



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

**Treowen 3 Plus
Treowen C.P. School
Treowen
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1NJ**

Date of inspection: November 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

Treowen 3 Plus is an English-medium setting. It meets within Treowen County Primary School that is situated in Treowen, a district of Newtown 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 morning sessions on weekdays during term time. It is registered for 16 children. At the time of the inspection there were 19 children on roll, including 15 three year olds, 13 of which are 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 January 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 performance is good because:

- most children make good progress and achieve well;
- the promotion of personal development and wellbeing is effective;
- planning to ensure a very good range of learning experiences is excellent;
- teaching is good;
- the leadership of learning is excellent; and
- the setting is very well organised and managed.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- clear direction and a shared sense of purpose ensure a teamwork ethos;
- practitioners are reflective and fully involved in shaping provision;
- planning for improvement is well established;
- the setting is strongly supported by the school; and
- there is an established record in improving provision.

Recommendations

The setting should:

R1 enhance children's competence in Welsh (WE) and information and communication technology (ICT);

R2 support implementation of the setting improvement plan (SIP) with sharper plans of action and focus evaluation to identify the impact of initiatives; and

R3 develop the role of the governing body (GB) as the responsible authority.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children achieve appropriate standards and make good progress in relation to their starting points. They steadily acquire new knowledge and skills as they enthusiastically explore their surroundings and try out new experiences. Progress in communication skills is good and sometimes very good. This enables most children to successfully enhance a wide range of skills through structured play activities.

Progress in early literacy skills is good. In particular, speaking and listening skills develop well. Most children make their needs known, ask questions and increase their vocabulary. Many spontaneously engage in simple conversations, such as through role play in the 'hospital.' A few use an extended vocabulary and express themselves clearly. These children are inquisitive and confidently engage in simple conversations about their play. Most children listen attentively during structured activities. Many develop thinking skills well and contribute with increasing confidence to group discussions. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and they enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. A majority handles books appropriately as readers and most recall what happens next in familiar stories. A few show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story. Most recognise their name and are beginning to link text to meaning. Mark making skills steadily develop and a few experiments with 'writing' in play.

Progress in early mathematical skills is good. In particular, numeracy skills develop well as children count as part of daily routines, sing action rhymes and play number games. Most have a good grasp of counting to at least 10; many name common shapes such as square and triangle and they match, count and compare objects. They develop appropriate awareness of time and identify coins, for example when 'shopping for fruit' at snack time.

Competence in using ICT is developing. A few confidently use the computer mouse to 'click on' and 'drag' pictures on the screen. With guidance they use the buttons on a controllable toy and begin to predict where the toy will move.

Competence in Welsh is developing. Many show appropriate understanding of the words and phrases used in everyday routines. Familiar vocabulary includes greetings, counting and naming colours. They readily recite familiar rhymes and songs, but the spontaneous use of Welsh is not established.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children develop positive attitudes to learning and in line with their age acquire an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. They are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Nearly all develop good social skills, eat a range of healthy foods that they often help to prepare and they enthusiastically participate in energetic activities.

With few exceptions children enter the setting confidently and happily engage in the activities provided. Most show a good level of independence. They are well motivated, sustain interest and concentration for appropriate periods and readily choose activities. Children are encouraged to plan what they will do each session and they thoughtfully review their work with adults during snack time. The children are appropriately involved in helping to decide which activities are maintained or changed in the setting. In discussions with the setting leader they clearly state which activities interest them.

Nearly all enjoy learning and develop self-confidence and high self-esteem. Relationships within the setting are very good. The positive role models set by adults helps children to feel safe and secure. They make their needs known and clearly express their preferences. Behaviour is generally good and most children begin to show courtesy and consideration for others. They take turns, share equipment and undertake simple day-to-day jobs.

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

Planning is systematic and detailed; it is successful in meeting the range of children's needs and provides an exemplar. The setting plans an imaginative range of learning experiences that successfully engages children in enjoyable and very well structured activities. Long, medium and short term planning is securely based on the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework and links activities closely to relevant areas of learning.

Practitioners work very well together to implement activities that challenge children to learn effectively. Detailed weekly plans ensure an appropriate balance across areas of learning and builds well on children's prior knowledge and skills. There is very good emphasis on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy and activities involving ICT are being developed.

Planning reflects a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and assures the progressive development of children's skills. Well-chosen themes, including a focus on selected books, promote continuity and assist the provision of meaningful contexts for learning. There is a good balance of activities that well promotes progress towards Foundation Phase outcomes. Many opportunities are planned for children to encounter new experiences, solve problems and encourage them to think for themselves. Practitioners know the children very well and skillfully plan focused activities to match their differing needs and abilities.

The learning experiences encourage positive relationships, foster respect and tolerance and promote awareness of other cultures, such as through celebrating festivals. The variety of indoor and outdoor activities is very good. The use of visits and the school grounds successfully promotes understanding of the natural and man made world. Awareness of sustainability and the impact we have on the environment is appropriately promoted.

Good provision is made to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales and practitioners, who are learners of Welsh, increasingly promote use of the language.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is lively, effective and well paced. Activities are stimulating and practitioners intervene sensitively to ensure appropriate levels of challenge. They are successful in making learning fun and the planning for activities provides effective guidance for their work. Practitioners use their initiative well to develop learning in different contexts and they skillfully promote group and individual learning. They have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a range of teaching strategies well to stimulate play. In particular, they build well on the very good relationships established and know how to develop learning activities in ways that engage children's interest. Practitioners observe, model activities and intervene appropriately. They ensure children have enough time to complete tasks, strongly encourage them to make choices and they use questioning well to develop thinking skills. Teaching is most effective in focused tasks that challenge children to extend their learning. The setting leader often provides an exemplar in this regard. The identification of small steps in learning for different groups of children is another good feature that helps to focus teaching.

Procedures for assessment are systematic and consistently implemented. Progress is carefully monitored and assessment information is used appropriately to help plan the next steps in learning for individuals and groups. Strategies include day-to-day observations, focused assessments and individual learning records. The latter record clearly denotes key attainments across the areas of 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 detailed written report of progress is provided at the end of a child's time in the pre-school setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance. Strong emphasis is given to ensuring children's health and wellbeing. The setting is particularly successful in promoting children's personal development. The provision for moral and social development is very good. Spiritual and cultural development is appropriately promoted. The overall 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 within the school.

There are established induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. There is close liaison with the Foundation Phase in the school. The setting has very good procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required. Liaison with local authority (LA) services, including health, social services and education is effective. The arrangements to support and integrate children with ALN are well established and effective. Good provision is made to support more able children.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a high quality and very well organised learning environment. The ethos is warm, caring and friendly, strongly supportive and wholly inclusive. This helps to ensure children are happy, safe and free from undue anxiety. Very good relationships permeate the setting and children are treated as individuals. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity and sensitively encourage understanding towards others. They consistently promote good behaviour and ensure equal access to all activities. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. They are a dynamic team that successfully ensures learning is fun. The setting is well resourced to provide for the Foundation Phase curriculum. The accommodation, originally an infant classroom, is well used and organised. This together with the adjacent outdoor areas enables a 'free flow' between indoor and outdoor activities. This is a well-established feature.

Learning is enhanced further through the good made use of resources within the community. A good example is the recent visit to the Fire Station.

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

The leadership of learning is excellent. This is a particularly strong feature that assures high professional standards and enables the provision to build on its success. The setting is very well led, managed and developed. It has a friendly, supportive ethos of mutual respect and a clear sense of purpose and direction is very well established. Effective teamwork among practitioners is a particularly strong feature. The setting leader enthusiastically promotes further improvement, sets high expectations and is most effective in ensuring all practitioners have a good understanding of their role in delivering education. The life and work of the setting is very well structured and organised and reflects a strong culture of self-improvement.

Parents are provided with a clear statement of purpose together with a summary of the provision offered. A range of detailed policies and procedures are implemented well. The school's headteacher is strongly supportive and maintains close oversight of learning and teaching within the setting. In collaboration with the school, arrangements for appraisal and to promote practitioners' professional development are systematic and well focused. The process sets meaningful targets and is effective. Practitioners respond positively to professional advice, attend appropriate training and readily embrace national and local priorities. The provision incorporates the Foundation Phase ethos very well.

Since the appointment of the present headteacher, the school's governing body, which is the responsible authority, is becoming appropriately involved in monitoring the setting and in providing strategic direction.

Improving quality: Good

The setting is successful and has a good track record in improving the quality of its provision. This has a positive impact on the outcomes for children. There is a reflective culture of evaluation among practitioners, but evaluations are not always sharply enough focused and recorded.

Appropriate procedures to identify the setting's strengths and areas for development are in place. Practitioners endeavour informally to take account of the views of parents and carers, and their children as much as possible. Self-evaluation is wide ranging and relevant areas for development are identified. The report prepared before the inspection is detailed, but some key elements are understated or omitted. The SIP provides a similar picture, although the issues identified in an annual audit of provision reflect well the priorities set. The SIP provides a good framework to further improve provision, but there is little evidence overtime of focused evaluations linked to the success criteria in action plans.

Networks of professional practice support well practitioners' professional development. The setting has beneficial links developed through a local cluster of settings. Regular meetings successfully encourage the sharing of good practice.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has beneficial and effective partnerships with parents, the school, the LA and other partner organisations in the community. These links impact well on both the quality of practice and the outcomes for children.

The partnership with parents and carers is strong, encourages their involvement and does much to assure children's wellbeing and progress. Day-to-day communication is friendly, relaxed and effective in keeping parents informed about their child's progress, the curriculum and planned activities. Parents receive an induction pack, newsletters and relevant information is displayed at the setting.

Partnership working among practitioners is very effective in developing the provision. Professional links with the primary school are well established. Resources and expertise are shared as appropriate and this does much to ensure a smooth transition to school.

The setting makes good use of resources within the community to enhance provision.

Partnerships with the LA and the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (WPPA) provide effective professional advice, support and training. Practitioners value and respond enthusiastically to the support and advice received from a range of external agencies.

Resource management: Good

The management of practitioners and learning resources is very effective and impacts very well on standards and progress. Practitioners are very effectively deployed; resources very well organised and efficient daily routines ensure a wide range of activities is offered. Clear guidance for practitioners is a key feature that helps to ensure learning resources are used to good effect. The integration of indoor and outdoor 'continuous' activities is very good.

The headteacher and school secretary exercise effective oversight of the setting's finances. Income is in line with expenditure and financial procedures are rigorous and effective. Although the costs of meeting targets in the SIP are not clearly identified and forward planning to update resources is not sufficiently formalised, the use of finance matches well the needs of the setting.

The provision represents good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parent questionnaires:

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. Discussion with parents confirm they value and have high regard for the setting and that their children enjoy the sessions.

Responses to discussions with children

During the sessions observed children quickly settled and engaged in play. They have very good relationships with their peers and with practitioners. An inclusive ethos ensures they feel safe and secure. This was clearly evident in children's confidence to initiate conversations with a visitor. They know practitioners help them and that they must try to be kind and to behave well.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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.
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.