



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
Zone2
Deeside Ind Park
Flintshire
CH5 2LA**

Date of inspection: February 2017

by

**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 a day nursery situated on the Deeside Industrial Estate in the Flintshire local authority. The nursery is registered for up to 75 children under the age of eight years and is open Monday to Friday from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm. There were 42 children on the register during the inspection. Seventeen three year olds receive early years funding from the local authority. The pre-school room leader took over the role in July 2016 covering a maternity leave and is supported by three other members of staff. All have appropriate early years qualifications and suitable experience of working with young children.

Most children who attend the nursery come from as far as Manchester to the east and Flint to the west. Most have English as their home language and a very few come from homes where Welsh is spoken. The setting identified that there are currently very few children attending with additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in January 2015 and by Estyn in November 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children are developing good mark making skills in a range of contexts both indoors and outdoors
- Most children demonstrate competent numeracy skills as they count by rote beyond ten and count objects accurately to at least five
- Nearly all children arrive at the setting full of enthusiasm and interest
- Nearly all behave well and understand the importance of sharing and kindness
- Nearly all children engage in their learning well
- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating first hand learning experiences that promote Foundation Phase learning successfully
- The setting provides a caring and nurturing environment and promotes children's wellbeing effectively
- Nearly all children co-operate well
- Practitioners provide valuable support and challenge children effectively

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The proprietor and nursery manager provide clear direction and support with a strong focus on ensuring that all children make successful progress in a caring and happy environment
- The room leader has established a strong team of practitioners who work together effectively to improve teaching and provision
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the areas in which the setting needs to improve
- Regular meetings enable staff to plan together and to keep the children's records up to date.
- There is a clear system of performance management with appropriate targets for individual improvement
- Practitioners access training regularly enabling them to keep up-to-date with recent developments in the Foundation Phase
- The setting's self-evaluation process is an accurate reflection of the its strengths and areas for improvement
- The setting has a good range of beneficial partnerships that contribute to children's progress and wellbeing successfully

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills

R2 Ensure that planned activities provide sufficient challenge for more able children

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During their time in the setting, most children achieve good standards and make worthwhile progress from their starting points. Most listen attentively and respond enthusiastically when working with adults. They enjoy listening to stories and show their interest when joining in with familiar sections and responding appropriately to questions. Nearly all children enjoy mark-making using a wide range of different materials and equipment. For example, they make interesting patterns in shaving foam and experiment outdoors mixing different colours of paint. Nearly all are developing their speaking and listening skills well. When discussing whom they are going to make their Valentine card for they take turns holding Lola the tiger to speak. All know that when someone else is speaking they need to be quiet and listen. Older children are beginning to write their own name on their work and to record that it is their turn to be the 'helpwr heddiw' for the day.

Most children count confidently past ten and name simple shapes such as circles, squares and triangles. They use mathematical language confidently during their play when they compare whose tower of blocks is higher and whether a truck in the sand tray is full or empty. However, children's use and understanding of ICT is underdeveloped.

Most children are developing an appropriate understanding of the Welsh language. They follow basic instructions in Welsh and respond appropriately using simple words and phrases. Many children are developing their thinking skills successfully, for example squashing the legs onto a playdough spider when asked how they are going stay on.

Nearly all develop beneficial physical skills as they run, ride bikes and scooters and play in the adventurous outdoor area. They develop their fine motor skills successfully through a comprehensive range of activities including cutting and sticking to create pictures and making marks and patterns in shaving foam.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children arrive happily at the setting and are eager to join in with the day's activities. They are familiar with the routines and move confidently between adult-focused and child-led activities. Most concentrate well for extended periods. For example, when building houses for different zoo animals indoors or creating an assault course from tyres and planks in the outdoor learning area.

Nearly all children behave well. They co-operate easily with one another and understand the need to share and to take turns, such as when they blow bubbles outdoors for others to burst. At breakfast time, they understand that they need to wash their hands before eating and demonstrate effective social skills as they sit and chat with their friends.

Getting ready to go outside in the winter months enables most children to develop good independent skills. Most find their own storage tray, put on boots and coats by themselves and line up quietly when they are ready. Nearly all children show a developing sense of responsibility when helping to tidy up at the end of a session.

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

Practitioners plan a stimulating range of interesting and engaging activities across nearly all Foundation Phase areas of learning. Planning for the development of children's thinking skills is good. For example, children investigate whether objects are wet or dry and learn that when it is very cold water turns into ice. As a result, most children make worthwhile progress in their learning.

Practitioners work effectively together to embed a systematic process of planning that takes account the development of individual children's skills and needs appropriately. Planning for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills is flexible and takes good account of children's interests. The setting held a superhero day in response to the interest of a group of older children. Staff and children dressed up for the day and planned many exciting activities linked to the theme. However, planning does not always challenge children that are more able consistently well enough.

Effective use is made of the local community to enhance children's learning experiences. Practitioners develop children's understanding of the world around them successfully through inviting visitors such as firefighters, police and ambulance workers to talk about their jobs. Children are developing a valuable understanding of the importance of caring for living things through planting in the outdoor area and caring for the fish in their classroom.

Practitioners promote children's Welsh language skills consistently well. They use Welsh effectively during group sessions and encourage children to respond in Welsh appropriately. Children develop their awareness of Welsh culture and traditions successfully when they celebrate St David's Day by dressing up in national costume, and cooking and tasting Welsh foods.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. They appreciate the importance of presenting children with a wide variety of opportunities to learn through play and active involvement. They provide children with worthwhile support while encouraging them to explore and investigate for themselves. All practitioners are good role models for language and make good use of stories, songs and rhymes to sustain children's interest and to enrich their vocabulary.

Practitioners manage behaviour well and sustain children's interest by ensuring tasks are not too long and use effective questioning and praise to good effect. They use the outdoor area consistently well to encourage children to explore and experiment with the extensive range of natural and man-made materials available. As a result most children are happy to undertake new learning experiences.

Regular recording of observations of individuals and groups of children provides practitioners with useful information to identify strengths and children's next steps in learning. Practitioners use these assessments to inform future planning effectively. However, planning for children who are more able is not always challenging enough. There is an open invitation for parents to discuss information about their child's progress at any time. At the end of the year, the setting invites parents to meet with their child's keyworker to discuss their progress in depth and to receive an informative written report.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has an effective range of policies and procedures that support children's health and wellbeing successfully. For example, practitioners ensure that children understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before cooking and eating food. The setting provides meals and snacks throughout the day, following a varied menu based on healthy eating principles.

Children have daily access to the outdoor area for beneficial lengths of time and are encouraged to take vigorous physical exercise. The regular use of the outdoors and occasional visits to the land behind the setting across the differing seasons contributes well to developing children's sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live. Suitable arrangements are in place for children to learn about the importance of recycling materials such as paper and plastic.

There are well-established procedures in place to support children with additional needs. The nursery proprietor oversees this provision effectively and provides access to a useful network of external agencies to provide extra support and advice when required. Celebrations such as Chinese New Year and the saints' days of the countries of the United Kingdom, encourage children's awareness of other cultures well.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to resources and learning opportunities. Suitably qualified practitioners work together successfully and know the children well. They create a warm and welcoming environment and, as a result, children enjoy their time in the setting. The building and outdoor areas are clean, well maintained and secure.

Practitioners make good use of the available space to create a well-resourced and attractive learning environment for the children. The room is bright and welcoming and children have easy access to the plentiful, good quality resources. Attractive displays of children's recent work reflect learning activities well. The outdoor learning area is a real strength of the setting.

Different areas of learning enable children to widen their understanding of the world through independent and group exploration and investigation effectively. For example, children are free to dig or to plant. A range of tyres, planks and crates, which children move around freely, form exciting structures or assault courses. These activities provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about taking risks and managing their safety within a secure environment.

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

The nursery proprietor and manager oversee the work of the pre-school room well. They have a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and provide strong support and appropriate challenge for the relatively newly established team.

The room leader manages the setting successfully and works closely with her team to ensure that all children make worthwhile progress in a caring and happy environment. All staff have clear and up to date job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities clearly. They work together well with a shared vision and set of values and support one another positively throughout the sessions. The current team is relatively new and have worked closely together to establish new systems of planning and assessment of children's progress. As a result, they are developing a growing understanding of the specific needs of individual children and are beginning to plan activities to meet those needs effectively.

The well-established programme of staff appraisal enables managers and staff to reflect on their performance and to plan appropriate training and support.

The setting implements national and local priorities well. The outdoor area provides good opportunities for independent learning and leaders focus on developing children's understanding of keeping healthy successfully.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders know the setting well and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. The self-evaluation process is a well-established part of the life and work of the setting. Leaders identify strengths and areas for development clearly with purposeful support from the local authority support teacher. They use this information successfully to create useful action plans. These include specific targets for improvement and clear success criteria by which they are able to evaluate progress.

There is a clear system in place to review progress towards meeting the targets in the current action plan regularly and the setting is making good progress towards achieving its current targets. For example, all practitioners are now following a new system to record children's progress, which enables them to identify next steps in learning more purposefully. They have also recently improved the provision for creative development by placing musical instruments both outside and within the classroom. As a result, children's interest has increased and they are able to access the equipment more independently.

Leaders work well with other agencies such as the local authority support teacher and the National Day Nurseries Association Wales (NDNA) to improve provision and to raise standards. Practitioners regularly visit other settings to gain ideas on developing their outdoor area. All staff are open to new ideas and keen to apply them to improve children's learning experiences within the setting.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a broad range of beneficial partnerships that contribute to children's progress and wellbeing successfully. Practitioners work closely with parents and ensure that they receive useful information about the work of the setting via monthly newsletters, via a parent hub on their website and through social media. Newsletters give useful information about all the age groups in the nursery and 'activities at home' sheets provide parents with specific things they can do with their children to support and enhance the activities in the setting. Parent's evenings are held annually and parents are invited to arrange other meetings during the year should they wish to. Practitioners in the pre-school room share the children's Foundation Phase Profiles with their parents, giving them a beneficial insight into their child's progress. .

Nearly all children transfer from the younger age groups to the pre-school room smoothly. They have regular opportunities to visit for increasing lengths of time, accompanied by a familiar staff member if necessary, enabling them to settle happily and quickly. Children from the setting move on to a very wide range of schools, often long distances away. Practitioners help to make this as easy as possible by contacting every school and inviting staff to visit if they wish.

Partnership with the local authority support teacher is strong and effective. Leaders are open to new ideas and recommendations and adapt these to the setting's needs appropriately.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a sufficient number of experienced, well qualified staff to support children's learning well. Practitioners develop their professional knowledge effectively through a range of training opportunities linked to their performance management targets. They share this knowledge positively within the setting to bring about improvements. For example, the high quality development of the outdoor learning area was the direct result of staff attending a Forest School training session.

A part time accounts manager oversees the setting's budget efficiently. Leaders have a good understanding of the finances available and ensure that good procedures are in place to support the targets for improvement identified in the setting's action plan.

The quality of the provision and the commitment of the leaders and practitioners clearly demonstrate that the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	34	24 71%	10 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	34	25 74%	9 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	34	28 82%	6 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	14%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	34	25 74%	9 26%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	34	21 62%	11 32%	1 3%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	28%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	34	19 56%	13 38%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	34	23 68%	11 32%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		83%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	34	22 65%	10 29%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	34	25 74%	8 24%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	34	18 53%	9 26%	0 0%	0 0%	7	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	34	15 44%	17 50%	1 3%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	31%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	34	22 65%	11 32%	1 3%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	34	20 59%	10 29%	2 6%	0 0%	2	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	34	13 38%	16 47%	0 0%	0 0%	5	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	34	14 41%	11 32%	7 21%	0 0%	2	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	34	24 71%	10 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Elspeth 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.wales)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.