Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

Estyn
Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Mathern Day Nursery at Caerwent

Northgate House
Caldicot
NP26 5NZ

Date of inspection: September 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Mathern Day Nursery at Caerwent

Name of setting	Mathern Day Nursery
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Amanda Gore
Person in charge	Amanda Gore
Number of places	66
Age range of children	6 weeks to 8 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	46
Number of children who receive funding for early education	22 three-year-olds, 2 four-year-olds
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 7.00am to 6.00pm
Flying start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	No
Date of previous CIW inspection	January 2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection	First inspection
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/09/2022
No children at the setting speak Welsh at home.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's Welsh language skills

R2 Develop manageable systems for observation, planning and assessment to identify future learning and to monitor children's progress effectively

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being:

Many children make decisions confidently, for example about where they want to play indoors. Most children make choices, independently or with suitable support, from the good variety of activities. For example, children enjoy banging a drum in the music corner and pulling up carrots in the outdoor garden. Many older children are very self-assured and communicate confidently during group activities, such as circle time and snack time. A majority of children contribute their ideas about activities and decisions that affect them. For example, they suggest they build a cave for the bear in the small world area. Children are aware that practitioners will listen to their choices and respond effectively to their needs.

Most children enter the setting very happily and cope with being separated from their main caregivers quickly on arrival. The majority are pleased to see their friends and form close bonds with familiar practitioners, which has a positive impact on their wellbeing and motivation. They demonstrate a good level of contentment and are relaxed within the setting.

Nearly all children behave very well in line with their age and stage of development. They are respectful and kind to each other and are beginning to take turns and share with friends. For example, they sit in a small group and wait patiently for their turn to join the ‘walking train’, excited as they skip to the outdoor play area. Many are beginning to play alongside or with others confidently in line with their stage of development.

Nearly all children engage well and show interest in the resources and activities on offer, for example when they prepare a breakfast sandwich for an adult in the home corner. Most children enjoy learning new skills while experimenting with a good variety of interesting play opportunities. For example, children are excited as they stretch out their arms to balance on the outdoor stepping stones. Many children focus appropriately on activities that interest them, for example twirling and dancing with coloured ribbons, laughing as they do so.

Many children make good progress in line with their stage of development. A few demonstrate a high level of confidence and language skills for their age and are beginning to use a few simple Welsh words. Many children develop their independence skills appropriately. A majority use their self-help skills well. For example, older children put their coats and shoes on independently and others practise pouring their drinks at mealtimes. Nearly all older children wash their hands with minimal support and eat independently.

Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):

Many children make good progress from their starting points during their time at the setting. They are happy and curious and engage well with the learning experiences available to them. They play purposefully for extended periods of time and persevere to complete tasks that interest them. For example, they work hard to dig up dinosaur bones in the dry mud patch.

Many children's communication and literacy skills are developing successfully. They speak confidently and chat freely with their friends, practitioners, and visitors. Many children ask questions to enhance their knowledge and listen to responses carefully. Many have a keen interest in books, turning pages and enjoying the content when practitioners read to them. They join in with familiar parts of stories enthusiastically and tell one another stories using the illustrations in books. Many children develop their mark making skills appropriately in both the indoor and outdoor areas. They enjoy using chalk to make marks on a large scale on patio slabs in the garden.

Many children use mathematical language in their play successfully. They talk about big and little pumpkins in the nature garden, heavy and not heavy blocks and after noticing their crackers were round at snack time, looked for and found circles around the room. Many children count reliably to six in English and Welsh when playing with flags, cups, and magnets and a few children look for sizes in their wellington boots.

Many children use information technology skills well (ICT). For example, they use digital cameras to photograph the vegetables growing outside and a tablet computer to find information on the things that interest them.

A few children use Welsh to count items and identify colours during their play. However, there is very little opportunity for children to use incidental Welsh and sing Welsh songs and rhymes during a session. As a result, children's Welsh language skills are underdeveloped.

Many children develop their co-ordination well as they use a range of tools and utensils in their exploration and play. They use spades, trowels, and forks to dig in a mud patch. They use cutlery to assist them at mealtimes. Many children develop their gross motor skills appropriately. For example, they run and jump competently and build a walkway with a selection of large equipment in the outdoors.

Many children's creative skills are developing effectively. They enjoy making vehicles from recycled materials and painting using autumn colours. They play imaginatively with much enjoyment. For example, they re-arrange furniture to make an aeroplane and talk about what it is like to fly off on holiday, what food they will eat and how they will feed their dolls on the plane.

Care and development:

Practitioners are clear about their roles and follow suitable policies and procedures to ensure children are kept safe and healthy. For example, they follow the accident and incident policy competently and meet the needs of children with allergies safely. Practitioners understand their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. Nearly all practitioners have up-to-date child protection training and know the procedure to follow in the event of a concern for a child. A beneficial range of risk assessments, including fire safety, are in place to maintain a safe service and regular fire evacuation drills are logged appropriately. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners follow good health and hygiene procedures, and practices are effective. For example, all resources are cleaned on a rota basis. They encourage children to wash their hands at regular intervals, including after messy play activities and before and after snack. The setting has effective arrangements to help children learn about living a healthy lifestyle and provides appropriate opportunities for physical play. For

example, practitioners take children for walks in the local area and ensure that they have regular physical play outdoors. The setting offers a good variety of freshly prepared meals and snacks. Water is available freely, which ensures that children remain well hydrated.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour very effectively. They provide children with clear, age-appropriate directions and praise them consistently for good behaviour, for example for their achievements or when they are kind and helpful. Practitioners model positive behaviour, which helps children to understand the importance of being kind and how to manage their own behaviour. For example, practitioners are respectful and very helpful to each other throughout the working day.

All practitioners provide a nurturing and caring environment with a focus on the needs of the children. They act on information from parents at the time of registration, which allows them to meet each child's needs and preferences successfully. All practitioners provide children with worthwhile learning and development opportunities. The setting has effective procedures to support children with additional learning needs and ensure that they have full access to all areas of learning. Practitioners work with a range of support agencies, such as health visitors, to ensure that they meet children's needs successfully.

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

Most practitioners have a suitable understanding of how children learn through play and exploration. They provide children with access to a wide range of stimulating resources in the indoor and outdoor areas. Practitioners ensure that children can make choices about what to play with and where they would like to play. Practitioners are flexible in their approach and provide children with sufficient time to become engrossed in what they are doing. They notice what captures children's interests effectively and they respond by ensuring appropriate resources are available to them. For example, after talking about carrot seeds, a practitioner gave each children a few seeds to examine closely. As a result, children have first-hand experiences that allows them to develop knowledge and skills successfully.

Practitioners provide exciting activities that develop children's understanding of the natural world and how to care for it. This is a strong feature at the setting. They grow pumpkins, peas and carrots and eat much of what they grow at snack times. Practitioners plan for children to experience awe and wonder outside, such as when they harvest the carrots they have grown.

Practitioners promote children's communication skills appropriately. They encourage children to respond to open-ended questions and provide thought-provoking comments on what they are doing. This has a positive effect on children's thinking skills and allows them to share their ideas and views readily. Practitioners have provided children with indoor and outdoor cosy book areas, where children can relax and develop their knowledge of story books. There are valuable opportunities for children to engage in mark making activities and there are suitable ICT resources for children to use in their play.

Practitioners plan activities that promote the cultural heritage of Wales well by celebrating St David's Day and having resources such as flags, costumes and books in the learning environment. Very few practitioners promote Welsh during sessions

and, as a result, there are limited opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills.

The setting provides children with beneficial opportunities to learn about other cultures and beliefs, through stories, food, and costumes. They celebrate Christmas by decorating and unveiling a themed window as part of a village tradition.

Practitioners make useful observations of what the children have being doing and what interests them when playing. They provide suitable resources to enable children to follow their individual interests well. Gathering information relies heavily on the participation of a few practitioners and does not fully identify next steps in learning. As a result, practitioners have a limited understanding of each child's current stage of development. The setting has recently started to record children's progress in learning journals. However, they do not show how children are acquiring skills clearly enough.

Environment:

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a suitably safe, secure and clean indoor and outdoor environment. Practitioners implement robust systems to keep children safe. For example, they position themselves effectively throughout the setting to monitor the children's safety well. Practitioners always supervise children appropriately and leaders organise practitioners' duties well. There is a robust system for managing access to the premises and a detailed record of visitors is maintained. For example, all visitors to the setting are signed in at the main reception area and are required to wear a visitor's badge. All required safety checks for the building are routinely undertaken and leaders act promptly on any recommendations and advice.

The premises are welcoming, child friendly and provide a flexible, homely, well-organised space and facilities to meet the needs of children. The room leaders ensure that play areas offer a beneficial range of opportunities for children to be active and independent. There is a large, secure, outdoor play space that children access easily for an appropriate amount of time. Practitioners use this area well to provide opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and imaginative play. For example, younger children enjoy crawling through the large tunnel and take turns to slide down the double slide with their friends.

Practitioners provide children with a worthwhile range of clean, age-appropriate resources that are well maintained and stored where children can access them independently. Leaders promote children's independence successfully. For example, most resources are stored at child height allowing children to choose additional resources to those already set out. There is a suitable range of Welsh, multi-cultural and natural, sustainable resources available for children's independent use, such as Welsh reading books and dressing up clothes. Furniture is age-appropriate, which promotes independence and ensures that children are comfortable when playing.

Leadership and management:

Leaders and managers share a clear vision for the setting, based on high quality provision with a homely feel where practitioners and children feel well supported and valued. They convey this vision appropriately and there is a positive ethos where all

practitioners feel comfortable to approach managers and leaders with concerns and ideas to improve the setting. Managers and leaders organise the setting well and meet the needs of children effectively. They set high expectations of practitioners who understand what is expected of them and have appropriate roles and responsibilities in their base rooms.

Managers and leaders follow safe recruitment procedures to employ suitably qualified practitioners and provide useful opportunities for them to access professional development opportunities. For example, they have recently attended training on supporting children with additional needs and Curriculum for Wales. Managers and leaders provide regular supervision and appraisal, which focuses on practitioner well-being, improving performance and identifying future training needs effectively.

Managers and leaders have suitable self-evaluation processes that feed beneficially into the setting's development plans. These plans identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement clearly. Managers and leaders set appropriate actions that bring about the desired improvements. For example, the setting has developed an outside space into a nature garden to enhance children's understanding of the world around them and how to care for it.

The setting makes appropriate use of available grants to improve provision and outcomes. For example, recently, they have purchased ICT equipment, such as digital cameras and battery-operated toys, for children to develop appropriate skills.

Managers and leaders have developed strong links with a range of partners, who fully support and enhance children's learning and development. There is a good link with the local advisory teacher who offers useful support and guidance to the setting. Established transition arrangements to feeder schools ensure that children are confident to move to the next stage of their education.

The setting has close relationships with parents and carers. As children start at the setting, managers and leaders liaise with parents and carers to identify children's needs and interests. They inform them about their child's well-being and development regularly via informal daily conversations, newsletters, and a closed social media group. Managers and leaders create a strong sense of belonging through links with the local community. For example, the setting attends charity coffee mornings and visits a local farm.

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)

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