



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

**Pontymoile Under Fives
Pontymoile Active Living Centre
Trosant Street
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 8AT**

Date of inspection: November 2014

by

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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

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Context

Pontymoile Under Fives is an English-medium setting in Pontypool, Torfaen. It is an independent provision run by a voluntary management committee and is based in Pontypool Active Living Centre, which is situated in Pontypool Park. This provision is part of the Pontymoile Under Fives Group, made up of five local playgroups that are run by a management team. Flying Start and day care sessions, over an extended day, are also provided for children at the premises in Pontypool.

The setting provides sessional day care and education for children aged between two and four years old. It is registered for 32 children and offers morning and afternoon sessions on weekdays during school terms. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children on roll, all of whom are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

The setting serves a wide catchment area including Pontypool, Blaenavon, Cwmbran and Usk. The children attending the setting have a range of backgrounds and needs. All are English speaking and British born. None are from ethnic minorities. No families speak Welsh at home. A very few receive additional support for learning.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in July 2013 and Estyn in October 2008.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- nearly all children make good progress and achieve well;
- high quality care, support and guidance assures children's wellbeing;
- a wide range of imaginative learning experiences are provided;
- effective teaching successfully engages children as learners;
- the learning environment is happy and purposeful; and
- partnerships with parents and supporting agencies are well developed.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for further improvement are good because:

- the setting is very well led, managed and developed;
- practitioners' professional development is effective;
- a strong teamwork ethos and clear strategic direction are evident;
- self-evaluation and planning for improvement are well established;
- strong emphasis is placed on improving practice and provision; and
- there is a good track record of improvement since the last inspection.

Recommendations

R1. improve children's competence in speaking Welsh and using information and communication technology (ICT);

R2. continue to integrate planning and assessment procedures to clarify next steps in learning and sharpen guidance for teaching;

R3. draw together plans of action to guide the implementation the setting's goals.

What happens next?

'Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.'

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children come to the setting with levels of achievement broadly in line with their age and stage of development. Most make good progress from their starting points and achieve good standards overall. They become confident learners as they enthusiastically explore their surroundings and try out new experiences, but the progress of able children is sometimes variable.

Most children have well developed speaking and listening skills. Many spontaneously begin simple conversations, for example in role-play in the 'kitchen.' They make their needs known, ask sensible questions and express themselves clearly. A few use a wide vocabulary and confidently engage in extended conversations about their family and what they are doing. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically recite familiar rhymes. A few able children handle books appropriately as readers and show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story. For example, they begin to recognise and sound initial letters when 'reading' their name. Mark making skills develop steadily and a very few write their name, trace letter shapes and make good efforts to copy write their name.

Progress in early mathematical skills is generally good. Numeracy skills develop well as children count as part of daily routines, sing rhymes and play number games. Most have a good grasp of counting objects to at least 5 and show increasing awareness of one-to-one correspondence, such as when matching objects to numbers on a template. Many are beginning to use appropriate mathematical terms, such as square, rectangle and triangle. However, able children seldom use a sufficient range of mathematical language when sorting and comparing objects and investigating shape and capacity. Children's competence in using a narrow range of skills in ICT is at an early stage.

Competence in Welsh is developing. Many children respond appropriately to the words and phrases spoken by adults, but very few use Welsh vocabulary spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

With few exceptions children become confident learners. They engage in activities with enthusiasm and confidently make choices as they move between tasks. Most are inquisitive, well motivated and keen to learn. They sustain interest and concentration well and persevere with tasks for appropriate periods of time.

Children have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Behaviour is very good and the children have positive attitudes. They increasingly show consideration and courtesy, such as when sharing resources and during snack time.

With few exceptions children work and play well together. They develop high self-esteem and steadily gain in self-confidence.

Most children express their preferences when asked about activities in the setting. They confidently take turns to assist practitioners during whole group activities and with few exceptions children readily help with tidying resources at the end of sessions.

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

A wide range of imaginative learning experiences is well planned and this successfully promotes progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Good account is taken of Foundation Phase principles in the organisation of learning. Planning is very well structured, promotes progression and is in line with children's needs. The provision strongly promotes positive relationships and respect. All areas of learning are well represented through interesting and well-resourced activities.

Planning provides an effective framework for long and short-term provision. Broad themes are carefully chosen to provide relevant contexts for children to develop their skills. Planning is detailed and guides the provision in areas of play appropriately. Practitioners are flexible in implementing this planning. There is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and these build appropriately on children's prior knowledge and skills. Adult led tasks are well defined and learning objectives identified. However, too few details of how other tasks can be enhanced are recorded.

Strong emphasis is placed on developing skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. For example, a good variety of role-play activities are used effectively to promote speaking and listening skills. Similarly, children's counting skills are developed well, such as when sorting and matching objects. The focus on skills in ICT is steadily developing.

The Foundation Phase framework is used well to check that the planned activities promote relevant skills and that all areas of learning are covered. This helps to ensure appropriate progression in learning, but although weekly planning records learning objectives, too few details of how and what the children might learn are recorded to help maximise progress, especially for able children.

The provision for Welsh language development and to promote awareness of the history and culture of Wales is appropriate. Activities are planned, such as the celebration of St David's Day, but little Welsh is spoken incidentally by practitioners outside of whole group sessions.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. Teaching skilfully manages and supports children's learning. Practitioners have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievement. They provide good

role models in language; interact well with children and respond effectively to their needs.

Daily routines are well structured and promote a positive learning environment. Effective indoor and outdoor activities are well supported. A good balance of child selected and adult led tasks is planned and implemented.

Practitioners know well the tasks they are to lead or support and successfully promote high levels of engagement in a wide range of activities. They steadily develop their skills in challenging children to extend their skills and achieve their best. However, their understanding of how to develop learning inline with children's ability is variable.

Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately. They are enthusiastic and often use questioning and praise well to promote learning. In particular, practitioners develop communication and social skills very well. Learning through play is effectively encouraged.

Procedures for assessment are well structured. These include baseline and focused assessments; individual children's records are regularly updated and these provide an informative profile of progress. Practitioners routinely note children's achievements. Their observations are increasingly linked to planning and the best examples exemplify achievement in specific skills. This information provides a good basis to plan next steps in learning, but on occasions levels of challenge vary, especially for able children.

Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress. Informal day-to-day contacts and regular formalised meetings promote well the exchange of information about children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for health and wellbeing is effective. Arrangements to assure children's healthy development and wellbeing are implemented consistently. Healthy eating is appropriately promoted through the choice of foods offered at snack time and children enjoy regular opportunities for energetic activities. The strong emphasis placed on personal and social development successfully promotes very good behaviour and relationships.

The provision for spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good. Positive values such as fairness, honesty and respect for others are successfully promoted.

Children are strongly encouraged to develop a sense of curiosity about the natural world and they respond with a sense of awe and wonder, for example when exploring the autumn leaf fall in the park. They are sensitively encouraged to quietly reflect on their experiences in the setting.

Children are positively encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong and they are given clear boundaries for behaviour. Social skills, such as taking turns, sharing resources and showing consideration for others are very well promoted.

Opportunities to learn about different cultures are well promoted through celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Practitioners appropriately promote awareness of acting sustainably, such as through recycling and activities in the adjoining park.

The setting has appropriate procedures to provide children with specialist support when needed. The arrangements to integrate children who need extra help with their learning are clearly documented and the current provision is well focused.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff have valid Disclosure and Barring Service certificates. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. These arrangements give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has an inclusive ethos and promotes equality well throughout its provision. Practitioners treat all children with respect. They are supportive, foster positive relationships and take good account of children's different backgrounds. This helps ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others and use positive strategies to manage any challenging behaviour. Equal opportunities are well promoted. However, policies do not include details of any steps to ensure that future children with disabilities do not experience less favourable treatment in the setting.

The setting has sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. A wide range of good quality age appropriate resources provides well for the requirements of the Foundation Phase. The provision of resource bags for outdoor activities is a very good feature.

The accommodation, consisting of two rooms, provides a safe and secure learning environment. Displays of children's work significantly enhance the indoor environment and the resources provided are very well organised and easily accessible. This ensures a visually stimulating learning environment. The accommodation is well equipped and maintained and the setting successfully provides access to outdoor learning in the adjacent park, despite the absence of direct access to facilitate the integration of indoor and outdoor activities. Good use is made of the local environment and occasional visitors to enhance learning.

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

The setting is very well led, managed and developed. The provision has high professional standards and expectations. This results in a friendly, purposeful and supportive ethos. A clear sense of purpose permeates the setting and a range of detailed policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

The impact of strategic direction, systematic managerial procedures, strong emphasis on practitioners' professional development and the distribution of leadership roles is exemplary. These aspects of leadership are excellent.

The setting's managers skillfully communicate clear vision for improvement, promote high expectations and are successful in ensuring practitioners have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. Effective teamwork is a key feature of the setting. This aspect helps to assure high professional standards and enables the setting to build on its success.

A voluntary committee maintains appropriate oversight of the work of five independent settings. It discusses strategic planning, reviews policies and two experienced managers skilfully and effectively manage the overall provision.

The setting enthusiastically embraces national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase philosophy and approach is embedded; there is strong emphasis on equality, healthy development and awareness of diversity and sustainability is appropriately promoted.

Improving quality: Good

The impact of procedures for quality improvement is effective. A reflective culture of self-improvement is clearly evident and managers confidently exemplify the impact of initiatives taken. There is a good track record in securing improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Managers and practitioners take careful account of the views of parents, carers and children as much as possible. There are systematic arrangements to discuss areas for improvement and the goals identified are both relevant and achievable. The summary action plan, included in the annual quality of care report and the targets identified in the self-evaluation report provide a good basis for further improvement. However, this information is not drawn together as a structured plan to guide the implementation of the setting's goals.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good range of successful partnerships that impact well on the quality of provision.

Close links with parents and carers are well established. They receive an informative welcome pack before their child attends the setting and information about events and the curriculum is provided regularly. On a day-to-day basis friendly relationships promote the exchange of information about children and more formal consultations are arranged for practitioners and parents to discuss children's baseline assessments and their achievements before they transfer to school.

The setting's partnership with receiving primary schools is developing. It has close links with a small group of pre-school playgroups and this successfully promotes the sharing of expertise and resources. Furthermore, the setting regularly provides placements for students undertaking childcare training.

The partnership with the local authority and other agencies, including the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, is beneficial in the provision of training and guidance. The impact of support and quality assurance provided by the local authority is appropriate.

Resource management: Good

The deployment of practitioners and both the use and organisation of resources are very effective in promoting children's learning. Sessions are well structured, purposeful and efficiently organised. Well-established daily routines ensure effective use of indoor and outdoor facilities. The strong emphasis placed on practitioners' professional development is a particular feature. This impacts well on children's learning experiences. Practitioners undertake appropriate training to improve their qualifications and share good practice with other settings through training events and visits.

Procedures to monitor the setting's income and expenditure are secure. Annual accounts are independently audited and managers are pro-active in reviewing the provision and impact of resources. However, planning for future resource needs is not always insufficiently clear.

The setting deploys its own resources, together with the funding received for early entitlement education, to good effect. This impacts well on children's outcomes and represents good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	13	11 85%	2 15%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	13	11 85%	2 15%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	13	11 85%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	14%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	13	9 69%	3 23%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	5%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	13	11 85%	1 8%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	19%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	13	10 77%	2 15%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	13	7 54%	2 15%	2 15%	1 8%	1	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	13	10 77%	2 15%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr. Michael T. Ridout	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)

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 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 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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.