



*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**

**Ysgol Trefonnen Early Years  
Ysgol Trefonnen Church in Wales Primary School  
Trefonnen  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 5EP**

**Date of inspection: June 2012**

**by**

**Michael T. Ridout  
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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Ysgol Trefonnen Early Years is an English-medium setting. It meets within Ysgol Trefonnen Primary School that is situated in the town of Llandrindod Wells in Powys. The locality served by the setting includes both more prosperous and disadvantaged areas.

The setting provides sessional care and education for children aged between two and a half and four years old. It offers four afternoon sessions each week during term time. It is registered for 16 children. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children on roll, including 10 three year olds funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. All children attending are English speaking and British born. No families speak Welsh at home. A very few children have additional learning needs (ALN).

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

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting's performance is generally good because:

- most children make good progress from their starting points and increase well their competence in early literacy and numeracy;
- progress in personal and social development is often very good;
- high quality care and support successfully assures children's wellbeing;
- teaching is good; and
- the learning environment is inclusive and well resourced.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for further improvement are good because:

- there is a good track record of improvement since moving to new premises;
- leadership promotes clear direction;
- day-to-day management and organisation are good;
- self-evaluation is wide ranging; and
- areas for development identified in the setting improvement plan (SIP) are relevant and achievable.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further the setting should:

**R1** maintain good progress in literacy and numeracy and enhance children's competence in the skills of enquiry, collaboration and independence;

**R2** focus planning to show how learning objectives are to be achieved, identify opportunities for assessment and better guide teaching in matching tasks to individual needs;

**R3** develop plans of action to show how targets in the SIP are to be implemented and provide a clear focus for monitoring; and

**R4** develop further the partnership with parents and carers.

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Children enter the setting with a wide range of starting points. Achievement varies widely and is below expectations in personal, social and communication skills for a minority. Most children achieve well in relation to their starting points and make good overall progress. They steadily acquire new knowledge and skills as they explore their surroundings and try out new experiences. Good progress in communication skills enables many children to steadily enhance their skills through a range of structured play activities.

Progress in early literacy skills is good. Most children gain confidence in speaking and listening. They make their needs known and ask questions, although the range of their vocabulary is often limited. A few children use a varied vocabulary, converse in simple sentences and express themselves clearly. These children are inquisitive and they initiate simple conversations about their play. Most children listen attentively during structured group activities. A few develop thinking skills well and readily contribute to group discussions. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and many enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. Nearly all handle books as readers; a few discuss the pictures, show awareness that the text and pictures convey the story and recall what happens next in familiar stories. More able children recognise their name and a few experiment with mark making.

Many children make good progress in early mathematical skills. In particular, numeracy skills develop well as they count as part of daily routines, sing action rhymes and play number games. A majority counts to 10 and is beginning to match, order and sequence numbers. They enthusiastically investigate capacity and begin to compare the size of objects. More able children match shapes to pictures and name shapes such as a triangle. Many children develop an appropriate awareness of time based on everyday routines and in role-play show a secure understanding of how we use money.

Progress in using a narrow range of information and communication technology (ICT) is generally good. A majority uses the computer mouse to make events happen on screen and shows appropriate understanding that a switch operates the CD player. Children use telephones in role-play and a few work out how to control a programmable toy.

Competence in Welsh is steadily developing. Most children use Welsh in whole group activities such as registration. Their vocabulary includes greetings, counting and naming colours. Many readily recite familiar rhymes and songs, but the spontaneous use of Welsh is not established.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children respond well to structured sessions when behaviour and attitudes are good. Most settle well when entering the setting and soon become involved in activities. However, the application of skills in free play is sometimes variable.

A majority is well motivated and sustains effort and concentration well. They steadily develop positive attitudes to learning and show interest in new experiences. They concentrate well and learn to play with others, but a minority sometimes loses interest and concentration. Most 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 and stage of development many gain an appropriate understanding that energetic exercise and the foods they eat help them to be healthy. Many participate enthusiastically in physical activities and most are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet. Many manage their own personal hygiene, but a few need assistance. During snack time most children develop social skills well, including good manners and how to use a knife to cut fruit. They enjoy a range of healthy foods.

Most show increasing, courtesy, consideration and respect for others. They benefit from the positive role models for relationships and the high expectations for behaviour set by adults. They know that practitioners will help them when they are upset and the confidence of most when moving around the setting indicates that they feel safe. There are good examples of sustained collaborative and individual play where children take turns and share resources. However, a minority has limited competence in the skills of enquiry, collaboration and independence. This sometimes reduces levels of participation and enjoyment in learning.

Community involvement with the school is beneficial, but the extent to which children develop simple responsibilities and contribute to making decisions about life in the setting is limited.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The setting provides a good range of appropriate learning experiences that encourage realistic progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Structured sessions with the whole group are particularly effective, but planning offers too little guidance to develop key learning outcomes across focused and continuous activities.

Recently established planning is well structured and provides clear details of the provision, but there is too little emphasis on what and how children might learn. Practitioners discuss basic details of planned activities informally. 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 children are provided with sufficient challenge.

Practitioners work very well together to 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 respond to their varying needs spontaneously and

appropriately during activities.

The setting leader ensures appropriate progression in children's skills through careful reference to the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework. Practitioners successfully provide children with learning experiences that appropriately develop skills in literacy and numeracy. The strong focus on finding out about the natural world is effective, but the range of skills promoted in ICT is limited.

Planning to encourage choice and free movement between activities in different areas is good. The provision includes good opportunities to be noisy, take risks and learn through experience. Use of the outdoor area to promote continuous activities is well established.

Practitioners promote children's Welsh language skills well through regular structured activities. The provision to promote their awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales is appropriate.

The setting provides few opportunities for children to learn about sustainability, recycling or the impact we have on the world.

### **Teaching: Good**

The impact of teaching is good. Practitioners skillfully manage children and their approach is calm and consistent. They have high expectations, implement whole group activities very well and intervene appropriately in play activities, but the use of assessment to shape provision and promote greater challenge is not securely established.

Practitioners are aware of the planned activities and have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and child development. They provide good models of language and use an appropriate range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. Activities and daily routines are well structured and practitioners often make learning fun. Most children respond well to this. They are given sufficient time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene sensitively. They are particularly skillful in managing occasional challenging behaviour and on occasions they use questioning well to challenge children's thinking. Teaching is most effective when practitioners challenge children to extend their learning and good use is made of praise. Planning provides a sound basis to guide teaching. It helps to ensure an appropriate balance between practitioner led and child selected activities, but details of the learning intentions for children of different abilities are not clearly defined.

Recently updated systems for assessment are comprehensive and appropriate records are maintained. Practitioners informally discuss day-to-day observations and evaluate progress, but there is little evidence of recording notable achievements. However, the play leader uses individual learning profiles well to compile a detailed summary of individual achievement. The information provides a good basis to plan children's next steps in learning, but assessments recorded in planning are seldom sharply enough focused on the learning and skills promoted by activities.

Practitioners make time before and after sessions to be available for parents or carers to discuss their child's progress. The setting also provides a detailed report of progress when children move to the primary school.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance that impacts well on children's personal and social development. The arrangements to promote their healthy development and wellbeing are good. The provision encourages a sense of curiosity about the world, fosters positive values, including honesty and fairness, and strongly promotes good behaviour and relationships. It also engages children in a range of community activities with the school. Social and moral development is promoted consistently, but there is less emphasis on spiritual and cultural development.

There are established induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. There is close liaison with primary school staff. The setting has good procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required. Liaison with LA services, including health, social services and education is effective. The arrangements to support and integrate children with ALN are appropriate. The provision to support more able children is developing.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff and regular volunteers have valid criminal records bureau disclosure. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting has an inclusive ethos and provides a well resourced learning environment where children feel safe. It has a warm and supportive atmosphere where individual qualities are valued. Very good relationships help to ensure children are free from undue anxiety. Practitioners appropriately promote awareness of diversity and encourage respect for and understanding of the needs of others. Procedures to manage occasional aggressive behaviour are implemented consistently. Equal opportunity and access to the provision is well promoted. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities do not suffer disadvantage.

There are sufficient well qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children on roll. The setting is well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum, but the range of resources for ICT is limited. The purpose built accommodation provides well for indoor and outdoor learning, although use of the provision and its resources by two pre-school groups imposes some constraints. Learning opportunities are enhanced by participation in events with the school, regular use of the grounds, including the outdoor classroom, and occasional visits within the local community.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

Strategic direction is clear and the impact of leadership since moving to the new building is effective. Managers articulate a clear vision for improvement and have high expectations. A teamwork ethos and shared sense of purpose are evident. The setting is well managed and practitioners have a clear understanding of their



roles and responsibilities. It has an appropriate statement of purpose; the required policies and procedures are implemented and daily routines are well established.

Links with partner agencies are built upon well to enhance provision. An annual audit is undertaken and the identification of specific goals helps develop and maintain the good work of the setting. The play leader, with guidance from the LA, draws together a SIP. This provides the basis of a useful working document. Day-to-day discussions raise practitioners' awareness of planning and organisation, but these arrangements are insufficiently structured.

Close liaison with the school is particularly beneficial. Arrangements for appraisal and to promote professional development are established and regarded as effective by practitioners. The headteacher maintains appropriate oversight of the setting and monitors its work informally. The governing body is strongly supportive of the setting's development and its role as a critical partner is developing.

The setting reflects on professional advice and readily embraces national and local priorities. The provision implements the Foundation Phase principles well.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The emphasis on improving quality is good; this impacts well on the quality of provision. Self-evaluation is honest and wide ranging, relevant areas for development are identified, but the means of their implementation lacks clarity, thus limiting the impact of monitoring.

Appropriate procedures to identify the setting's strengths and areas for development are implemented. Practitioners endeavour to take account of the views of parents and carers as much as possible. The self-evaluation report is a thorough document that matches closely the issues raised in an annual audit and the priorities identified in the SIP. These documents provide a good basis to improve further the quality of provision and the SIP includes evaluations of progress. There is strong evidence of recent improvements in provision, but planning does not include simple plans of action to show how further improvements will be secured and resourced.

Networks of professional practice appropriately support practitioners' professional development. The setting has beneficial links developed through a local cluster of settings. Regular meetings and occasional visits to other settings successfully encourage the sharing of good practice.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

Partnership working impacts well on the quality of the setting's provision; in particular partnerships with the school and LA are well established. Day-to-day partnerships with parents successfully promote friendly communication, but opportunities to encourage greater parental interest in their children's education are over looked.

In close collaboration with the school induction arrangements provide parents with accessible information. Most attend the weekly parent and toddler group, run by the play leader, before their child attends the setting. This promotes familiarity with the school and promotes both confidence and trust. However, once children attend the setting little formalised information is provided about activities and the achievements

of children. Furthermore, opportunities to involve parents in activities with their children and to suggest ways to support their child's learning are undeveloped.

The partnership with the primary school is strong. Liaison with school managers is supportive although current arrangements are insufficiently formalised. Links with the nursery/reception teacher help to ensure a smooth transition to school and where appropriate children attending the setting join in with school activities. Some resources and practice is shared, but on occasions this results in over structured tasks.

In line with its self-evaluation the setting is developing links with the wider community. There is a strong partnership with the LA. An advisory teacher works closely with the setting to promote effective educational practice. Practitioners value and respond positively to the advice given and they benefit from training provided by the LA and courses attended with the school.

### **Resource management: Good**

The management and organisation of staff and resources is efficient and this impacts well on the quality of provision. Practitioners are well deployed, although opportunities to guide their work are insufficiently developed. Taken overall the setting has sufficient good quality learning resources to match the needs of children. Since moving to purpose built accommodation good working routines have been established. Furthermore, the provision of focused and continuous activities across areas of learning, together with the integration of indoor and outdoor learning has developed well.

The headteacher and governing body maintain appropriate oversight of the settings' finances. Income and expenditure are monitored systematically and planning to resolve the current deficit is carefully considered. The SIP identifies relevant goals for improvement, but the costs of meeting targets, including the renewal of resources, are not quantified. This hinders the evaluation of cost effectiveness.

The setting deploys the resources available effectively to provide a range of good quality provision that impact well on children's achievement and progress. 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

Most children settle well and engage in activities. They have good relationships with practitioners. A calm friendly ethos ensures children feel safe and secure. Those who readily communicate with adults confirm that they know practitioners help them and that they must try to share resources and 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>
<b>National Childminding</b>	<p>This is a professional membership association working</p>

<b>Association (NCMA)</b>	with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.