



*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**

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

**Date of inspection: May 2012**

**by**

**Mary Dyas**

**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:

<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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## About the setting

Poppies Day Nursery is an English-medium setting which occupies a grade-two listed building on the outskirts of Pontypool. The nursery is privately owned and the pre-school area comprises two rooms on the ground floor and access to the beautifully developed gardens outside.

The setting serves mainly the local community and the children move on to a number of different primary schools. The children are considered to come from mainly advantaged backgrounds and all have English as their home language. The setting welcomes all children and makes good provision for those with additional learning needs. At the time of the inspection there were two children who had been identified with Additional Learning Needs at Early Years Action.

The setting is open from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm for children aged from birth to five years. At the time of the inspection there were sixteen children on roll in the pre-school room of whom eleven four-year-olds and three three-year-olds were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in February 2012 and by Estyn in February 2005.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is judged to be good because:

- Children make good progress across all areas of learning in relation to their age and ability;
- The nursery is a happy and welcoming place where children are enabled to develop their skills and personalities;
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and caring;
- Practitioners in the setting are aware of what they need to do to support the children; and
- The setting provides a good range of interesting and exciting activities for the children both indoors and outdoors.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- The setting has a long standing culture of self-evaluation which is of a very high standard;
- The setting makes good use of information from a range of self-evaluation strategies to identify areas which need to be addressed;
- There is strong evidence of effective implementation of strategies to address identified areas of improvement;
- The setting manager is very effective and leads her team well; and
- Staff work closely together towards shared goals.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve the setting needs to:

R1 Continue to develop and embed practitioners skills in high quality questioning and appropriate intervention; and

R2 Ensure that children have more opportunities to engage with Welsh books and stories.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how the setting 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

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

All children make good, and sometimes very good, progress across all areas of learning. All enjoy their learning experiences and persevere at their chosen tasks for considerable periods of time. Most children are confident to work independently but often work together in pairs or small groups sharing materials and resources.

All children enjoy listening to group stories. They listen intently and make comments and ask questions which indicate their good levels of understanding. Almost all children in the group are very articulate and express their thoughts and feelings using full sentences and a developing descriptive vocabulary. Most children recognise their name when having their mid-morning snack and many older children are beginning to recognise the names of their friends and to write their own name. All children make good use of the range of mark making activities available to them within the planned provision and are developing a good understanding of the purposes of writing.

Most children use correct mathematical language in the course of their play and recognise basic two dimensional shapes. Many older children also recognise more complex shapes such as pentagons, hexagons and octagons. All children count confidently to at least ten and most are able to count objects accurately to three. Older and more able individuals are able to recognise and sequence numbers to ten and beyond.

All children are developing their understanding of ICT through their use of a computer mouse to move and select objects on the computer and a good range of technology such as a camera, CD player and battery operated toys. All children have well developed creative skills, such as when painting. They enjoy role play and respond well to music and dance.

All children are making good progress in their understanding and use of the Welsh language. They respond positively to commands and instructions in Welsh and delight in using the simple questions they have learned when speaking to visitors. Their ability to follow stories in Welsh and to look at Welsh books is more limited.

## **Wellbeing: Good**

All children have an appropriate understanding, in line with their age, of how they can keep healthy. Many wash their hands without prompting when they have been using the toilet, painting or playing in sand and water and before snacks. Many children have a basic understanding of healthy eating such as the importance of fruit in the diet.

The outside environment provides them with a safe environment where they can engage in vigorous physical activities. Relationships are very good and children are free from verbal or physical abuse. A good and notable feature of the nursery is the high level of enjoyment children have in learning. Behaviour is well above expectations and all children have very good attitudes to learning and are willing participants. Children's positive attitudes to learning are well illustrated by their perseverance and concentration on their tasks. Their conversations show that they relate very well to each other, co-operating and working together happily.

All children are actively involved in the planning and evaluation process for their learning activities. They make clear decisions about what activities they would like to take part in each day but are also prepared to listen to suggestions and requests from the adults who work with them.

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

Practitioners work very well together to plan a wide range of activities which stimulate, engage and challenge most children to learn effectively. A particularly good feature of this is the level of planning that is based on children's interest. Subsequent planning during a topic is flexible and responds very well to children's needs and expectations. Plans are based on ensuring coverage of the areas of learning using the Foundation Phase Development Profile and Skills Framework and on specific needs identified from observations of children's learning. This ensures that more able children are challenged in their learning experiences. Children's learning experiences include ample opportunities for them to develop their physical and creative skills and an understanding of living things. Learning activities are well designed to develop children as independent learners through giving them opportunities to select their tasks and so develop their self-confidence.

The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the Welsh culture and traditions is good, including the celebration St. David's day. The Welsh language is well developed through planned use of the language and most children are learning and using an appropriate range of basic words and phrases. The planning incorporates opportunities for children to learn about recycling of materials, such as when growing seeds and looking after them. The nursery is very involved in recycling and children help to collect and sort materials ready for collection by the Local Authority. Children have suitable opportunities to meet and hear about people who look after them in the community and to begin to understand the roles different people play in society.

## **Teaching: Excellent**

Teaching is of a very high standard. Both practitioners working in the pre-school area have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and are very aware of what and how they should teach. They set very high expectations for themselves and for their children. An exceptional feature is the very effective way in which practitioners speak to the children, making very good use of skilful questioning to encourage and enable children to develop their thinking skills. They all cleverly encourage children to express their own ideas by the very regular use of open-ended questions as part of their natural conversations with individual children and when they are working in groups. All children grow in confidence to challenge themselves in their learning through the warm and supportive help they receive.

Procedures for assessment and recording of children's progress are very good. Children identified as being more able are supported by extending the targets set for them and through more extended questioning. Those with additional learning needs have personal targets expressed in effective Individualised Education Programmes which are implemented and regularly reviewed. Differentiation is clearly shown in the fortnightly plans and takes into account the learning needs of individual children. Comprehensive record keeping procedures are very well used to record children's progress and to inform future planning. Practitioners make relevant notes of what children have achieved both spontaneously and in adult-led focussed activities. This process begins with a baseline assessment which is carefully considered and from which individual targets are set. In addition to daily interaction with the adults in the setting, parents receive a report, which includes suggestions for the way forward for their child, towards the end of the year and also have an opportunity to discuss this formally with their child's key worker at an open evening.

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

The setting has good arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing and arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs. Practitioners work closely with professionals such as the health visitor, Speech and Language team and LA special needs advisers. There are good transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. Children and parents visit the setting before admission and the settling in process is tailored to suit each individual.. Children and their parents or carers say they feel happy in the setting and are willing to ask for help and support. Children are kept safe by regular careful risk assessments. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners receive relevant training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



## **Learning environment: Good**

The nursery displays a positive inclusive ethos that provides equality of access to all children whatever their background. Staff know their children well, are sensitive to their needs and show children affection, consideration and understanding. The nursery is a warm, supportive environment where children display a tolerant attitude free from any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. Policies and procedures for dealing with specific instances of discrimination are in place.

The nursery is able to accept pre-school children with any form of disability and has policies in place to promote equal opportunities. The nursery is generously staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners. Resources are well matched to the demands of the Foundation Phase curriculum and accessible to the children. There is a generous supply of resources and materials which are well focused on the specific needs of the children. Overall, the accommodation, particularly the well-developed outdoor area, provides a very good environment for children's learning and is used effectively. The local environment is used well to support the learning.

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

All staff have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff working in the nursery are highly effective in meeting the needs of the children and the day-to-day activities and experiences provided for the children are highly imaginative and of a very high standard. The overall leadership of the nursery by the manager provides clear direction and a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement. Staff share values, aims and objectives, there are high expectations and these have been realised in practice. Staff are highly professional and the group leader for the 3 year olds, who is also the deputy manager, fully understands her role in the organisation and plays a highly significant role in managing her responsibilities based on her thorough knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase objectives for children's learning.

There are effective and innovative procedures in place to induct, appraise and improve practitioners. Staff are appraised twice a year and their professional needs and the expectations of the nursery addressed. This has resulted in all staff playing a highly effective and creative role in the nursery and providing some outstanding experiences for the children. Overall, the exceptional impact of the leadership has provided the nursery with clear innovative strategic direction and a fully committed staff.

Links with parents are very good and the nursery is very effective in meeting the differing needs of parents and in responding to their personal situations. The nursery is highly effective in meeting national and local priorities and has taken good account of Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authority initiatives as exemplified recently in the setting being the first in the Local Authority to carry out the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

### **Improving quality: Excellent**

Self-evaluation is an exceptionally strong feature of the processes in place to drive the setting forward. The setting's self-evaluation document is very detailed and comprehensively addresses the three key questions for inspection. It reflects the ethos of continually seeking for the best, which is at the heart of the way in which the nursery is led and managed. Areas of success and improvement are clearly identified.

In addition, the setting has used other self-evaluation tools such as the Effective Early Learning Project and ECERS to look at other aspects of provision for the children and has set targets to address areas for improvement. All staff are fully involved in professional development and actively contribute to the whole-setting professional learning experiences including in-house training. The impact of training is routinely measured in terms of its effect on children's progress and wellbeing. This has proved to be highly effective. Staff have good opportunities to develop their professionalism through visits and courses made available to them outside the setting.

The nursery is also very aware of encouraging all children to express their own opinions of the way their setting is organised and the procedures in place to develop 'The Children's Voice' are highly effective.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Parents, in the questionnaire replies expressed their complete satisfaction with the nursery and are highly appreciative of the standards of care and the quality of educational provision provided. They appreciate the time they have to settle their children at the nursery and balance between education and high-quality care which is provided. Details of the daily activities, of the curriculum and other useful information are displayed on the notice board. There are opportunities at the end of the day for parents/carers to have some informal discussion with the staff and to see examples of their child's work.

The nursery has benefited from advice provided by the advisory teacher from the Local Authority who reported on the willingness of the nursery to accept advice and to implement change. The nursery is acknowledged by Local Authority staff as a very good example of current nursery practice.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting is generously staffed and has a good range of resources which are well used to support different learning experiences. A particular strength is the outstanding development of the outdoor area which fully supports all areas of learning of the Foundation Phase.

The owner, together with the manager, manages the finances rigorously. They are mindful of the impact of spending decisions on the quality of its provision and the progress children make. The setting gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to parents' questionnaires

Due to the small number of questionnaires returned there is no report on the responses to the questionnaires.

### Discussions with children

Children in the setting are very happy with the experiences planned for them. All say they enjoy their time in the setting and older children talk positively about the adults who care for them and about the friends that they have made.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mary 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## 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>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<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 partnership's 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>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.