



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
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA31 3EP**

Date of inspection: June 2015

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 Day Nursery is accommodated in a purpose built building on the campus of University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Carmarthen. The setting is registered to provide full day care for up to fifty-two children under the age of eight at any time. Currently, there are eighty-five children on roll. Approximately 47% of the children come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. A few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The nursery is open for five days a week from eight in the morning until six o'clock in the evening. During the inspection, there were seventeen children in the Foundation Phase group aged two and a half to five. Three children receive funded early years education. There were no children with additional learning needs in the group.

In addition to the manager, five members of staff work with the Foundation Phase group. They are experienced and suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. The manager has been in post since 2010.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in October 2014 and by Estyn in October 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Practitioners provide children with a wide range of stimulating experiences
- There are good opportunities for children to use their Welsh speaking skills in different situations
- There is effective provision to develop children's creative skills
- The very good relationship between children and practitioners develops their confidence as learners
- Constructive approaches promote very good standards of behaviour
- Effective teaching ensures the active involvement of children in their learning
- The promotion of children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment is a strength
- The setting provides a happy, caring and supportive environment for all children

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The manager provides strong leadership to the setting's work
- Practitioners fulfil their roles conscientiously and work effectively as a team
- Leaders have high expectations that are reflected in their commitment to children's education and development
- Practitioners demonstrate positive attitudes towards further professional development
- The self-evaluation report identifies appropriate areas for development
- The setting development plan sets appropriate priorities including extending children's literacy and numeracy skills further
- Resources are used constructively to support learning
- The strong links and effective collaboration with a range of partnerships supports children's learning and wellbeing

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen planning to show the development of children's skills clearly
- R2 Refine assessment procedures and extend the use of the information collected to support planning
- R3 Develop the self-evaluation procedures by giving more attention to aspects of teaching and learning

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?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is broad and meets the needs and interests of children effectively overall. Activities are organised around a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. All practitioners are involved in the planning sessions and this ensures that the objectives and organisation of activities are clear to everyone. There are appropriate opportunities for children to contribute to the planning by suggesting additional activities.

There is suitable use of frameworks, which are appropriately linked to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, to plan provision. The frameworks set out the learning objectives and list activities appropriately. At times, however, the planning does not show the progressive development of children's skills clearly.

There is effective provision to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills. Welsh is the natural medium of the life and work of the setting. During group sessions, there are valuable opportunities for children to listen to stories, talk about their activities, join in songs and rhymes, and use their marking skills. As a result, most children use their literacy skills purposefully in their activities. For example, children use their Welsh oral skills confidently to converse with one another when playing in the ice cream shop.

There are constructive opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during circle time, group work and in their play. For example, the experience of counting and sorting socks by colour and pattern provides effective opportunities for children to use their thinking and number skills in a practical context. The task of explaining in their own words what is similar and what is different provides an additional challenge for children.

Productive experiences promote children's information and communication technology skills appropriately, and extend their investigative and physical skills. A wide range of interesting experiences develops children's creative skills effectively. They include experimenting with different media and materials to create collages, paintings, drawings, printings, and to emulate the work of a well-known artist.

The children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales is developed effectively through activities such as celebrating St. David's Day and St. Dwynwen's Day. There is appropriate use of visits and visitors to support children's learning. For example, the visits to a local chapel, the National Botanic Garden of Wales and a beach promote children's awareness of some of the features of their local area. In addition, people who visit the setting, such as a minister, firemen and postman, develop children's knowledge of people's different roles in the community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They provide a wide range of experiences that engage children's interest and secure their active involvement in their learning. There is an appropriate balance between activities that are chosen by the children and activities which are led by practitioners.

Practitioners create a happy and positive learning environment for children. They intervene sensitively in children's play to provide support and to ensure appropriate progress. For example, they introduce relevant vocabulary consistently and this assists children to talk about their experiences confidently. Planning for activities led by practitioners gives due regard to the range of children's learning needs. On occasion, however, the introductions to these activities are too long.

Practitioners know the children well and use comprehensive procedures to assess and record their progress. They observe children during activities and record any significant developments. Currently, there is some duplication in the records kept. Practitioners make appropriate use of the information collected to assist in planning aspects of the provision but procedures are not fully embedded. Children's initial self-assessment skills are promoted through suitable opportunities to express an opinion about activities they like.

Parents are informed effectively about their children's achievements and progress through regular dialogue and through detailed written reports. The collection of photographs of children participating in activities is an interesting record of their experiences at the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A family ethos exists in the setting and practitioners are caring and supportive of all children. A range of appropriate policies and daily routines promote children's health and wellbeing effectively. They include effective opportunities to raise children's awareness of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. Being part of the Design to Smile and the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school scheme, for example, helps practitioners to promote children's knowledge of good practice in caring for their health.

Experiences of a high standard successfully develop children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things. They include visits to the nearby forest school to explore the features of the natural world around them in a safe and exciting environment.

Children are encouraged to be involved in a wide range of recycling activities. The experiences of collecting litter around the setting, which they sort into recycling sacks and sacks of waste, plus a visit to the town's recycling site promote children's understanding of the recycling process. The setting is well aware of the importance of acting sustainably and has been awarded the Eco Schools Green Flag for the second time.

Practitioners work well together to promote important values such as being kind, sharing and respecting others. As a result, all the children are very well behaved. Children are encouraged to share their feelings, such as what makes them happy or sad. Practitioners respond sensitively to children's views. The good emphasis on caring for the environment and all living things, Christmas celebrations and saying a prayer before snack contribute appropriately to children's spiritual development. Taking part in activities to raise money for good causes, for example, raises children's awareness of the importance of caring for others.

There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about other people's cultures and celebrations. They include celebrating the Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, and the festival of Divali through a range of appropriate experiences including art and craft activities.

There is an appropriate policy and procedures for responding to children with additional learning needs, when required.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting's ethos creates a welcoming and happy environment for children. It is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to the learning experiences. Practitioners consider and value children's diverse backgrounds and respond appropriately.

There is an appropriate number of experienced practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Overall, there are plenty of suitable resources in all learning areas. They are accessible to children and this promotes independent learning effectively.

The building offers very good facilities. There is effective use of indoor space by organising learning activities around the room. The outdoor area provides an interesting and varied environment where children can develop and apply their skills in a range activities. The building and site are clean and safe.

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

Leadership: Good

The manager provides strong leadership to the setting's work. She has established a constructive working relationship with the deputy manager, who has responsibility for co-ordinating the Foundation Phase at the setting. They share clear aims and values which are successfully reflected in the setting's ethos and provision. All practitioners understand their roles and work effectively as a team. This ensures an orderly and purposeful environment for children. Appropriate policies and procedures are implemented with care.

There is successful collaboration between the manager and University staff on a range of issues relating to the management of the setting. For example, University staff offer valuable guidance on statutory requirements and financial matters. The registered person provides constructive support on policies, and contributes to staff appointments and performance management procedures. There is a suitable system to appraise the work of practitioners and to identify further professional development needs.

The setting gives appropriate consideration to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's Welsh language skills and promoting healthy eating.

Improving quality: Good

The manager has a secure understanding of the setting's strengths and the main areas for improvement. This is based on information gathered through staff meetings, observations of provision, and discussion sessions with individual practitioners to provide further guidance. However, more detailed consideration of aspects of teaching and learning is not fully developed.

The self-evaluation report offers a balanced review of provision. Many of the areas identified for attention are included clearly in the setting development plan. They include extending children's literacy and numeracy skills further. The development plan, which includes a timetable and outlines responsibilities, is being implemented appropriately.

Practitioners respond positively to external advice. The productive collaboration with the local authority link teacher provides appropriate opportunities to evaluate and develop aspects of provision. The changes to the planning system are an example. The implementation of new policies and guidelines is discussed constructively with the Mudiad Meithrin development officer.

The manager seeks parents' views on provision appropriately through discussion and through questionnaires. The practice of seeking children's views on aspects of provision provides them with an opportunity to contribute to the self-evaluation arrangements. The regular liaison with University staff and the purposeful use of the advice provided contributes to the setting's development.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works productively with a range of partners who contribute effectively to the quality of provision and children's wellbeing. The aims and objectives of the setting are shared with partners.

There is a strong partnership with parents and this was confirmed during the inspection. Parents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the progress their children are making at the setting. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work through daily conversations, the notice board, posters and newsletters. Practitioners are regularly available for discussion at the beginning and the end of the day.

The strong links with the University offer children and practitioners good opportunities to use a range of resources and facilities. The links with the primary school to which most children transfer promotes a smooth transition for children to the next stage of their education. Transition processes include worthwhile visits by children to their new school and discussions between staff.

Links with the community through visits and the contribution of visitors enrich children's learning. In addition, members of the wider community support the setting by, for example, supporting fundraising activities.

Resource management: Good

The manager ensures an appropriate level of staffing to deliver the Foundation Phase and cater for children's wellbeing. There is productive use of practitioners' time and skills. Overall, resources are used effectively to support the teaching and learning. The setting's building and grounds are well maintained. Practitioners succeed in creating an attractive and colourful environment for children.

Practitioners receive appropriate training on the requirements of the Foundation Phase and aspects of child development through the local authority and the University's School of Early Childhood. Training has a positive impact on aspects such as promoting children's language skills and their creative development.

Visits to other settings arranged by the manager have been productive in providing opportunities for practitioners to share experiences and observe good practice. Practitioners make appropriate use of training opportunities to gain further qualifications in early years education.

The manager has a clear understanding of the budget and manages expenditure carefully in line with setting priorities.

Given the quality of leadership, the learning experiences and the care and support for children, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector –

Dorothy Morris	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)

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.