



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Stepping Stones - Pre School - Magor
Magor Primary
Sycamore Terrace
Magor
NP26 3EG**

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Stepping Stones - Pre School - Magor

Name of setting	Stepping Stones - Pre-school - Magor
Category of care provided	Sessional Day Care
Registered person(s)	Vivienne Sian Hickey
Responsible individual (if applicable)	N/A
Person in charge	Bethan Flood
Number of places	25
Age range of children	2 ½ to 5 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	3
Number of children funded for up to five terms	3
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 09:15 – 11:45 & 12:45 – 15:15
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate providing a full service in Welsh as the provider operates in an area where Welsh is not the dominant language. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	21/02/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	01/04/2014
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	26/11/2019

Additional information

Most children speak English as their first language. The setting has identified very few children as having additional learning needs.

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Good
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	n/a
Care and development	Good
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Environment	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Plan more challenging learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors, to meet the needs of all children

R2 Inform parents of children's progress and achievements regularly

What happens next

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

Main findings

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enter the setting very happily and cope with being separated from their main care givers quickly on arrival. Nearly all are very excited to see their friends and form close bonds with familiar practitioners and their key workers. They demonstrate a high level of contentment and are happy and relaxed within the setting. For example, they sit in a small group and listen attentively to an 'alien' story read by their friend and giggle at the animated pictures together. Nearly all are beginning to play alongside or with others confidently in line with their stage of development.

Most children make decisions very confidently, for example about where they want to play indoors. Most children make confident choices, independently or with suitable support, from the good variety of available resources. A few children are very self-assured and communicate confidently, for example standing up in circle time and inviting the children to go and play using a Welsh phrase: 'Un, dau, tri, amser i chwarae'. A few children contribute their ideas about activities and decisions that will affect them. For example, in circle time they discuss new topics and suggest meaningful ideas as to what naturally interests them or things they could explore.

Nearly all children behave very well in line with their age and stage of development. They are respectful and kind to each other and beginning to take turns and share with friends. For example, whilst making playdough, children wait patiently to take their turn to add an ingredient and stir the mixture. Most children engage well during circle time, answer questions and follow instructions appropriately. Nearly all children take good care of the resources both inside and outdoors, and most enjoy tidying up together at the end of the session.

Nearly all children engage well and show interest in the resources and activities on offer, for example when making Christmas decorations from clay and decorating them with sparkles and jewels. Many children focus appropriately on activities that interest them, for example laughing, twirling and dancing with coloured scarfs to a musical movement session.

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 Welsh words and phrases and understand what is being said to them. Most children have developed good levels of independence. For example, they self-register in the morning by selecting and placing their name in a basket. Nearly all use their self-help skills well, such as when they select and serve themselves snacks. Most clear their own plates and put the crockery into the washbasin co-operatively. Many children wash their hands with minimal support and feed themselves independently.

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

There is no report on children's learning. This is because the number of three or four-year-old children present at the time of the inspection that do not receive funded education elsewhere was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Care and development: Good

Practitioners provide a good level of responsive care, which meets children's individual needs well in a nurturing and caring atmosphere. Nearly all practitioners demonstrate a worthwhile understanding of the children's individual needs, abilities and preferences. 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.

Nearly all children have valuable opportunities for both free play and adult-led activities, which are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. Practitioners working with children track their progress appropriately and use information from observations and assessments to help them move forward with their learning effectively. Practitioners are beginning to identify children's interests and include these in their planning. Practitioners promote equality appropriately by ensuring that multi-ethnic resources are available, such as books and toys, and celebrating cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year. The use of Welsh language is promoted positively through songs and greetings.

Practitioners follow the behaviour management policy, which sets realistic and clear boundaries for children, consistently. They give children lots of praise and encouragement. For example, they celebrate children's talents by adorning the walls with their art work. Practitioners offer gentle reminders skilfully to help children learn the importance of values such as fairness, kindness and respect. As a result children's behaviour is good.

Practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities in promoting children's health and wellbeing and to keep children safe. All practitioners have relevant training and demonstrate a clear understanding of the range of useful policies and procedures in place. They follow the clear procedures to manage accidents, pre-existing injuries and the administration of medication and keep records appropriately. The Registered Person and all practitioners give safeguarding a high priority and have a clear understanding of the setting procedures to keep children safe. 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.

The setting has effective arrangements to help children learn about living a healthy lifestyle and provides appropriate opportunities for physical play. Children have freshly prepared snacks. Water is available freely throughout each session and children access this independently.

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

Practitioners provide a broad range of engaging activities in the inside and outdoor areas, linked to all of the foundation phase areas of learning. Practitioners monitor children's progress purposefully and make good use of regular assessments to identify their next steps. They use this information well in their forward planning to

develop the a range of foundation phase skills. However, practitioners do not share children's next steps well enough with parents, to keep them informed of their ongoing progress.

Supportive relationships within the setting develop children's confidence, self-worth and a sense of belonging effectively. Practitioners allow children sufficient thinking time when asking questions and respect children's choices. For example, during circle time, children were given time to examine a potato and to suggest ideas of what it could be used for. There are high expectations for most children with an appropriate balance of adult directed and child initiated learning. Practitioners model language effectively and this has a positive impact on the children's oracy and listening skills. For example, they give clear instructions about how to make playdough, which children follow successfully in a small group. However, learning experiences are not always challenging enough to develop children's problem solving skills effectively.

Practitioners provide an effective range of worthwhile learning experiences to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills progressively. For example, they encourage children to count daffodil bulbs and place them in the small, medium or large sections of a tray. There are good opportunities for children to develop their mark-making skills using a whiteboard. Practitioners provide a useful range of information and communication technology (ICT) devices that develop children's ICT skills appropriately. For example, they provide tablet computers that children use with increasing confidence to take pictures of what they have been doing.

Practitioners model the use of Welsh language phrases effectively. They use puppets to engage children in Welsh language sessions, and children respond to this successfully, such as to describe the weather. There are good opportunities for children to develop their awareness of Welsh traditions and celebrations. For example, they wear traditional dress as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Practitioners provide valuable experiences for children to feel part of their community, for example by visiting the wildlife trust in Magor marshes. Children recycle plastic cartons and food waste purposefully at snack times, and have visited the local recycling centre to support their understanding of sustainability. There is good provision for children's spiritual and cultural development. For example, children benefit from joining in the local school's harvest service.

Environment: Good

The premises are welcoming and child friendly, and they provide flexible well-organised space and facilities to meet the needs of children. The person in charge ensures that play areas meet children's needs and offer a beneficial range of opportunities for children to be active and independent. There is a small 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, children learn about volume when transferring containers of water from one tray to another until it 'floods'.

Practitioners provide children with a worthwhile range of clean, age appropriate resources that are well maintained and stored where children can access them independently. There is an adequate 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.

Leaders ensure that children are cared for in a suitably safe, secure and clean indoor environment. Practitioners demonstrate a good awareness of safety matters and position themselves effectively throughout the setting to supervise the children and monitor the children's safety 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 school reception area and in the pre-school area and must wear a visitor's badge at all times. All required safety checks for the building are routinely undertaken and leaders act promptly on any recommendations and advice. Practitioners complete risk assessments appropriately and identify and reduce risks for all areas of the setting, including places they take children for offsite visits.

Leadership and management: Good

In the short time since being appointed, the person in charge has established a strong collaborative vision for moving the setting forward. This vision is focused on children's wellbeing, learning and a positive ethos that supports a calm atmosphere within the setting. Leaders communicate high expectations to those they manage by setting clear roles and responsibilities. The statement of purpose is clear and allows parents to make an informed choice about the setting. Leaders ensure that they follow safe recruitment processes and that the setting meets the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners consistently.

There are comprehensive arrangements for self-evaluation and all practitioners are committed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Leaders gather the views of stakeholders such as parents appropriately, and this has led to recent improvements in the indoor learning environment. They identify suitable improvement priorities such as developing the outdoor provision. Leaders use the setting's appraisal and supervision systems to review the performance of practitioners suitably.

Keyworkers evaluate most children's progress from a given starting point effectively, to identify baselines and plan next steps in children's learning. However, leaders do not ensure that information about their children's progress is shared regularly with parents.

There is a strong focus on continuous professional development within the team and this has a positive impact, such as improving practitioners' understanding of children's skill development in block play successfully. Leaders use funding well to ensure that there are a good number of well-qualified staff and that the learning environment and resources support children's learning effectively.

Practitioners develop a range of effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children successfully. The setting makes beneficial use of its links with the community and external agencies. For example, practitioners engage with members of the community to create a Christmas tree made of everyone's handprints, which strengthens children's sense of belonging. They work closely with the local authority's advisory teacher to maintain and develop the foundation phase curriculum and pedagogy. The setting's transition arrangements with the local school are good.

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)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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