



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

A report on

**Ysgol Rhiw Bechan 3+
Ysgol Rhiw Bechan
Tregynon
Powys
SY16 3EH**

Date of inspection: September 2015

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

Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan 3+ is situated in the rural village of Tregynon, on the outskirts of Newtown and it serves the village and the surrounding area. It is registered to provide care and pre-school educational activities for up to sixteen children from 3 years old to school age. Admission is by staggered entry and parents can opt for children to remain in the setting for an additional term as part of the LA policy.

The setting which opened in 2004 is part of the school. It is local authority funded by child and funded with additional funding from the school budget for resources etc.

This predominantly English-medium setting is held in a part of the building at Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan. The school's Acting Head Teacher is the Responsible Individual (RI) on behalf of Powys County Council and is therefore responsible for the provision. The setting is managed by the school's Governing Body.

The setting is open from Monday to Thursday from 1.00 until 3.30 during the school term, and provides education for three-year-old children. At the time of the inspection, ten children were entitled to funded educational provision. Seven children have attended the setting regularly since January 2015 and ten since September.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children on the special educational needs register. No children from an ethnic minority background attend the setting. All the children come from homes in which English is spoken as the main language of the household.

Two members of permanent staff are employed at the setting, which include a leader and a full time assistant.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in March 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The settings overall performance is adequate because:

- The setting and the school work well together
- Relationships between children and adults are strong
- The children are happy and enjoy their time in the setting
- The opportunities for children to learn Welsh are good

However:

- Activities do not focus sufficiently on developing children's early writing and ICT skills across all areas of learning
- The more able, older children are insufficiently challenged
- Children's opportunities to make choices and manage their own time is insufficient
- Educational visits and visitors limited
- Attendance is low

Prospects for improvement

The settings prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- It is part of the school
- The setting leader have shown appropriate leadership skills
- The practitioners understand the setting's objectives and work well as a team to create a caring ethos in which children are happy and keen to learn
- The leader and staff have a positive and active attitude towards professional development and training
- The Governing Body manage the finance, staffing and resources well
- Partnerships with the parents and the Local Authority are strong
- The setting provides good value for money

However:

- The uncertainty about future leadership has resulted in some weakness in direction
- The systems and processes are comparatively new and it is too early to evaluate their effect on the setting's provision and children's outcomes
- Practitioners are slow to use new resources and activate the Local Authority's advice.

Recommendations

R1. Provide sufficient opportunities to develop children's marking and early writing skills across all areas of learning

R2. Provide sufficient opportunities to develop children's ICT skills across all areas of learning;

R3. Use assessment to plan activities that are well matched to children's age and ability to challenge them particularly in the third term of attendance

R4. Implement new systems and processes effectively in order to improve provision and raise children's outcomes;

R5. Attend without delay to the safety issues highlighted during the inspection

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	N/A
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Standards: N/A

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

Wellbeing: N/A

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

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

The setting has developed a broad plan to develop interesting experiences across the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase that are well suited to the children's needs and interests. These include numerous table top and floor activities which are changed on a daily basis to boost children's interest. Children also have opportunities to dance and play football and parachute games in the school hall. Overall, there are too few suitable for pupils to contribute to planning, especially to influence the choice of learning themes.

Practitioners promote children's literacy and numeracy skills well through their daily experiences at the setting. They encourage the children to develop their oral language by singing songs and playing games. Labels and books are used well around the setting effectively to support the children's understanding of symbols and pictures. There are good opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills through tasks that are led by adults and through independent tasks. However, there are few opportunities especially for the older children to extend their marking skills. Also, there are too few opportunities for children to use their ICT skills to record their work and oral language.

The setting makes limited use of visitors and visits to the locality to enhance children's learning experiences and understanding of the world around them.

Appropriate use is made of the outdoor area for children to learn about how things grow and how to care for plants and the environment. There are good opportunities to celebrate Welsh traditions and festivals, such as St David's Day and national and local eisteddfodau.

Teaching: Adequate

The quality of teaching methods is generally adequate. The strong relationships between practitioners and the children create a very reassuring atmosphere. This that encourages children to develop self-confidence and attempt new activities.

Practitioners lead the learning in whole group situations well. They ask open questions during story time and invite children to predict what is going to happen. They encourage them to choose their favourite songs, colours and shapes and to take part in enjoyable games and action songs.

However, the teaching is not as effective during group activities. Children's opportunities to make choices and manage their own time is limited also, opportunities to move children on to their next steps in learning is missed too often. This is particularly so in the development of mark making and ICT skills across the areas of learning.

Practitioners made good use of Welsh. However, their confidence is variable and they do not consistently model polished language to enhance children's understanding and usage sufficiently.

Staff make purposeful use of the variety of resources, especially in the role-play area and the outdoor area. However, the use of ICT and music resources are limited and do not enhance pupils' progress sufficiently.

The setting's new procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress is very thorough. However, practitioners do not yet use the evidence sufficiently to influence planning to ensure an appropriate challenge for each child.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing are good and the setting is a happy and caring community. Children are encouraged to understand the importance of eating healthily and to be physically active. Practitioners promote good practice in cleanliness daily, for instance for cleaning teeth and hand washing before eating their snacks.

Practitioners give consistent positive feedback to boost children's confidence. Good attention is given constantly to developing their personal, moral and social development by emphasising values such as sharing and caring for one another. Good emphasis is put on understanding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The setting provides opportunities for children to take part in celebrations such as harvest, Christmas and St David's Day which contributes well to children's spiritual development. There is an appropriate supply of books and experiences to develop awareness of other cultures such as their celebration of the Chinese New Year. However, practical opportunities to learn about the world outside the family through educational visits to the local community are limited.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children on the special educational needs register. However, suitable systems are in place to identify children's additional learning needs. The leader and practitioners understand the importance of identifying children's needs at an early stage and are aware of the local authority's expectations in terms of co-operating with specialist external agencies. Practitioners transfer information about the children to the school's nursery class effectively. Their arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting creates a welcoming and homely atmosphere to ensure that all children are well respected as individuals. It is an inclusive community, in which all children have equal access to all learning experiences. Practitioners liaise well with parents to consider individual children's nature, background and interests to support their learning. The setting's positive ethos enables almost every child to settle in quickly.

There are sufficient practitioners with appropriate experience and qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is an adequate supply of resources most of which are within the children's reach.

Practitioners make effective use of the shared space allocated to them by the school. The room is clean and safe.

Children have a wide range of activities to include a variety of table top and floor activities which are changed on a daily basis. Children's successes are displayed and celebrated adequately. The setting has access to the school hall which is used for a variety of physical activities.

The outdoor areas are well used throughout the year. The courtyard includes a large enclosed sand pit, a patio area and a large climbing frame. There is also an area of safety flooring which is suitable for jumping, rolling. Practitioners provide a variety of play activities outside on a daily basis.

The outdoor classroom is a stimulating grass and wooded area which incorporates a live willow den and screen, woodland walk, planting areas, the children's own allotment, seating areas are used effectively as a theatre for role plays, story time and outdoor music sessions.

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

The setting staff are a new team established since the beginning of the academic year.

The leader is developing her management skills appropriately by working closely with the registered person who is the acting headteacher of the school. They share agreed values and expectations and work well to ensure consistency in their work and expectations to ensure positive experiences for children most of whom will become pupils at the school.

The practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clear. They work as a team and each one contributes to the planning using their particular expertise and experience well to fulfil their duties from day to day. The setting has satisfactory processes to manage the staff's performance. As a result, practitioners are beginning to develop their professional skills appropriately.

The leader of the setting has worked effectively with the support of the local authority's link teacher to set a strategic direction and it pays due attention to local and national priorities. For example, there is a suitable focus on developing aspects of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and on the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Practitioners show signs of effective teamwork in their aim to provide positive experiences for children to aid their personal confidence and develop their social skills.

The governing body manages and supervises the setting well to ensure good value for money. They receive accurate information about the setting's progress and are committed to the benefits for children for the setting to be housed within the school.

Leaders have recently ensured that roles and responsibilities are clear and many useful systems and processes are in place. However, these are comparatively new and it is too early to evaluate their effect on the setting's provision and children's outcomes.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement are suitable, but fairly new.

The leadership team, with the support of the local authority, have strengthened their quality assurance systems. This has improved the practitioners' understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation in improving quality outcomes, provision and leadership. They have recently included school staff and governors to contribute appropriately to the process.

Consequently, the leader has developed an accurate overview of the setting's strengths and shortcomings. The current self-evaluation report prioritises aspects of standards, provision and leadership appropriately. It identifies what the setting does well and identifies some important areas to be improved.

There is an appropriate link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the targets for development. The priorities have been well linked to time and cost. These focus well on improving provision and leadership in order to raise standards, for instance, mark making opportunities and more ICT resources to develop these skills across all areas of learning. Most of the setting's priorities for improvement are in line with the inspection findings.

Recently, the performance of individual staff is evaluated and feedback specific given relating to their strengths, areas for development and training needs. Consequently, the setting has addressed Estyn recommendations in 2009 to put formal procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision as required.

Practitioners respond positively to the external support of the link teacher and to the closer links with the primary school staff. However, they are not displaying sufficient confidence to experiment with all the various new ways of thinking and working that are suggested to them.

Partnership working: Good

The setting is placed in the school to which the vast majority of children transfer. Partnerships with school staff have recently been strengthened to ensure smooth transition.

The partnership with parents is strong. The handbook is a useful document which provides them with relevant information before their child starts. Parents value practitioners' easy accessibility and daily informal report. They have easy access to photographic evidence and staff observations and receive a useful and detailed termly report.

The local authority advisory teacher has provided excellent guidance through worthwhile training and opportunities to observe good practice. She has made frequent and regular visits to the setting and her advice has been very relevant and specific. However, this has limited impact on provision because staff do not implement the suggestions swiftly enough.

Partnership with the local community is limited and valuable resources for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world underused.

Resource management: Adequate

The leader manages staff and resources suitably. She utilises the team's strengths well in order to deliver the areas of learning effectively. Appropriate use is made of a range of resources.

Performance management arrangements have recently been put in place and staff receive relevant training, based on their needs and the setting's priorities. However, because both the team and this structure are comparatively new, some aspects have not yet been implemented or their impact evaluated.

The leader uses staff expertise well to support the Welsh language. The inconsistencies in staff's use of Welsh on a day-to-day basis makes this less effective.

The setting is overall adequately resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum apart from in ICT.

The Friends of 3+ raise a considerable amount of money annually to finance the settings priorities. The Governing Body allocate and supervise the finances and the resources efficiently and the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

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)

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 partnerships 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>

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