



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
Little Stars Deeside Ltd
Unit 69
Third Avenue, Zone 2
Deeside Industrial Park
Deeside
Flintshire
CH5 2LS

Date of inspection: November 2010

by

Mary Dyas

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:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Context

Little Stars Deeside Ltd is an English medium setting which serves both the local community and also parents travelling from a distance to work on the industrial estate where it is situated.

The children are considered to come from neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds. They are from mainly English speaking homes, though around 15% come from families where at least one parent speaks another language.

The setting is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks a year. It is registered for up to 75 children aged 0 – 8 years. The pre-school room can take up to 24 children and, at the time of the inspection, there were 19 children on roll of whom 15 were three to four year olds.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2010. It is the settings first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

All children enjoy learning and make good progress

All children are happy and well behaved

The setting provides a wide range of stimulating learning experiences

There are warm and caring relationships between children and staff

Prospects for improvement

The team leader and staff are enthusiastic and keen to improve

Informal self evaluation has been effective in the past in bringing about improvements

Recommendations

- R1 Develop the process of self evaluation to ensure
 - a targets are prioritised to sustain improvement and
 - b the involvement of parents/carers and children
- R2 Improve standards in, and provision for, Welsh language development
- R3 Ensure that planned activities challenge more able children
- R4 Ensure that staff receive up to date training in the safeguarding of children

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the foundation Phase Areas of Learning. Children acquire new knowledge and understanding effectively and enjoy the challenge of new and varied activities. Many are confident learners who are willing to learn from their mistakes, take risks and explore their surroundings.

All three year olds apply their skills well to a wide range of play activities. Many have good communication skills and are beginning to use more complex sentence structures to express themselves. Most children join in with songs and rhymes with enthusiasm and enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults and with their friends. A minority show an interest in writing and are beginning to recognise their own written name.

Most children count objects accurately to three and many are able to do so to five. All join in with counting together to ten. Many children use mathematical language appropriately in their play and are able to recognise and name basic two dimensional shapes.

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Children's progress in Welsh is adequate. While they respond appropriately to the use of Welsh during circle time, they are not yet able to use Welsh spontaneously in their play.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enter the setting happily, are welcomed by their friends and settle immediately into activities. Relationships between children are strong, they know one another well and treat one another with affection and respect. Behaviour is good. Most children work well with others and understand the need to share and to take turns.

All children enjoy their healthy snacks and meals and most are able to explain why it is important to wash their hands before meals or after using the toilet. Many make sensible suggestions when asked how they should carry out an activity.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The setting provides all children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences across all Areas of Learning. Practitioners work well together to plan a wide range of activities which stimulate, engage and challenge most children to learn effectively.

Planned activities effectively develop children's communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The indoor and outdoor environments provide opportunities for children to experiment with new experiences and develop their skills effectively. Visitors to the setting such as the police, fire service and travelling library, enhance the children's experiences.

The provision for children's Welsh language development is superficial. While Welsh is used during registration, practitioners do not use incidental Welsh regularly with the children. St David's Day is well used to enable children to learn about the traditions and celebrations of Wales.

The setting provides few opportunities for children to learn about other peoples and cultures or about sustainability, recycling or the impact we have on the world.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. They know the children very well and adapt their questioning appropriately to the stage of development of individual children. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and encourage them to talk and think about what they are doing.

Practitioners make useful and evaluative observations of children's learning and achievements which are used to inform future plans. Parents and carers have daily opportunities to discuss their child's progress and are provided with a copy of their child's record of progress, 'This is Me', and a portfolio of work when they leave the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Very good procedures are in place to ensure that children have a smooth induction into the setting. Due to the location of the nursery and the fact that many parents travel from considerable distances it is difficult for the setting to have close links with the many primary schools to which the children move on. The setting provides good support for children with additional learning needs. Children integrate well and have access to the full range of activities.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has adequate procedures for safeguarding. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities and have read the policy. Neither managers of the nursery or the staff in the pre-school group have received any recent training in the safeguarding of young children.

The setting has appropriate risk assessments in place. Children and their parents or carers say they feel safe in the setting. Learning experiences promote children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a welcoming environment for the children. Children's work is displayed on the wall together with photographs of activities and events in which the children have been involved. All children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision and children are valued as individuals.

Practitioners are appropriately qualified and the setting is well resourced with a sufficient range of appropriate equipment to support the planned activities. The accommodation bright and inviting and well maintained.

Outdoors, most wheeled vehicles are not suited to the age and ability of the pre-school children. This has been identified in the setting's self evaluation as a target for improvement.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Setting managers work closely with the leader of the pre-school group and are well informed of the work and the children. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and appreciate the work of the setting.

An annual system of staff appraisals is in place where targets for training and improvement are set and evaluated. There is an informal culture of self-evaluation and the continued development of the outdoor area is an example of this.

Improving quality: Adequate

Arrangements for self-evaluation and for planning and securing improvement are adequate. Informally leaders and managers are trying to improve provision and have worked towards specific areas of improvement. However, formal self-evaluation is very much in its early stages. Areas for improvement have been identified but no specific targets have been set. Long term strategic planning and the evaluation of improvement in terms of children's progress are at an early stage of development. The setting leader attends meetings of the National Day Nurseries Association to share ideas and good practice and the pre-school leader had visited another setting to gain ideas for improvement.

Partnership working: Good

The setting uses a range of partnership working to contribute to children's experiences and wellbeing. A monthly planning sheet informs parents about their children's learning and identifies ways in which they can help. The setting makes good use of visitors from the community such as police officers, fire fighters, a mobile library, dental hygienist and parents to enhance children's learning.

The setting enjoys good links with the Early Entitlement link teacher from the local authority who provides advice and practical support. There is evidence that this advice has been taken and acted upon.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are fully deployed within the setting. A good range of good quality resources contributes well to the planned activities. Financial decisions are made by the managers in consultation with the setting leader to ensure that the requirements of the Foundation Phase are met.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Parents are happy with the setting and many are very satisfied with all aspects of the setting. They state that their children are very happy to attend the setting and appreciate the care and attention shown by the practitioners. A minority would like to have more information about their children's progress.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy coming to the setting and that they feel well cared for. A majority say they enjoy books and stories and all appreciate the newly developed outdoor area.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.