of encouraging children to try an activity and allowing them to explore and discover for themselves. Practitioners manage behaviour well and use appropriate groupings indoors and outdoors. They are very encouraging and support the children with praise but questioning does not always extend children's thinking. Each child has a booklet where their achievement is noted under the areas of learning identified in the Foundation Phase learning outcomes. These observations are dated and consequently illustrate progress made. This information is used to complete the 'This is Me' assessment booklet required by the Local Authority and these records accompany the child to their next stage of education. The recorded observations are, at times, specific but at other times are too descriptive and do not clearly identify the levels of skills achieved. As such, the next steps in children's learning are not always apparent and the assessment comments less useful in planning for future curriculum. Parents and carers are regularly informed about their children's progress and their wellbeing and development when they bring and collect their children and the nursery also holds a well attended open evening during the autumn term when parents are able to meet with their child's keyworker.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children and staff provide good role models which encourage children to treat one another with kindness and respect. Transition into the group is smooth because children are already playing in the room and are familiar with the routines and with the activities provided specifically for the pre-school children. Parents and children are made aware of the change and of the fact that there is now a new keyworker. The setting daily takes and collects children to and from schools where they attend a nursery class but there are currently no specific links to support transition.

The provision made for children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good

Although there are no children with additional learning needs attending the setting at present, practitioners have previously worked together with outside agencies to support individual needs.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners receive relevant training from the local authority and understand their roles and responsibilities. The setting has a good range of policies to ensure children's safety during sessions.

Learning environment: Good

The nursery presents an attractive and welcoming environment. The room has a good variety of displays of children's work which are relevant to the current topic and all children have full access to all areas of provision.

There are sufficient well trained practitioners with an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase to ensure all children's needs are met. All practitioners are keen to improve their own knowledge and attend regular training. Good resources are available and these are used appropriately to develop the children's skills and understanding.

Until recently there have been few opportunities for children to widen their experience of the world around them through visits to and visits from the local community. The setting has identified this as a target for improvement and has begun to visit the library and a local park.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

All practitioners are fully committed to ensuring the best possible provision. The proprietor and her staff have created a very positive ethos and the children are well supported and valued for themselves as individuals. Parents are kept informed through termly newsletters and a daily activity board. National and local priorities such as the Foundation Phase are met.

The proprietor has taken a lower profile over recent years but is still very much a part of the management team. The recently appointed manager has also worked in the setting for a number of years in different capacities and has worked with the pre-school leader to set clear goals which they are working together to achieve.

Appraisal procedures are in place. Notes are taken at formal staff meetings but the setting is a small and close community where practitioners work well together towards shared goals and much information is shared informally.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation in the setting is developing well and practitioners know their setting. Formal self-evaluation is still in its early stages but there is a positive culture of informal reflection on practice. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a useful one which identifies many of the setting's strengths and appropriate targets for improvement. Evaluation of improvements in terms of children's progress is still at an early stage of development. The manager has established good links with other registered providers in the area and staff have visited other settings to see good practice

Partnership working: Good

Results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. Practitioners speak to parents every day about what their child has been doing and celebrate success. They have created strong relationships with parents and carers have put into place regular systems to keep them up to date with information about the activities offered to the children.

The setting enjoys a very positive relationship with the Early Entitlement link teacher from the Local Authority who provides support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the chi

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately equipped with good quality resources which are used effectively to support the children's learning both indoors and outdoors. The setting is appropriately staffed by qualified and experienced practitioners who motivate the children well and help them to learn. Good use is made of the building and outdoors to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum.

The proprietor manages the finances well and links spending with priorities identified by the manager and room leaders. Overall the nursery gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Six questionnaires were received from parents. All were very positive about the care and provision provided by the setting although a majority of responses indicated that they do not feel there is a good range of activities including trips or visits. One additional comment indicated that their child had not been on any trips or visits.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy their time in the setting. They have made friends and play well together. Most are confident when talking to a visitor and speak positively about the activities they enjoy. They are familiar with the rules and routines of the setting and can explain what is going to happen next.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.