



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

**Abacus Day Nursery
Newmarket House
26 Lion St
Abergavenny
NP7 5NT**

Date of inspection: November 2013

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 |

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2013: 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 copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 19/12/2013

Context

Abacus Day Nursery opened in 1994 in the market town of Abergavenny and is available for parents to bring their children from birth until 8 years plus. Children come to the nursery from a wide area stretching as far as Cardiff and Hereford and the nursery is open from 8am to 5.30pm for 51 weeks a year. There are currently sixteen children registered in the pre-school group with ten three-year-olds and three four-year-olds in receipt of funded educational provision.

The children attending the pre-school group come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds with a high proportion from socially advantaged homes. There are currently no children from ethnic minority groups and nearly all speak English as their main language. A very few children have been identified as having additional learning needs and clear policies and procedures are in place to accommodate their needs.

The nursery occupies a large town house in the town centre and has the benefit of a large garden comprising a patio and separate grassed area. The pre-school group has the use of two rooms downstairs with toilets accessible independently by the children. During activity times children have free access between these rooms and the outdoor area. One room is set up with quiet activities and a topic based role play area and the other is a 'messy' room with playdough, sand, painting, and craft activities. Children are able to select their own resources from shelves and cupboards both indoors and out.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2013. The nursery was last inspected by Estyn in January 2008.

Summary

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

Current performance

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

- All children are happy and relaxed in the setting and enjoy their learning;
- Staff in the setting are good role models and support the children well;
- The setting provides a good range of interesting activities that engage the children and enable them to make progress;
- There is a warm and caring ethos where all children are respected as individuals; and
- All children make good progress from their starting points.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The self-evaluation process is established and progress is being made towards meeting the setting's current targets;
- The setting is well run and all staff are involved in planning and in the self-evaluation process; and
- All staff share a vision for improvement.

Recommendations

R1. Develop the use of Welsh to include a wider range of incidental words and phrases for daily use.

R2. Consider ways in which parents can be given information about how they can help their children to improve.

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

All children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their age and starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Most demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding and approach challenging activities with interest and confidence. Most are confident communicators and express their wants and ideas clearly. They make regular suggestions to the activities they like and are involved in planning new topics. All join in with songs and rhymes enthusiastically and enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults or their friends. Most children enjoy mark-making both inside and in the outside area and they experiment confidently choosing from a wide range of materials and implements. A few are beginning to write their names and to understand the purpose of writing; for example, when they write their names on the list to choose their morning snack. All children develop their knowledge of technology through their independent use of a range of electronic toys, camera and torches. They also use simple programs on the computer to select and move items on the screen.

All children are developing their early mathematical skills. They count by rote to ten, count objects accurately to at least five and describe shapes such as circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. Many use correct mathematical language and skills correctly in their play. They compare what they have with their friends; for example, "I've got more than you" or "my leaf is bigger than yours".

All children are making appropriate progress in the Welsh language. They understand the words and phrases used by adults in the setting and respond to questions and commands in Welsh with understanding. Most count confidently to ten and are very familiar with Welsh words for colour, which they are beginning to use spontaneously in their speech.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy in the setting and enjoy their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners make them feel safe, happy and confident. All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. All children behave well and are polite and show consideration for others when taking turns and sharing equipment. Most children make friendships in the setting and show care and concern for one another. Children play in self-selecting groups, in pairs and independently depending on the activity in which they are involved.

There are many opportunities for children to make choices about their learning. Their ideas are always sought before a new topic is planned. Both indoors and outdoors they make clear choices about the activities they want to do and select their own equipment to use.

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
|---|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The setting has developed a process of planning that successfully ensures coverage of all the Foundation Phase areas of learning and takes into account the likes and needs of individual children. Practitioners know the children very well and respond appropriately to their varying needs, abilities and interests. Learning experiences successfully enable children to develop communication, numeracy and ICT skills every day. Planning for adult-led focused activities includes four levels of differentiation ensuring that every child's next steps in learning are addressed. This is a good feature. Particular attention is given to ensuring that children who only attend for a few sessions are able to access the full range of the curriculum. Staff also ensure children are present when their ideas are implemented in the setting.

The Welsh language is positively promoted through songs, rhymes and the use of simple words and phrases particularly at circle time and when the children are accessing their mid-morning snacks. However, incidental Welsh is not used consistently during the rest of the sessions. St David's Day is well used to teach children about the customs and traditions of Wales.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have appropriate expectations for every child, including those of both higher and lower ability. All staff interact very positively with the children and give them sufficient time to complete a task or develop an idea. They show a good understanding of when to intervene and when to leave a child to develop their own ideas. Good use of questioning helps to develop children's thinking skills and also enables practitioners to assess children's knowledge and understanding. Practitioners know their children well and adapt their interactions and level of challenge appropriately to the ability of each individual.

Practitioners keep regular and accurate records of children's progress. They record their observations directly onto tablet computers and email them to the nursery manager, often including supporting photographs. Parents receive these observations monthly and are encouraged to add their comments which are then stored in the children's personal profiles. Observations are evaluative and staff ensure that all areas of learning are addressed. This is a strength of the setting. These comments effectively evaluate individual progress and enable staff to plan for children's next steps in learning. There are currently no arrangements to provide information to parents of how they can help their child to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good arrangements are in place to support children's health and wellbeing. All children show a good understanding of what foods are healthy and know that there are some foods that should be kept as occasional treats. Children help to take leftover food and scrap to the compost area and know that they use the compost to grow vegetables and flowers. They also know that used paper should be put in a different container from other waste and that it will be used to make more paper. Practitioners value children as individuals and strive to enable each child to develop their potential and personality. A range of policies relating directly to the practice within the nursery ensures that children settle quickly when they start at the setting and are kept safe from harm and bullying.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff are robust and adhered to and there are good procedures for managing children's arrival at and leaving the setting.

Provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Practitioners are good role models and foster a sense of right and wrong and of treating one other with respect. Although there are only a very few children with

identified additional learning needs, practitioners are aware of the need for early identification and have worked closely with other professionals in past years.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and the activities provided for them. The nursery creates a warm and friendly ethos where staff know the children well and value them as individuals. Practitioners place emphasis on meeting children's interests and respond positively to any requests or suggestions.

The setting has enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of learning experiences and to develop positive values and attitudes. Good quality resources for all areas of learning are well matched to support the planned activities. Practitioners make good use of the well developed outdoor area to enhance the children's educational experiences.

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

Leadership: Good

All practitioners have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff are effective in meeting the needs of the children and the day-to-day activities and experiences provided for the children are imaginative and of a good standard. The overall leadership of the nursery by the manager and her direct involvement in the work of the pre-school group provides clear direction and a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement. All staff share values, aims and objectives.

There are effective procedures in place to induct, appraise and improve practitioners. Staff are appraised annually and their professional needs and the expectations of the nursery addressed. Bi-monthly supervision sessions ensure that any concerns are dealt with quickly and achievement is recognized. Overall, the impact of the leadership provides the nursery with clear direction and a fully committed staff. The nursery is effective in meeting both national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is very much part of the work of the setting and clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. Progress towards targets is regularly reviewed and practitioners have a good understanding of the need to assess improvement

against the impact on teaching and learning. The professional advice received from the support teacher from the local authority provides high quality support for the setting and there is good evidence that her advice has been acted upon to effect improvements that have impacted positively on the learning experiences provided for the children.

Practitioners are very open to advice and to new ideas. They share information and good practice with each other and are willing to try out different ways of working to benefit the children. They have made good use of Foundation Phase training provided by the Local Authority to improve the quality of provision of the setting and of ideas gained from sharing practice at cluster meetings with other settings in the local area.

Partnership working: Good

A good feature of the setting is the way in which practitioners take positive steps to involve and inform parents and carers. Parents receive information about all aspects of the setting's activities through regular newsletters and notices in the foyer. A monthly information sheet gives practical suggestions for every area of learning to suggest activities parents can do with their children each week. Parents are very appreciative of the care and guidance provided by the setting.

The nursery is well placed in the centre of town and makes good use of the local area to visit the castle, the museum, the market, parks and shops. Visitors are welcomed to share their knowledge and expertise.

Resource management: Good

The setting is well staffed and has a good range of resources which are used effectively to support different learning experiences. The outdoor area is a strong feature and has been well developed to support all areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. Staff within the pre-school group deploy themselves informally and make good use of their individual interests and abilities.

The nursery manager has overall responsibility for all spending decisions. She has good systems in place to monitor income and expenditure and assesses all requests for larger items against their impact on the children's learning and development. In view of the good progress made by all children during their time in the nursery, the setting provides good 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 |
|-----------------------|---------------------|

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> |

| | |
|--|--|
| National Childminding Association (NCMA) | This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support. |
| National (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. |