



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm - Sêr Bach Y Cwm  
Hendreladus  
Ystradgynlais  
Swansea  
SA9 1SE  
United Kingdom**

**Date of inspection: December 2015**

**by**

**Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens  
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

Sêr Bach y Cwm Pre-school is situated in the town of Ystradgynlais on the outskirts of Swansea. It delivers English medium provision in two separate settings in two purpose built rooms within the building of Ysgol Golwg Y Cwm. The two run alongside each other during the morning and afternoon.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 11.45am throughout the year during school time. The setting is registered to take up to 20 children per session. Currently, there are 36 children between two and four years of age on the register. Eighteen children receive funded early years education.

Nearly all of children attending the setting have English as their home language. Very few children have additional learning needs.

There are three members of staff including a full time leader, and two practitioners who work during each session. They are all experienced and all are suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. The leader has been in post since 2012.

The Pre-school was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April 2015. The setting has not previously been inspected 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 current performance is good because:

- practitioners create a welcoming atmosphere and an enthusiasm for learning
- all children make good progress and their self-confidence and independence is developing well
- almost all children are well behaved and all show good attitudes to learning
- the leader provides a very strong role model and the quality of teaching is good overall
- practitioners use children's interest and ideas very well to plan a variety of activities across all areas of learning
- the setting provides a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities
- by the time children move to the school nursery, almost all children have progressed well from their literacy and numeracy skills starting points

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospect for improvement is good because:

- leaders are fully committed to the clear vision they have for the setting
- their planning for improvement of the daily life of the setting is very effective
- the setting's partnerships with the school and local authority are very strong
- leaders ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are very clear and that staff make effective use of their expertise for the benefit of the children
- the setting provides good value for money

## **Recommendations**

R1. Ensure that assessments note the next steps in the children's learning and that parents are included in the process and are kept informed about the progress of their children.

R2. Ensure the rich provision is used consistently as an effective learning environment

R3. Ensure children are given every opportunity to use the Welsh vocabulary and phrases they learn.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

All children make good progress in learning during their time in the setting and achieve well. These children have a good recall of previous learning, when remembering stories and songs for example. They are developing thinking skills and acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to derive full benefit from their learning experiences.

All children have well developed listening skills. Children listen attentively for significant amounts of time to stories and are eager to respond to them. During registration children answer to their names and respond appropriately to practitioners when discussing the weather. Nearly all children have a well-developed and extensive vocabulary and many have the confidence to talk to practitioners and each other. Most children express themselves confidently and make themselves understood. They listen to and carry out instructions promptly and demonstrate an extensive vocabulary in spontaneous play.

Most children respond enthusiastically to class songs, particularly to action songs when most are eager to take part. Many children display early writing skills. They form recognisable letters and numbers and know some of the purposes of writing, such as making a list of words relating to ice melting.

Many children recognise their names without prompting and a minority enjoy looking at books with an adult. These children handle books carefully and follow the story. Most children have good numerical skills and are able to count up to double figures. . Many children count accurately, such as when counting vegetables, and use appropriate mathematical language, such as "large" and "small". Most children are able to match shapes and can correctly name two dimensional shapes, such as circle, square, triangle and rectangle. Children's information and communication technology skills (ICT) are developing well.

Most children use a range of small tools with skilful control and accuracy, such as when painting pictures or gluing shapes for example making a Christmas card. Overall, children's physical development is good; however, it is limited during the Winter months because the children have less access to the outdoor area. They move confidently, particularly when responding to the rhythmic music when it is time to tidy up, particularly when they respond to the rhythmic music when it is time to tidy up.

Children are confident and are happy to select different activities. Their thinking and problem-solving skills are well developed.

Although most children have a good understanding of simple Welsh phrases, including instructions spoken by an adult, their Welsh language skills are not developed well enough. They sing a few Welsh songs and do not use the Welsh words and phrases themselves during their daily activities.

**Wellbeing: Good**

All children enjoy coming to the setting and all are eager to participate in activities set out for them. Routines are well established and children are sufficiently confident to choose their favourite activity.

All children show good attitudes to learning. They work diligently on their tasks and are willing to share with their friends and to take turns. Relationships are good and staff provide valuable support and children feel safe and secure.

Children's personal and social skills are well developed. Almost all children behave well and respond promptly to instructions. Most accept responsibility, such as when tidying up and taking on the role of the shopkeeper in the snack shop. They interact well with the practitioners and this helps to develop their social skills most effectively.

Most children have a basic understanding of the importance of healthy eating. They all understand the importance of personal hygiene. Snack time is a very valuable social occasion when children learn to share, take turns and accept responsibility, for example in selecting their foods and drinks.

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

Practitioners provide a variety of interesting experiences across all areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. They base these on themes, such as cold weather, Winter foods and Christmas. The leader gives a high profile to children's ideas, consequently the activities match children's needs and appeal to their interests.

The setting plans good opportunities to support children's creative development through a range of painting, mark making media and building materials. It promotes physical development well through dance, and indoor table-top activities. However, children have limited access to outdoor activities such as the see saw, climbing frames, water and sand troughs and a small garden in the Winter which limits their physical development. The setting provides suitable opportunities for children to acquire knowledge of the world outside the family through visits to the local community and a few visits from 'People who help us'.

Practitioners provide a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. There are ample opportunities for pupils to decide themselves about what they are going to learn and the activities they choose. Good attention is given to challenging the more able children in focus groups and when they are at play, when they show an enthusiasm for how to balance a weighing scale and how ice melts for example.

The setting promotes children's literacy and numeracy skills well across all activities such as hunting for icicles and counting them and using their thinking skills to work out how to release a well-known film character from a block of ice. Practitioners plan valuable opportunities for children to develop their oral language by singing songs and playing games. They use labels and books around the setting effectively to enhance children's understanding of symbols and pictures that convey meaning. Most children develop their early writing skills across all areas of learning. There are good opportunities for children to develop their numeracy and ICT skills through both focused tasks and independent play. There are insufficient opportunities for children to use the Welsh language they learn daily in the setting.

Suitable emphasis is placed on the traditions and celebrations of Wales, such as celebrating St David's Day. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of the wider world through celebrating festivals such as the Chinese New Year and tasting Chinese foods.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good overall. Most practitioners have suitable knowledge of Foundation Phase requirements. All interact very warmly and effectively with children, and this creates a supportive atmosphere, which encourages the children to develop self-confidence and enjoy new activities.

The setting leader leads the learning very well in whole-group situations and is very successful in using questions to develop children's thinking skills when they are at work and play. However, insufficient opportunity is given to modelling the setting leader's very strong teaching skills to ensure consistency, for instance of skilful questioning. Practitioners have good access to training, which ensures their skills and knowledge are regularly updated.

All practitioners link the activities well with the development of children's numeracy and literacy skills. For example, children count sprouts when attempting to balance a weighing scale and learn words and phrases associated with ice and snow when trying to melt a block of ice.

There is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and practitioners ensure that both the indoor and outdoor environment is inviting and stimulating. However, children do not have sufficient access to the outdoor activities in Winter to support and extend their learning and physical development fully.

The setting's procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are detailed. All staff are involved in observing children's learning during activities and noting their findings. However, this information is mostly descriptive and practitioners do not always use their findings sufficiently well in practical situations to encourage children to take their next steps in learning, particularly whilst they are at play.



Parents and carers are adequately informed of their children's development through daily discussions but they do not receive sufficient information on their child's next steps in learning. The setting is developing a recording system in line with recent national requirements to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning.

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

Practitioners create a warm, welcoming atmosphere and promote an enthusiasm for learning. Arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing are good and the setting is a happy and caring community. Practitioners provide good opportunities to raise children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily. The setting implements good practice in terms of cleanliness, for example in relation to hand-washing before children eat their snacks. They provide a variety of beneficial opportunities for children to be physically active on a particular focus day which they call 'Walking Wednesday'.

Practitioners encourage children to recycle paper and plastic during snack time and this is developing children's understanding and awareness of sustainability suitably.

All practitioners use strategies to promote positive behaviour and they offer good support to boost children's confidence. The ratio of adults to children is very favourable. Staff interests and expertise are used effectively in planning and in supervising activities. They focus very well on developing children's personal, moral and social development, especially during snack time, by emphasising values such as fairness, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and caring for each other. All practitioners promote children's independence successfully by their high expectations of children when they tidy up and when they put on their own coats.

The setting provides good opportunities for children to take part in celebrations such as at harvest time and Christmas and these contribute well to children's spiritual development. Practitioners provide a suitable variety of opportunities for children to learn about the world outside the family through a limited variety of educational visits and visitors, such as the local policeman, to talk to the children for instance and through relevant videos, games and books.

The leader uses effective systems to identify children's additional needs at an early stage. The setting has very good links with specialist external agencies and makes good use of these to support children and families. The setting transfers information about the children to the school's nursery class effectively.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The leader creates a welcoming and inspiring atmosphere which enables most children to settle in quickly. All practitioners respect the nature and background of every child and ensure that each one has equal access to all learning experiences.

There is an extensive supply of good quality resources which are available and accessible to children. They are stored and labelled clearly to promote children's independent learning during and when they tidy up.

Practitioners make effective use of space. For example, they have created a quiet carpeted area for singing, listening to stories and looking at books, suitable mark making and painting areas and a room for children to build large-scale constructions. Designated learning areas are attractive and practitioners work hard to change these regularly. Displays of children's work celebrate their successes and support learning further. The setting is secure and well maintained room.

The outdoor spaces are appropriate and well-resourced. However, practitioners make limited use of the variety of resources to promote children's physical development, such as a see saw, climbing frames, water and sand troughs and a small garden particularly in Winter and this restricts opportunities for children to enjoy exercise outdoors.

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

The leader shows high commitment to the setting. She has very effective teaching skills and good leadership skills. She works closely with the local authority's link teacher to set a strategic direction for the setting.

The management committee has a clear vision for the setting and high expectations for its performance. They work as an effective team to ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clear and that practitioners make effective use of their expertise for the full benefit of the children.

All practitioners understand the setting's objectives to provide a welcoming atmosphere in which children are happy, keen to learn and develop confidence and self-esteem. They share agreed values and expectations and work effectively as a team to ensure consistency in their work and expectations.

Staff pay good attention to local and national priorities, for example the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and developing positive attitudes to eating and drinking healthily.

The leader works closely with the local authority advisory teacher to evaluate practitioners' work annually, based on their experience, personal development targets and the setting's priorities. They identify each practitioner's strengths and areas for development accurately.

They are beginning to support practitioners to reach higher standards of consistency by ensuring that both in-house and local authority training matches both individual and setting needs.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation systems and development planning processes are good and well in place. The leadership team, with the support of the local authority, have strengthened their quality assurance systems. This has improved practitioners' understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation in improving quality outcomes, provision and leadership.

The leader has an accurate overview of the setting's strengths, shortcomings and areas for development. These focus well on improving provision in order to raise standards and processes are now in place to implement the new baseline assessment. The setting shows positive improvements in a very short time.

The local authority advisory teacher has supported the setting significantly over time to set a strategic direction. The leader responds very positively to this support and acts on advice swiftly to improve the provision for children, for example, in improving the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all activities.

The setting has not been inspected previously. However, the leader and managers act quickly and make very good progress in response to the recommendations of all external feedback.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has very strong partnerships with the local authority advisory teacher and with the school.

The partnership with parents and carers is appropriate. The prospectus is an appropriate document which provides them with suitable information about the setting before their child starts. The emphasis is on face-to-face communication and a welcoming atmosphere. Parents value the setting's open door policy and the opportunity to speak to staff regularly. The staff greet children on arrival and are available to discuss any concerns parents may have.

Parents have access to staff observations of their child's learning and they receive a detailed termly report. However, the language is often formal and inaccessible. Overall, insufficient attention is given to noting individual children's next steps to enable parents to be fully involved in their child's learning.

Partnerships within the setting are good. The practitioners from each age group work well together as a team. Children benefit from mixing with younger and older children and this aids transition from one age group to the other.

All children transfer to the mainstream school and the setting leader and the school staff work together very effectively to ensure smooth transition.

The leader responds swiftly and effectively to the local authority advisory teacher's feedback and advice for instance in involving children fully in their own learning by taking note of their interests and suggestions. Presently, the setting is forming more effective ways of planning and assessing children's stages of development and involving parents in their children's learning.

## **Resource management: Good**

The setting has enough appropriately qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They work suitably as a team developing and sharing their professional knowledge.

Overall, leaders and managers make good use of practitioners' strengths to deliver the curriculum effectively. Those who are learning Welsh are becoming more confident. However, their use of the Welsh is inconsistent and does not provide children with sufficient structure of words and phrases to promote their use and fluency in the language.

The setting's performance management arrangements identify training needs suitably. Practitioners have good access to training, which ensures their knowledge is regularly updated. However, insufficient opportunity is given to modelling the setting leader's very strong teaching skills to ensure consistency, for instance in the use of questioning children when they are at work and at play.

Resources are ample and of good quality and practitioners make purposeful use of the variety available. However, the outdoor resources are insufficiently utilised to enhance children's learning during the Winter months.

The finance manager manages the funding diligently and works closely with the leaders and school governors to ensure that the setting has a good level of staff of resources. The setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	18%	1%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	12	10 83%	2 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	27%	0%	0%		
Teaching is good.	12	12 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	12	9 75%	3 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	6%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	12	10 83%	2 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		66%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		74%	25%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		64%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The Reporting inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## 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 partnerships 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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National Day Nurseries Association (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.