



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

**Agincourt Nursery
Dixton Lane
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 3SY**

Date of inspection: May 2013

by

**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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Publication date: 06/06/2013

Context

Haberdashers' Agincourt Nursery is part of Haberdashers' Agincourt School, which is an independent pre-preparatory school for boys and girls aged three to seven years located in the town of Monmouth. Children who attend the nursery come from the surrounding rural areas of Monmouth, Abergavenny, Ross-on-Wye and Chepstow. A few children travel from Newport and Pontypool. The nursery reports that none of its children is socially disadvantaged.

The nursery (known throughout the report as the 'setting') caters for children aged three to four years. Children are admitted to the setting in the term in which they are three and may spend up to five terms in the class before transferring to the reception class in Haberdashers' Agincourt School or other local primary schools. Most children attend for a full day for at least two days a week. There are currently 34 children on roll, of whom eight 4-year-olds attend fulltime for five days a week. Monmouthshire local authority partly fund early years education places for eight 3-year-olds and fifteen 4-year-olds.

English is the predominant language of all children. No child speaks Welsh as their first language or speaks other languages at home. A very few children are from minority ethnic groups. No child has identified additional learning needs.

The headteacher of Haberdasher's Agincourt School, together with the school's Board of Governors, is responsible for the quality of education in the nursery. A senior teacher, a newly qualified teacher and two nursery nurses staff the nursery. This is the first time that Estyn has inspected the nursery setting independently of the school. The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) do not inspect the setting.

Summary

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

Current performance

Haberdashers' Agincourt Nursery is a good setting because:

- most children make good progress in line with their age and ability;
- almost all children persevere for sustained periods of time and are highly engaged and motivated to learn;
- learning experiences are exciting and fun;
- teaching is good and questioning is used effectively to support and extend children's learning;
- behaviour is very good and children are polite and courteous to each other and to adults;
- children are well supported and cared for;
- resources are of good quality and the accommodation both indoors and outdoors is used effectively to enhance children's experiences and wellbeing; and
- the relationship between adults and children is very good.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the school's headteacher provides sound leadership and is well informed about the setting's provision and quality of teaching;
- practitioners are reflective and are keen to improve their skills;
- the setting responds effectively to advice and guidance;
- practitioners are deployed well to support children's learning;
- the partnership with parents is very good; and
- recent initiatives, such as, an increased focus on improving children's listening skills is impacting positively on children's standards.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's Welsh language skills
- R2 Make better use of assessment to plan more effectively for children's next steps in learning
- R3 Ensure that improving quality has a clearer focus on children's standards

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children make good progress during their time in the setting, in line with their age and stage of development. Almost all children persevere for sustained periods and are highly engaged and motivated to learn. Many have good recall of previous learning, are quick to find ways to solve problems, and are willing try out new things.

Most children's literacy skills are developing well. They listen with concentration during story-time and respond to questions in a mature way. Early reading and writing skills are developing positively. Many children know a few initial sounds and have the physical skills necessary for writing. For example, they use small tools, such as tweezers, pens and scissors with increasing control. Many understand that writing is important to remember things, such as, putting a date in a diary when role-playing in the doctor's surgery. Older and more able children are beginning to write their names, forming most letters correctly. These children recognise their own names and the names of their friends when they register in the morning. Many children are developing a love of books and stories and find pleasure in looking at books with or without an adult.

Almost all children use numbers naturally in their daily activities and enjoy participating in practical mathematical activities and learning number rhymes. Most children are developing a strong understanding of number. They count, sort, order and match objects confidently to at least 10 and have a worthwhile understanding of simple number patterns. Children's information and communication technology skills (ICT) are developing appropriately.

Many children have well developed physical skills. For example, they balance, skip and play football with a high degree of control over their bodies. Most are keen to solve problems, particularly in outdoor activities, such as experimenting with how much water is needed to make a mini-beast move quickly and in making a bug hotel.

The Welsh language skills of many children are developing suitably. These children respond enthusiastically to Welsh songs, answer the register in Welsh and can name common colours. A very few use the odd Welsh word spontaneously but this is not a strong feature.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enter the setting each morning with enthusiasm. They settle down to activities quickly and are keen to learn. Many show high levels of concentration and perseverance such as when building a shelter outdoors, making patterns with beads or in trying to walk unaided across a uneven balance beam.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Many children show kindness, consideration and affection towards other

children. For example, they invite others to join in their games, take turns readily, share their resources willingly and encourage others in their learning.

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

Practitioners work well together to plan a wide range of learning activities that interest and engage all children. The curriculum is broad and balanced and based firmly on providing high quality first hand, practical experiences.

Practitioners provide plenty of worthwhile experiences for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Planning is generally appropriate and practitioners use enhanced provision effectively to support thematic and focused work. For example, when practitioners introduce the letter sound 'l' this is linked closely to the mini-beast theme; children make ladybirds, read ladybird stories and design and make a ladybird's home. Daily planning regularly contains thought-provoking questions that promote children's thinking skills successfully such as do bees have teeth? Practitioners provide suitable focused activities that challenge all children appropriately.

The setting promotes the Welsh language reasonably well through daily focused sessions and useful displays. However, practitioners are not generally confident in using Welsh to support children's acquisition of the language effectively. There is appropriate provision in place to support children's understanding of Welsh culture and heritage, for example through the celebration of St David's day and the nursery Eisteddfod.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase. They are strongly committed to ensuring that children are active learners. For example, children act out the life cycle of the ladybird, which makes learning fun and memorable. Daily rules and routines are well established. This ensures that all children settle quickly, know what to expect and feel safe and secure. As a result, children are confident in trying out new things and are willing to learn from their mistakes. Relationships between practitioners and children are very good.

Practitioners generally have high expectations of all children and use questioning effectively to extend children's learning and to challenge their thinking. They are good language role models and this ensures that children's oracy skills and vocabulary are enhanced and improved.

Effective teamwork ensures a consistency of approach in, for example knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to let children try things for themselves. Sessions are well organised and managed and practitioners' work hard making resources, such as board games linked to a topic to support children's learning. All practitioners are deployed effectively and make a significant contribution to children's standards and wellbeing.

Practitioners know the children very well. Regular observational assessment and half-termly formative assessments provide an appropriate picture of each child's strengths and areas for development. However, practitioners do not always use this information well enough to plan for children's next steps in learning. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress through both informal and formal meetings with practitioners.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully and provides good opportunities for access to physical development. For example, daily outdoor sessions encourage children to use outdoor apparatus confidently and with increasing control. Practitioners are also careful to ensure that in a busy day, children have a quiet time to relax and reflect.

Practitioners' provide valuable opportunities for children to form positive relationships, to learn to share equipment and take responsibility for the care of resources. Daily contact with parents ensures that children settle quickly into the setting and this contributes appreciably to children's good emotional and social development. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal hygiene by washing their hands before eating food. They are also encouraged to put on their own coats independently before going outside.

An appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children learn about the importance of caring for the environment well by growing seeds, planting flowers and helping to care for the school's allotment.

There are appropriate processes in place to support children with additional learning. Recent training from a speech and language specialist has increased practitioners' confidence in dealing with these issues. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community that offers equal access to the curriculum to all children. There are good procedures in place to help all children develop tolerant attitudes and, as a result, everyone works well together. Day-to-day activities promote appropriately children's understanding of equality and diversity. For example, children learn about the world in which they live by celebrating such things as Chinese New Year and Mardi Gras.

The accommodation is well maintained and secure. Practitioners make valuable use of attractive displays to reinforce children's learning. The setting's outdoor area is relatively small but is used creatively to provide a comprehensive range of interesting experiences across the curriculum. For example, children's numeracy skills are strengthened through physical activities outdoors such as aiming and throwing objects accurately to find a given number. The setting further enhances children's outdoor learning experiences through regular use of the school's high quality outdoor provision.

The setting makes worthwhile use of the expertise of its parents and the school community to provide additional learning experiences that have a beneficial impact on children's skills. For example, parents read stories to the children, participate in children's role-play 'pamper sessions' for Mother's Day and a teacher from the school supports children's dance skills well.

Learning resources are of good quality and easily accessible to the children. Practitioners are well qualified and experienced to teach almost all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

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

The headteacher of Haberdasher' Agincourt School has the overall responsibility for leading and managing the setting. The school's headteacher provides strong leadership. Her clear vision for a nurturing, caring environment where children enjoy learning is evident in the setting and impacts positively on how children behave and the standards they achieve.

The headteacher has delegated appropriate responsibilities to the two nursery class teachers for day-to-day organisation and management of the setting. As lead practitioners, they provide effective leadership and work well together and with other practitioners to provide a very good learning environment for children. In the relatively short time that the nursery practitioners have worked together, they have succeeded in establishing a positive team ethos. They have a clear sense of purpose, which is best summed-up in their published aim, "to provide a firm, secure framework, which enables children to become independent, co-operative and interactive." The lead practitioners have implemented and managed several changes in practice well. For example, they have changed the way they plan and deliver aspects of the curriculum. The headteacher has monitored these changes carefully as a 'critical friend'.

Governors are kept well informed about the setting through regular updates from the headteacher.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self-evaluation procedures are developing appropriately in the setting. The two lead practitioners completed the local authority self-evaluation framework in the autumn term, updating it prior to the inspection. This has provided them with a good overview of what it does well and what it needs to do to improve in terms of its provision. For example, practitioners identified the need to make better use of the outdoors, which has resulted in a far greater focus on this aspect of provision. However, planning to meet these identified needs is at an early stage of development.

The setting has made important changes to its provision this year because of advice from the local authority and from their evaluation of day-to-day practice. These changes have improved children's listening skills, their confidence in asking and

responding to questions and in their early writing skills. However, improving quality is mainly focused on improving provision and does not pay enough attention to improving children's standards and wellbeing or in evaluating change in terms of benefits to children.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has an appropriate range of effective partnerships, which impacts positively upon children's standards, wellbeing and the quality of provision.

Partnerships with parents are very strong. Many parents give the setting valuable support, for example, on trips and visits, leading reading sessions or in fund raising activities that have provided indoor and outdoor equipment for the children. Parents value not only the good progress their children make but also the care that practitioners' provide for their children.

Practitioners in the setting work well with the local authority. They have benefitted from advice and support in developing and improving the quality of the learning environment, the use and quality of the display of children's work and on planning for skills. The lead practitioners regularly attend local authority meetings with other settings, which are proving a useful source of information on such things as child protection.

Links between the setting and the main school are particularly effective. For example, there are well-established procedures for sharing information about individual children and for sharing expertise and resources. As a result, children move easily to the reception class and are ready to start their next stage of education.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support learning and teaching well. Practitioners are deployed effectively to make best use of their experience and expertise and the adult to child ratio is good.

Practitioners make every effort to improve their own knowledge, understanding and skills. They plan together, share ideas and ways of working and make use of their training to improve provision for the children. The headteacher, bursar and school governors' manages the setting's finances appropriately.

The setting's accommodation is bright, cheerful and welcoming. It is well maintained and resources both indoors and outdoors are of a good quality and well matched to children's needs.

In view of the fact, that children's outcomes are good and there are many strengths in provision and leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Bev Jenkins	Reporting Inspector
Richard Hawkley	Team 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 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>

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.