



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

A report on

**Usk Nursery
Old School Building
Monmouth Road
Usk
NP15 1SE**

Date of inspection: October 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Usk Nursery

Name of setting	Usk Nursery
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Alison Janik and Jan Henstridge
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Jan Henstridge
Number of places	30
Age range of children	2 to 4 years of age
Number of children funded for up to two terms	17
Number of children funded for up to five terms	10
Opening days / times	8.45 to 15.15 during term time only with breakfast club from 8.00 to 8.45
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 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	16/10/2017

A report on Usk Nursery
October 2019

Date of previous Estyn inspection	18/11/2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	15/10/2019
Additional information	
A very few children come from an ethnic minority background and none speak Welsh at home.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Excellent
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 areas of non-compliance were identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Use assessment information more effectively to ensure that learning experiences challenge children well
- R2 Ensure that improvement processes focus more sharply on children's progress and outcomes

What happens next

The setting will produce an action plan showing how it will implement the recommendations.

Main findings

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all children enter the setting happily and settle quickly on arrival. Nearly all are very eager to join their friends, and form close, secure bonds with their keyworkers and other practitioners. They demonstrate a high level of happiness and security within the setting. Nearly all are beginning to play alongside or with others confidently in line with their stage of development. For example, they play in a circle with their chosen dolls, sharing resources and offering to care for each other's 'baby' when they have other things to do, such as making a telephone call.

Most children are very confident to make decisions, for example about where they want to play. Nearly all choose independently or with suitable support from an excellent variety of available resources. Many are very self-assured and a majority communicate highly effectively, for example reading a story to the whole group, capturing their attention, as they join in eagerly with the responses. Most children contribute their ideas confidently for activities and decisions that will affect them. For example, children suggest their own worthwhile ideas for a healthy snack.

Nearly all the children are exceptionally well behaved and respectful of each other and their environment. Many are developing a very good range of social skills, share willingly and take turns with friends during play activities. During snack time, children wait patiently in line to select their food. A minority support each other beneficially and praise their friends for achievements proudly, for example examining others' stickers and saying 'well done, it's shiny.' Nearly all children take good care of the resources both inside and outdoors, and most enjoy tidying up together at the end of the session.

Nearly all children engage actively throughout play sessions and are very keen to take part in the diverse range of interesting activities on offer. Many focus and concentrate highly effectively on activities that capture their attention. For example, the reflections made by shining a torch through holes they made in a pumpkin captivates them purposefully. Other children are excited as they skip through the outdoor forest area, searching for nature items to collect.

Nearly all children make very strong progress in line with their stage of development. Most have developed excellent independence, for example when selecting and persevering with their chosen learning activities. Nearly all use their self-help skills exceptionally well, select and serve themselves snack, including pouring their own drinks. They all clear their own plates and assist staff by putting the crockery into the washbasin helpfully. During outdoor play sessions, most children demonstrate a high level of confidence and creativity in imaginary play, for example playing 'air-guitar' and singing to their friends loudly.

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

During their time at the setting, most children make strong progress from their individual starting points. Most develop effective communication and creative skills, and become confident, engaged learners.

Most children listen to adults and to others well. Many respond to questions and engage in simple discussions effectively. For example, when investigating pumpkins, children describe the experience thoughtfully, using words such as hard and cold to describe the skin, and slippery to describe the seeds inside. They listen and respond to instructions carefully, for example when given guidance on how to make a picture with painted pinecones.

Many children look at books and turn pages confidently. They study pictures intently, such as photographs of food in a cookery book. They follow carefully when adults read stories, joining in with familiar words and phrases. A very few more able children 'read' aloud before a group, turning the pages of a book and 'telling' the story confidently. Many children are beginning to mark make successfully and practise writing in their play happily. A minority read out what their marks say confidently, for example sharing that they have written about going to the shop. A few more able children develop highly effective writing skills, forming a good range of letters successfully. Most experiment with a range of mark-making equipment confidently, such as using chalks and paints in the outdoor writing shed.

Most children develop their numeracy skills well. Many touch count beyond five in their play activities, such as when counting six cakes in the kitchen area. Many recognise a few numbers accurately, for example when pointing out numbers on a telephone keypad. When playing in the forest area, many demonstrate a good understanding of number and quantities by collecting a given number of items. A few more able demonstrate valuable thinking skills, suggesting criteria by which they can sort their items confidently, such as separating them into leaves, seeds and twigs.

Most children develop their physical skills well. When singing 'dingle-dangle-scarecrow' they demonstrate good body control, jumping and waving in time. In the outdoor area, they engage successfully in building a large wooden robot using heavy blocks and long poles. When playing inside, many develop effective control of smaller objects, such as paintbrushes and pens. They roll dough successfully and pick up small seeds skilfully to push into their dough cakes.

Many children develop their creative skills successfully through independent and adult led play. They experiment confidently with media such as paints and coloured pens, for example when drawing from real life. Many take part in creative, imaginative play confidently, such as making a 'bridge' from breadsticks and cheese which spans a blue plate that represents the ocean.

Many children use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment effectively in their activities to help them develop their communication skills. For example, they use games and apps that allow them to learn about colours in Welsh.

Many children develop their Welsh language skills effectively. They respond to a range of words and phrases well. For example, many children understand and follow the instruction to wash their hands when given in Welsh. They count a few numbers

confidently and sing songs, such as 'bore da' independently. A few children respond accurately when asked who they are.

Care and development: Good

The setting provides a good level of responsive care, which meets children's individual needs in a cheerful and caring atmosphere. Key workers know their children's individual needs very well. They value the information collected through the settling in period and utilise this effectively to plan the care for each child. Many practitioners use skilful tailored questioning to adapt learning opportunities to suit individual children's needs.

Leaders and practitioners have effective procedures to support children with special educational needs and ensure that they have full access to all areas of learning. When needed, they plan individual learning activities skilfully for children who need extra support. They ensure that these children have beneficial access to extra adult help. They work effectively with support agencies, such as speech and language specialists to ensure they meet children's needs successfully.

Nearly all practitioners demonstrate a worthwhile understanding of the children's individual needs, abilities and preferences. They act as positive role models and are very polite and respectful to their colleagues and the children. They give children appropriate verbal praise and celebrate their achievements effectively. For example, they give children's art and craft work high status, displaying it prominently in the setting. Practitioners help children understand values such as honesty, fairness, and respect, well. They promote principles that help children to distinguish right from wrong. For example, they use interesting storybooks, with characters such as Mona the Monkey, that demonstrate these values beneficially.

Leaders and practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe and healthy. They attend regular training relevant to their roles. All practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of the good range of useful policies and procedures in place. They give safeguarding a high priority and are confident about what action to take in the event of a concern. Practitioners maintain detailed records of accidents and incidents. They have a worthwhile range of risk assessments processes, and undertake fire evacuation drills appropriately. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting has effective arrangements to help children learn about living a healthy lifestyle. Children have freshly prepared snacks and strong opportunities for physical play. Practitioners ensure that water is available freely throughout each session and children access this independently. They encourage children to use the toilet and wash their hands independently.

Practitioners help children understand the importance of treating all people with equality well. They ensure that children have daily access to a broad range of beneficial resources that reflect diverse ethnicities and abilities well. For example, children play with jigsaws showing children from around the world and play confidently with dolls that represent children with different abilities.

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

Practitioners provide a broad range of engaging activities in the inside and outdoor areas, linked to all of the foundation phase areas of learning. For example, they plan and deliver creative activities linked to the autumn topic, such as leaf painting, potato printing and investigating different pumpkins. They develop children's mathematical development and problem solving skills in the outdoors carefully, hunting for a set number of objects in the forest area and then sorting them by criteria. Many learning activities encourage children to be active, to take risks and experiment with new experiences. For example, when building a very large wooden robot outdoors, practitioners encourage children to work together to lift and build with large wooden blocks. They encourage children to explore, for example when filling bottles from the water butt and spinning round while squeezing the bottle, to see what the water does.

Practitioners take into account the views of children well when planning learning activities. They discuss with the children what activities they would like and then incorporate these efficiently into learning activities. For example, children's requests about spiders resulted in hunting for insects and spiders in the forest school, and creative artwork on spiders' webs.

Nearly all practitioners demonstrate an up-to-date knowledge of the requirements of the foundation phase. They intervene appropriately in children's play activities, allowing them to work independently when suitable and supporting them when needed. Most practitioners use questioning to challenge children well. A few do this expertly. For example, when pumpkin carving, they ask children to describe the pumpkins by feeling, smelling and tapping it, predict what will be inside it and use more extended vocabulary to describe it.

Practitioners plan a good balance between child-initiated and adult directed led activities that meet children's individual needs well. They plan a stimulating, challenging and exciting environment both inside and outside. For example, they use the outdoors well to extend children's speaking and listening skills while acting out the story bear hunt. Adult led activities develop children's communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well. For example, children learn to recognise and name shapes by creating interesting shape pictures. Many children develop their communication skills effectively when describing pumpkins and their seeds. However, practitioners do not consider sufficiently how independent activities will contribute to children's skills development.

Practitioners record children's accomplishments well and in useful detail. For example, when playing with pinecones they identify how many each child could count to and whether they can give a set number back. They undertake daily, focused observations that identify what children do well. Practitioners keep beneficial records that allow them to see children's progress and feed back to parents and carers effectively. However, they do not always use these records well enough when planning learning. As a result, they do not always challenge a minority of children, and particularly the more able, well enough.

Environment: Good

Leaders ensure that the indoor and outdoor learning environments offer an engaging and beneficial range of opportunities for children to be active, independent and inquisitive. The premises are welcoming, friendly and provide ample space and facilities to meet the needs of children. The walls of the play areas are decorated with attractive displays, which celebrate the children's current art and craft work. There is a secure, vibrant outdoor play space that children access for a suitable amount of time. This provides worthwhile opportunities for children to be physically active and develop wider skills. For example, children learn about balance when filling buckets of water and transporting them on the back of their trikes and they practice early writing skills happily in the outdoors writing shed.

The premises are very clean and well maintained. Practitioners provide children with a good range of clean, stage and age appropriate resources that are easily accessible, well maintained and promote their independence. They stimulate children's curiosity effectively by providing plentiful resources for them to investigate, such as different sized empty boxes and recyclable materials. There is a good range of Welsh, multi-cultural and natural sustainable resources available for children's independent use, such as Welsh reading books.

Leaders ensure that children have access to a safe, secure, and highly engaging indoor and outdoor learning environment. There is a robust system for managing access to the premises and practitioners check and record visitors' identification consistently. Practitioners monitor the outdoor areas routinely to identify and eliminate risks, and complete appropriate risk assessments of places they take children for offsite visits. Leaders ensure that most required safety checks for the building are in place.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision and comprehensive procedures that focus purposefully on developing and maintaining a caring and effective learning environment for children. Their focus on ensuring that children's wellbeing is at the heart of their work results in children demonstrating very high levels of confidence and independence. They convey their expectations to all practitioners beneficially and this ensures that all provide the high same level of care. For example, they identify and share their high expectation of practitioners' roles through detailed job descriptions and regular staff meetings that focus on important priorities.

Leaders have developed appropriate procedures for evaluating the quality of their work and for making improvements to the setting. For example, they consider carefully the effectiveness of the environment, and of resources, and identify where this needs improving beneficially. They ensure that parents and children have an opportunity to make valuable suggestions as to how they can improve and implement these well. For example, they have improved effectively the quality and regularity with which they report daily activities and children's accomplishments. However, when evaluating and making improvements, leaders do not consider well enough the standards and progress made by children in their learning. They are beginning to involve all practitioners in this process, but this is at an early stage of development.

Leaders work with practitioners to help appraise the quality of their work, set targets for development and identify training needs. This helps to ensure that practitioners remain aware of important developments in education and focus on developing their practice appropriately. However, leaders make no formal observations in the setting to support this work. Leaders manage staff effectively and ensure that they benefit from suitable training. For example, they encourage staff to gain further qualifications that will help them become leaders. This has a direct and positive effect on the quality of children's learning, for example in the quality of teaching to support children's Welsh language development.

The setting has a beneficial range of useful partnerships to support its work and children. There are strong links with parents and leaders ensure that practitioners keep parents informed about children's development effectively through social media, a daily noticeboard and 'stay-and-play' sessions. Practitioners complete diaries for parents and hold regular meetings to discuss children's progress effectively. The setting has highly effective links with the local school, which ensures that nearly all children make a smooth and happy transition. For example, they use the school hall for weekly play sessions, visit for major events such as the school Eisteddfod, and take children to the school for lunch each week in the summer term.

Leaders use funding well to ensure that there are a good number of well-qualified staff and that the learning environment and resources support children's learning effectively. However, they do not target specific grants well enough towards their intended recipients.

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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