



*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**

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

**Date of inspection: October 2014**

**by**

**Dorothy Morris  
Reporting Inspector**

**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

Stepping Stones Day Nursery is in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. It offers full day care and education for up to 46 children ranging from birth to school age. It provides after school care for children up to eleven years of age. The nursery's day is split into morning and afternoon sessions and children can attend on a full-time or part-time basis.

At present, nine children between three and four years old attend the nursery during the week. None is currently in receipt of funded early years education. All children speak English as their first language. No child speaks Welsh at home. There are no children with additional learning needs.

There are five full-time members of staff who cater for the three year olds. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The manager has been in post since 2011.

The setting was previously inspected by Estyn in January 2009 and by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in July 2014.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is judged to be good because:

- practitioners provide a range of stimulating experiences which interest and motivate children well;
- teaching is good and secures the active participation of children in their learning;
- practitioners treat children with care and respect;
- practitioners support children well during activities which develops their confidence as learners; and
- the setting provides a happy and caring environment for all the children.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because:

- the manager's strong leadership provides a clear sense of purpose and direction;
- all the practitioners work effectively as a team;
- there is a shared commitment to children's development and wellbeing;
- self-evaluation identifies appropriate areas for improvement;
- successful initiatives have secured improvements in provision; and
- good links with parents support children's learning and wellbeing.

## Recommendations

- R1. Strengthen improvement planning by setting clear targets
- R2. Update the child protection policy to meet current requirements
- R3. Address the health and safety issue drawn to the attention of the setting

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

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

**Good**

#### Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners provide a range of stimulating learning experiences which gains children's interest well. Longer term planning includes the effective use of broadly based themes that are suitable for the children's age range. For example, there is good use of storybooks as a stimulus linked to seasonal activities. Children's ideas for activities are included appropriately in the planning. Daily planning is thorough and guides provision effectively.

Planning places a strong emphasis on promoting children's skills particularly literacy and numeracy skills. There are effective opportunities for children to listen to stories, speak about their experiences, look at books, and use their marking skills. There is purposeful use of role-play in the cafe to develop children's numeracy skills, and of snack time when children calculate how many cups and plates are required. There are appropriate opportunities for children to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills independently in their play and to practise their Welsh skills.

Provision to develop children's physical skills is good. For example, tasks are planned well and develop children's skills in using small tools, such as pencils, scissors and paintbrushes, independently in a range of activities.

There is effective provision to develop children's Welsh language skills. Activities including listening to stories, singing songs and rhymes, counting and discussing the weather develop children's vocabulary effectively. Singing and movement sessions are particularly enjoyable and succeed well in developing children's interest and involvement.

There are good opportunities for children learn about the traditions and celebrations of Wales through activities including celebrating St. David's Day and St. Dwynwen's Day.

There is effective use of visits to the beach, local library, the fire station and travel agent, for example, to enhance children's learning experiences and to develop their awareness of the local area. There is appropriate use of visitors, such as the postman and builder, to contribute to topics such as 'People who help us'.

## **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a secure knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase. They have a good understanding of the purpose of the activities they lead or support and use a range of resources well to promote children's learning. Practitioners interact effectively with children and respond well to their individual needs. There are examples of very good practice when practitioners use open-ended questions purposefully to develop children's understanding during investigative tasks, craft and building activities. There is imaginative use of more focussed activities to extend children's language. When composing nursery rhymes, for example, practitioners encourage children effectively to contribute their ideas and appropriate vocabulary.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their thinking and problem solving skills. For example, children collect conkers, apples and pinecones in the garden and sort and weigh them independently.

The manager and practitioners know the children well and have a good understanding of their progress. They observe children well during activities and note significant points in personal diaries and on the children's individual development sheets. There is effective use of the information gathered to plan the next steps in learning for individuals and groups of children. Parents are kept suitably informed of their children's development through daily discussions and detailed reports.

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

The setting is a caring community with a family atmosphere which contributes significantly to children's personal and social development. There are appropriate arrangements to develop children's awareness of healthy eating and exercise through daily activities and the snacks provided which include fruit, water and milk. The induction arrangements, together with the daily contact with parents, ensure that children settle quickly into the setting.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness and kindness, are promoted effectively through daily activities. Experiences, such as Christmas celebrations and saying prayers before snacks, contribute appropriately towards children's spiritual development.

There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about other people's cultures and traditions through activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year and the festival of Divali. The theme of 'Our trip around the world' provides children with interesting opportunities to taste foods from different countries.

There is appropriate provision to develop children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things through growing and caring for plants, and recycling activities.

The setting has a designated additional learning needs co-ordinator and appropriate procedures to support children with additional learning needs, when required. There are clear communication links with specialised services including health visitors and speech and language therapists.

The setting has a suitable range of policies to promote children's wellbeing. The current child protection policy, however, does not meet requirements.

The manager's attention was drawn to a health and safety issue.

### **Learning environment: Good**

Practitioners create a warm and positive ethos in the setting. They respond sensitively to all the children demonstrating a thorough knowledge of their needs, interests and backgrounds. Each child has equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided.

The setting has enough experienced practitioners to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase. There are sufficient resources which are used fully to support the learning and teaching. Nevertheless, the range of ICT equipment is more limited.

The accommodation is secure and appropriately maintained. Displays of children's work create an attractive environment. The outdoor learning area, which includes grassed and hard play areas, provides children with suitable opportunities to investigate and play.

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

The manager has a clear vision for the development of children's learning and this is shared well with all practitioners. She has high expectations and leads by example. Regular staff meetings provide good opportunities to discuss and plan provision collaboratively. Practitioners implement an appropriate range of policies and procedures.

All practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. They share the same values demonstrating a strong commitment to ensuring that children receive the best possible provision while in their care. The manager provides practitioners with daily guidance on all activities and this ensures that sessions run smoothly.

There is an appropriate system in place to manage the performance of staff and to identify their further professional development needs.

The setting gives good attention to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills, and promoting their Welsh language skills.



### **Improving quality: Good**

The manager has a thorough knowledge of the setting's strengths and areas for development. She monitors provision regularly and uses the findings effectively to promote further improvements. The setting takes suitable account of the views of staff, parents, carers, children and support agencies.

Practitioners have a positive approach to self-evaluation and are open to new ways of working. They discuss and plan improvements collaboratively and identify suitable aspects which they wish to develop. The manager makes effective use of day-to-day evaluations of activities to improve provision. This is illustrated, for example, in the regular updating of themes and topics to focus on skills that need further attention.

The self-evaluation report offers a balanced view of the quality of provision. The improvement plan identifies relevant areas for attention but targets are not always specific enough to assist practitioners measure progress. There is appropriate attention to implementing the action plans, which include suitable timescales, list responsibilities and note costs. Self-evaluation is an on-going process and has brought about improvements in many areas such as the provision for Welsh and the quality of planning.

The local authority link teachers monitor provision appropriately. Areas for development are agreed and relevant strategies implemented. The setting gives good attention to the advice provided.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a number of strategic partnerships that make an effective contribution to the quality of provision and to children's wellbeing.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents feel welcome and appreciate the ease with which they can approach the staff. They receive regular information about all aspects of the work of the setting through daily discussions, brochure, the notice board, posters and newsletters. Parents can view the attractive display board and topic files, which record children's activities clearly across all areas of learning.

There is a valuable partnership with the community through the use of visits and the contribution of visitors. Visits to the local library, for example, promote children's interest in books. This links well with the setting's effective use of storybooks as a stimulus for a range of activities.

There are appropriate links with the local primary schools to which children transfer. This contributes to a smooth transition for children to the next stage in their education. There are effective partnerships with a range of agencies and local services which provide guidance and support to staff, parents and children as required.

## **Resource management: Good**

There is an appropriate level of staffing. The manager deploys staff well to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum and the best use of their expertise and experience.

There are sufficient resources which are accessible to the children. Additional resources of good quality are made by the manager. There is suitable use of the outdoor area to provide a range of activities to develop children's skills.

Practitioners attend relevant training opportunities that are developing their knowledge and skills effectively. For example, practitioners benefit from the training in developing children's Welsh language skills, and the guidance received on supporting children with additional learning needs.

The manager has a thorough understanding of the allocated budget and prioritises spending according to need. Expenditure is monitored and evaluated appropriately. In view of the effective provision and strong leadership provided, the setting offers good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector –

Dorothy Morris	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))

## 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 partnerships 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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.