

# **The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age**

**Nursery report on:**

**Bluebelle Nursery**

**Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Mary Dyas**

**Date of inspection: 5th and 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

**Contract number: T/124/08N**

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**Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector**

**Name of nursery:** Bluebelle Nursery

**Address:** The Recreation Hall  
Manor Way  
Portskewett  
Caldicot  
Monmouthshire

**Telephone:** 07778 962 724

**Person responsible for day-to-day management** Beverley Rees

**Position** Nursery Supervisor

**About the inspection**

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings

## 1.0 Context of the setting

### **Context of the nursery setting**

Bluebelle Nursery (previously Portskewett and Sudbrook Playgroup) has been open since July 1975. It meets for five mornings a week in the local village hall which is used by other organisations and therefore equipment has to be set out and tidied away daily. The nursery is registered to take up to 26 children from two and a half to five years. The pre-school group currently has 26 children in receipt of funded educational provision of which 9 are four year olds and 17 are three year olds. During the inspection there were 23 three and four year olds present on the first morning and 24 on the second.

Children come to the nursery from the local area. The children come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds and currently all speak English as their main home language. Children with special educational needs are welcomed into the nursery and good procedures are in place to support them. The nursery has strong links with outside agencies and makes good use of their expertise.. Positive arrangements are in place to enable children to settle easily into the nursery environment.

The main hall is large and brightly decorated. Despite the constraints of the use of the building the staff of the nursery use every opportunity to display examples of the children's work. The hall is well laid out with different areas of learning. An adjoining room is used for circle time with the whole group and also to work with individuals or small groups during the main session. The hall opens out onto a small area which is enclosed by removable fencing and is well used to extend the curriculum activities.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in November 2008 with no requirements or recommendations and by Estyn in March 1999.

## 2.0 Main findings of the report

### **2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning**

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

## 2.2 Standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning

<b>Seven areas of learning</b>	<b>Grade for under-fives</b>
<b>Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity</b>	1
<b>Language, literacy and communication skills</b>	1
<b>Mathematical development</b>	1
<b>Welsh language development</b>	1
<b>Knowledge and understanding of the world</b>	1
<b>Physical development</b>	2
<b>Creative development</b>	2

## 2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

<b>Quality of education</b>	<b>Grade for under-fives</b>
<b>Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	1
<b>Quality of planning for children's learning</b>	2
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	1
<b>Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers</b>	2
<b>Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community</b>	1
<b>The contribution made by the setting to children's well-being</b>	2
<b>Quality of the leadership and management of the setting</b>	1
<b>The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report</b>	2

### **3.0 The standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning**

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds

#### **3.1 Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity**

Children's standards in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are good with outstanding features.

##### **Outstanding features**

All children are making very good progress in their personal and social development. Through well-planned activities and opportunities for them to follow their own interests, children are motivated to learn.

All children are developing independence. They use the toilet independently and know that it is important to wash their hands afterwards and also before they have something to eat. At snack time they collect their own plates and cups and pour their own drinks from a jug and when going outdoors all children put on and take off coats and try to fasten them according to their stage of development.

The level of independence of almost all the children in the nursery is a particularly outstanding feature. They take responsibility for pouring their drinks and serving themselves at the snack café, find and put on their own coats, Wellingtons and hats when they play outside and use tools such as scissors and glue spreaders independently.

All children in the nursery are confident and happy in the setting. Most children show high levels of self-confidence as they explore and experiment with the activities that have been set out for them. They make suggestions about things that they might do within a topic and ask for favourite activities to be repeated.

##### **Good features**

The children's awareness of different cultures is developing well. They have a growing understanding of lifestyles different from their own as they talk about children who are not as fortunate as themselves and enjoy raising money to help. They know they are Welsh and are developing an awareness of the cultural heritage of Wales.

Individually and in small group situations, they concentrate independently of adults for lengthening periods.

Relationships between children are good; they relate well to each other and demonstrate respect, care and affection. They play happily alone and alongside others, displaying good behaviour and self-control. Children are confident in the company of adults and enjoy helping them clear away activities.

##### **Shortcomings**

No shortcomings were identified.

### **3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills**

Children's standards in language, literacy and communication skills are good with outstanding features.

#### **Outstanding features**

Most three and four year olds are happy to speak within the nursery group and all listen attentively to one another as they take turns to speak. Many children are very articulate and express their ideas and opinions clearly. Almost all children speak confidently to one another and to adults.

Children are developing their understanding of some of the functions of writing as they make relevant marks, and sometimes write simple words, in the different areas of learning

#### **Good features**

All children listen with great enjoyment to stories read to them in a group or individually, following the story carefully and eagerly filling in the next part. Many children also enjoy looking at books during the course of their play. They handle them correctly and identify elements of the story from the pictures. Many also enjoy listening to stories and songs in the listening area during the course of their play.

Most children are beginning to understand that words convey meaning and recognise their names in a variety of contexts including the use of name cards during self-registration. All children recall and join in with singing familiar songs and reciting rhymes and poems.

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

### 3.3 Mathematical development

Children's standards in mathematical development are good with outstanding features.

#### **Outstanding features**

The level of knowledge and understanding of numbers is an outstanding feature of this nursery. Children count together by rote to at least 26 and many three and four year olds are able to name and identify these written numbers independently. Most are able to identify quantities to at least three without counting. Many older children are able to say what one more will be up to at least seven and most to at least 12.

#### **Good features**

Most children use mathematical language in a wide range of relevant contexts, for example when using different shapes to build a dragon or a castle.

Almost all children are developing an appropriate awareness of the passage of time through the order of their daily routines.

All children are becoming familiar with money and its use through role play situations and also other more structured opportunities to sort and count change,

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

### 3.4 Welsh language development

Children's standards in Welsh language development are good with outstanding features

#### **Outstanding features**

All children are making very good progress in this area of learning.

Most children use the Welsh words and phrases to which they have been introduced very naturally and relevantly during the course of the session. They know and use numbers, colours, greetings and responses, and weather words with exceptional ease.

#### **Good features**

Almost all children are happy to join in with the Welsh songs and rhymes they have learned. Many children are happy to look at books written in Welsh during the course of their play.

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

### 3.5 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Children's standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good with outstanding features

#### **Outstanding features**

Children explore and experiment with the different activities provided for them with great confidence. Most are able to ask questions about what they do not understand and many make suggestions about other things they would like to investigate.

As a direct result of the first hand opportunities to investigate the world around them many children are confident in making realistic predictions about what they think might happen in a given situation.

#### **Good features**

Children discuss the weather and are able to discuss different features of different seasons. The majority of children are developing an understanding of the passing of time through their familiarity with the routines of the nursery and anticipate what is going to happen next.

As they go out into the local environment walking to the church or to post letters or to explore in the area of common ground, children are beginning to understand about different places.

There are many opportunities for the children to explore and to solve problems which they approach with confidence and enthusiasm. For example they learn at first hand that ice is frozen water when they encounter a patch of ice on the recreation field and then have opportunities to further investigate ice for themselves indoors.

Through their topic work the children are beginning to develop an understanding of the environment. Most know that plants make seeds and that new plants grow from seeds. A few are able to confidently name and identify roots and shoots on a seedling.

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

### 3.6 Physical development

Children's standards in physical development are good with no important shortcomings

#### **Good features**

The children's fine motor skills are promoted using a wide range of activities and resources. For example, threading objects and fitting jigsaw pieces into place. Most children demonstrate good manual dexterity as they use tools to dig in the soil to plant seeds or pour their snacktime drink and finer control when they use small tools to make patterns in clay.

Most children engage in vigorous physical play with great enthusiasm and safely and confidently control wheeled toys within the outdoor area without bumping into one another. They balance and jump safely on small apparatus such as planks and stepping stones showing good co-ordination and balance.

#### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings but there is a lack of large climbing equipment, particularly outdoors, to challenge and develop further the physical skills of older and more able children.

### 3.7 Creative development

Children's standards in creative development are good with no important shortcomings.

#### **Good features**

There is a good selection of children's colourful work on display, showing examples of painting, printing cutting and sticking. Children make clear choices about the colours and effects they want to use when creating a collage or a 3D model.

Most children make good use of the role play area and they enjoy acting in role and dressing up in the role play doctor's surgery. Many children are very creative in their play both in the role play area and when playing with small world settings.

The children have many opportunities to respond to music either with instruments, by moving in response to a musical stimulus or following suggestions from an adult. Following adults' instructions, most children are able to use a range of percussion instruments to demonstrate loud, quiet, fast and slow sounds as they play along to their singing. They are beginning to appreciate the work of others as they listen carefully to each other's performance.

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

## 4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds

### 4.1 The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with some outstanding features.

#### **Outstanding features**

Children are cared for in an inclusive, warm and friendly atmosphere where they are encouraged to be inquisitive and to take responsibility for their own actions. As a result the children are confident, happy, and eager learners. Spiritual development is outstandingly promoted through regular visits to the local church and frequent visits from the vicar who is warmly welcomed by the children.

The use of Welsh is firmly embedded into the daily life of the nursery. There is a strong focus on Welsh in the circle time sessions and all practitioners use incidental Welsh at every opportunity. As a result all children have made a very good start in their knowledge of a basic vocabulary and are confident in using the words and phrases they have learned.

#### **Good features**

The policies and routines of the nursery promote positive behaviour successfully and the children are guided well through the use of praise and are sensitively guided in learning right from wrong.

The children regularly raise money for good causes such as Barnardos and Children in Need. The life and work of the nursery outstandingly reflects positive attitudes and values and promotes respect for the diversity of beliefs, social and cultural traditions within society. For example the children have looked at the lifestyle of children less fortunate than themselves and compared this with their own way of life.

#### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified

## 4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

The quality of planning for children's learning is good with outstanding features.

### **Outstanding features**

The systematic provision of thematic planning, enhanced provision and focussed session plans are outstanding features. The nursery supervisor involves the other practitioners effectively in developing daily plans and this ensures that they have a clear understanding of their role in promoting a flow of activities within well established day to day routines.

The planned provision is imaginatively implemented to ensure the children benefit from first hand experiences that build up their confidence and independence, enhance their learning skills and develop their knowledge and understanding.

### **Good features**

The curriculum is well resourced including multicultural toys and books. It effectively promotes equality of access for all children whatever their backgrounds, special or linguistic needs and provides a good balance between child-led and adult-led activities. All focus activities are evaluated in order to inform future planning.

### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

## 4.3 The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good with outstanding features

### **Outstanding features**

Practitioners have very strong working relationships with one another and with the children. They have high expectations for children's progress and achievement and encourage them to engage in a wide variety of suitably challenging activities. They engage children in discussions to develop thinking and understanding of their experiences using wide and varied vocabulary, well-focused open questions, praise and encouragement.

There is a very good balance between structured learning through child-initiated activities and those directed by adults; adults have a clear understanding of when it is appropriate to intervene to extend children's learning and when to allow them to reach conclusions by themselves.

### **Good features**

All practitioners demonstrate a sound understanding of the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. They work together positively as a team supporting each other and the children well.

Children move confidently between the indoor and outdoor learning environments both of which provide a range of appropriately challenging and differentiated play.

### **Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

#### **4.4 The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers**

The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers is good with no important shortcomings.

##### **Good features**

An appropriate recording system is in place which collates information regarding children's progress. Children are assessed using the Monmouthshire Transition Record in the term following their third birthday. This is updated in June of that year and again the following June when they leave to move on to primary school. This information is shared with parents and carers during the twice-yearly opportunity parents are given to meet with the supervisor. They discuss the progress their child has made and some of the targets they are working towards. The Transition Record is agreed and signed before the child leaves the setting and sent on to the receiving primary school.

Practitioners make daily observations during the adult focus sessions. These are transferred to the children's individual record files and the results entered into the Transition Record.

##### **Shortcomings**

No shortcomings were identified.

#### **4.5 The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community**

The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community is good with outstanding features.

##### **Outstanding features**

Parents of children in the pre-school group are well informed about the learning experiences provided for their children. Regular newsletters are sent to all parents and the nursery has an excellent and up to date website which includes information about upcoming events.

The setting has excellent links with the local primary school. The supervisor meets regularly with members of staff to share good practice and the children are invited to the school for special events such as the Christmas concert and an Easter Bonnet parade. Teachers from the school visit the nursery throughout the year to get to know the children.

##### **Good features**

The group welcomes many visitors to come to talk to the children; for example a police officer, the fire service, the local vicar and any parents who have a skill or interesting occupation to share with the children.

The children are also taken out into the community to help them to learn about different places. They go to post letters, to visit the church and the library and to investigate the area of common land that adjoins the recreation field.

The setting is developing good links with the nearby primary school who invite the children to see their Christmas play and to look around the school.

**Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

**4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing**

The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing is good with no important shortcomings.

**Good features**

There are appropriate procedures in place to ensure the setting contributes to children's well being, supported by a wealth of clear policies and procedures to safeguard children and ensure their health and wellbeing. There are secure arrangements for the safety of children, who are very well supervised at all times. The supervisor has received recent update training in child protection procedures and has made arrangements for all staff to receive training in the near future. Risk assessments are in place and carried out before any visits outside the nursery.

**Shortcomings**

No important shortcomings were identified.

#### **4.7 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting**

The quality of the leadership and management of the setting is good with outstanding features.

##### **Outstanding features**

Relationships within the nursery are excellent and staff work together as a team with shared aims and objectives that are focussed on the development and well being of the children.

The nursery benefits from a very evaluative culture. A self-evaluation exercise has been carried out with the whole staff with clear targets for improvement identified. All staff are well aware of these targets and they work together to try to reach them. For example the present outstanding use of incidental Welsh.

##### **Good features**

Staff appraisals are in place and are carried out annually. Personal targets are set and reviewed. Training is provided mainly by the local authority Early Years team. Staff make good use of the ideas and skills gained through training.

The nursery enjoys a good relationship with the Early Years link teacher from the local authority and there is evidence that they have taken her advice.

The nursery is well resourced and the resources are used appropriately to support the planned activities. The need to set up equipment daily and to put it away by a particular time causes some tensions in the management of the day but staff work together well to overcome these.

##### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings but the lack of a dedicated outdoor area is hindering the children's development in some areas.

#### **4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report**

The nursery has made good progress in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report.

## 5.0 Recommendations

### **The setting needs to:**

Continue to provide high quality learning experiences for the children in the nursery.

Build on the very successful start that has been made in the teaching of Welsh language and culture.

Continue to develop the outdoor area as identified in the self evaluation documentation in order to provide children with learning activities linked to those indoors and also opportunities for climbing.

**The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples' Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.**