



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

**Podlings Day Nursery
Brookvale
Wrexham Road
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 1HT**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

Mary Dyas

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

Podlings Day Nursery is an English-medium setting based in a large converted house on the outskirts of the town of Mold in north Wales. The nursery is privately owned and embraces Montessori principles. The owner, who managed the setting for many years, now lives abroad and has left the day to day responsibility to two managers who work four days a week each. The pre-school children have access to an upstairs room and a downstairs 'messy' room which are shared in rotation with the older nursery aged children. The large garden is used extensively by all children in the nursery and provides the children with a range of exciting learning experiences.

The children attending the nursery come from a wide area and move on to a number of different primary schools. They are considered to come from mainly advantaged homes and most children have English as their home language. Although there are currently no children with additional learning needs, the setting has appropriate policies and procedures to ensure appropriate provision would be made.

The nursery is open from 7.30am until 6.00pm and is registered for up to 50 children aged from three months to eight years. At the time of the inspection there were six children in the pre-school group in receipt of funded educational provision.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2011 and this is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is judged to be good because:

- All children enjoy their time in the nursery and make good progress;
- Practitioners provide a good range of stimulating activities which engage the children and support their learning;
- All children are polite and well-behaved in the setting. They understand the rules of the nursery and play co-operatively together; and
- Relationships between children and adults are warm and caring.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Practitioners are very committed and are keen to provide good quality education for the children in their care; and
- The self-evaluation process is in place and there is good evidence that targets in the action plans have been, and are continuing to be, addressed.

Recommendations

The setting needs to :

R1 Continue to refine the process of short term planning.

R2 Ensure that evaluations reflect the identified learning intentions for planned activities

R3 Improve the quality of information parents receive about the activities which are offered to their children.

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.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

The progress of all children is good and they achieve well. Almost all children's numeracy and mathematical skills are good and all count by rote confidently to at least 10. Most three-year-olds are able to count objects accurately to at least 5 without support. Almost all children communicate clearly in full sentences and are confident to talk to adults about what they are doing and all carry out instructions promptly. All children enjoy stories in both English and Welsh and all show an interest in books and their content and handle them correctly. The majority practise writing across different areas of learning.

All children are developing their understanding and use of ICT as they play confidently with a range of electronic toys and use the computer to play age appropriate games. Children's Welsh language development is good and they make good progress. The majority understand simple words and phrases and many are beginning to make appropriate use of the words and phrases they have learnt.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy in the nursery and enjoy their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners make them feel safe, happy and confident. All have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and that good food and exercise are important to make them healthy. All children know that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and also before their meals because they don't want to catch germs. All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. All children behave well and are polite and show consideration for others when taking turns and sharing equipment.

Most children make friendships in the setting and show care and concern for one another. Children play in self selecting groups, in pairs and independently depending on the activity in which they are involved.

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

Practitioners provide children with interesting and stimulating learning experiences that cater for their needs and interests across most areas of learning. Every opportunity is taken to make full use of the indoor and outdoor environments to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. Planning is based on the Foundation Phase learning outcomes and overall there is good provision for the development of children's literacy, mathematical knowledge and skills in ICT. Systems for planning are still developing and need to be established and embedded and evaluations of planned activities do not reflect the stated learning intentions.

Provision for the Welsh language is good. Practitioners use incidental Welsh consistently throughout the session and children are encouraged to use the Welsh language as much as possible. Activities based around St David's Day are well used for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the traditions and celebrations of Wales. There are no opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. All practitioners have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase principles and practice. They use a good range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning experiences which interest and appeal to children of all abilities.

Adults give children sufficient time to complete a task or develop an idea and intervene appropriately and sensitively when needed. Teaching is most effective when practitioners use open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking. Practitioners provide children with helpful oral feedback as they learn.

Practitioners know the children well and support this with incidental information from observations to inform the completion of the Local Authority's 'This Is Me' record of progress. Informal links with parents and carers are strong and a daily diary provides detailed information of activities their child has taken part in. In the summer term parents and carers are invited to discuss their child's progress with their keyworker and receive the completed 'This Is Me' together with a file of samples of their child's work. There are currently no arrangements to provide information on the next steps in children's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children and staff provide good role models which encourage children to treat one another with kindness and respect. Transition into the group is smooth because children regularly interact with one another and with a range of practitioners during their outdoor play. Children joining the pre-school group who have not previously attended the nursery are given time to settle.

The provision made for children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are good arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. The setting has a good range of policies to ensure children's safety during sessions.

Learning environment: Good

Podlings is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. There is a clear emphasis on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity. Practitioners create a supportive environment for learning. There is a sufficient supply of good quality resources that are used appropriately to support the learning and teaching. The extensive and imaginative use of the outdoor area is a strength of the setting. Visitors from the community make a good contribution to enhancing pupils' experiences.

Practitioners working within the pre-school area and nursery managers have attended a range of courses organised by the Local Authority which has enabled them to cover all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum effectively. The setting succeeds in creating an attractive and welcoming environment for the children.

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

The owner and managers have created a setting with a very positive ethos where children are welcomed and are very much at the centre of planning and organisation. The setting has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented well by all practitioners. There is a developing culture of self-improvement amongst practitioners which helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. Leaders respond well to advice and support, ensuring that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

Leaders have a good understanding of their role and work together effectively to successfully deliver the Foundation Phase. Appraisal processes are in place to support and improve staff. Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities. They are involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase and share information with one another.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation in the setting has been developing over time and practitioners know their setting well. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a realistic one owned and shared by all practitioners and which identifies many of the setting's strengths and appropriate targets for improvement. Progress is regularly monitored and recorded. Evaluation of improvements in terms of children's progress is still at an early stage of development. Managers have good, informal relationships with other similar settings in the local area.

Partnership working: Good

Parents are provided with regular newsletters which give information about the nursery and more detailed information in their children's daily diaries. There is, however, no information regarding the planned activities or advice on how parents and carers might support their children's learning.

Good links exist between the setting and some of the primary schools which the children move on to. The setting is a member of the Clybiau Plant Cymru. It enjoys a good relationship with the Early Entitlement link teacher from the local authority who provides support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of up-to-date resources which contribute effectively to children's learning. Staff are appropriately deployed and good use is made of the available space outdoors to provide a range of interesting learning experiences for the children. Finances are managed by one of the managers who has a good understanding of the budget and the setting provides 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.

Responses to discussions with children

Due to the small number of children present in the setting there is also no report on discussions with children.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary 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.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 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.