



*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**

**First Steps Day Nursery  
The Croft  
Alltami Road  
Buckley  
Flintshire  
CH7 3PG**

**Date of inspection: March 2012**

**by**

**Anne Manning**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

First Steps Day Nursery is a privately owned converted house and was first established in 1999. In December 2008 the nursery relocated to their current premises.

The medium sized nursery is situated about four miles from Mold town centre in North Wales. The nursery is managed by the owner and the general day to day running is carried out by the owner, deputy manager and a team of practitioners.

The entrance has information for parents to view when they drop off or collect their children. Upstairs, the pre-school provision is set out in different rooms that are divided into areas for play including a library, role play room and wet area. Outside; the garden to the front of the building provides good opportunities for a variety of outdoor activities.

The nursery is open all year and is registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide full day care for up to 55 children.

The last CSSIW inspection was in November 2011 and this is the first inspection by Estyn.

There were six children present aged three who were eligible for funding during this Spring Term.

The nursery is English speaking, providing care and education for children from families for whom nearly all this is their first language.

Nearly all are White British and no children have additional needs.

The nursery has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. The area served by the nursery is considered neither to be advantaged nor disadvantaged.

Most children attending the nursery are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds.

First Steps Day Nursery receives support from Flintshire Early Education.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is adequate because:

Learning opportunities do not provide sufficient opportunities for mark making or Information Communication Technology.

Teaching is good.

Planning for outdoors is insufficient.

The provision for the health and well being of the children is good.

Insufficient use is made of the local community and environment.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

Self evaluation has already led to improvements in the setting.

Practitioners work actively for the benefit of the children and their families.

The setting works closely with the local authority to develop the provision.

## Recommendations

R1. Increase opportunities and resources for ICT and mark making.

R2. Make clearer roles and responsibilities regarding the leadership and management of the Foundation Phase.

R3. Utilise the local community and environment to develop the learning of the children.

R4. Strengthen planning to always include outdoor play provision and maximise opportunities for observations.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Adequate**

#### **Standards: Adequate**

All children achieve good standards, progress in the nursery and achieve well from their starting points. All children communicate well and nearly all are involved in making choices about what they want to do and show confidence and good concentration and perseverance skills.

Although many understand the functions of writing there are too few opportunities to mark make in the different areas of learning or for the children to recognise their names. All children enjoy listening to stories in both English and Welsh and all can handle books correctly and carefully by themselves or with an adult. Many enjoy re telling a favourite story including books about the Welsh bear Ticw.

Although there are mobile phones and a keyboard, children do not have sufficient opportunity or resources to develop their skills in ICT. They do not use a computer or have opportunities to operate equipment such as CD players.

The majority use appropriate mathematical language and concepts in their play. Most can match colours, recognise patterns and can count in both English and Welsh.

#### **Wellbeing: Good**

All children are safe and happy in the nursery and they settle well and quickly to the activities. Nearly all are developing positive attitudes to learning and show interest in what they are doing, for example when planting seeds. The majority co-operate and work together well, they understand the need to share equipment and can take turns using equipment and when looking at books. Nearly all sustain concentration and engage well in tasks.

Most children understand about being healthy and that certain types of food are good for them and their bodies such as milk and toast.

All behave well, are polite and show care and concern.

The majority of children respect the toys and equipment and handle them carefully. They relate well to adults around them and each other and often help their friends.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

**Adequate**

## **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Practitioners know the children in their care and respond to their needs appropriately. There is time before and after the session for parents to come and talk to practitioners, to discuss progress and development.

Children have a range of learning experiences that enable them to work towards most of the Foundation Phase outcomes and children are acquiring basic skills in communication, and numeracy however their access to technology is too limited to make much progress in this area.

Activities for indoors are well planned however outdoor play is not sufficiently well planned for. The provision offers opportunities for children to develop communication skills and to listen, for example, during circle time and when following instructions. The nursery encourages the children to sing songs and rhymes and effectively promotes a keen interest in books.

All are interested and engaged in activities they enjoy particularly sharing large sized Welsh books, listening to stories and outdoor play. Learning experiences encourage children to form good relationships, sharing and taking turns, however there are too few opportunities and resources for the children to effectively develop their mark making skills.

Opportunities for the children to develop an understanding of the world and caring and learning about living things are limited to planting, and growing flowers and vegetables. Although the nursery encourages visitors to the setting insufficient use is made of the local community to develop the learning of the children.

## **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners effectively provide a re-cap on previous activities and a good explanation of what is going to happen that morning. They manage the behaviour of the children effectively and they are good language models. Practitioners give good explanations and make effective use of questioning to extend the progress of the children and to develop and challenge their thinking.

Teaching strategies are good and practitioners let children develop their play, they take note of their interests and develop these well. The practitioners intervene appropriately in play and they have effectively developed confident learners who are happy to talk about and share their play and opinions.

There are high expectations of the children and practitioners understand the importance of providing opportunities for the children to learn through their play experiences. They make good use of informal learning opportunities and resources both indoor and out.

The use of the Welsh language develops the learning of the children through rhymes and stories. All children respond well and the majority are confident to use Welsh spontaneously.

Practitioners have appropriate qualifications and experience and are developing the way in which observations and assessments are carried out however practitioners sometimes miss opportunities to record observations of the children.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting promotes the health and well being of the children including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are a range of policies and procedures to ensure that the children are kept from harm and practitioners keep the children and minimise any potential hazards.

The practitioners were observed to put into practice equal opportunities and treat all children on an individual basis with equal concern. They expect good behaviour and children are encouraged and supported to differentiate between right and wrong and opportunities are provided to share and take turns using equipment. The children were observed to be kind to each other, share and help their friends.

The nursery encourages the children to say what they think and they enjoy talking about what they are doing. They show initiative and take responsibility for themselves. The nursery fosters values such as fairness and honesty.

Practitioners have undertaken child protection training. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Nursery encourages children to be healthy by offering a healthy snack. They have the opportunity to develop physically indoors in the setting and by using the large tyre swings and soft play equipment in the garden.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting has an ethos and practice that promotes equality and encourages children to develop respect for others. Opportunity is offered to all the children and the setting ensures that they have equal access to areas of provision. There are basic resources located appropriately, that enable children to choose from what is available. The nursery offers an inclusive setting and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. The children make good use of their outdoor area that provides a range of different learning experiences.

There are sufficient practitioners who are appropriately qualified and experienced working with the children. Practitioners promote a friendly, calm and relaxed atmosphere and the children are all very happy when they arrive in the nursery.

Although practitioners are keen to improve their knowledge and skills and continue to develop stimulating indoor and outdoor areas, the local environment is not sufficiently used to develop the experiences of the children and provide varied learning opportunities outside the nursery.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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## **Leadership: Adequate**

There is a sense of purpose that focuses on the needs of the children. Children and staff are well supported and there is direction and purpose in the nursery.

Overall the nursery is managed well, but the way in which the pre-school is organised does not always provide consistent delivery of the Foundation Phase ethos. Although all children make progress and practitioners work effectively together, as they job share, there is no identified leader with a defined role taking responsibility for the development and co-ordination of the provision.

Relationships between children, their parents and carers and the owner, deputy manager and practitioners are good and contribute significantly to the sense of community in the nursery.

Leaders successfully use relevant information about the nursery and have a focus on achieving progress towards the priorities of the setting. They are successful in meeting local and national priorities such as healthy eating.

## **Improving quality: Good**

Although quality review and evaluation are still in the early stages in the nursery, self evaluation has been completed that links effectively to improvements in the provision.

The setting has identified areas needing improvement and is committed to working closely with early education to develop the service. There is evidence that the nursery, in particular the pre-school provision, has developed considerably over the past 12 months and this has had a positive impact on the learning and progress of the children.

Practitioners are open to new ways of working and share their experience, knowledge and ideas. Practitioners are able to evidence how they have effectively improved the provision.

Practitioners have made good use of their training to benefit the organisation and they share good practice, but they do not have enough opportunities to become involved in professional learning communities beyond the nursery, for example, visiting other settings.

## **Partnership working: Good**

Partnership working is based on trust, respect and clear communication. This benefits the children and actively contributes to their progress and wellbeing. Although the setting works effectively with parents and there is a good relationship with local schools, links with the community to extend the learning of the children are insufficient.

The practitioners have a good relationship with parents and there are opportunities for verbal feedback when they collect or drop off their children in the setting. A range of notices and information is displayed for parents in the entrance hall and this ensures that they are kept up to date with what is happening in the nursery.

Partnership working between practitioners in the nursery and early education teachers is purposeful, beneficial to all and has had an impact on the provision, enhancing the work of the setting. Practitioners and management in the nursery value the support they receive and early education state that the setting responds positively to any advice and guidance.

**Resource management: Good**

A range of resources is used well both indoors and outdoors to develop children's skills across most areas of learning. These motivate the children and help them to achieve.

There is a good understanding of budget matters and spending is prioritised. Financial decisions are evaluated to ensure that the resources have a positive impact on raising standards.

The nursery effectively plans for the future and gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to discussions with children

Children were very confident in the nursery and spent time talking to the inspector about what they were doing.

They said they are happy in the nursery and like coming. They like the staff and playing with their friends. They enjoy going outside and playing with Ticw the bear and reading his books and his stories.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Anne Manning	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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.