



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

**First Steps Day Nursery
1 Llandudno Road
Rhos on Sea
Conwy
LL28 4TR**

Date of inspection: February 2014

by

**Mary Dyas
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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About the setting

First Steps Day Nursery first opened in 2000 and the present proprietor took over in 2007. It operates from a large, detached house in a quiet, residential area of Rhos on Sea and offers full day care for children aged from 0 to 11 years. There are currently 16 children on roll in the pre-school group, ten of whom also attend school part time. Five children are in receipt of funded educational provision from the local authority. Most children in the playgroup speak English as their home language and a few speak both Welsh and English. The setting is inclusive and welcomes all children. Although no children have currently been identified with additional learning needs, the setting has good procedures in place to ensure early identification and support.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in April 2013. The last time Estyn inspected the setting was in February 2008.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- nearly all children make good progress in their learning and achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy
- all children are happy in the setting and enjoy their learning experiences;
- relationships between staff and children are warm and caring;
- without exception, all children behave well; and
- practitioners provide a good range of interesting experiences to motivate children to learn.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the process of self-evaluation is well established;
- practitioners work well together as a strong team with shared goals; and
- practitioners are working actively towards meeting current targets for improvement.

Recommendations

R1. Develop the use of incidental Welsh throughout the sessions to encourage the children to use the Welsh they have learned more independently.

R2. Ensure that planning identifies provision for children of different abilities.

R3. Ensure that planning for the the outdoor area consistently provides children with a wider range of learning experiences.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

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

All children achieve well and most make good progress in relation to their age and starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Almost all children are developing their skills in literacy and numeracy appropriately. They are confident communicators and are able to make themselves understood and to ask for things they want. Almost all children enjoy making marks in a range of media such as coloured sand and they are developing good pencil control. Many are able to recognise their written name and are beginning to write at least the initial letter of their name independently.

Most children count by rote to at least ten and count objects confidently and accurately to five. They use mathematical language correctly in their play; for example, when talking about snakes being longer or shorter than each other when playing in the rainforest. All are developing their knowledge of information and communication technology when they play simple, age appropriate games on the computer or use a range of electronic toys such as walkie-talkies, a microphone with a recorder, watches, mobile phones and cameras.

Almost all children are making appropriate progress in the Welsh language. They understand the words and phrases used by adults in the setting and most can confidently count to ten. They are very familiar with Welsh words for colour and occasionally use them in their speech.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy in the setting, are well motivated, and engage positively in the activities that they choose. They are confident when playing and make clear choices about the activities in which they would like to participate.

Without exception, all children behave well throughout the sessions. They know the daily routines well and all help to tidy up at the end of a session. Most children have been together in the nursery since they were babies and know one another well. They are kind and thoughtful towards one another and share equipment willingly. Most concentrate well on the tasks they have chosen and sustain interest and involvement for appropriate lengths of time.

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

Practitioners plan together and ensure that they provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning activities that interest and engage the children. Planning takes good account of Foundation Phase skills and the activities succeed in engaging the interest and curiosity of the children both indoors and outdoors. All children make good progress in literacy, communication, numeracy and ICT skills and the planned activities build well on children's previous knowledge and understanding. Although practitioners adapt their interactions with individual children appropriately to their stage of development, planning does not always reflect this.

Children go outside for a set time during the morning. The outdoor area is not set out with the full range of Foundation Phase areas of learning although these are covered over time. Specific and enjoyable activities are planned each day that stimulate and challenge the children; for example, when they play with umbrellas in their waterproof coats and boots under the hosepipe providing pretend rain. Children learn to care about living things by sowing seeds and looking after the plants that grow in the garden.

Practitioners promote the Welsh language well during group times and use a good range of vocabulary and resources. However, there are few occasions when Welsh is used incidentally through the rest of the session to support the children's learning. All children celebrate and learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. All practitioners are aware of the learning objectives for activities and have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase principles and practice. They use a good range of approaches to stimulate the children's interest and make learning fun.

All adults give children time to complete a task and know when to intervene and when to allow a child to follow their own ideas. Where teaching is good, practitioners use open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking.

The setting keeps accurate records of children's progress. Observations of children's achievements and progress are immediately recorded on sticky notes and used to inform the child's assessment record when they are updated every term. Good arrangements are in place for parents to see and discuss their children's experiences

and progress. Practitioners share targets for the children informally with parents at these meetings.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners know the children very well and value them as individuals. The daily routines in the nursery help to develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect. Children are well aware of the difference between right and wrong and behave accordingly. There is a good range of policies to ensure children's safety from harm and bullying. Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle well when they start at the nursery and similarly when they move from one age group to the next. All children in the setting are beginning to learn and understand about sustainability when they put their unfinished food into the food bin at mealtimes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Robust procedures are in place for checking the suitability of staff and all practitioners strictly adhere to procedures for managing children's arrival and departure from the setting.

Although there are no children currently attending with identified additional learning needs, the setting has good arrangements for their identification and support and has worked closely with outside agencies in the past.

Learning environment: Good

The nursery has a warm and welcoming ethos that provides equality of access to all children whatever their background. Staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals and show the children affection and understanding. All children have equal access to all areas of learning and the nursery has a good range of policies for dealing with specific instances of discrimination.

The nursery is appropriately staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners who have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There are ample good quality resources that are well matched to the planned activities and accessible to the children. The nursery has maintained the indoor accommodation to a high standard and effective use is made of the available space.

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

The leadership of the owner/manager provides the nursery with clear direction and a highly committed workforce. All staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There are good lines of communication between managers and staff and opportunities for personal development. Managers conduct annual appraisals of all staff members at which their professional needs and the expectations of the nursery are discussed and addressed. Minutes are kept of the regular weekly meetings of keyworkers and monthly staff meetings to ensure that all staff are kept well informed. The nursery is effective in meeting both national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has a well-established process of self-evaluation and, following this, it identifies relevant strengths and areas for improvement. The views of parents and carers, and of the children, further inform the self-evaluation process. The current development plan indicates a good awareness of the needs of the setting and clearly identifies the way forward. There is good evidence that current targets for improvement in the development plan are positively addressed. Practitioners attend training courses regularly and the impact of this can be seen in the good quality of the teaching and the children's well being as they implement what they have learned.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are informed about all aspects of the nursery's activities through a regular newsletter that includes a section about each age group, the activities they have been involved with and what they are planning for the current term. The pre-school age group displays the fortnightly planning for parents to see. Almost all parents are very positive about the setting. Parents are appreciative of the work of the nursery and feel that their children are well supported both educationally and emotionally.

The manager and her deputy have established good links with the three local primary schools to which most children move on when they take and meet the children that attend half-day nursery classes. The setting makes good use of the local and wider area to enhance the children's learning experiences. The partnership with the local authority link teacher is purposeful and beneficial and has had a clear and positive

impact. Practitioners in the setting value the support they receive and the link teacher reports that the setting responds positively to training and to any advice and guidance.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners work together closely and deploy themselves effectively during the sessions. The setting has a good range of high quality resources that support the planned activities well.

The nursery owner/manager ensures financial resources are available to support learning and developments in the setting. Spending decisions are appropriate and in line with the targets identified in the development plan. For example, the setting has identified the need to develop the outdoor area in order to provide the full range of areas of provision and this is now a financial priority for the nursery.

Overall, the children make good progress during their time at the nursery and the nursery gives 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

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas	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)

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	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>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.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>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.</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>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.</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.