

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Progress Review

First Steps Day Nursery Ltd

**Unit 2 The Croft
Alltami Road
Buckley
Flintshire
CH7 3PG**

**Date of visit:
June 2022**

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

Outcome of visit

The setting is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and the Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales are removing the setting from any further follow-up activity.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve opportunities to develop children's numeracy, ICT and Welsh skills

Leaders and practitioners ensure a far more broad and balanced provision for the children than was the case during the core inspection. There are better opportunities for children to develop their Welsh oracy skills across the provision. Leaders ensure valuable professional learning opportunities which enable practitioners to develop confidence when using familiar words and phrases with the children throughout the day. As a result, children show an increased understanding and respond positively to questions and instructions, for example when counting together, recognising colours and using simple questions.

Within the different areas of the provision, leaders and practitioners ensure a good range of opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Children have unhindered access to the range of resources and their skills are developing appropriately. For example, when playing in the mud kitchen they discuss which receptacles are full and which are empty, and how long the chocolate cake should remain in the oven until it is cooked. In the sand they discuss the marks made by the different vehicles and which are long and short. Leaders have developed their pedagogy in line with the non maintained curriculum, and are working diligently to develop their approach to responsive planning. An example of this approach of allowing children unhindered play for extended periods is the free access to mathematical resources in the setting. The children play with the shapes, gradually growing in confidence and develop an understanding of the relationship between the shape and the number the shape represents.

Practitioners now provide a good range of opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology skills across the provision. Most children access the range of equipment and resources confidently. For example, children use camera equipment to take photos of their friends as they participate in activity and performance. They use timers and control coloured lights confidently.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that planning develops children's skills systematically across all areas of learning and challenges children in line with their abilities

The setting has suitable planning to develop children's skills across all the areas of learning. As a result of recent professional learning undertaken by all staff, the setting changed its planning format to better reflect the principles and pedagogies of the Curriculum for Wales. This has resulted in a change in how practitioners plan, moving away from planning a range of adult-led tasks throughout the session to a more child-led play based approach to learning. This change to planning has enabled practitioners to take better note of the teachable moments that present themselves when children are playing. Through their observations, practitioners develop children's skills appropriately, responding to their interests and fascinations. For example, they provide horses in the small world area to enable children to sort and classify, and add story sacks to the book corner following an interest in caterpillars.

Planning identifies appropriate enhancements to enrich activities linked to the theme, for example, the addition of red and blue coloured paper and dough to the creative areas for their topic on The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Practitioners have developed a suitable system to identify the skills and concepts they have taught. However, planning does not reflect how they will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that there is coverage across all areas of learning.

Leaders are aware that they are at the very early stages of curriculum implementation and have identified that they now need to consider what skills need developing for individual children as a next step in their planning.

Recommendation 3: Improve how assessments are recorded and used across the setting to ensure that all children make good progress from their individual starting points

The setting has a suitable system for recording children's progress. Practitioners are beginning to use the curriculum for non-maintained settings to support their assessments of children's learning and this gives them a developmentally appropriate picture of each child's progress. As part of this process practitioners identify the teaching strategies that have been used, for example, questioning or modelling of language. They highlight children's learning to identify what they have learnt and what they needed to learn next. However, this is in the early stages of use and it is too soon to measure whether this will give practitioners quality information to inform their planning or to track children's progress effectively. Practitioners have continued to measure children's progress against the Foundation Phase Profile outcomes and these results are shared with the feeder schools to ease transition.

Leaders are willing to try new ideas. They are trialling a system where assessments and observations can be captured more easily. For example, older children's photos are displayed, and their next steps identified to support practitioners to focus on particular skills when observing children's play. The recent purchase of recording devices allows practitioners to spend more time playing alongside children and then

record their observations. This enables practitioners to take advantage of teachable moments but still provides them with the information that they need to inform future plans or to record assessments.

Although the assessment processes used by the setting are in the early stages of development, practitioners have embraced the curriculum for non maintained settings and its principles and pedagogies and used them to develop a system that works effectively for the setting.

Recommendation 4: Develop and embed and systematic self-evaluation processes to ensure that action planning is focused on key priorities and results in sustained improvement

There has been a change of leadership at the setting since the core inspection. The leader and deputy leader, who leads the early education provision at the setting, share a clear vision for a setting based on the developing principles of the non maintained curriculum. Leaders are providing effective professional learning and building capacity to deliver the new curriculum, reflecting the pedagogical principles embedded within it.

Leaders are developing an open, reflective ethos at the setting, and this approach is already having a positive impact on provision. Leaders and practitioners are contributing purposefully to the self-evaluation process. With support from the local authority early years advisory team, they have established a suitable process to record elements of strength and areas for improvement at the setting. This is particularly pertinent during a period of such sustained change and challenge. Priority areas are broken down into specific targets for improvement, but these are not always broken into sufficiently measurable and time limited targets to enable the setting to evaluate progress.

Leaders engage fully with ongoing training and professional learning opportunities provided by the local authority. There is a positive culture at the setting and this builds confidence and resilience amongst practitioners.

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