



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

A report on

**First Steps Nursery
Y Garth
Alexandra Road
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LS**

Date of inspection: July 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About First Steps Nursery

Name of setting	First Steps Day Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	Theresa Mills
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Theresa Mills Lisa Mills
Number of places	32
Age range of children	0 to 8
Number of children funded for up to two terms	0
Number of children funded for up to five terms	10
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 8am until 5:30pm
Flying Start service	No
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 people / 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	20/09/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/05/2014

A report on First Steps Nursery
July 2019

Dates of this inspection visit(s)	16/07/2019
Additional information	
<p>Nearly all children come from English speaking homes. The Welsh language is used frequently with children. The setting has identified children with additional learning needs.</p>	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Good
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Care and development	Good
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that planning provides opportunities for children to develop their communication skills through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and an understanding of other cultures
- R2 Improve the quality of questioning to support children's learning effectively
- R3 Strengthen processes for self-evaluation so that they identify specific areas for improvement more effectively

What happens next

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

Main findings

Wellbeing: Good

Children have a strong voice, make intelligent decisions and take control of their learning by choosing where they play, and with whom. Most children express an opinion very well and contribute to their activities. For example, they choose which colour paint and the material to use when printing. They move confidently around areas and choose toys and appropriate equipment that they enjoy, for example returning often to play with musical instruments. Most children know that practitioners will give good consideration to their wishes and they communicate their needs in a variety of ways. For example, babies point at toys or use their own words.

Nearly all children feel safe and secure. They have a warm and respectful relationship with one another and practitioners, and are happy and settled at the setting. Most children arrive at the setting eagerly and cope very well when separating from their parents or carers. They are very familiar with the daily routine, and nearly all children know that free and outdoor play follows circle time giving them a sense of security.

Most children form friendships with others and play particularly well together. Nearly all children are well behaved and polite. They are beginning to wait patiently for others to complete tasks before taking their turn with resources. Nearly all children share equipment willingly and co-operate happily, for example sharing tractors or implements in the playdough. Many children have formed friendships and chat with each other animatedly as they play together.

Most children are engaged and happy in their learning environment. Many children concentrate and engage with tasks for a period of time appropriate for their stage of development, for example, concentrating fully on deciding where to put the toy figures in the pirate ship. Another child enjoyed playing with the twigs and leaves in the natural area. Children practise self-registration in a fun way, learning to recognise their names. During practitioner-led activities, children concentrate and listen well. Their response shows they understand the instructions.

Children make good use of the wide range of experiences on offer. They develop a broad range of age appropriate skills through their free play. For example, they develop mark-making skills when chalking in the outdoor area. Nearly all children can accomplish things for themselves. They make their own sandwiches, attempt to put on aprons and eat independently.

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

Nearly all children make good progress from their individual starting points during their time in the setting. Nearly all show confidence and enjoyment in learning.

Many children's literacy skills are developing well. They engage appropriately in conversations with each other and adults. They speak clearly and most use increasingly complex sentences to convey meaning and express preferences.

Around half talk with enthusiasm about things that interest them, for example a book that they had been reading at home.

Most children listen well at story time and join in enthusiastically with actions and familiar phrases. However, a minority of children become restless during longer carpet time sessions. A majority follow simple instructions appropriately, for example at snack and tidy up time. Most children select books independently and can identify their favourites. A few children know that the front cover tells you what the book is about and most handle books as readers holding the book the right way up and turning pages carefully

Most children enjoy making marks and use a range of tools appropriately to draw pictures and write recognisable letters. Nearly all older children write their own name independently. Most recognise their names during registration and find their named seat for lunch.

Many children's numeracy skills are developing well. Most children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and many name less common shapes, such as, an oval, hexagon and rectangle. Most children count independently up to 10 in English and Welsh and a few count up to 20. Many children order numbers up to ten confidently and a few add up to three numbers successfully.

Most children use the ICT available to them independently, for example, when practising handwriting patterns.

Children's physical skills are developing well. Most children use scissors to cut a range of materials with increasing control and a few use knives independently to prepare fruit for snack time. Nearly all children are developing good skills using outdoor equipment, such as slide and a rocking horse. Nearly all children manoeuvre bikes and pedal cars with confidence. Nearly all run and jump confidently and most enjoy participating in yoga sessions.

Nearly all children develop their creative skills well. For example, they use modelling materials skilfully to make an individually designed recycling super hero. Many children demonstrate good problem solving skills, such as when finding the right axle to make a model car run smoothly.

Nearly all children develop good Welsh language skills. They enjoy listening to Welsh stories and joining in with Welsh songs. Many name colours in Welsh independently and count to ten. Many children respond with confidence to simple instructions and questions, for example during snack time and at registration.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners are very caring and supportive. They know the children well, treat them with respect and value their rights, views and opinions. Practitioners and children show respect for each other and children feel comfortable to approach practitioners for help when needed.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Nearly all practitioners have completed relevant and up-to-date safeguarding training. They are all familiar with the setting's safeguarding procedures and understand their responsibilities. Practitioners are able to discuss their role in relation to safeguarding procedures with confidence.

Practitioners place a very high priority on children's health and safety. They are very familiar with the setting's relevant procedures and most have attended appropriate training courses, such as first aid and early years health and development. All practitioners practise good hygiene procedures consistently and wash their hands and wear aprons and gloves.

Practitioners ensure particularly good opportunities for children to live healthily, and they reinforce the importance of oral health by encouraging children to brush their teeth daily. Through well-planned daily routines, practitioners encourage children to eat and drink healthily and provide worthwhile opportunities for them to exercise and play outside.

Practitioners promote courtesy and good manners and mutual respect is important to the setting. Children say please and thank you and practitioners prompt children to include manners in their day to day play. Practitioners are good role models and constantly encourage positive behaviour throughout the sessions. For example, offering lots of praise, "well done ...", "lovely turn taking" and applauding children's efforts and achievements. Practitioners are fair and consistent in their use of rewards and most children are beginning to become aware of what is acceptable behaviour.

Robust systems are in place to support children with additional learning needs, and practitioners work very closely with parents and key agencies, such as speech therapists and health visitors. Parents are given comprehensive information about their children's progress and are fully involved in all decisions about their child.

Practitioners know the children and their families very well and they have a clear understanding of their needs, abilities and individual preferences. They successfully meet children's needs. Practitioners complete regular assessments for all children and have a good understanding of their stage of development. They set and monitor individual targets to promote successfully each child's development. Targets feed into the planning of activities to ensure children of all ages benefit. Practitioners keep suitable records of children's achievements, and parents are well informed about them.

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

Practitioners offer children a worthwhile range of learning activities that engage many successfully. Nearly all practitioners have established good relationships with children and know them well. Practitioners make appropriate use of praise and encouragement to develop children's confidence and wellbeing.

Practitioners work together well to plan a range of suitable learning experiences that children enjoy. They ensure that there is a good balance between child and adult-led

activities. However, on a few occasions, practitioners intervene before children have had enough time to engage independently with an activity or persevere with a challenging task.

Practitioners identify suitably focused learning experiences to ensure that nearly all children develop their skills progressively. However, planning does not include opportunities for children to use a range of ICT equipment to develop their communication skills. As a result, children's use of ICT for this purpose is underdeveloped.

Practitioners make good use of opportunities to provide authentic learning experiences for children, such as a visit to the farm to feed lambs, hunting for treasure in the local park and participating in local events, such as walking a kilometre around a local lake during the walking festival in 'Wellness Week'.

Practitioners plan and organise a range of appropriate activities to support the development of physical and social skills, communication and co-operation through creative drama sessions and regular visits to local parks to play football. However, the setting does not plan opportunities for children to experience or develop an understanding of other cultures well enough.

The majority of practitioners are good language role models in both English and Welsh. They consistently introduce and reinforce new vocabulary to the children. Most practitioners use questioning appropriately to support children's play and to make choices about what they would like to do next. However, practitioners do not consistently use a range of questions well enough to extend children's learning.

The setting has appropriate procedures to observe children and assess their progress. All practitioners are involved in carrying out regular observations of the children as they engage in focused and independent activities. They make appropriate use of this information to identify next steps for learning and more recently, practitioners have extended this to challenge children that are more able.

Practitioners provide very worthwhile activities to enable children to experience and learn about the culture of Wales, for example listening to Welsh stories, singing Welsh songs, using Welsh in daily routines and celebrating St David's Day. They actively promote the Welsh language in their questioning and instructions and consistently encourage children to respond in Welsh. This is a strong feature of the setting.

Environment: Good

Children are cared for well in premises with nominated areas for babies, toddlers and preschool children. The layout of the premises promotes children's independence successfully and encourages them to learn and develop. Leaders ensure that the accommodation is very safe and secure. Risk assessments are thorough and

undertaken for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment. These are reviewed and updated often. Fire equipment is tested and emergency evacuation procedures are completed regularly. Practitioners implement good safety precautions, such as locking doors and providing covers for radiators. Safety measures are embedded into the daily routines and help to ensure the smooth running of the setting.

All practitioners work hard to ensure that the environment is warm, inviting and suitable for children's play and learning. The areas are welcoming and interesting, and there are numerous displays of children's craftwork and photographs, giving children a sense of belonging. Stimulating play areas have been created, including reading, role play, discovery, creative, small world and mathematics areas. Older children use the bathroom facilities independently. Toilets and nappy changing facilities are clean and comply with hygiene requirements. A clean, safe and well-resourced kitchen enables practitioners to provide nutritious meals for children. Practitioners make use of the outdoor provision and plan good play opportunities for the children; for example, children are learning about recycling and how to make things with used materials.

There is a wide range of good quality resources, which are appropriate for the children's ages and development. There is a good variety of resources in all areas, all within easy reach for the children. Resources are accessible for the children and are stored in low-level boxes with labels and pictures to enable children to make effective choices about their play. There is a wide range of toys and equipment to promote cultural awareness, including books and dolls. There is a good selection of resources for children to develop their ICT skills, including tablets and audio resources. The outdoor learning environment is extensive as there are covered areas and play resources for the various age ranges including soft play for the babies. Recycled materials and natural items such as twigs and leaves are available for children to enjoy playing with. A play lorry has been made from recycled items with a steering wheel and gear stick. Nearly all resources indoors and outdoors are clean, well maintained and fit for purpose. The setting has sufficient quantities to ensure that all children have equal access, choice and variety of toys and resources.

Leadership and management: Good

The leader has established a welcoming and positive environment for children, parents and staff. She has a clear vision for the setting and communicates this effectively with all staff. She shares this vision successfully with parents through a comprehensive parent pack, regular newsletters, progress reports and social media.

The setting has well-established processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. All practitioners contribute to this process. The leader ensures that the views of parents are included. However, evaluations are too general overall and do not always identify key actions well enough. This means strategic planning does not always focus clearly on what the setting needs to do to secure improvements.

All practitioners are suitably qualified and access a range of training to support identified priorities. They have appropriate and up-to date job descriptions, ensuring

that they have a good understanding of their role in the setting. Good communication between room leaders and staff ensures that there is clarity about daily duties and responsibilities. The leader has high expectations of all practitioners and challenges everyone to do their best. The setting has established and effective processes for recruitment, staff appraisal and professional learning. As a result, practitioners have a thorough understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

The setting has established effective partnerships that enhance children's wellbeing successfully. Partnerships with parents and carers are good. They feel welcome at the setting and value the regular exchange of information they receive about their child and forthcoming activities. Parents feel very confident that if they approach the setting with any concern it will be resolved appropriately and swiftly. They feel that their children are well cared for and safe during their time in the setting.

The leader has established very successful partnerships with the local community. Practitioners use these partnerships to good effect to enrich the curriculum and provide authentic learning experiences for children, for example, riding on the bus and buying items from local shops. Nearly all practitioners work well with health professionals to ensure that they meet the needs of all children successfully. The setting makes appropriate use of the advice and support they receive from the local authority advisory teacher to secure improvements in identified areas, for example providing more opportunities to develop the use of Welsh language in the setting.

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)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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