



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
Two Counties Day Nursery**

**County Hall
Croesyceiliog
Cwmbran
NP44 2XH**

Date of inspection: March 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

Two Counties Day Nursery is an English Medium setting. Most parents and carers who bring their children to the nursery work for either Torfaen or Monmouthshire Councils and the nursery meets in the County Hall building in Cwmbran. Since it opened in 1999 the nursery has enjoyed rent free accommodation but this is due to end in March 2012 when County Hall will close. The present manager is planning to move the business to other premises and to take over ownership.

The setting serves a wide area ranging from as far as Cardiff to the west and Chepstow to the east and children are considered to come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. All children in the pre-school group have English as their home language although a very few come from homes where one parent speaks Welsh. Fourteen per cent of the children have been identified as having additional learning needs.

The setting is open from 8am to 6pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks a year. The nursery is registered for up to 70 full time places with up to 24 in the pre-school group. Children usually move into the pre-school room around the time of their third birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 28 children on roll of whom 12 three year olds and 8 four year olds were in receipt of funded educational provision.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in January 2011 and by Estyn in 2006.

Summary

| | |
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| The setting's current performance | Good |
| The setting's prospects for improvement | Good |

Current performance

All children are happy and well behaved in the setting
Relationships between children and staff are warm and caring
Children enjoy their learning experiences and are well motivated
All children make good progress during their time in the setting

Prospects for improvement

Systems for self evaluation and review are well established
There is good evidence that, over time, improvements have been made and sustained
The setting leader and staff have a positive attitude towards improvement

Recommendations

- R1 improve standards in, and provision for, Welsh language development
- R2 ensure that younger three year olds have access to the full range of continuous provision to enable them to make their own choices about their learning
- R3 effectively plan and use continuous provision for outdoor learning

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

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| Key Question 1: How good are outcomes? |
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| Good |
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Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning. Children acquire new knowledge and understanding effectively and enjoy the challenge of new and varied activities. Most children are confident learners who are willing to learn from their mistakes, take risks and explore their surroundings.

Almost all children are very articulate and most speak in full sentences. They communicate freely with one another and with the adults in the setting and almost all are happy to talk to visitors. Most children concentrate for appropriate lengths of time according to their age and stage of development. They listen carefully to instructions, for example when they are singing and dancing to a music CD, and are beginning to understand the functions of writing when they recognise and try to write their names. All children are developing their understanding of mathematical concepts and many are beginning to apply this and to use mathematical language in the course of their play.

Most children use electronic toys with some understanding and play games on a computer confidently. Most are also developing good levels of independence. They visit the toilet unaided and understand the need to wash and dry their hands

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afterwards and also before they eat their snacks and meals. As they play, many choose resources for themselves and only ask for help after they have tried something for themselves.

Children's progress in Welsh is adequate. They respond in Welsh to the register and many are able to count to ten together with an adult and know basic colour names. Few use individual words in Welsh or respond to simple instructions.

Wellbeing: Good

All children appear to be happy and relaxed in the setting and enjoy their learning. They participate enthusiastically in a range of interesting activities and are confident to ask for help from adults. Relationships between children are good. Almost all play very well together – they encourage one another in their play and are willing to include others in their activities. Many are very confident in the group and enjoy singing and reciting familiar songs and rhymes independently. Most share happily and take turns naturally.

Behaviour is good. The children know the adults and one another well and relationships are relaxed and comfortable. Almost all children are eager to talk about what they are doing and are keen to welcome and question visitors. Many children make helpful suggestions when consulted about activities they would like to be included in their next topic.

Through their involvement in the Healthy Lifestyle Award, which they achieved in July 2010 and more recently a Healthy Lifestyles Award in March 2011, almost all children speak with confidence about healthy foods and they know that it is important to take exercise to be healthy.

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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
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Learning experiences: Adequate

The setting provides a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences across the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners work well together to plan a wide range of activities which stimulate, engage and challenge many children to learn effectively.

Planning is well organised and ensures that all children are challenged by relevant activities which provide continuity and progression in their learning following the Foundation Phase Development Profile and Skills Framework. The planned activities enable all children to make positive progress in communication, numeracy, ICT and wider skills.

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Older children have good access to an appropriate range of continuous and enhanced provision and make clear choices about their learning. Provision for younger three year olds, however, does not fully reflect the Foundation Phase ethos. Although they are provided with a good mix of activities during the session, they are directed and do not have enough opportunities to access activities freely.

Although the outdoor area is used on a daily basis, practitioners do not plan consistently for its use. Insufficient use is made of the outdoors for continuous activities.

Provision for Welsh language provision is adequate. Welsh is not used consistently throughout the session although it is well used during the morning group time.

The setting involves all children in recycling a wide variety of resources which are put into labelled bins and then taken, with groups of children, to the collecting point in the grounds of the County Hall.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a wide range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. All make good use of questioning to challenge children and to extend their thinking. There is a good mix of planned activities and opportunities for most children to choose their own activities.

The setting operates a keyworker scheme. The local Authority's 'Footsteps' assessment is administered once the children are eligible for funding and is updated termly. Daily observations, relating particularly to focussed activities, are noted by all practitioners and then entered into children's personal profiles by their keyworkers. There is a helpful daily verbal exchange of information with parents and carers during the handover at the beginning and end of sessions and the setting offers a parents evening during the children's last term in the setting. Parents and carers also receive a summary report when their children leave which describes their child's progress in the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase but does not currently indicate the next steps in learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has good arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing and arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs. Children with additional learning needs have appropriate targets identified in an Individual Play Plan. This is shared with parents and reviewed termly.

Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they move on from the toddler group. The pre-school group provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children. A child attending the nursery move on to a very wide

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range of schools and the setting has identified the need to improve transition arrangements in their improvement plan.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The nursery is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment.

Practitioners in the pre-school group are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to create a stimulating environment for learning. Practitioners regularly attend training courses to update their knowledge, understanding and skills. The group is well resourced with a range of high quality equipment which is used appropriately to support children's learning.

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

The setting manager knows her setting well and motivates her staff positively. Staff throughout the nursery are warm and friendly and this creates a caring environment where children are enabled to thrive. A clear sense of purpose and a desire for improvement throughout the nursery is shared by her deputy and by the room leader for the pre-school group. All are keen to receive and act on advice and suggestions in order to raise standards in the nursery. The nursery is managed by a Board which comprises parents and carers of children who attend the nursery. The nursery manager reports regularly to the Board which ensures that they are equipped to make informed decisions.

The nursery has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented by all practitioners. There is a well established appraisal system in place to support and improve staff throughout the nursery.

Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners in the pre-school group meet weekly to evaluate the teaching and learning activities of the past week and all contribute to suggestions to adapt or improve future activities. These are helpful and feed into future plans. Children have an opportunity to make suggestions for activities at the start of each topic.

Self evaluation in the pre-school group is developing well and practitioners know their setting very well. A self evaluation process has recently been established. All areas of provision have been assessed and realistic targets set. Formal self-evaluation is still in its early stages but there is a long standing culture of informal reflection on practice.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has strong relationships with the parents of the children in their care and results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. This is a strong feature of the nursery. Practitioners speak to parents every day about what their child has been doing and celebrate success. The proprietor has recently become involved with the local National Day Nurseries Association and the setting is also a member of the Wales Pre-school Providers Association.

The setting enjoys a very positive relationship with the Early Entitlement link teachers from the local authority who provide support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the children.

Resource management: Good

While the nursery Board has overall responsibility for the management of the setting the nursery manager makes all spending decisions below an agreed amount. She makes good use of the staffing and resources at her disposal and ensures that the setting has a good range of up to date resources that support the planned learning experiences. Children in the setting make good progress and the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Nine questionnaires were returned and these were almost all positive. A small minority of parents do not feel that there is a good range of activities including trips and visits and a similar percentage say they do not understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints. Many parents say they are extremely happy with the education and learning experiences provided for their children and are full of praise for the care and support provided by the staff

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy coming to the nursery and they like to play with their friends. They say that the leaders are kind to them and help them when they can't do something.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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| 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.