



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

**A report on**

**Little Footsteps Nursery at Blakedown House**

**Blakedown house  
Heol-Mostyn  
Village farm industrial estate  
Pyle  
Bridgend  
CF33 6BJ**

**Date of inspection: November 2022**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Little Footsteps Nursery at Blakedown House

Name of setting	Little Footsteps Nursery at Blakedown House
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Corinne Coulter, Stacey Barker-Platt
Person in charge	Corinne Coulter, Stacey Barker-Platt, Amy Chard, Sarah Tolley-Smith, Jade Claypole, Victoria Dewar, Ella Tandy
Number of places	75
Age range of children	0-12
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	3
Number of children who receive funding for early education	3
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday 7am-6pm
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and does not demonstrate a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	02.08.2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	January 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	22/11/2022

## **Non-compliance**

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Develop and extend existing learning opportunities and experiences to provide a variety for all children across the setting
- R2 Improve the provision for children's Welsh language skills across the setting
- R3 Ensure that self-evaluation processes focus clearly on improving children's skills and development

## **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:

Nearly all children are developing a strong voice. They make suitable choices and decisions about what affects them. Children choose what activities and resources to play with. Most children express themselves well through verbal and non-verbal communication. They know practitioners listen and respond to them appropriately. For example, when children said they had not finished their snack, they were able to carry on eating whilst others left. Older children confidently ask for an alternative meal at teatime with their wishes granted.

Nearly all children arrive happily at the setting and are eager to start playing. They are well settled and most cope very well as they separate from parents and carers. The very few children who are a little upset are well supported and settle in time. Children have warm, close relationships with practitioners and approach them for cuddles and talk about recent events in their lives. For example, older children excitedly tell practitioners about a recent trip to Cardiff Castle.

Nearly all children make purposeful choices and confidently move freely between activities. Younger children play alongside each other as is appropriate for their age or stage of development. They happily engage in role play when 'going on a bear hunt' and when making spells. Nearly all children are beginning to follow rules and respect other people. They are becoming aware of each other's feelings, for example they ask one another if they are okay during snack time. Older children support and help younger children. In after school club, an older child helps a younger child by putting colouring items within easy reach.

Nearly all children are active and engaged in their play. They show purpose and curiosity as they take part in a range of activities appropriate to their stage of development. For example, they build towers successfully with large blocks, explore textures in sensory activities and share books with practitioners. Most older children speak confidently to friends and practitioners. They talk about favourite food happily whilst sitting at the table at snack time and discuss facts about the human body with amazement. Overall, all children listen and follow instructions well, for example when they are reminded to use their manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you' at snack times.

Nearly all children develop skills and knowledge by following their own interests. They have confidence in making choices and seeking help when they need it. They develop increasing independence and self-help skills. For example, many younger children help to tidy up and are supported to wash their hands prior to mealtimes. Most older children recognise and collect their own belongings, use toilet facilities, and pour their own drinks. All children are provided with support from practitioners if needed.

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

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:**

Leaders have developed a suitable range of relevant policies and procedures to support practitioners to keep children safe. Leaders and practitioners have a good understanding of how to protect children and know what to do if they have any concerns. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Nearly all practitioners work well to keep children safe and healthy. Overall, they follow the setting's policies and procedures in relation to hygiene, health and safety and review them each year. Practitioners supervise children well and complete relevant records in relation to accidents, incidents and administering medication. They know what to do in an emergency as they practise and record regular fire evacuation drills. Leaders provide appropriate healthy meals and snacks for children including milk or water to drink. They follow effective procedures to support children with allergies and dietary needs.

All practitioners are very caring and supportive. They interact with children in a warm, gentle manner, creating a positive, happy atmosphere. They give children cuddles and engage kindly as they know them very well. There is a suitable behaviour management policy in place, which they use effectively. All practitioners give praise for good behaviour and use positive techniques such as explanations and distraction to help children learn. For example, when sharing equipment practitioners say, "*you're always good at sharing*" and "*that's really good*".

Overall, practitioners are successful in meeting the needs of children, including those with additional learning needs. They suitably identify children who may have additional learning needs and have appropriate systems in place to support them.

Nearly all practitioners are responsive to children and support them in their play. For example, singing songs as they play, sharing books, talking to them, and playing alongside them. Practitioners plan basic activities appropriately. However, they do not always promote a range of learning opportunities and experiences across all ages within the setting, including the use of the outdoor area. The setting is in the early stages of implementing the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders and practitioners have developed and implement a system for tracking children's progress and development. Practitioners promote equal opportunities and diversity successfully although little Welsh language is used across the setting.

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

Practitioners have a suitable understanding of child development and how children learn through play and exploration. They are developing an appropriate knowledge of

the curriculum and how it supports children's development and learning. They plan responsively and flexibly and respond well to the interests of children. They provide additional resources to enhance and enrich the children's play and plan for future activities based on these interests. For example, following an interest in role playing witches, they provide items such as feathers, wands, and sparkles to encourage children to make spells. However, practitioners do not always have a clear focus on how they can develop children's skills and knowledge through these activities.

Practitioners provide an appropriate environment that engages children and encourages them to play together. They plan a suitable range of opportunities that allow children to play for extended periods of time and to take risks in their play. For example, by building towers taller than themselves and using the outdoor climbing frame. These opportunities allow children to become confident explorers of their environment.

Practitioners support children with additional learning needs well. They make useful observations of what the children have been doing including what interests them in their play. Practitioners monitor progress against the children's targets regularly and use this information to inform specialist services on how children are progressing. However, practitioners do not always use this information effectively to plan opportunities to deepen and extend children learning.

Practitioners are good language role models and support children well through their interactions and questions. They plan a worthwhile range of activities that support children to use their mark making skills in their play, for example when writing letters to their family and posting them in the setting's post box. Practitioners support children to develop resilience, independence, and confidence appropriately, for example through encouraging them to take calculated risks and challenge themselves physically on large play equipment. They provide a range of suitable opportunities to develop children's mathematical skills, in particular their number skills. The use of the newly purchased digital resources is having a positive effect in developing children's digital and communication skills. For example, they discuss how they have moved pieces around the screen to make the picture of a dinosaur.

Practitioners help children to develop a sense of awe and wonder through their regular visits to local parks. They encourage children to discover and enjoy nature and to look for the changes to the seasons. Practitioners plan a range of visits to the local area and places of interest such as trips to the shop and the pumpkin patch. These visits support children to develop a sense of belonging and a curiosity of their own and other people's lives.

The setting provides an appropriate range of activities and celebrations that support children to learn about Wales and its culture. They plan for children to participate in cooking Welsh cakes and dressing in traditional clothing for St David's Day. They also display pictures of Welsh landmarks around the setting. Practitioners provide suitable activities for children to learn about other cultures and their traditions and celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. However, practitioners do not plan or use Welsh well enough in their interactions with children and do not provide enough opportunities for children to hear Welsh songs and rhymes. As a result, children's Welsh language skills are underdeveloped.

## **Environment:**

Leaders ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and secure. Thorough risk assessments are in place, including daily checks of the environment. They ensure that all required safety checks are completed and follow rigid procedures in relation to visitors accessing the setting. The premises are clean, and practitioners practise effective hygiene procedures, such as sanitising tables and highchairs. They also wear appropriate protective clothing. The toilet and nappy changing facilities are appropriate, although practitioners do not always ensure older children's privacy.

The premises has recently undergone redecoration, which promotes a natural, fresh, homely feel. The environment is welcoming and provides a spacious area for children to play and move freely. Leaders provide a range of interesting toys and resources across all rooms within the setting. Many of these resources reflect the natural environment, real life objects and promote the use of loose parts and block play well. Most resources are at low level, which allows children to access them independently. Children use appropriately sized furniture and suitable equipment for their age and stage of development, including a purposely converted 'sensory room'.

Leaders ensure that the secure outdoor area provides a variety of learning and play opportunities, such as a mud kitchen, a 'pirate ship', a dressing up role play area and a water wall. They also provide a limited range of opportunities for older children to access the outdoor area at the rear of the setting.

Leaders provide suitable designated areas for children to store their personal items and display children's artwork attractively across the setting. This supports a sense of belonging and promotes their self-esteem well. Leaders use a variety of play materials effectively to promote children's cultural awareness, including Welsh heritage and diversity. This promotes children's understanding of the world.

## **Leadership and management:**

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting based on the wellbeing of children and practitioners. They recognise the importance of this early stage in a child's life and want to give all children the best start in a homely and caring environment. Leaders set clear expectations of what is expected of all practitioners.

They ensure that practitioners have up to date job descriptions which includes clear information about their roles and responsibilities. Leaders follow suitable induction processes which helps new practitioners to quickly feel part of the team. They implement an effective system for practitioners' supervision and appraisal that leads to agreed targets. Leaders ensure a positive sense of teamwork throughout the setting and practitioners support each other well. The setting has a clear statement of purpose that provides an accurate picture and leaders ensure that a suitable range of relevant policies and procedures are in place.

The setting's self-evaluation processes help leaders to identify what works well and what they need to improve. These include informal reflections at the end of the day that helps to inform practitioners of immediate changes that need to take place. In addition, annual evaluations provide leaders with useful information to ensure a longer-term view of improvement. However, these activities focus mainly on the day-

to-day role of the leaders and changes to the environment rather than on improving children's learning and levels of wellbeing. Although leaders request feedback from children, parents, and carers on the work of the setting, they do not always record their findings appropriately. As a result, leaders do not always recognise areas for improvement effectively enough.

Leaders work well with parents and carers and use social media to keep them well informed of their child's progress and development. Parents value this communication highly as well as the hints and tips they receive to support their child at home.

Leaders make effective use of grants and other funding to develop the setting, for example to purchase beneficial resources to support children's emotional and social development. The recent addition of wooden blocks and vehicles to the setting is having a positive effect in engaging children in problem solving activities.

Leaders and persons in charge have developed strong links with a range of partners including the local advisory teacher to support and enhance children's learning and development. They also work closely with the local authority's early years additional learning needs team and external agencies to ensure that children with additional learning needs are well supported and that their needs are met. Leaders ensure strong transition arrangements with feeder schools to support all children to move confidently to the next stage of their education.



## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))