



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**ONS Acorns
Government Buildings
Cardiff Rd
Newport
NP10 8XG**

Date of inspection: September 2015

by

**Mary Dyas
Reporting Inspector**

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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About the setting

ONS Acorns is an English-medium setting that serves staff employed in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Newport, South Wales. Children move to the pre-school room the term after their third birthday.

At the time of the inspection, there were thirteen pre-school children. Of these eight three year-olds and one four year-old were in receipt of funded educational provision. All children attending the nursery have English as their first language and none has a parent at home who speaks Welsh. A few children have additional learning needs and the setting has good policies and procedures in place to support them.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in July 2014. Estyn last inspected the setting in March 2011

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- There is a warm and caring ethos where all children are respected as individuals
- Staff work well together
- Teaching is of a consistently good standard
- The range of activities successfully engages and supports children's learning
- Nearly all children enjoy their learning and make good progress

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- practitioners are committed to improving the provision;
- the current self-evaluation document accurately reflects the current practice in the setting;
- practitioners have set realistic and manageable targets for improvement; and there is good evidence that they are working towards meeting current targets.

Recommendations

R1. Extend the current assessment procedures to enable children to take part in their own assessment and target setting.

R2. Provide parents with more specific information of how their child is doing and what they can do to help them to improve.

R3. Provide opportunities for practitioners to visit other non-maintained settings to further develop their professional knowledge and understanding

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

Nearly all children make good progress in relation to their age and starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Almost all are growing in confidence in their ability to express themselves and are developing a good vocabulary. They understand and follow instructions and answer questions appropriately. Nearly all children listen attentively to stories and show their interest when they join in, comment on what is happening or remember a familiar part.

Most children count confidently together by rote to ten and many are able to do this independently. Most children are able to count objects accurately to five and many are able to do this to ten. A few older children are able to recognise numerals to ten. Most children are able to recognise and name basic two-dimensional shapes such as circle, square and triangle. Many children concentrate for extended periods and most see a task through to its conclusion, for example when building a house of bricks in the outdoor area. Nearly all children recognise that Welsh is a different language and show that they understand the words and phrases that they hear during the day. Many are beginning to use these words during circle time and occasionally they use familiar Welsh words during the course of their play.

Wellbeing: Good

Children are relaxed and happy in the setting. Nearly all come in happily in the morning and are eager to see what the day holds for them. They are confident when playing and make clear choices about the activities in which they would like to participate. Nearly all children interact positively with one another and with adults and behaviour in the setting is good. Nearly all children understand the need to take turns and to share toys and objects and most manage this successfully. The majority are keen to talk about their experiences and are confident to ask for help from adults. All children have good attitudes to learning as illustrated by their perseverance and concentration on their tasks.

Most children co-operate well with one another and work together happily. They play happily on their own, in pairs or in small groups. Most are involved in making decisions about what they would like to learn and make appropriate suggestions for the practitioners to include in their planning.

Most children are developing their independence well. They pour their own drinks successfully, wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating and help to tidy up after their activities both indoors and outdoors.

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

Practitioners work together to plan a range of interesting learning experiences that successfully engages all children. As a result, nearly all children make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. There are good opportunities in place for children to make decisions about what they would like to learn and they contribute ideas on a regular basis. This is a good feature of the setting.

Planned focus tasks where the children work with adults build systematically on children's previous knowledge, understanding and skills and take into account the needs of children of different abilities. Practitioners know the children well and adapt their teaching and interaction appropriately to the needs of individuals.

Children learn about different cultures and traditions through the celebration of meaningful festivals, for example Chinese New Year, Diwali and Holi. A good range of information communication technology ensures that the children develop effective skills. Children have good opportunities to learn about caring for living things by taking care of their plants in the outdoor garden. Practitioners use Welsh effectively to encourage the children throughout the session and as a result, the children are beginning to use the Welsh that they know spontaneously in their play. The setting places a suitable emphasis on Welsh traditions and celebrations, such as celebrating Saint David's day.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners are well qualified and experienced and have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase principles and of how children learn and develop. They use a wide range of approaches to stimulate play and make every effort to provide the children with experiences that are fun and that stimulate them to want to find out more.

Adults understand the need to give children sufficient time to complete a task or to develop an idea and intervene appropriately and sensitively when needed. They make good use of asking the children open questions that help to develop their thinking skills and enable the practitioners themselves to assess the children's level of understanding.

Practitioners make daily notes of children's achievements and enter the information into the children's profile books. This information informs the local authority's transition records. There are currently no arrangements for setting individual pupil targets to help the children and their parents to see what they need to do to improve. Parents are able to see these records at any time and are shown them at the two open evenings which take place during the autumn and summer terms.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children. Practitioners know the children very well and value them as individuals. They are good role models and this encourages children to treat one another with kindness and respect.

All children in the setting are beginning to learn and understand about sustainability when they recycle the paper that they use and take it to the ONS post room for the next stage in the recycling process.

Transition into the setting is smooth and tailored to the needs of individual children. There are good procedures in place to ensure that children with additional learning needs receive appropriate support.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The caring attitude of the staff and the range of activities on offer serve to provide a warm and caring atmosphere for the children. Staff know the children well and recognise each child's individuality. All children have equal access to a suitable curriculum. The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which help to eliminate disruption or oppressive behaviour appropriately. There is a real sense of busyness when the children are engaged in their chosen activities.

Staff are well qualified with a wealth of experience of working with young children. The setting uses its resources effectively to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the children's needs. Children are able to access equipment independently and this promotes their sense of responsibility well. The recent move of the pre-school group to the present area has provided good space for the full range of activities and this is supported by the dedicated outdoor learning area. All areas of learning are available to the children daily. Practitioners make the most of the nursery Forest School area and of the local woodland.

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

Staff fully understand their roles and work together well as a team. They share responsibilities effectively between them. The qualified teacher provided by the Acorns group plans the lessons she teaches in line with the current topic. There is a positive ethos and a commitment to providing the best possible experiences for all children. The nursery has suitable arrangements for the review of staff performance that links to training opportunities. All staff focus effectively on the care of individual children.

Staff attend appropriate training, which has a beneficial effect on the quality of provision. The management of the Acorns group is effective and supportive, for example in the early provision of a teacher to cover maternity leave to ensure that the hand over is smooth for the children. The setting has addressed national and local priorities such as healthy eating and outdoor learning.

Improving quality: Good

Changes in staff have meant that there has not been a consistent process of review of the setting's self-evaluation. The current self-evaluation review indicates a developing understanding of the quality of its provision and leadership and a sound knowledge of the standards the children achieve. It identifies appropriate areas of strength and targets for improvement. The setting sends out questionnaires to parents annually - responses are very positive.

Areas for improvement identify individuals responsible for implementing the targets, appropriate timescales and success criteria. The self-evaluation and targets in the development plan link appropriately. Areas for improvement identify individuals responsible for implementing the targets, appropriate timescales and success criteria. The setting takes good note of suggestions from the local authority's advisory teacher, for example introducing Welsh phrases to the children in snack time

Partnership working: Good

Parents are appreciative of the work of the nursery and feel that the setting supports their children well both educationally and emotionally. Practitioners speak to parents every day about what their child has been doing and they celebrate success.

Children in the setting move on to a number of different schools. The setting has worked hard to communicate with the schools and invites them all to visit during the summer term before the children leave in order to meet the child that will be attending their school and to speak to the practitioners.

The setting makes good use of the local and wider area to enhance the children's learning experiences. The partnership with the local authority link teacher is purposeful and beneficial and has had a clear and positive impact. Practitioners in the setting value the support they receive and the link teacher reports that the setting responds positively to training and to any advice and guidance.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners work closely together and support one another well when deploying themselves during the sessions. The setting has a good range of resources, which practitioners use effectively to support the planned activities. The setting manager ensures there are sufficient staff to oversee effectively the areas of learning both indoors and outdoors.

The Acorns group accountant takes responsibility for the budget and the setting manager is given a budget and petty cash.

In view of the effective provision, good teaching and effective leadership, the setting offers value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs 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.