



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

**A report on**

**Stepping Stones Day Nursery  
18 Bush Row  
St Thomas Green  
Haverfordwest  
SA61 1RJ**

**Date of inspection: January 2019**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Stepping Stones Day Nursery

Name of setting	Stepping Stones
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	Vivienne Sian Hickey
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Georgina Barton
Number of places	42
Age range of children	Birth to 11 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	1
Number of children funded for up to five terms	0
Opening days / times	8am to 6pm
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	No
Welsh Language Active Offer	Working towards providing the Active Offer
Date of previous CIW inspection	21/02/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first time Estyn has inspected the setting
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	22/01/2019
Additional information	

## Summary

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Learning</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>No judgement applied</b>
<b>Care and development</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and assessment</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

## **Non-compliance**

We have advised the registered person that improvements are needed in relation to the following in order to fully meet the legal requirements:

Provision of information (Regulation 31 (1));

suitability of workers (Regulation 28 (2) (b) (ii)); and

keeping of records (Regulation 30 (1) (a)).

A notice has not been issued on this occasion, as there was no immediate or significant impact for children using the service. We expect the registered person to take action to rectify this and it will be followed up at the next inspection.

## **Recommendations**

R1 Ensure that the needs, views and interests of children who attend after school are fully considered when planning activities and the environment

R2 Provide effective opportunities for children to lead their own play, in the indoors and outdoors, enabling them to explore, try things out and solve problems

R3 Improve planning to reflect children's interests and develop their skills progressively across all areas of learning, with a particular focus on mark-making and information and communication technology (ICT)

R4 Update risk assessments for the setting to minimise risks to children further and ensure that all practitioners are familiar with these

R5 Ensure that setting improvement systems are fully effective in improving outcomes for children and support all practitioners effectively through regular appraisal and professional development opportunities

R6 Address all non-compliance issues identified during the inspection

## **What happens next**

The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn and/or CIW will monitor the setting's progress.'

## Main findings

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Children feel happy, relaxed and settled at the setting. Almost all children part from their parents happily. There are good arrangements in place to help children to settle when they first begin to attend the setting and there are flexible arrangements for parents to settle their children at the start of each session. Children who are having difficulty in settling experience individual attention from a consistent practitioner. Older children say that they enjoy attending the setting and that they can speak to practitioners should they be unhappy about something. Children of different ages approach practitioners for cuddles. Parents agree that their children enjoy attending the service.

Children are offered choices regularly. For example, almost all children have a choice of whether they want milk or water to drink and whether they want more or have had enough food. Children under two years old and children who attend after school make a free choice of what they want to play with almost all of the time. However, children aged two and three years have limited opportunities for freely chosen play, and they are not always able to sustain play they are enjoying due to the setting's routine. Children express themselves, make requests and are listened to. For example, children express when they are unhappy about something, verbally or non-verbally, according to their stage of development, and the practitioners respond positively. However, older children's ideas do not clearly inform activity planning.

Children form friendships and co-operate well. They show affection and an understanding of others' feelings. For example, they give cuddles to others and show concern if another child is upset. Older children say that they have friends at the setting. Children play happily together or alongside each other. They take turns and share resources well. For example, they play games and do jigsaws together. Almost all children follow instructions from practitioners, such as directions to wash their hands and to tidy up.

Children show enjoyment in their play. They smile, laugh and show wonder. For example, many children join in enthusiastically with group singing sessions and laugh as they sing quietly and loudly. They sustain interest for appropriate amounts of time in activities.

Children are generally developing their skills well and have the opportunity to participate in activities which enable them to make progress. Parents are happy that their children are making good progress.

Children develop their independence well. For example, almost all children aged two and three years old wash their hands independently. Almost all children of that age

attempt to put their own outdoor clothing on and they remove their own wellies. Children feed themselves with increasing independence in accordance with their age and stage of development.

**Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): No judgement applied**

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

**Care and development: Good**

Practitioners supervise children well and keep them safe effectively. They all have up to date training in paediatric first aid and they follow safe procedures when children are unwell or have accidents. Practitioners administer medication safely, keeping detailed records in accordance with regulations and national minimum standards.

All practitioners have attended safeguarding training. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to this and they are confident of the safe processes to follow. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Most practitioners follow good hygiene procedures in relation to hand washing. They have a good understanding of safe hygiene processes in relation to nappy changing and apply this consistently. All practitioners who prepare food have up to date food hygiene training.

Practitioners encourage children to have a healthy lifestyle by providing them with healthy food and encouraging them to follow safe hygiene processes, such as washing their hands before eating and throwing away toothbrushes that fall on the floor. They provide a variety of home-cooked meals and healthy snacks. Practitioners encourage children to brush their teeth daily and they implement schemes promoting healthy lifestyles effectively.

Practitioners support children to manage their behaviour and difficult feelings by using positive techniques effectively, for example, reminding children to 'use inside voices'. They give regular verbal praise such as "da iawn", "well done" and "you're doing great". They give children individual attention and are good role models by speaking kindly, calmly and positively.

Practitioners know the children well. For example, they know and plan for children's preferences at snack time, providing an alternative to snacks that specific children do not like. They seek information about children's needs when they begin at the nursery and maintain good communication with parents, about children's changing needs, on a daily basis. They perform regular and meaningful observations of

children's skill development and keep records of this. This allows them to identify if children are not meeting developmental milestones and they liaise with parents to provide extra support and intervention if necessary. Practitioners meet children's needs effectively. For example, they ensure that babies' individual routines are followed and they ensure that children's dietary needs are met.

Practitioners support children appropriately to develop their independence. They encourage children to do things for themselves whilst providing verbal or practical support. For example, they tell children step-by-step how to put their aprons and coats on, if needed. There is basic activity planning in place for babies and children who attend after school.

Practitioners use incidental Welsh regularly. For example, they say "Golchi dwylo", "amser tacluso" and "amser snac" as part of the daily routine and they name animals and count in English and Welsh. They have a good understanding of children's language backgrounds and use more Welsh with children whose families speak Welsh.

**Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Adequate**

The setting provides an appropriate range of learning experiences that engage most children successfully across most areas of learning. Practitioners develop children's personal and social, numeracy, physical and Welsh language skills well. However, they are less successful in developing their mark-making and ICT skills.

Nearly all practitioners develop children's communication and literacy skills appropriately. They engage children in conversation and encourage them to join in with songs and rhymes throughout the session. A majority of practitioners share books and stories with children and model how to handle books with care. Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to take part in mark-making activities using chalk and pencils. However, mark-making resources are limited and there are very few opportunities for children to develop an understanding of writing for different purposes.

The setting provides a satisfactory range of ICT resources that children enjoy using, such as phones and a toy till. However, practitioners do not plan good enough opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills effectively.

Nearly all practitioners are good role-models and support children to develop respect for others and a sense of right and wrong effectively. They encourage children to share equipment and to take care of resources successfully. As a result, children learn to co-operate well. For example, they pretend to make ice-creams in the outdoor play house and hand them out to friends.

A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual and cultural development well. For example, practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things when they support children to plant sunflower seeds and observe them as they grow.

The setting provides regular opportunities for children to listen to music and play instruments. Practitioners encourage children to find out about other cultures through engaging activities such as taking part in Indian dancing during Diwali celebrations. Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability, such as, placing left-over snack in the correct recycling bin and making 'smell pots' from used materials.

Most practitioners support children's Welsh language development effectively. They model Welsh through singing songs, sharing stories and using Welsh words and phrases throughout the session. Children have suitable opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, they look at the Welsh flag and wear traditional dress as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Most practitioners have a suitable understanding of foundation phase principles. For example, they explain things clearly, model activities and question children effectively. However, practitioner-led activities and routines dominate the session and limit opportunities for children to lead their own play, try things out and solve problems.

The setting has effective assessment procedures. However, they do not use this information to build on children's individual skills and interests well enough.

### **Environment: Adequate**

Leaders have effective processes in place that contribute to providing a safe environment. They ensure that there are up to date safety checks on portable electrical appliances, the heating system and fire-safety equipment. They have safe processes for entry to the service which protect children from unauthorised access. They conduct regular fire drills and keep records of these. The setting has a rating of 5 from the Food Standards Agency and leaders have appropriate systems in place to keep the environment clean. There are risk assessments in place for the environment, specific outings and school runs. However, these are not fully effective in minimising risks to children in all areas. For example, there are risks present when practitioners transport hot food through the nursery. Also, the records of the temperature in the babies' sleep room indicate that it is not consistently a suitable temperature. Leaders have arranged for recent maintenance on the building and they have a plan in place to continue with addressing other areas in need of maintenance.

Leaders provide space and facilities that are suitable for younger children. Babies have plenty of comfortable indoor space to practise crawling and toddling. Children aged two and three years have a suitable play space and they can independently access the toilets and wash their hands. This is because: the basins and toilets are a suitable size; soap, paper towels and a bin are within easy access; and there are also mirrors placed at suitable heights for the children to see to wash their faces. However, the toilet facilities are not suitable for older children who attend after school. Also, tables and chairs provided are a suitable size for younger children but not for older children who attend after school. However, older children have their own room in which to play and relax, separate from the younger children.

Leaders provide suitable resources for babies, including sensory toys, books and toys that encourage children to develop their physical skills. Children, who attend after school, have access to resources that are suited to their age and stage of development, such as games and construction toys. Resources provided for children aged two and three years old are mostly suitable, although there are limited resources for ICT and mark-making. Resources are accessible as they are stored at a low level and they are labelled in English and Welsh, and some have picture labels also.

Leaders provide a large space for the children outdoors although they do not make the best use of this space. There is large-scale equipment for children to practise their physical skills such as a wooden bridge, rocking toys and slides. However, not all equipment is in a good state of repair and additional resources to support the children's play are not provided. For example, there are no resources in the play house and one of the kitchen units has a broken panel. Leaders and practitioners acknowledge that this is an area needing improvement.

### **Leadership and management: Adequate**

The person in charge works effectively with the practitioners to provide a caring and engaging environment for all children. She leads practitioners and children well to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following established routines. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and nearly all practitioners feel valued. The person in charge works closely with the registered person and keeps them well informed through regular informal updates. However, there is not a named deputy and it is not always clear who is in charge in the absence of the person in charge. Leaders are in the process of recruiting a deputy.

The setting does not comply fully with all CIW regulations. They do not ensure that all relevant recruitment checks are fully completed or notify CIW in a timely manner of relevant matters. Also, there are not full records of which practitioners are looking after the children at all times.

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective. Many practitioners can identify what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve. A few improvements have been made such as developing children's independence and supporting Welsh language skills across the setting. However, progress made towards improving a minority of important areas has been slow or inconsistent. This has impacted negatively on outcomes for children. For example, the outdoor area remains underdeveloped and offers limited opportunities for play and exploration.

The person in charge communicates suitable expectations and actively supports and challenges all practitioners to do their best. For example, she emphasises the need for practitioners to use Welsh language regularly, to support children's skills in this area. The person in charge uses induction and supervision systems successfully to communicate required standards and review the performance of all practitioners. Direct observation of practitioners across the setting provides them with a useful starting point to discuss and develop an aspect of their work. However, the setting

has not established effective annual appraisal procedures and practitioners do not have the opportunity to reflect on their overall performance. Annual targets for improvement are not in place and the setting does not ensure that foundation phase practitioners have good enough opportunities to attend training and keep up to date with national priorities.

The setting makes good use of practitioners to support children's well-being effectively. Leaders ensure that there are sufficient practitioners with relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children in the setting. Resources for children are sufficient and are generally of good quality.

The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children effectively. Parents receive useful information through newsletters and day-to-day contact with practitioners. This helps parents to feel comfortable in approaching the setting about any concerns and keeps them informed about daily activities successfully. However, the website and social media for the setting are not updated regularly.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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