



A report on

**Penglais Nursery
Heol Penglais
Aberystwyth
SY23 3DU**

Date of inspection: July 8,9 2013

by

Branwen Llewelyn Jones

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

Penglais Nursery is a purpose built setting which opened in 2012 on the campus of Aberystwyth University on the outskirts of the town of Aberystwyth in Cardiganshire. It is part of Aberystwyth University and also serves the local community in an area which is neither privileged nor underprivileged. It is registered as a private nursery under the Children Act of 1989. It is managed by a committee which is composed of members of the university's staff. The cylch meithrin is held on five mornings a week for a specific time under the recognised guidelines of Mudiad Meithrin. The nursery is registered for up to fifty- eight children.

The nursery provides care for the children of the university's staff and students and children from the local community and surrounding areas for five days a week from 8.00 a.m until 6.00 p.m. for fifty weeks a year. The cylch meithrin is held for thirty-nine weeks a year. The cylch meithrin admits children of three years old and upwards. They leave when they begin their education mainly at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Plascrug where the nursery runs after school clubs.

The building consists of two floors, a ground floor and lower ground floor, and access is from the first floor. On this floor is the reception area together with the manager's office. A secure door leads to the main nursery. The nursery area is used for babies and children under two years and provides a room for each age group, a baby feeding room and a bathroom. The lower ground floor, which is accessed by either the stairs or a lift, caters for children of two and three years. A room is allocated to each age group and there is a shared bathroom, toilets which are suitable for young children, a kitchen and a dining area. Outside doors give access to a large, very attractive, sloping, grassed area containing mature trees and shrubs. There is also a safe, covered play area.

The nursery is bilingual and both Welsh and English are spoken. At the time of the inspection five children were funded of whom none came from a Welsh speaking background. Three came from English speaking homes. There are several children from different cultural backgrounds and two come from homes where English is a second language. At the time of the inspection there were no children identified as having additional learning needs.

Three practitioners are employed to work with three year old children and all possess appropriate qualifications for the early years. The last inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CGSSIW) was on 27 February, 2013. The setting was inspected by Estyn in July 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- children feel happy and safe in the nursery;
- children's achieve well and make good progress from their starting point;
- the excellent learning environment is used to its full potential to enrich children's learning;
- the teaching is of a consistently good standard;
- the wide range of interesting and active experiences ensures the children enjoy their learning and engage in it enthusiastically;
- assessment by observation is used effectively to plan the next steps, and
- effective use is made of the community to enrich children's learning.

Prospects for improvement

The provider's prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a culture of professional reflection which is based on self-evaluation;
- the good standard of leadership is provides clear strategic direction;
- the setting demonstrates a commitment to continuous professional development, and
- the long-established team ensures stability and consistency and practitioners work very well together.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the setting should:

R1 Improve children's skills in the Welsh language

R2 Extend the use of open-ended questions in order to develop further children's thinking skills

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children at the time of the inspection to report on them without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting and imaginative experiences in every area of the Foundation Phase. The provision meets children's interests well because the adults include their ideas in their planning. As a result, the provision engages children for extended periods in activities which are meaningful to them. Long, medium and short term planning is based on the Foundation Phase areas of learning and ensures that children are actively involved in their learning. Adults work well together to make sure that planning reflects very well the child-centered philosophy of the foundation Phase. Practitioners use interesting themes to make learning relevant and purposeful and to build steadily on what children know, can do and understand. They work together very effectively as a team to implement planned activities but are also flexible and if the children are particularly interested in an activity or something unexpected happens, the children are encouraged to follow their interests. Practitioners extend children's experiences well through visits, for example to the beach and through good links with the community, for example children go to the library regularly and also to the local shop to buy ingredients for cooking. The nursery makes good use of visitors also to enrich the children's experiences and people come from the fire services, the police and parents also come in to talk about their role in the community.

Children choose from the wide range of inviting activities provided and this develops well their self-confidence and independence. It also ensures that the children engage equally well in directed activities because they have good opportunities to make choices. This balance of activities and practitioners' ability to intervene very effectively during activities to move children's learning on are good features. Adults develop children's literacy; numeracy and ICT skills well in every area of learning and ensure that all make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. They also provide many opportunities for children to enjoy new and exciting experiences, to solve problems and they encourage them to think for themselves developing their problem-solving skills well. Practitioners give children good opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills and an understanding of living things through their good use of the outdoors. Practitioners plan well in order to meet children's differing needs and abilities and to help them make good progress.

As a result of the interesting learning experiences and positive relationships, children develop confidence, tolerance and good social skills which enable them to accept quite naturally children and adults from different backgrounds and cultures. The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the Welsh culture and traditions is good and they celebrate Welsh festivals such as St. David's day and Santes Dwynwen and make traditional Welsh foods. The Welsh language is developed well through specific sessions and the children receive a natural model of the Welsh language. Practitioners encourage the children to speak Welsh at all times and develop their vocabulary and language patterns through rhymes, songs and stories which contain rich vocabulary and language. Though the children make very good progress from their starting point they do not yet have sufficient skills to use it naturally when they play. Awareness of sustainability and the impact they have on the environment is well promoted through recycling and making compost to feed the plants and flowers they grow from seed.

Teaching: Good

The experienced and well qualified adults use an imaginative range of strategies to make the children want to learn. Meaningful activities such as playing games outdoors after discussing shape and size ensure they learn naturally through play. The teaching meets well the requirements of the Foundation Phase because it is founded in play, it is flexible and interesting. They have high expectations of the children and they enable the children to meet these. The good ratio of adults to children gives practitioners a very good understanding of the children and helps them support them and meet their individual needs. Adults manage behaviour in a positive and sensitive way and as a result children learn important lifelong attitudes including showing respect, sensitivity and kindness towards others. Practitioners make effective use of open-ended questioning to promote children's learning on the whole, however they do not use it sufficiently to extend fully their thinking skills.

Assessment is based on observations of the children which are recorded informally and then used to inform children's "Information Transfer" booklets. These are discussed in staff meetings and then used to help decide the next steps in planning. They keep continuous records of children's attainments which include useful and thorough information that gives a clear picture of all children's achievements. Children's progress is measured regularly in all learning areas and practitioners use this information well to meet children's needs and interests. Parents receive a helpful report about their children when they leave to go to school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners have created a caring and inclusive environment. Staff have a positive influence on children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Practitioners help children learn about the importance of fairness, honesty and truth by modelling these themselves. They give the children good opportunities to socialise at snack times and this helps children develop a good understanding of the importance of respect for others. All children know the difference between right and wrong in the context of their lives in the setting and they have regular opportunities to make

decisions and choices about their life in the nursery. Children are encouraged to take responsibility, show initiative and to behave well. They develop a good understanding of living and sharing with others and are encouraged to look at and think about the wonders of the natural world in their lovely outdoor area. For example, they go for walks alongside the stream and in the wood near the nursery to see the bluebells and the changes in the seasons. The celebration of festivals and the making and tasting of different foods gives them an awareness of different cultural traditions. Adults develop well children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit by providing healthy snacks and through regular physical exercise sessions.

There are good, well-established arrangements with local professional support and services to provide children with specialist support when needed. When necessary children identified with ALN have full access to all areas of learning and all have access to everything that goes on in the setting. Parents are involved well in their children's education.

The necessary procedures for safeguarding are in place, meet regulations and ensure children's safety at all times. All practitioners are trained in child protection and know the steps to take. The procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008). The setting draws on expertise such as the health service when required.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting's ethos is exceptionally inclusive and caring and is centred firmly on the needs of the child. Practitioners use the wide range of children's backgrounds in a natural and exemplary way to celebrate diversity and as a result all adults and children are tolerant, kind and there is no trace of anxiety. Exemplary relationships form the firm foundation of the life and work of the nursery. Practitioners know the children and their needs and interests very well and they use this information very well to help children learn. They consistently promote high standards of behaviour and ensure equality.

The ratios of staff to children are excellent and this, together with resources of the highest quality for the Foundation Phase and this contributes considerably to the excellence of the learning environment. The accommodation and resources are excellent and the nursery provides a very stimulating and inviting learning environment. The sloping grassed area outdoors provides excellent opportunities for the children to develop problem-solving skills by experimenting with things they can climb, push and pull. Its different areas provide excellent opportunities for imaginative play and for children to learn about the natural world around them and the outdoor area enhances exceptionally well their learning.

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

The leader has created a positive and inclusive ethos which ensures that each child fulfills his/her potential. She has a clear vision of the way forward and gives clear direction to the life and work of the setting and the improvement process which is grounded firmly in a good understanding of how young children learn.

She works well with the deputy, the project manager and practitioners and they share clear principles and objectives which are based on a good knowledge of child development. These are seen to be implemented in the active learning experiences which are provided for children which are a good feature. They are evident also in the opportunities children are given to make decisions and choices concerning their learning, to develop self-confidence and independence and to make good progress.

All practitioners undertake their responsibilities effectively showing firm commitment to their role to the benefit of the children. The leader and manageress work well together to plan strategically very well for the setting's future. They share values, aims and objectives they wish to promote through personal example and regular discussion. They have high expectations of themselves, of staff and of children together with targets which ensure good standards of achievement. The long-established team of practitioners ensures consistency and stability and they work very well together.

The manageress and leader are aware of everything that happens in the setting and they understand and undertake their roles effectively. They know the setting's performance well, use robust information to make effective decisions and discharge their legal duties fully.

The management committee is aware of everything that happens in the setting and they understand and undertake their roles effectively. They know the setting's performance well and use robust information to make effective decisions. They discharge their legal duties fully. Leaders fulfil national and local priorities according to the requirements of the Assembly and the authority, for example, the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation report leads to strategies for improvement which ensure positive advantages for all children. The setting makes good use of its self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The leader consults with staff, parents and carers to inform the self-evaluation. She uses information received from parents to gather opinion and identify areas to be developed. She also makes effective use of the support of the local authority's Foundation Phase advisory teacher and practitioners implement her recommendations effectively. Following the self-evaluation process, a setting improvement plan is produced which shows a good awareness of the setting's performance and which focuses on raising standards through setting targets to improve provision.

Practitioners have an annual interview with the manageress to evaluate performance and identify professional development needs. They use the robust procedures of the university for this. They attend in-service training courses provided by the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin regularly in order to develop new teaching methods. The positive effect of this can be seen on teaching and children's wellbeing as they implement what they have learned. The leader has visited other settings in order to see good practice and practitioners attend training meetings with other practitioners which are organised by the local authority in order to discuss current developments.

Partnership working: Good

The setting co-operates well with others to present learning experiences. The leader works very closely and effectively with the local authority's Foundation Phase advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. Positive results of this partnership can be seen in the improvements in provision and standards.

The setting works closely with stakeholders, especially parents, and it is very willing to consult with them and receive suggestions from them. There is a notice board for parents giving information about the nursery's activities and suggestions from parents are invited. There are also good partnerships with school where the nursery runs after school clubs and where the children visit which facilitates their transition when they leave. The teacher from the school visits the children before they transfer there.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are deployed well in order to make the most effective use of their expertise and ensure good provision. Staff use indoor resources effectively in order to provide interesting experiences for children. They measure the effect of resources on learning and teaching and plan for resource needs in the future. They use the outdoors very well to develop children's skills in each area of learning through exciting, first-hand experiences which challenge them; this is one of the strengths of the setting.

Leaders make optimum use of the setting's resources and of funding to offer the best provision and succeed in so doing. The setting prioritises its expenditure in order to respond to its targets for improvement. Financial decisions are evaluated effectively by the leader in order to ensure positive outcomes in raising standards. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parent questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received.

Responses to discussions with children

During the inspection children were eager to come to the nursery. Their relationships with their friends and adults are excellent and they are very happy in the setting. The welcoming and inclusive ethos ensures they all feel safe and happy. They enjoyed speaking with adults including visitors and asked and answered questions confidently. Every child knows that the practitioners are there to help them.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Branwen Llewelyn Jones	Reporting Inspector

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 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 Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working 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.