

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Estyn review

Early Learners Day Nursery

**13 Dyserth Road
Rhyl
LL18 4DW**

**Date of visit:
July 2023**

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

Outcome of visit

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

As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

His Majesty's Chief Inspector, in accordance with the Education Act 2005 is of the opinion that this setting is in need of focused improvement. The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

An Estyn inspector will re-visit the setting in around six months' time, to monitor progress in addressing the recommendations.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Develop children's numeracy and Welsh language skills

Most children make suitable progress in developing an understanding of number. A few count independently to ten and are beginning to recognise the associated digits. Many rote count numbers as part of songs or rhymes. A few talk about what they need to use to measure things and themselves and indicate how they would find their height on a chart. A few make towers using blocks or beakers and count the number of objects they use to create them. They talk about whether their creation is taller or shorter than themselves. Practitioners are now more aware of how to support children in developing their numeracy skills and often intervene appropriately in children's play to support them to develop their numeracy skills. This work is still at an early stage of development.

Since the last monitoring visit, practitioners have all attended an online Welsh course to improve their skills. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the amount of Welsh they use in the setting. They are now using Welsh for routines and when encouraging children to say thank you. A few children identify colours in Welsh. They count in Welsh, for example to identify how many plastic minibeasts are in the tray in the outdoor area. They are beginning to learn and sing a wider range of Welsh songs and to respond with thank you. Children listen to simple stories in Welsh. They respond appropriately to a limited range of commands. For example, they understand that 'amser tacluso' is time to tidy up. It would be useful for practitioners to access training about how to introduce Welsh language patterns to young children to develop children's skills further.

R2. Improve practitioner interactions with children to ensure that they support children's learning and development during play activities

Overall, practitioners interact well with children, showing care and consideration for their needs. They encourage them to take part in activities in the different areas indoors, such as drawing and writing and using dough to shape, cut and make prints

in. They play alongside children in the outdoor area and provide useful support when children want to take more risks in their play, such as climbing onto logs to make themselves taller. Practitioners now use interactions that focus on developing children's skills, such as numeracy and Welsh, much more consistently and this is having a positive impact on children's skill development.

Staff have an improved understanding of how to use observation and assessment effectively to identify children's next steps in learning. However, they do not always respond well enough to children's needs as they play. This is particularly true when developing children's speech and language skills. For example, they do not ensure that they model the correct version of what a child has said so that children build their vocabulary appropriately. On occasions, practitioners are not good language role models themselves. Practitioners often miss key opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, they do not take advantage of opportunities to discuss key vocabulary when sharing books, or during play activities.

Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to reflect on their learning and play during circle time and they encourage them to contribute to story time by reading books together in an engaging manner.

R3. Develop systems for planning, observation and assessment to identify and plan next steps for all children, including those with additional learning needs

Practitioners all contribute to planning activities and think about what the children would like to do and how activities link to a theme or book. They follow the rhythm of the year well in their planning to ensure that the children have experience of events that are important to them.

Practitioners have trialed a variety of assessment and planning tools and formats since the core inspection. Their systems are developing, but this is still at an early stage and practitioners have identified that they require additional support in this area. Most practitioners are insecure about which version of recording, supplied by the local authority, is best to use and what its purpose is. The link between practitioners' observations of children and activity planning is still not clear in all cases. However, when practitioners identify that a group of children need extra support with a particular skill or concept, they do plan suitable activities to develop this aspect.

The setting does not currently have specific plans for those children with additional needs, for example, those who need support with their speech and language skills. As a result, they do not always ensure that all children are making sufficient progress in all areas of learning and development.

Practitioners are beginning to use a system to record where they have stepped in to develop children's skills during play and what the outcome of this has been. This recording of teachable moments, combined with children's individual record books, is beginning to show the progress that children make during their time at the setting effectively.

The setting has recently worked with its partner umbrella organisation to produce a useful plan about how it is going to develop children's Welsh language skills, their understanding of what it is like to live in Wales and a sense of Welshness.

R4. Ensure that leaders and staff know and follow nursery policies

Leaders have conducted a thorough review of the setting's policies. With the assistance of their umbrella organisation, they have ensured that they have a comprehensive set of policies and that most staff are familiar with them. Staff are now aware of how to deal with any child protection concerns that they may have. This includes referring to the setting's designated person, along with a sound understanding of the procedure to follow if they are concerned by the designated person's response. The designated person has a suitable understanding of the steps to take when a child protection referral is necessary. However, the setting does not ensure that all staff understand its behaviour policy thoroughly in terms of the expectation for all practitioners to treat children with respect at all times.

R5. Strengthen processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure a clear impact on learning and development

Leaders have produced a useful self-evaluation report that identifies some strengths and areas for improvement suitably. For example, it recognises the need to work on developing Welsh language skills. However, these formal aspects of the self-evaluation process do not always reflect the current situation accurately enough. For example, it has not identified the improvement required to the learning environment in terms of resources and cleanliness. These areas were highlighted by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection in March 2023.

Arrangements for practitioners' appraisal and supervision have been improved recently and these now take place in a timely manner. The process is more robust but, in a few instances, practitioners' targets are not specific enough to drive improvement and do not link closely enough with the setting's improvement priorities.

Leaders produce an improvement plan that places a valuable focus on some important aspects, such as developing pupils' Welsh language skills. However, the plan does not make clear what is expected of practitioners in relation to the use of some of the new approaches, or the expected impact on the children. It does not make clear what leaders expect children to be able to do because of the action steps, and by when.

Leaders provide valuable opportunities for parents to provide feedback about the work of the setting. For example, as a result of feedback from parents, they changed the soap dispensers to a more child-friendly model.

R6. Address the areas of non-compliance found during the inspection

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) has followed its securing improvement and enforcement policy with regard to this recommendation.

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified