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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Crossgates Early Years
Crossgates County Primary School
Crossgates
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 6RE**

Date of inspection: June 2012

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

Crossgates Early Years is an English medium pre-school setting based at Crossgates Primary School. It is situated in Crossgates, two miles north of Llandrindod Wells in Powys.

The children who attend the setting come from the village of Crossgates and the surrounding rural area. The locality is described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. All the children speak English as their first language and a very few have ethnic minority backgrounds. None come from homes where Welsh is spoken. A few children attending are looked after by the local authority (LA) and a small proportion have additional learning needs (ALN).

The setting provides full wrap around day care and education for children between two and four years old. It is registered for 25 places and provides morning and afternoon sessions on weekdays during term time. The school offers play sessions to pre-school children at the holiday club. At the time of the inspection there were 26 children on roll. This includes 11 three year olds whose places are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Child Development and Childcare Partnership.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in June 2011. This is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's overall performance is good because:

- progress and achievement are generally good;
- high quality care, support and guidance successfully assure children's wellbeing;
- teaching is enthusiastic and promotes very good relationships;
- the learning environment is good and has a welcoming, inclusive ethos; and
- partnerships with parents, the school and the LA are effective.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for further improvement are good because:

- leadership ensures clear direction and day-to-day management is good;
- the setting improvement plan (SIP) identifies appropriate goals;
- self-evaluation is perceptive; and the areas for development identified provide a good basis to secure further improvement.

Recommendations

The setting should:

R1 further improve children's competence in information and communication technology (ICT) and Welsh;

R2 develop planning to improve guidance for teaching, identify opportunities for assessment and enhance opportunities to promote children's skills in different contexts;

R3 develop simple plans of action to sharpen the focus on key priorities in the SIP; and

R4 extend the range of information provided for parents.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

A report on Crossgates Early Years
June 2012

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Children come to the setting with a wide range of achievements. In line with their age and stage of development nearly all make good progress. This is especially evident in literacy and numeracy. Children steadily acquire new knowledge, and develop their skills across the areas of learning. They become confident learners as they try out new experiences and explore their surroundings. Most apply their skills well through an appropriate range of structured play activities.

With few exceptions children have good communication skills. Their skills in speaking and listening are well developed. Most express themselves clearly and a few use a wide vocabulary. They readily talk about what they are doing, ask questions and converse in simple sentences. Many speak confidently during group activities and have good recall of nursery rhymes and songs that they enthusiastically perform. All enjoy listening to stories and browsing in the book corner. Most handle books as readers, recall what happens next in familiar stories and show very good awareness that text and pictures convey the story. Many recognise their name and a few know individual letters. They experiment with mark making, begin to form letters and to overwrite letters and words.

Most children make good progress in early mathematical skills. They confidently count objects and gain competence in sequencing numbers to 10. A few show good awareness of one-to-one correspondence, for example they count up to six objects in a group and match the group to the appropriate number. During role play many show a good understanding of the use of money, including giving change. They develop a sense of time based on everyday routines and develop well their understanding of capacity as they fill and empty containers. A few begin to use appropriate mathematical language, including comparative terms.

Most children's skills in ICT are at an early stage of development. They confidently respond to programs during group sessions and know how to manipulate the display. However, their competence in using a range of ICT is limited.

Children's competence in Welsh is limited. In structured activities they show increasing awareness of everyday words, including greetings. A few count, name colours and use simple vocabulary to describe the weather. Furthermore, they gain greater awareness of the language through listening to stories and following the pictures, but they rarely speak Welsh spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

A strong sense of wellbeing is evident among the children. Nearly all enter the setting confidently and happily engage in the activities provided. For their ages most show a good level of independence and clearly enjoy learning and play. They are well motivated, have positive attitudes and maintain interest and concentration well. Most readily make choices about how and what they learn within the setting, but their involvement in helping to plan and develop activities is limited.

In line with their age most children have an appropriate understanding that exercise and the foods they eat help them become healthy. They particularly enjoy energetic movement activities and begin to understand the impact of exercise on their body. They are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Nearly all develop good social skills and relate well to their peers. This is particularly evident during snack time when they eat foods such as toast and fruit.

Nearly all children demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They benefit from the positive role models of adults and this helps them feel safe and secure. Nearly all participate enthusiastically in activities and their behaviour is good. They show courtesy, increasing consideration for others and their collaborative skills, particularly when sharing resources, are well developed. Community involvement with the school, such as special events is beneficial, but the extent to which children develop simple responsibilities and are involved in making decisions about life in the setting is limited.

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

A wide range of stimulating learning experiences is provided; these impact well on progress, but although planning is systematic the implementation of focused and continuous activities is insufficiently developed in order to consolidate the full range of children's skills.

The provision is broadly in line with children's needs and practitioners increasingly collaborate to plan activities. Long, medium and short term planning is well structured and continuous activities are often imaginative and implemented flexibly. However, opportunities to integrate activities for older and younger children and to promote incidental learning are missed when focused activities are over structured.

Planning provides good details of the provision and promotes good working routines. Practitioners discuss the basic details of focused and continuous activities. The organisation of activities is good, but the learning objectives are not clearly enough defined. Too few details of how and what children of different abilities may achieve are identified to ensure they are provided with sufficient challenge to maintain progress.

Practitioners skillfully develop the range of activities to stimulate learning and engage children's interest. They promote opportunities to solve problems, be independent and experiment with new experiences. They know the children very well and often respond to their varying needs spontaneously.

The play leader ensures appropriate progression in children's skills through reference to the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework. Practitioners successfully provide children with learning experiences that develop skills in literacy and numeracy. The provision for imaginative role play is a particularly good feature, but the focus on developing skills in ICT is less evident.

Planning to encourage choice and free movement between activities in different areas is good. The provision includes good opportunities to be energetic, take risks

and learn through experience. Use of the outdoor area to promote continuous activities is well developed.

The play leader promotes children's Welsh language skills well through structured activities including the reading of stories and the regular introduction of new words or phrases. However, the incidental use of everyday vocabulary, such as greetings and commands, is not established. The provision to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales is appropriate.

The setting is beginning to provide opportunities for children to learn about sustainability, recycling or the impact we have on the world.

Teaching: Good

The impact of teaching is good and the play leader provides a good role model. High expectations and a sense of fun permeate the learning experiences. Planning provides a good basis to guide teaching, but some opportunities to develop learning, focus assessment and maintain appropriate challenge are missed.

Practitioners are aware of the planned activities and have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and child development. They provide good language models and use a range of approaches well to stimulate learning through play. Activities are well structured and children respond well to this. They are given enough time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately. Teaching is most effective when practitioners use questioning well to challenge children's thinking and encourage them to extend their learning. Planning helps to ensure an appropriate balance between child selected and practitioner led activities, but the expected steps in learning for children of different abilities are seldom clearly enough defined.

The setting implements comprehensive arrangements to assess children's learning. Practitioners informally discuss and record day-to-day observations. The play leader uses recently introduced individual learning profiles well to structure the recording of achievement and exemplify significant progress. This record provides a good basis to link assessments to the learning objectives for different activities and to help plan the next steps in learning.

Practitioners make time, on an informal basis, to be available for parents or carers to discuss their child's progress before and after sessions. A summary report is provided when children leave the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance that impacts well on children's wellbeing. It successfully promotes health, and safety and the overall provision for personal development is good. Moral and social development is very well promoted, but opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are less well developed.

Supportive and friendly relationships within the setting have a very positive impact on personal and social development. Practitioners promote strongly the values of honesty and fairness; they consistently promote good behaviour and sensitively encourage courtesy and consideration towards others.

There are appropriate induction and transition arrangements for children entering or leaving the setting. Liaison procedures with the adjacent school are well established and effective. The setting has good procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required. Effective links are established with partner agencies, including health, social services and education. The arrangements to support and monitor the education of looked after children are well established. An appropriate policy to support and integrate children with ALN is in place and procedures are implemented well in partnership with the school. The effectiveness of educational guidance for more able children is sound.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented. Practitioners are trained in first aid and all members of staff have a valid criminal records bureau disclosure.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The information provided for parents about the service provided, including details of safeguarding is very good.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a welcoming and supportive learning environment. It has an inclusive ethos, values individual qualities and successfully promotes equal opportunities, so that children have full access to all areas of provision. Very good relationships within the setting do much to ensure children are free from undue anxiety. Good account is taken of the diversity of children's backgrounds and individual needs. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity and encourage understanding of the needs of others. They consistently encourage good behaviour and tolerant attitudes. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities do not suffer disadvantage.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children on roll. The setting is generally well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum, but provision for ICT is limited. The purpose built accommodation is fit for purpose and used well. Learning resources are well organised and accessible and a wide range of stimulating learning activities is provided outdoors. Occasional use is made of the school grounds, visits and visitors to enhance provision.

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

Leadership is successful in determining clear strategic direction for the setting's work. School managers and a link governor make a significant contribution and the impact of the play leader in managing the development of provision is good.

The setting has an appropriate statement of purpose and its aims and objectives are clearly stated. A strong sense of purpose is evident, day-to-day management is effective and practitioners have a good understanding of their responsibilities. They discuss daily planning, but the focus on how to promote educational outcomes is

limited. The setting's key policies and a summary of the provision offered are published for parents. These policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

The setting is an integral part of the school's management structure with lines of responsibility clearly defined. Regular meetings with school managers assure effective communication and systematic procedures promote strategic planning. The headteacher monitors the setting's work and implements suitable procedures for appraisal and professional development.

The governing body maintains appropriate oversight of the setting. A management group, including a link governor, reviews provision and identifies relevant areas for development, but the strategies to achieve them are not sufficiently clear. The setting reflects on professional advice and readily embraces national and local priorities. The provision incorporates Foundation Phase principles well.

Improving quality: Good

Procedures to plan the setting's development are well established. The impact in improving provision is good. The SIP identifies a wide range of targets, but does not identify clearly the main priorities. Practitioners endeavour to take account of the views of parents, carers and children as much as possible. The views of parents are sought informally and occasionally through questionnaires.

The recently completed self-evaluation report is perceptive in identifying both strengths and areas for development. The areas identified provide a good basis to refine planning, but currently there are no plans of action to guide the involvement of practitioners and help maintain a sharp focus on the most important areas.

Networks of professional practice appropriately support practitioners' professional development. The setting has beneficial links developed through a local cluster of settings. Regular meetings successfully encourage the sharing of good practice and participation in training courses enhances practitioners' skills.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working is effective and impacts well on the quality of the setting's provision. Induction arrangements are well established and parents are provided with a very good range of information. Day-to-day communication promotes friendly conversations, the exchange of important information and brief informal discussion about children's achievements. However, further opportunities to encourage parental interest and involvement in their children's education are seldom developed.

The setting's partnership with the adjacent primary school is strong and effective. Regular liaison with school managers and the nursery/reception teacher helps to ensure a smooth transition to primary school and where appropriate children attending the setting join in with school activities. Furthermore, some resources are shared, including the mobile library and occasional visitors.

Self-evaluation identifies the use of resources in the community to enhance learning experiences as an area for development. Good use is made of the resources available within the school grounds.

Partnerships with the LA and other supporting agencies provide effective professional support and challenge. An advisory teacher works closely with the setting to promote effective educational practice. Practitioners value and respond positively to the support and advice received. In particular they benefit from training provided by the LA and courses attended with the school.

Resource management: Good

The management of staff and the organisation of learning resources is efficient and impacts well on the quality of provision. Practitioners are well deployed, although opportunities to guide and develop the work of the supporting practitioner are insufficiently developed. Taken overall the setting has sufficient learning resources to match the needs of children. Efficient working routines are established and the indoor and outdoor accommodation is used well to develop a good range of activities. The integration of indoor and outdoor provision is well established.

The school maintains appropriate oversight of the setting's finances. The headteacher plays a key role in the deployment of staff and the allocation of resources. This ensures expenditure remains in line with income and sufficient funds are allocated to goals identified in the SIP. Progress in meeting the setting's goals is reviewed annually, but the evaluation of cost effectiveness is not linked to formalised criteria.

The resources available to the setting are deployed effectively and impact well on children's progress and achievement. This represents good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. Discussion with several parents confirms they are pleased with the provision and that their children enjoy attending.

Responses to discussions with children

The children settle happily and quickly engage in activities. They have very good relationships with practitioners and their peers. A welcoming ethos ensures children feel safe and secure. With few exceptions children confidently engage in simple conversations. They know practitioners help them and that they must try to be considerate and to behave well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Michael T. Ridout	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.

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 partnership's 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>
National Childminding	<p>This is a professional membership association working</p>

Association (NCMA)	with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.