



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

**Y Gamfa Wen
Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant
Caerfyrddin
SA31 3EP**

Date of inspection: 20 October 2011

by

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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

Y Gamfa Wen is a purpose built nursery sited on campus of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The university is situated on the outskirts of the town of Carmarthen which is in Carmarthenshire. The nursery is registered for fifty two children at any one time: eighteen from birth to two years of age; eighteen between the ages of two and three and sixteen between the ages of three and five years. At the time of the inspection there were sixteen children in the Foundation Phase group (two-and-a-half to five years) three of whom are funded by the local authority. The nursery is open five mornings a week between 9.30 am and 12.00 pm for thirty eight hours a year.

The nursery is an open plan building which is divided into three areas: Babies (from birth to eighteen months); Toddlers (from eighteen to thirty months) and the Foundation Phase group (from two-and-a-half to five years of age). At present seventy three children in total are registered at the nursery including those who attend part time. Of these, 40% come from families where both parents speak Welsh. A further 40% come from families where one parent speaks Welsh and 20% come from homes where no Welsh is spoken. The setting is open to children of different ethnic origins; at present there is one child from a different ethnic background at the nursery.

Most children at the nursery go on to Ysgol Y Dderwen in Carmarthen. There are close links between nursery practitioners and staff at the school.

There are strong links with the School of Early Childhood at the university and with the university itself. Members of the School of Early Childhood visit the nursery regularly to update practitioners about developments in early years education and to share ideas. The registered person is the university's Human Resources director who also visits the nursery regularly to offer support with any issues which arise.

At the time of the inspection three children of three years of age receive funding. There are no children with additional learning needs (ALN) at present.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in January 2011. This is its first inspection by Estyn.

The setting is registered as a private nursery under the Children Act 1989 and it has a management committee. Four practitioners are employed for the Foundation Phase group all of whom have appropriate qualifications in early years education. The leader and her deputy have degrees in early years education, one practitioner has an NVQ level 4 qualification in child care and another an NVQ level 3 in child care. Sixteen practitioners are employed in total at the nursery all of whom have appropriate qualifications.

The children who attend the nursery come from Carmarthen and the surrounding area. The area is recognised as one which is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. Parents choose the nursery so that their children receive Welsh language education.

There is a secure entrance to the nursery and it has good resources which include an enclosed outdoor area which is divided into a grassed area planted with trees, a small garden and a hard surfaced area. The open plan room is adequate in size for the number of children registered.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good for the following reasons:

- there is an inclusive ethos and every child feels happy and safe;
- children achieve well according to their stage of development;
- teaching is good;
- assessment through observation is good and is used effectively to inform the next steps in learning, and
- staff work well as a team.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good for the following reasons:

- there is a developing culture of professional reflection based on self-evaluation;
- there is good leadership, and
- a commitment to continuous professional development.

Recommendations

In order to further improve provision and achievements providers will need to:

R1 Ensure that children's learning experiences are not over-directed and that provision and day-to-day organisation are more flexible.

R2 Integrate fully the indoor and outdoor areas and use the grassed area to its full potential when planning children's experiences.

R3 Use the self-evaluation process to identify and prioritise areas for improvement and set targets to achieve them with clear criteria for monitoring their success.

What happens next?

The nursery will produce an action plan to indicate how these recommendations will be implemented successfully.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Judgement

Standards: Judgement

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language or their welfare because there are too few children of three years of age to report on without identifying individuals.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners plan together as a team after discussing and evaluating the provision and outcomes of the previous week. They discuss the achievements and needs of individual children and evaluate the observations they have made using the information gathered to inform the next cycle of provision; this is a good feature. Planning responds well to the interests and needs of the children on the whole and a range of interesting learning experiences is planned which enables children to make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase. Although planning is generally effective, it focuses on defined outcomes and is not always sufficiently flexible to allow changes of direction when the planned activities do not sustain children's interest or challenge them sufficiently. Adults build well on children's knowledge, understanding, skills and interests.

Their learning experiences help children to begin to become enthusiastic and confident learners and all receive good opportunities to develop creative, physical, language and mathematical skills. They begin to develop thinking skills when they receive opportunities to explore their environment and during role play. Children enjoy opportunities to explore the world around them when visiting a nearby wood and through such activities as planting and tending flowers and vegetables. Their knowledge of sustainable development is promoted by re-cycling paper and waste food to make compost.

Through engaging in their learning experiences and cooperating within their close learning community, children receive many opportunities to develop good relationships with others and to show respect and tolerance towards all including those from other cultural backgrounds.

The children are encouraged by the practitioners to speak in Welsh at all times and practitioners extend their language consistently through stories, rhymes and songs. They celebrate the Welsh culture in a range of ways including celebrating Saint David's Day, Saint Dwynwen's day and through Welsh folk dancing.

The children enjoy visits to exciting places linked to the termly theme, for example, to see boats on the sea shore.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners receive regular training in child development and current developments in the field and they understand well the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They have high expectations of each child according to their stage of development. Practitioners manage behaviour in a sensitive and positive way and as a consequence, children learn lifelong dispositions including the importance of showing respect, sensitivity and kindness towards others.

Practitioners generally make good use of questioning to extend children's learning but it is not always sufficiently challenging. Teaching is at its best when children choose which activities they want to engage in and have ample time to explore and enjoy their experiences receiving appropriate support. Practitioners sometimes intervene effectively in children's activities while they are at play to extend their learning but some tasks have outcomes which are too prescriptive.

The organisation is flexible at times giving children good opportunities to make decisions and choices about their learning and promoting well their independence. It is, however, over-directed at other times.

Practitioners know and understand the children well and have a close relationship with each of them. They assess by observing the children at their learning experiences, identifying significant things and discussing their findings. Practitioners use the information gathered to inform the next cycle of planning. Continuous records are kept of the achievements of children and they contain useful and thorough information which gives a clear picture of each child's achievements. Practitioners record children's progress regularly in all areas of learning and use this information to meet the needs and interests of children well. Parents receive a comprehensive report about their children's achievements and progress when they leave the nursery to go to school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners have created a family atmosphere in the setting where children feel very comfortable and happy. Each child is valued and respected.

They develop well the children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit by following a healthy pre-school programme which promotes nurture, discipline, hygiene and dental health.

Children's curiosity about their lives and beliefs and those of others is developed well. They learn well about the beliefs of others for example by celebrating the Chinese New Year and cooking Chinese food with a parent of one of the children. They say a prayer before eating and the university chaplain comes to talk to them about the main Christian festivals at Harvest time, Christmas and on Saint David's day. They develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them when visiting the wood, observing a hedgehog in the garden and through growing vegetables in the outdoor area and eating them.

Practitioners nurture very well the morals and values they believe are necessary to the holistic development of the responsible child. The children learn about the importance of fairness, honesty and truth and they know well the difference between right and wrong in the context of their young lives. The provision enables children to socialise well and to develop a good understanding of life and sharing in their small community. They have some opportunities to make decisions and all enjoy their experiences in the nursery.

The relationships between the nursery, the schools it feeds and outside agencies are good. The close relationship between the nursery and the schools to which the children transfer ensures the successful transition of the children when they begin in the nursery class.

The relationship between parents and the setting is very good. A selection of parents said they were very satisfied with all aspects of the setting's provision and they consider that the practitioners know their children well. They feel that their children are very well looked after and that they can go to the leader to discuss any matter. Practitioners have received training in child protection and know well the procedures to follow. All necessary procedures for child protection are in place and they reflect the requirements of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008.

There are no children with additional learning needs at present and every child has access to all areas of learning and all the learning experiences provided.

Learning environment: Good

There is a warm and positive ethos in the nursery. Adults show great affection and kindness towards the children and every child is valued. Practitioners know the needs and interests of the children well and respond to them by using their thorough knowledge of their backgrounds. All children have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. As a result of the affection and respect for the child and the values and standards displayed by the staff, children develop tolerance, positive attitudes towards their learning and good behaviour.

The nursery has very positive policies and procedures to deal with any problems of aggressive behaviour, to promote equal opportunities and the rights of the child and these are known to everyone. They are monitored and implemented effectively. The nursery is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and there were no recommendations made in the last report. Risk assessments are conducted regularly.

There is a good ratio of adults to children and practitioners are well qualified. The nursery is a purpose built building and has very good facilities. The room is adequate for the number of children on the register at present. They have enough space for role play, to paint, to look through books and also enjoy learning experiences outdoors. All children show concern and kindness towards their peers, adults and visitors.

Children receive a range of experiences which promote their creative, physical, and mathematical and language skills. The nursery makes good use of the university's

resources and the children benefit from their visits to its library.

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

The leader gives clear direction to the nursery and the process of improvement. She and her deputy work together well and share clear principles and objectives which are based on child development. Leaders succeed in creating a positive and happy ethos.

Both fulfil their responsibilities effectively, demonstrate a strong commitment to their role in the interests of the children and both contribute to the strategic planning of the nursery. The leader and her deputy share the values they wish to promote in staff meetings. They have high expectations and set targets which ensure good provision and they address underperformance effectively.

The leader ensures that practitioners receive regular training from a number of sources: the local authority; Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and the university's School of Early Childhood, in order to extend their knowledge of current developments. The leader appraises practitioners' performance regularly. There are good links between the leader and the parents.

The management committee is well informed about what happens at the nursery and is very supportive of it. Its members understand their roles well and they fulfil them conscientiously. They are knowledgeable about the performance of the setting and there are regular discussions between the registered person and the leader. The committee makes use of this information to make decisions about the nursery and it fulfils its legal duties.

The leader meets national and local priorities as required by the Assembly and the Local Authority.

Improving quality: Good

There is a developing culture of reflection in the setting which is based on self-evaluation.

The leader and her deputy make good use of self-evaluation to identify strengths but do not identify areas for improvement as effectively. They consult with parents, carers, staff, the management committee and the children to inform self-evaluation; this is a good feature. They use the information gained from questionnaires to parents and carers to gather views and to identify areas they have noted for development.

After the self-evaluation process, a setting improvement plan is produced which contains targets to raise standards by improving provision. Not every target, however, is identified by the process of self-evaluation, neither are targets prioritised.

The self-evaluation report identifies some areas in need of improvement which will ensure positive benefits for all children

A system of appraisal is in place and practitioners have good opportunities to reflect on their performance and identify areas they wish to develop through training in order to improve the provision.

Planning for improvement is good overall.

Partnership working: Good

The nursery has a strong partnership with parents and carers. It provides them with regular information by letter and the 'home boxes' project gives them good opportunities to know about what their children learn.

The leader works effectively with the local authority advisory teacher for the Foundation Phase, the officer from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and members of the university's School of Early Childhood who monitor provision and make regular inputs into training. All are very supportive of the nursery.

The staff works closely with stakeholders and is very willing to consult with and to receive suggestions from parents and guardians.

The partnerships between the nursery and the schools it feeds are good, in particular with the school to which most children transfer. Meetings are held every term to discuss the children who will move to the school the following term in order to ease the transition for them.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are well deployed in order to make the most effective use of their strengths and to ensure the best provision. They make effective use of resources indoors to provide interesting experiences for children. They measure the effect of resources on the learning and teaching and plan in order to ensure a good supply of resources for the future. The best use is not always made of the outdoor area and as a result important opportunities to stimulate the children and enrich their learning experiences in all areas of learning are lost.

Leaders make good use of the setting's resources overall. The budget is managed effectively in order to offer good provision. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The comments of those parents/carers who responded to the questionnaires were very positive.

Responses to discussions with children

Every child was comfortable talking with a visitor and all said they were very happy in the nursery. They talked about their friends and said they knew what to do and who to speak to if they were unhappy or upset about something.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Branwen Llewelyn Jones	Reporting Inspector

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.

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