



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

A report on

**Once Upon A Time Day Nursery
Heol Y Beddau
Beddau
Pontypridd
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF38 2AG**

Date of inspection: April 2018

by

**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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Context

Once Upon a Time Day Nursery is a privately owned nursery in Beddau in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. The nursery is registered for 39 children between the ages of six weeks and five years. It offers early education sessions from Monday to Friday from 9.15am until 12.15pm. Currently, there are 17 children in receipt of funded early years' education. During the inspection, there were 13 three-year-olds present.

There are 17 members of staff, including the management team. Three members of staff work with the funded three-year-old children. The nursery manager has been in post since 2004.

Nearly all funded children speak English at home. A very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak another language at home. No children have Welsh as their home language. There are currently no children identified as having additional learning needs.

This is the setting's first Estyn inspection. The last Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection was in June 2015.

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:

- The setting is a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment, where children thrive and develop positive attitudes to life and learning
- Children develop strong working relationships with one another and with adults, and play and work together happily and confidently
- Children make good progress in developing a wide range of skills across the foundation phase areas of learning
- Practitioners support children's learning and play effectively, and encourage them to take measured risks and try new things
- There is an exciting range of learning experiences on offer, which motivates children to participate enthusiastically and ensures their full engagement
- Practitioners assess children's achievements and progress regularly, and reflect purposefully on these assessments to inform their planning

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The proprietor, manager and practitioners keep the wellbeing and progress of children at the centre of all aspects of the setting's work
- The nursery manager has high expectations of herself and her staff and strives to provide the very best for the children in the setting
- Leaders and practitioners respond positively to support and challenge
- A suitable culture of reflection and self-evaluation is developing in the setting, which means that leaders and practitioners understand the benefits of self-evaluation and continuous improvement
- Leaders know the setting's strengths and areas for improvement well and identify appropriate priorities for development
- Systems for monitoring and appraising the work of practitioners are thorough and enable leaders to identify and provide practitioners with appropriate opportunities for professional learning

Recommendations

- R1 Provide appropriate challenge for all children, particularly those who are more able
- R2 Ensure that all children have opportunities to develop the full range of foundation phase skills over time
- R3 Ensure that all improvements that leaders and practitioners make lead to better outcomes for children

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children, particularly those who have attended the nursery from a very young age, enter the pre-school setting with skill levels at, or above, those expected for children of their age. Most make good progress and build successfully on their previous skills, knowledge and understanding. As they experience new things, they often make links with previous learning and apply this knowledge to new activities and play situations. The observation skills of many children are good and they use these to learn quickly from others and copy what they are doing. A few more able children are developing good thinking and problem solving skills. For example, a child learning to spin a hula hoop realised that her body would get in the way of the spinning hoop if she stood too close. She soon worked out how to position the hoops so that she could move away from them as soon as they started spinning, then shared this learning with others. During their time in the setting, most children achieve well, and a few attain particularly high standards of communication and personal and social development.

Nearly all children express themselves well for their age. They make their wishes understood, speak confidently to adults and ask and answer questions appropriately. Most listen well, particularly in reflection time, when they show respect for the person who is speaking and rarely interrupt or speak over one another. Most children enjoy listening and responding to stories. They join in with repeated phrases, or answer questions about the pictures. Many show interest in a variety of mark-making activities, and are beginning to understand that many real-life activities involve writing.

The early numeracy skills of many children are developing well in activities across the areas of learning. For example, when fishing for balls during a focused activity in the water tray outside, many children count to five reliably and a very few more able children recognise the corresponding numbers written on the balls. They understand terms relating to size and quantity, including 'more' 'less', 'bigger' and 'smaller' and use this to help them sort similar items. A few use their knowledge of the properties of simple 2D shapes to talk about the shapes they are cutting out when playing with dough.

Most children are developing an understanding of simple technology in the environment and know that this often reflects real life situations, for example when using the card reader in the class shop. Many operate remote control cars, voice recorders and other electronic toys confidently, and manipulate ICT equipment, including tablet devices and digital cameras, competently to support their learning. A few children with strong speaking skills use common technological language, such as 'selfie', correctly when using the resources.

Many children have strong physical skills. They move confidently and with good spatial awareness when running, jumping and manoeuvring around the outside play area in particular. Nearly all take calculated risks as they play, and show little fear

when faced with new challenges. For example, they ride a variety of bikes, swing on a tyre hanging from a rope, balance on a range of low level equipment, and bounce on a trampoline with vigour and enjoyment. Most children handle a wide variety of equipment with dexterity, including pencils, brushes, cutters and scissors. They use a range of mark-making resources confidently to create pictures.

Children's Welsh language skills are progressing appropriately. Nearly all join in with songs enthusiastically and answer simple questions in Welsh, using correct pronunciation for familiar words and phrases. Most count to at least three and identify a few colours reliably. Many show a good understanding of simple instructions in Welsh by responding correctly in a variety of situations, for example when an adult asks for an item of a certain colour, or at tidying up time.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy and confident in the setting. Many have attended the nursery since they were very young and are relaxed and at home in their surroundings. They settle very quickly and happily on arrival and know the routines of the setting very well. For example, they go to their usual table at snack time and help to lay out plates and cutlery and serve themselves a drink with little direction. Most develop high levels of self-esteem and are engaged in their learning. They approach new people openly and with interest, and speak confidently and enthusiastically about their work and play.

All children develop positive attitudes to life and learning and nearly all participate fully in activities. The standard of children's behaviour is a strength of the setting. Nearly all develop a good understanding of the needs of others. They wait patiently for their turn in games and activities, for example when using the tyre swing, and understand that they must listen carefully to their friends during their daily reflection time.

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

The setting provides children with a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities across the foundation phase areas of learning. Careful planning around a range of interesting topics meets the needs of most children well and stimulates their imagination. Increasingly, practitioners offer children opportunities to contribute to planning by asking questions such as 'What would you like to find out about your favourite superhero?' as part of their topic.

Provision for developing pupils' skills is generally good. Practitioners' weekly planning identifies clearly the specific skills they are aiming to develop and consolidate through specific activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on communication, numeracy and ICT skills, but the setting also takes good account of developing children's physical, creative and thinking skills. In general, practitioners consider children's needs and abilities appropriately when they plan and often build well on what children can already do. However, there is no comprehensive overview that ensures that children have opportunities to develop the full range of foundation phase skills over time. Practitioners use the inside and outdoor areas effectively to

extend children's experience and encourage them to experiment with the varied environments and the resources within them. Special visitors to the setting and visits to places of interest, such as a local farm park, broaden the children's experiences well and help to consolidate their learning.

Practitioners integrate the Welsh language naturally into activities in many areas of learning, especially in literacy, numeracy and physical development. For example, they count and talk about colour in Welsh and English when reading books and doing mathematical activities. Throughout the year, practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to learn about Welsh customs and those of other cultures.

Teaching: Good

Leaders and practitioners have a good understanding of the foundation phase and its aims. Practitioners use a suitable range of teaching strategies to introduce new skills and topics and often link new learning purposefully to previous experiences to engage the children. Practitioners develop very good working relationships with children. They know them well and respond appropriately to children's individual needs, questioning them sensitively and encouraging them to take part in activities they may not choose naturally. Practitioners are confident to respond spontaneously to the environment and events around them for the benefit of children. For example, while in the garden, they respond positively to the children's excitement at hearing a delivery lorry outside by taking them to the gate to see what is happening and discussing what they see.

Practitioners collaborate purposefully to plan a good range of focused activities and opportunities for child-led learning. Planning usually identifies activities at two different levels. Practitioners evaluate activities conscientiously and identify children who struggle with particular skills. Increasingly, practitioners use this information to inform their future planning and succeed in meetings most children's needs. However, they do not always provide enough challenge, particularly for the most able children.

Practitioners carry out on-entry assessments for all children and use focused observations throughout their time in the setting to evaluate children's progress across the areas of learning. Practitioners' observations are reflective and provide a comprehensive 'story' of each child's progress from entry to exit. They highlight each child's strengths and areas for improvement, and suggest a way forward. Sharing this information regularly helps all practitioners to support individual children effectively. The nursery manager analyses assessment information thoroughly and uses the outcomes appropriately to identify patterns to consider with practitioners and share with receiving schools.

As well as speaking to parents informally about their children, the setting provides written reports about their children's progress. These are personal and provide parents with useful information about their children's strengths and how they can help them to overcome any challenges they might have.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners offer a high level of care and support for the children. The setting has a wide range of relevant policies and procedures in place to support this and to ensure the health and wellbeing of children. There are very good opportunities for children to get plenty of exercise and fresh air every day, whatever the weather. Practitioners encourage children to eat a wide variety of home-cooked food at snack and lunch times and this helps children to understand the importance of having a varied and healthy diet.

The broad range of learning experiences on offer promotes children's spiritual, moral and social development well. Practitioners' positive approach to all aspects of children's behaviour and personal development helps children to develop respect and understanding for others. For example, during a daily reflection session, practitioners encourage children to think about their day and talk about the activities they have enjoyed or found difficult. This encourages children to express their feelings and concerns openly. Opportunities to develop children's cultural awareness, including a workshop with an opera singer, open children's minds to experiences they may not otherwise have.

Children thrive in the setting as practitioners support them to develop their individual personalities and self-esteem, as well as encouraging a positive approach to all aspects of life and learning.

Although there are no children in the setting currently identified as having additional learning needs, the setting has clear guidelines for highlighting children who are not making appropriate progress. The setting's processes for evaluating children's progress are robust enough to identify those who may require additional support.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

All children have equal access to the setting's provision. Practitioners are aware of a few children's tendency to choose particular activities, but work hard to resolve this through gentle encouragement and sensitive adult intervention in activities. The setting staff have an appropriate awareness of recognising and respecting diversity. The nursery manager ensures a range of resources are available to support this, for example by providing a variety of clothes for children to wear in the home corner, and introducing musical instruments from around the world in the creative area.

The high quality inside and outside learning environments are clean and carefully maintained. Indoor areas are bright and airy and provide a pleasant and stimulating environment in which children can learn safely. The outdoor areas are particularly stimulating and provide children with a wealth of purposeful activities that motivate them and keep them engaged in their play and active learning. Resources are plentiful and in excellent condition. Practitioners use the different areas of the setting imaginatively to provide the best experiences for all children. For example, they move the three-year-olds to a quiet room for carpet time so that the children can concentrate and listen to stories and songs without being disturbed by the younger

children in the setting. Resources are accessible and this encourages children to choose what they do and where they play.

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

The proprietor, nursery manager and staff have a strong sense of purpose. They share common goals, and have the wellbeing and progress of children at the heart of everything they do. The nursery manager has high expectations of herself and all practitioners. Her approach to all aspects of the setting's work is meticulous and she takes pride in ensuring the careful implementation of policies and processes. Occasionally, there is not a close enough link between these processes and the benefits they bring to the children.

Working relationships in the setting are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community. Appropriate appraisal procedures are in place to evaluate the work of individuals. They encourage practitioners to reflect purposefully on their strengths and areas for development and enable leaders to identify and provide relevant professional learning opportunities.

The manager has started to share responsibilities with other practitioners in order to develop their leadership skills. Practitioners have responded very positively to this challenge and are responsible for specific areas in the setting, often linked to the targets in the setting's improvement plan. Staff meet regularly to plan new topics together, discuss children's progress and consider improvement priorities. The setting's response to local and national initiatives and to support and guidance from external agencies, including the local authority advisory teacher, is positive. Leaders and practitioners welcome advice, relish challenge and have a growing appreciation of the benefits of improvements on provision and outcomes for children.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and practitioners are open to new ideas and they have a sound understanding of the benefits of self-evaluation and improvement planning. The setting has worked closely with the local authority advisory teacher to develop effective self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. This has enabled leaders to gain the skills and confidence to carry this work out independently in the future. The current self-evaluation report, although somewhat descriptive in places, is an honest appraisal of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.

The information from self-evaluation feeds appropriately into the setting's plans for improvement. Leaders identify a few relevant and manageable targets, which reflect local and national priorities, as well as areas that practitioners identify through their regular monitoring and evaluation of activities, planning and children's progress. The improvement plan identifies appropriate actions, resources, personnel responsible, timescales, monitoring arrangements and success criteria. However success criteria do not always focus closely enough on how the changes will benefit children and improve their outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents are positive. The setting communicates effectively with them to ensure that they understand how well their children are progressing, and to help them support their children's early education. Parents have regular, formal opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions to the setting, and are encouraged to speak to practitioners informally if they have any particular concerns.

The setting works closely with the local authority advisory teacher. Leaders benefit considerably from her experience and respond positively to her support, for example by releasing practitioners to attend training, such as recent sessions on the digital competence framework, one of the setting's priorities.

Productive partnerships exist with several local schools, particularly those to which most children transfer. Practitioners visit these schools to discuss transition arrangements, raise any concerns or fears the children may have and provide useful information about individuals.

Children benefit from appropriate links with the local community. Visits to the local park, allotments, and local shops, such as the florist, as well as visits from the fire service and local police officers, support their learning well. Collecting food for the local food bank at Harvest time helps children to understand how they can contribute to their community and help make a difference to the lives of others.

Resource management: Good

The setting employs sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to work directly with the children. Leaders deploy them effectively to make good use of their time, experience and expertise. Regular staff appraisals support leaders and practitioners to identify and take part in a suitable range of relevant training to keep their skills up-to-date and to respond effectively to the setting's priorities. This enables them to provide high quality care and education for the children.

The proprietor manages the setting's financial resources carefully and follows the advice and guidance of the nursery manager. She bases spending decisions on the needs of the children and each new topic, and links purchases closely to targets for improvement. Leaders monitor the impact of purchases informally, but they do not always make sure that there are direct improvements to children's achievement, progress and wellbeing as a result of spending.

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
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 partnerships 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation 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