



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Poppies Day Nursery  
Maesderwen House  
Maesderwen Road  
Pontymoile  
Pontypool  
NP4 5LE**

**Date of inspection: November 2016**

**by**

**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:

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

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## Context

Poppies Day Nursery is an English-medium, privately owned setting in Pontymoile, in Torfaen local authority. The registered person has owned the business for 18 years. The manager and deputy manager run the setting on a day-to-day basis. The setting has 12 members of staff, three of whom work with the pre-school children. All have appropriate early years qualifications and have suitable experience of working with young children. The pre-school area comprises of two rooms, with access to large gardens and an extensive outdoor play area.

The setting mainly serves the local community and its surrounding area. Most children have English as their home language and a few have English as an additional language. No children speak Welsh at home. Currently, very few children are identified as having additional learning needs.

The setting is registered for 48 full time places for children from birth to 12 years of age and is open from Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm. It offers a wrap-around service transporting children to and from local primary schools. At the time of the inspection, there were 14 children on roll in the pre-school room, of whom three were aged four and six were aged three, and receiving early years funding from the local authority.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2015 and by Estyn in May 2012.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children make independent choices about where they want to play and persevere well with activities
- Most children readily take part in conversations with each other and happily talk to practitioners and visitors about their learning
- Nearly all children use a range of Welsh phrases confidently
- Most children work together successfully to solve problems
- The setting provides an interesting range of learning experiences
- Practitioners are good language role models for the children and use effective questioning to develop the children's thinking skills
- Practitioners create an inspiring learning environment where excellent use is made of the outdoors enabling children to flourish and learn important social skills
- Practitioners show respect and consideration to all children successfully
- The setting has a homely, caring and inclusive ethos, where children are valued and are happy

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting is well led, managed and organised on a day-to-day basis
- All practitioners share the same vision to ensure children are happy, confident and independent learners
- The setting has an effective improvement plan and involves all practitioners in the self-evaluation process
- Practitioners have positive attitudes towards continued professional development and training
- Leaders and managers are reflective about their practice and are keen to improve
- Relationships with parents, outside agencies and the consortium are strong
- Practitioners are compassionate and work well as a team

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve planning to ensure that there are regular opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of learning
- R2 Ensure that planned activities provide appropriate challenge for more able children
- R3 Evaluate all actions and initiatives in terms of their impact on children's outcomes
- R4 Ensure that leaders use formal observations of practitioners to maintain and improve outcomes for children

### What happens next?

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

Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Nearly all children achieve good standards and are progressing well in line with their ability and level of maturity across all areas of learning. Most children make independent choices about where they want to play and persevere well with activities that they enjoy, for example when counting foil cake cases in the mud kitchen.

Most children readily take part in conversations with each other and happily talk to practitioners and visitors about their learning. Most enjoy listening to a range of stories and recite familiar songs and rhymes enthusiastically. For example, they respond confidently to a song that asks them to 'roar' like a lion and 'stomp' like an elephant. A few recognise initial letter sounds and the letters in their name and are beginning to read other children's names accurately. Nearly all children understand that print carries meaning and recognise their own name when written down. Many experiment with early mark making, making patterns, lines and circles with a range of equipment confidently.

Most children develop their numeracy skills adequately. Nearly all are developing the competency with support to count items to at least five accurately and a few more able children count numbers higher than 10 confidently. A very few children know that money carries a value and comes from a bank. Nearly all children are developing a good understanding of basic shapes and their properties and can recognise them around the setting successfully.

Many children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) competently. For example, they use cameras and metal detectors independently, and know to push the button on the till make it open. Nearly all understand that they have to press the switches on the role-play car wash to make it work. Most children are developing good problem solving skills and this is having a positive impact upon their learning. For example, they work together successfully to solve problems when using the metal detectors and when cutting up fruit.

Nearly all children use a range of Welsh phrases confidently. Most speak Welsh naturally as part of their everyday play and join in with songs, stories, responses and counting enthusiastically.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and concentrate for appropriate lengths of time, for example when painting a picture of poppies. Most children behave well and work to complete familiar tasks independently. Most relate very well to each other and are courteous, demonstrating awareness of the feelings of others. Most children share resources and take turns very well, for example when playing in the role-play car wash outside. Nearly all children show good levels of enthusiasm and interest in their learning, for example when discussing colours, sizes

and shapes of different fruit and vegetables. Nearly all children interact well with adults and happily ask for help when they need it.

All children listen carefully to instructions and respond accordingly. They make choices about where they wish to play confidently, and move between adult led tasks and 'free choice' activities purposefully.

Most children are confident when approaching new challenges and learning experiences. They are aware of the needs of others and show good levels of respect when sharing in tasks such as dressing up and looking at books together. Nearly all children demonstrate suitable levels of self-help skills, for example when putting on shoes and coats independently to go outside and when washing their hands after painting.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners provide a range of stimulating learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They build on children's existing knowledge and understanding effectively and promote Foundation Phase learning successfully.

Practitioners plan a worthwhile range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences to develop children's skills across all areas of learning. Flexible planning allows children to make valuable contributions and practitioners take good account of topics and activities that interest them. They involve the children effectively in planning by providing them with meaningful opportunities to give their ideas about what they would like to learn. As a result, children feel involved in their learning and listened to. However, practitioners do not always plan activities that challenge more able children well enough. Practitioners use regular visits around the local community to enhance children's learning experiences effectively. For example, a recent visit to the local park enriched children's knowledge of how the leaves change colour in autumn.

Practitioners make suitable use of opportunities to develop children's literacy skills. They encourage children to talk about what they would like to play on and to discuss what they have been doing during the session. This supports children's recall of prior learning and develops their oracy skills well. There is a comprehensive range of mark making opportunities, for example making marks in soil and using whiteboard pens and ballpoint pens outside. Practitioners provide good quality books for children to enjoy both indoors and outdoors. There are frequent opportunities to read, for example when children recognise their name in the basket. However, there is not always a sufficient focus on developing children's communication skills across all areas of the curriculum.

There are sufficient opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills, for example when counting to 10 and counting blocks in outdoor play. However, there are missed opportunities to develop children's understanding of number across a range of different activities. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities to identify shapes in the setting.

Practitioners are effective role models for promoting the use of Welsh and consistently provide a range of words and short phrases for children to use. Consequently, nearly all children use incidental Welsh naturally both to the practitioners and to each other to a high standard. The setting promotes Welsh culture and heritage well through celebrating St David's Day and in its use of bilingual signs and displays around the setting.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Effective and purposeful interactions with the children help support them in achieving good standards. Skilful questioning by practitioners encourages children to develop their thinking skills and ensures that they have a good understanding of the concepts covered.

Practitioners provide flexible activities that allow them to adapt to ideas initiated by children. They follow the children's interests naturally and encourage them to develop their knowledge and understanding, for example when looking at the inside of an apple after it has been cut. As a result, children are confident to follow their own interests and contribute enthusiastically to their tasks.

The setting's procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are comprehensive and thorough. Practitioners identify next steps in children's learning from daily observations skilfully and effectively. Regular discussions from observations of the children enable practitioners to inform future planning beneficially. They use the Foundation Phase Profile to measure children's progress suitably during their time at the setting. However, practitioners do not always plan for children that are more able well enough.

Practitioners provide parents with useful information about their child's progress through daily informal feedback. Termly parents' evenings and informative end of year reports enable parents to feel well informed and confident to support their child's learning at home.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting provides worthwhile opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners nurture values such as care, consideration and fairness consistently well, through regular discussions about feelings. They provide beneficial opportunities in fostering children's sense of awe and wonder, for example when finding and studying a spider in the bug hotel.

Daily routines provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop their social skills through interacting and sharing with others. Practitioners skilfully encourage and negotiate with children waiting for their turn effectively, for example when waiting for a particular vehicle to ride outside. Practitioners are very good role models and are polite, fair and respectful towards the children in their care. As a result, standards of behaviour are consistently high.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to be active and use the exceptional outdoor play area skilfully to develop their health and fitness. For example, children ride bikes, climb the log climbing frame and dig for 'dinosaur bones'. Practitioners promote healthy eating by providing a range of appetising food and snacks. Most children have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and understand the importance of personal hygiene and regular exercise. There are daily opportunities for the children to recycle plastic bottles, cardboard, paper and tins. This develops children's early understanding of sustainability successfully.

Children have a range of beneficial opportunities to find out about other cultures, such as when learning about Chinese New Year, Hanukkah and Diwali.

Effective arrangements are in place to identify children with additional learning needs. All children identified with additional needs have a suitable action plan and practitioners and parents review this regularly.

The setting is a safe environment, with locked doors and bolted gates, and practitioners take very good care of the children. All practitioners have up to date information about child protection procedures. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Excellent**

Practitioners create an inspiring environment where excellent use is made of the location to provide exciting opportunities for children to flourish and learn important social skills. For example, nearly all children share resources in an exemplary manner and co-operate and take turns with each other when playing on the bikes outdoors successfully.

The setting is situated in a converted building, which practitioners have laid out in a highly creative way to provide extensive, purposeful learning opportunities for children. The outstanding outdoor area is very attractive and the use of different areas of the garden, for example the swing park, the log bridge and bug hotel, supports children's learning across the areas of learning highly effectively. This consolidates their learning experiences and develops and enhances a valuable range of their skills. For example, most talk extensively about how they are feeling in Welsh when looking in the mirror outside in the mud kitchen. 'Real life' resources are used comprehensively in role play, for example cooking utensils in the mud kitchen and real fruit and vegetables in the Welsh greengrocer's shop. This encourages children to co-operate and converse with each other naturally in Welsh.

The indoor environment is bright and colourful and has a very warm, welcoming, and stimulating atmosphere where children are eager to learn. Displays are imaginative, using questions and labels to encourage children to investigate and to develop their thinking skills effectively. The indoor provision is pleasantly laid out, making very good use of the space available. Practitioners display children's work attractively, recognising and respecting their efforts well. This encourages children to achieve successfully.

Practitioners are very friendly with the children and know them well. They create very respectful, positive working relationships with each other and with the children in their care. They encourage and praise good behaviour consistently well. The setting's ethos is one of inclusiveness, where practitioners are excellent role models and encourage children to be considerate, kind and tolerant of each other.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The setting's owner and managers work together professionally and are committed to providing a welcoming environment focusing on creating happy, confident and independent learners and raising children's outcomes. A robust management structure provides all practitioners with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Communication between staff is a strength of the setting and practitioners and leaders work well together as a team.

Both the owner and managers have high expectations of practitioners and communicate these effectively through regular staff meetings and appraisals. Managers update the setting's policies on a regular basis and all practitioners are involved in this process. However, the use of formal observations of teaching as a method to share good practice is underdeveloped. Managers establish strong links with parents through their warm and friendly manner and value the important support provided by the advisory teacher.

The setting places a strong emphasis on staff training. Practitioners have numerous opportunities to undertake a range of useful training. This improves their knowledge and skills effectively and raises standards of provision beneficially. The support, integration and development of new practitioners are successful.

The setting takes good account of national priorities, such as implementing the Foundation Phase Profile, promoting sustainability and developing improved outdoor provision.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting's owner and managers are very positive about the setting's potential and are committed to undertaking valuable improvements. Leaders and managers understand the setting's strengths and highlight useful areas for development. This helps to ensure that continuous improvement is a regular feature and that practitioners are reflective, and are willing to adapt and be flexible. For example, as a result of attending good practice meetings, practitioners have installed a new mud kitchen, which has significantly impacted upon the standards that children achieve in Welsh language acquisition.

Leaders review the quality of provision on a regular basis and add resources as necessary. The setting's self-evaluation document takes account of the views of practitioners, parents and children suitably, through regular questionnaires and meetings. For example, as a result of suggestions from parents, the setting has employed an external provider to enhance children's creative development.

Both the self-evaluation document and the setting improvement plan provide a solid basis, to evaluate teaching and learning satisfactorily. However, policies and procedures outlining what makes effective teaching and learning are underdeveloped.

The self-evaluation document is relevant and detailed, and it pays attention to a suitable range of areas, although is overly descriptive in parts. Leaders and managers measure the effectiveness of improvements successfully and evaluate their impact on teaching and provision well. However, they do not always evaluate the impact on the standards that children achieve well enough. The setting's improvement plan prioritises improvements, identifies costs and relevant timescales, and allocates responsibilities for actions successfully. There is a good track record of improvement in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has strong relationships with parents and provides useful information through daily informal contact, regular reports, social media, the setting's website and monthly newsletters. Parents welcome regular ideas on how they can support their child's learning with activities at home. This encourages children to talk about what they have been learning in the setting and consolidates skills successfully.

The setting has beneficial links with local primary schools through its transportation of children for wrap around care. There are clear arrangements for the handover of useful information about children's progress and wellbeing when children transfer from the setting to school. This enables children to settle quickly.

There is effective co-operation between the setting and the consortium. Practitioners benefit from useful training courses which contribute to raising children's standards and improving provision. The advisory teacher gives valuable support to leaders and practitioners. A worthwhile professional learning community is developing well and practitioners are starting to regularly visit other settings to view good practice and to share their own.

There are beneficial links with outside agencies such as the Wales Pre-school Providers' Association, which provides effective support by sharing exemplar policies and keeping the setting informed with updates on statutory procedures.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting makes effective use of its well-qualified staff and plentiful resources to motivate and encourage children to learn. Leaders ensure that there is a sufficient supply of high quality resources, and match these to the needs of the children well. The setting uses its outdoor learning environment extensively to develop children's skills across the areas of learning.

Performance management arrangements are effective and well established. Practitioners regularly attend worthwhile training events and use their new knowledge and expertise in the setting beneficially. They evaluate the impact that it has had on their practice and on provision for the children successfully. However, practitioners

do not reflect on the improvements to standards achieved by children as a result of their training.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of budgetary matters. They allocate funds purposefully according to priorities for improvement identified in the setting improvement plan and following discussions with other practitioners. Leaders use the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively. For example, the purchase of good quality multicultural resources improves children's understanding of other cultures successfully.

As a result of the good standards that children achieve, the effective teaching and interesting provision, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Joanna Burdett	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.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"><li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li><li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li><li>• mathematical development</li><li>• Welsh language development</li><li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li><li>• physical development</li><li>• creative development</li></ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>

<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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 partnerships conditions of registration.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.