Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

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

A report on

Poppies Day Nursery Limited

Maesderwen House
Maesderwen Road
Pontymoile
Pontypool
NP4 5LE

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

About Poppies Day Nursery Limited

Name of setting	Poppies Day Nursery Limited
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Janet Darlington
Person in charge	Brady Cheshire
Number of places	48
Age range of children	0 – 12 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	23
Number of children who receive funding for early education	8
Opening days / times	Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This service is not making a significant effort to promote the use of Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	4 November 2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection	November 2016
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	19/11/2024
No children with ALN. No children from Welsh speaking homes. 1 child who has English as an additional language.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Well-being	**Excellent**
Learning **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Care and development	**Excellent**
Teaching and assessment **(only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)**	**Excellent**
Environment	**Excellent**
Leadership and management	**Excellent**

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Continue to implement the highly effective practice to support pupils' development, well-being and learning

What happens next

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

Main findings

Well-being: Excellent

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They are making excellent progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills, and many are confident communicators, either verbally or pre-verbally. For example, younger children are happy to engage with visitors and older children are enthusiastic to share their learning and achievements with others. Children make decisions and choices around where they play. For example, they choose whether to go and listen to a story with a puppet or to remain at their activity making models out of clay. Most children express their own feelings confidently knowing practitioners will respond and listen to them respectfully.

Nearly all children enter the setting enthusiastically. They settle quickly and are extremely happy to see their friends and practitioners. For example, many children give practitioners big hugs as they arrive in the morning and in return they are greeted with genuine care and attention. Children feel valued in knowing practitioners take an enthusiastic interest in their lives outside of the setting. They excitedly share their news from home and their enthusiasm for future holiday plans.

Children's and practitioners' interactions are consistently positive. Children happily talk to practitioners and are relaxed in their company. Many children are developing friendships with a few already demonstrating empathy towards their friends. For example, they console their friends when they are upset and give each other caring hugs. Nearly all of the older children follow instructions readily, such as washing their hands before eating.

Nearly all children have fun, and are active and motivated in their play and learning. They enjoy a wide range of interesting and exciting opportunities both indoors and

outdoors. For example, they enjoy balancing on beams covered in snow and reading stories to the class pets. Children concentrate for significant periods of time in line with their stage of development. For example, babies enjoy filling real life objects such as jugs and teapots with natural resources. Older children enjoy making the most of the snow, experimenting with ice, water and food colouring to make creative patterns and colourful potions in the mud kitchen.

Nearly all children develop their independence skills effectively. For example, they store away their belongings in the cloak room and help to put away resources when they finish playing with them. Older children develop their independent self-care skills effectively. For example, they wash their hands before mealtimes and after accessing toilet facilities. During snack time younger children are encouraged to feed themselves and older children choose when they are ready to eat and where they want to sit. They serve themselves fruit and pour their own milk from jugs.

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

Nearly all children make strong progress from their starting points. They make choices around where they play and select resources that interest them confidently. Nearly all children engage in the rich and varied learning experiences provided and this expertly supports their holistic development well.

Nearly all children join in familiar songs and rhymes with enthusiasm and confidence, in both English and Welsh. Nearly all children listen to stories attentively, often joining in with repetitive phrases. For example, when listening to ‘We’re Going on a Bear Hunt’ many eagerly contribute to the sound effects found in the story. Most children initiate conversations confidently and demonstrate strong communication skills. Nearly all children engage meaningfully with adults and peers, seeking support when needed and show curiosity through thoughtful questions. They interact warmly with visitors to the setting. Most children follow simple Welsh words and instructions, and a few are starting to use Welsh in meaningful contexts. For example, when asking to go to the toilet. Most children develop their fine motor skills highly effectively. For example, they demonstrate skilled precision and control when using pipettes and syringes to squirt coloured water onto snow. When using dough, children roll, squash, squeeze and mould it into shapes of cakes. Many children actively engage in mark making activities. For example, they eagerly make marks in the recent fallen snow outside. A few children are beginning to recognise letters and the associated sounds and pronounce them correctly. Nearly all children have well-developed gross motor skills and are able to balance on uneven surfaces, navigate across beams with confidence and control, and jump in muddy puddles with enthusiasm.

Nearly all children use simple mathematical language purposefully during play. For example, they confidently use vocabulary such as big and small to compare the size of their handprints in the snow and heavy and light when describing cakes made from clay. Most children join in with number rhymes enthusiastically. Many children recognise that 2D drawing shapes and repetitive squiggles form patterns.

Many children exhibit high levels of perseverance, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. For example, they work collaboratively to build a guttering system for rolling balls into containers. They adapt their design to achieve success. Many

children engage in imaginative play purposefully, demonstrating creativity and meaningful connections to real-life experiences. For example, they use rolling pins to mimic lifting weights, saying they are ‘like daddy’. Nearly all children use digital equipment skilfully to enhance their play such as taking photographs of the snow on a tablet and using handheld metal detectors to explore magnetic shapes in the sand.

Care and development: Excellent

Practitioners have a strong understanding of how to keep children safe and healthy. They consistently support and encourage children to participate in daily outdoor play and provide a nutritious and wholesome menu of healthy food. They implement highly effective policies and procedures and are confident in their roles and responsibilities. Nearly all practitioners adhere to the medication policy competently, recording accidents and incidents in detail and are aware of those children who have allergies. Practitioners employ high standards of hygiene practices consistently, encouraging handwashing and by following intimate care routines such as nappy changing, with a high regard for infection control.

Nearly all practitioners have an excellent understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm, including how to respond to any child protection concerns. The setting’s arrangement to safeguard children are robust and do not give cause for concern. Practitioners are confident of the setting’s emergency procedures and practise regular fire drills, recording details for evaluation and identifying areas for improvement.

Practitioners are caring, kind and nurturing. They communicate and interact with children in a genuinely warm manner, creating a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Nearly all practitioners are positive role models for children, They model respectful interactions towards each other when communicating in front of the children. Most practitioners are aware of the importance of using the settings positive behaviour strategy. They encourage children to have time to reflect upon their actions. Older children are given time to talk through any incidents, express their feelings and consider about what they would do differently next time. Most practitioners use encouraging language when praising positive behaviour. Their positive affirmations further promote children’s resilience and perseverance, empowering children to make the right choices. For example, practitioners tell children they can achieve their goals if they keep practising. They also tell children they are brave and responsible and allow them to resolve conflict themselves, where appropriate.

Nearly all practitioners confidently support children in their play and extend their learning opportunities effectively. For example, they introduce coloured water to the children’s frozen leaf sculptures, creating an enhanced experience for the children to explore their curiosity and creativity. Practitioners offer children time to play without interruptions, which allows them to fully engage in their play and lead their learning.

The setting has effective procedures in place to support children with additional learning needs (ALN). Although the setting does not always have children with ALN, practitioners keep up to date with their knowledge through participating in a variety of online courses. This ensures practitioners are best placed to meet the needs of any children who may attend the setting. Practitioners record detailed observations of children’s learning and development and track progress effectively. They have a

secure understanding of individuals' next steps to purposefully inform the planning. They keep parents and carers well informed about their child's development and carry out termly progress meetings.

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

Practitioners have an excellent understanding of child development and how children learn. They balance opportunities for children to follow their own interests with engaging, thoughtfully planned experiences that support their developmental needs and spark curiosity.

Provision to develop the children's literacy skills is highly effective. Practitioners regularly read stories to children to help them develop effective listening and early reading skills. Throughout the session, practitioners and children regularly join in signing familiar Welsh and English songs and rhymes together. Practitioners support children's early writing skills well. They provide a wide range of opportunities and a variety of resources such as pencils, paint and chalk for children to experiment making marks. Practitioners are strong language role models. They frequently introduce mathematical language during play and effectively integrate numeracy and Welsh skills into snack time. This creates meaningful opportunities for counting and language development. Practitioners frequently use incidental Welsh words, phrases, and greetings effectively to develop children's understanding of the Welsh language. They ensure that a wide variety of authentic resources are available, such as books and artefacts, to encourage children's understanding of Welsh culture. Practitioners also promote an appreciation of cultural diversity by providing opportunities for children to learn about different cultures though storytelling and through the resources, which are embedded in every day play. They also learn terminology used by different cultural families to create a sense of belonging for all.

Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to develop responsibility for caring and looking after living things, such as looking after the setting's two pet guinea pigs. Practitioners skilfully nurture a sense of awe and wonder by embracing spontaneous moments of excitement. For example, when playing in the outdoors they take notice of the snow falling to encourage children to explore the snow with their senses.

Practitioners provide rich problem-solving opportunities; they encourage children to ask questions and plan solutions during their play. They skilfully know when to step in and when to allow children time to think and develop their ideas. Nearly all practitioners use open-ended questions to promote children's thinking exceptionally well. Practitioners plan for beneficial opportunities for children to take calculated risks in their play and activities. For example, they have developed a woodwork area where children use real tools such as hammers and nails. Practitioners prompt the children to remind themselves of the rules they must follow to stay safe.

Practitioners skilfully foster a strong sense of belonging at the setting. They provide an inclusive, nurturing environment where practitioners celebrate each child's individuality through displays of their work and photographs of their families, pets and homes. They make excellent use of the local area to enrich children's learning. For example, when visiting shops to purchase pet food and cooking ingredients, they

encourage children to write lists of ingredients and use money to purchase items from the shop.

The setting has highly effective observation and assessment procedures in place, which enable practitioners to plan purposeful learning opportunities. Practitioners regularly engage in professional dialogue, collaboratively reflecting on each child's progress and identifying the most effective ways to tailor support for their development and well-being. Practitioners provide parents with beneficial information about their child's progress via termly assessments and face-to-face discussions.

Environment: Excellent

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, which is extremely well maintained indoors and outdoors. There is a suitable system to manage access into the setting and details of visitors are consistently recorded. Leaders have highly effective systems in place, which include robust written risk assessments and daily checks, reducing or eliminating potential hazards. These comprehensive general and fire risk assessments are consistently reviewed and acted upon. These along with emergency procedures are clearly communicated to all relevant people at point of induction and revisited during regular team meetings. Safety certificates are readily available and highly effective monitoring systems are in place for ensuring that these are always renewed in a timely manner. Leaders effectively organise consistent cleaning routines that reflect excellent hygiene practices, which minimises any risks to children's health and safety.

Leaders ensure that the environment has plenty of indoor play space for children to move freely and explore. They ensure that the environment meets the children's needs, enabling them to reach their full potential. There are nappy changing areas which ensure privacy and dignity, a suitable toilet area, a cloak room for children to hang their belongings and a highly organised and clean kitchen. The premises are welcoming, warm and homely. Leaders have introduced neutral colour tones, which along with the soft lighting create a calm and soothing atmosphere.

Leaders are committed to providing stimulating resources to promote children's curiosity about the wider society, celebrating multicultural events and raising cultural awareness. These resources alongside those for Welsh language and culture are fully embedded in every day practice.

Practitioners provide children with real-life resources and natural loose parts, which enable them to lead on their own play. For example, they use wooden blocks to create small cities and use natural resources as pretend food. Furniture is at a suitably low level, which allows children to access and use most resources independently.

Leadership and management: Excellent

Leaders and managers create a highly positive ethos where staff and children are valued and respected. They work closely together to ensure high standards of well-being and learning across the setting. Leaders have a strong vision for the setting, which focuses on ensuring a nurturing and inclusive environment that supports children's individual needs and promotes their holistic development. Leaders have

high expectations of practitioners and how they implement their roles. They take an active part in all aspects of the setting. They monitor the quality of provision, consistently ensuring that all practices are embedded seamlessly into every day practice.

Leaders enforce safe recruitment practices rigorously, and ensure that they appoint practitioners with the appropriate qualifications. Ratios are consistently maintained throughout the setting. Leaders have recently started requesting staff to sign in and out of rooms during breaks to evidence that there is sufficient suitable cover. Well-structured induction procedures are in place to establish a strong foundation for new staff. There is a clear leadership structure in place, ensuring that all practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities. Policies, procedures and guidance are of a high standard and reviewed regularly. The comprehensive statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting.

Annual self-evaluation processes are comprehensive and drive meaningful improvement, and foster a strong culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Leaders actively include input from practitioners, parents and children to inform decisions, demonstrating a collaborative and inclusive approach. Grant funding is strategically allocated to address priorities identified in the setting improvement plans. Practitioners' performance management targets are meaningful, with actions set and monitored.

Nearly all practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. For example, the training on curriculum and assessment arrangements has brought about a positive impact on improving children's learning and provision at the setting. Over time, leaders have planned strategically to improve standards of Welsh at the setting for both practitioners and children. While this remains an ongoing focus, their efforts have already had a significant and positive impact on the quality and use of Welsh within the setting.

The setting has established strong partnerships with professionals, parents, schools and external agencies, including local authority advisory teachers, to enhance provision and support children's development. Leaders and practitioners foster a welcoming environment, collaborating closely with parents to ensure that children feel happy, secure and settled. Effective communication through newsletters, a parenting app, and daily conversations ensures that families remain informed and actively involved in their child's learning journey. The setting has effective partnerships with the local community. This enables the setting to provide interesting experiences, such as visiting a local care home for the elderly.

The setting collaborates effectively with local schools to aid transition. Within the setting, transition arrangements are highly effective, where leaders organise additional support and observations to ensure a positive experience for all.

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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Publication date: 24/01/2025

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	**What each means**
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this	N/A

	inspection	

Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children's well-being.
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children's well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice.

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Date Published 24/01/2025