



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

**Footsteps Day Nursery & Children's Centre
The Old Police Station
Station Road
Llanbradach
Caerphilly
CF83 3LF**

Date of inspection: October 2012

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
Reporting Inspector**

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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Context

Footsteps Day Nursery is situated in a converted police station in the centre of Llanbradach, near Caerphilly. It currently provides nursery education for eight children in morning sessions and 12 children who attend for afternoon sessions. Of those who attend in the afternoons, eight spend a full day in the setting.

Children come from a wide range of backgrounds and are generally neither advantaged nor disadvantaged economically or socially. No child is considered to have additional learning needs. All pupils have English as the language of the home and come from white, British backgrounds. No child speaks Welsh as a first language. Generally children enter the nursery from the pre-nursery area of the setting in the term in which they are three years of age, prior to their transfer to primary schools.

The setting was last inspected by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2011. There were no recommendations. The school was last inspected by Estyn in the autumn term 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because of the:

- good progress children make from their different starting points;
- overall quality of teaching and advantageous practitioner to child ratio;
- good provision in all of the areas for learning;
- effective use made of resources;
- strong and purposeful leadership and management; and
- the effective links with parents and other providers.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because of the:

- accurate and detailed processes for self evaluation;
- progress made in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection;
- careful planning to meet the targets the setting has agreed; and
- the commitment of those involved in leading the setting to continue its improvement.

Recommendations

R1. Provide more opportunities for children to begin to evaluate their own learning and be more aware of how they can improve.

R2. Put in place systems to judge the cost effectiveness of spending decisions contained in the setting development plan.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

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

All children achieve well and make good progress, bearing in mind their young age and different starting points. They enjoy their activities and make the most of the time they spend in the setting. Nearly all have good levels of concentration when investigating or listening. They are curious and eager to learn.

In communication in English all make good progress in speaking and listening. They are developing good early listening skills. They know that letters to another person should contain information and when they 'write' an invitation it needs to be sealed in an envelope and posted. They have good control of mark making objects when beginning to form letter shapes on a wide range of surfaces using a variety of media such as water and foam. All are good listeners when a practitioner reads a story to them or when given instructions for the session. They enjoy following a story told in pictures and in words and eagerly wait for the next part to come along. They look forward to visiting the library to look at new books and to listen to a storyteller. They speak confidently to adults, often using short sentences.

In Welsh, all are beginning to build up their vocabularies, counting confidently to 10 and singing a good range of number rhymes and action songs enthusiastically. They respond to instructions given in Welsh appropriately and most are beginning to use simple phrases to describe the weather and how they feel.

In mathematical development all make good progress in their skills in numeracy. They know the names of numbers and recognise a number within 10 when it is in array and as a numeral. They rank objects by size and colour. They measure using a wide range of utensils when playing in the sand and water areas, or when preparing to cook for example, when baking bread. They recognise the qualities of some three dimensional shapes and are building up their mathematical language to compare them.

In their work, all children have good access to a suitable range of electronic toys and devices. They use a digital camera well when recording others using the outdoor play area. Nearly all know how to program an electrical toy to move in a predicted way. They have increasing confidence when using the controls on the computer to make their way through simple programs. In role-play all enjoy using the telephone, the cash register and 'electrical equipment' in the home area.

Wellbeing: Good

Across the setting all children are making good progress in learning how to look after themselves. They wash their hands regularly and know it is important to do so after eating or after a visit to the toilet. They are beginning to dress themselves in their coats and hats independently when preparing to go outside. Nearly all understand that fruit is a good food and some other foods are not so good for you. They

recognise that doing exercise is important order to keep healthy. All practice their exercises at home as well as in the setting.

All take care when going up and down stairs and know the importance of taking turns and showing consideration for others when moving around the setting.

All children are happy to share resources and to make choices about what they want to do and when to do it. They use large wheeled toys sensibly, following routes and avoiding accidents when in the outdoor play area. They use a wide range of tools safely when exploring materials and when creating collages and pictures.

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

All activities are carefully planned to match the objectives of the Foundation Phase and to ensure that all children build successfully on what they know and can do. The curriculum addresses all areas of learning for children of this age and is well matched to their different abilities. The planning is organised into different themes which include a wide range of stimulating experiences and investigations.

The setting has good arrangements to match the planning to individual children's preferences and to ensure that the more able as well as those who find learning more difficult, are fully engaged and confident learners.

All children are regularly challenged to find things out for themselves. They have good opportunities throughout the year to celebrate a wide range of 'special days' in the lives of people who are from different backgrounds to their own. For example, the setting holds an Israeli day and celebrates 'Kwanza', enjoying Jewish and African food. They take on roles and dress in different costumes as part of this.

The setting provides a good range of activities which emphasise children's own roots. There is good provision for children to begin to appreciate their own heritage through music, creative activities and visits.

Children have good opportunities to visit local places of interest and to travel on the bus and the train to some places not too far away. There are also good links with the local community which enhance their learning.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners work together very closely and effectively. They have a good understanding of how to organise suitable activities and how to support individual children well so that they enjoy and benefit from this. All practitioners question cleverly so that all children are encouraged to think things out for themselves. Children are prompted to look and to decide what they want to do next for themselves. Where necessary all practitioners are very supportive and help children to overcome difficulties and to be confident learners.

Across the setting practitioners organise the experiences for children very thoughtfully so that they match the needs of each child. They provide learning which

is stimulating and holds the interests of all children well. All have high expectations of what children should achieve and encourage them warmly so that all succeed. However, practitioners do not always give children enough opportunity to talk about what they have really enjoyed or done well and to think about how they could do better.

All practitioners assess children's learning rigorously. There are good shorter and longer term approaches to recording children's achievements and progress. These are well used to indicate what each child should do next in order to build on previously learning. Practitioners use ongoing notes to help them assess and to modify their planning.

There are well constructed long-term records which trace the progress of each child from initial entry into the setting until he or she leaves it. These show the all-round development of each child clearly and inform practitioner and parents of the progress children are making. Reports are sufficiently detailed and give a detailed picture of each child.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All practitioners make children's health and wellbeing a major focus of the daily life of the setting for example, at the beginning and end of sessions they ask children to say how they feel. All children are positively encouraged to behave well and to understand that rules are there to help them to be happy. They are regularly reminded of what is expected of them when playing with others and of the importance of caring for each other.

Arrangements for children's personal development are well-organised. There is good provision to promote their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. A particular strength is the way in which children are encouraged to learn about some of their own heritage and that of others around the world.

There are good procedures to promote children's understanding of healthy living and how to take part in regular exercise for example, in taking home a set of activities to do with their parents and in growing healthy food in the garden area which is subsequently prepared and eaten by them. There are mutually supportive and well established links with parents, who are kept well informed about their children's lives in school and their emerging needs. There are appropriate arrangements for support from a wide range of specialist services where necessary.

The setting has well organised arrangements to identify and help any child who may have additional learning needs. There is a designated practitioner who is well trained in this area. When necessary parents are closely involved in agreeing a way forward and in understanding the progress their children make.

There are appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

All practitioners ensure that all children are treated equally, are valued the same and are fully included in all activities in the curriculum. All are encouraged to be

independent and to think for themselves. There are many opportunities for children to be helpful and caring to others.

The nursery, which forms part of a larger setting, is well-organised and has sufficient space for the curriculum to be taught effectively. There is a very good ratio of practitioners to children. Practitioners are well qualified and suitably experienced.

General resources are of a good quality and quantity. They are readily available to all children. The setting has developed an outdoor play area successfully. Practitioners and other staff have given considerable thought and effort to turning a narrow, bare, hard surfaced area into a very stimulating mixed learning environment.

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

The proprietor and managers are very well aware of the needs of children of this age. They plan very conscientiously to provide well for all children. They organise their resources wisely and have created a very positive ethos which is shared by all staff.

The leadership team provide a strong sense of direction and are far from complacent. They review the work of the setting regularly and ensure that it functions smoothly. They have high expectations of themselves and others. This fosters a very purposeful atmosphere where the continual development of practitioners' professional skills is a priority. There are good arrangements to look carefully at teaching and learning and to link what is observed to the training needs of individuals.

There are well established links with parents. Parents are encouraged to be equal partners in the setting and to play a full part in helping their children to have a firm foundation to their learning.

The setting does not have a management committee. However, regular staff meetings ensure that all practitioners are involved in purposeful discussion about the priorities for the future and the quality of education provided. The setting does not have formal arrangements to evaluate systematically how successfully decisions have been implemented and how well money has been spent.

The setting meets local and national priorities well. The Foundation Phase is well established and good provision is being made in developing children's confidence to use English and Welsh. The setting gives good attention to developing children's literacy skills and their awareness of how to live healthy lives.

Improving quality: Good

The proprietor and managers working closely with the local authority have systematically reviewed the setting's strengths and areas for development. They have considered the views of practitioners, parents and other stakeholders. Their evaluations are accurate, honest and firmly based on first hand evidence. There are good arrangements to link the conclusion of this process to the setting development

plan which is well-organised. It is used on a regular basis to judge the process the setting is making to address its priorities.

The local authority has established a strong link with the all staff and regularly advises and supports its work. All practitioners regularly attend appropriate courses and take the opportunities provided to develop their skills. The setting has made good progress in addressing the many recommendations of the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

Links with parents are There are well established links with parents. Parents are well informed about all aspects of the setting's activities. They are successfully encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and to discuss this with practitioners informally and at formally arranged meetings.

The setting has established mutually beneficial links with the two other schools in the area to which many children transfer. This involves the exchange of information about children's achievements and individual needs.

The setting also works closely with other similar settings in the wider area and with local colleges, secondary schools and national organisations.

Resource management: Good

Staff are effectively deployed. Although the setting is on the first floor of the building, the area set aside is easily accessible, well equipped and resourced. There is sufficient space for the number of children who attend to experience all aspects of the curriculum. The wider environment is also well used.

Bearing in mind the quality of the education provided and the progress children make from their different starting points, the setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

PARENTS

Only a small number of parents responded to the questionnaire. It is not appropriate to report in detail their responses. However, their views were positive.

CHILDREN

Children had only relatively recently begun attending the setting. All were confident and enjoyed being with their helpers and with each other. They expressed their feelings openly and all were outgoing and happy.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	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.

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnership's conditions of registration.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.