



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

**Brookfield Day Nursery
Garthmyl
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6RS**

Date of inspection: October 2011

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

Brookfield Day Nursery is an English-medium setting. It is situated in the village of Garthmyl, near Montgomery in Powys. Children who attend have relatively advantaged backgrounds and come mainly from Newtown, Montgomery and Welshpool. All children currently on roll have English as their home language. They come from homes where little Welsh is spoken. None have additional learning needs (ALN).

The setting is open from 8am to 6pm five days a week for 51 weeks a year. It provides childcare services for up to 49 pre-school children, including education for three year olds. The nursery class is registered for 24 children. At the time of the inspection 17 three year olds and one 4 year old were enrolled. The local authority (LA) funds 15 children.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in January 2011 and the previous inspection by Estyn was in October 2005.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- nearly all children have well developed skills and achieve good standards;
- they are happy, enthusiastic learners;
- high quality care, support and guidance assures children's wellbeing;
- the quality of teaching is good;
- the setting is very well run and the manager provides dynamic leadership.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the play leader provides good educational leadership;
- a strong ethos of teamwork permeates the life and work of the setting;
- the setting improvement plan (SIP) identifies relevant targets; and
- there is an established record of improvement since the last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the setting should:

- R1 provide appropriate levels of challenge, especially for more able children;
- R2 focus planning and assessment to identify small steps in learning;
- R3 promote greater integration of learning activities and develop further the use of resources in different contexts; and
- R4 improve provision for information and communications technology (ICT).

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

When they come to the setting nearly all children have well developed skills for their age and stage of development. They build well on these skills in a range of contexts and make good overall progress. They successfully acquire new knowledge, develop their skills and confidently explore their surroundings and try out new experiences. All children apply their skills well as they engage in a range of structured play activities.

Nearly all children have very good communication skills. They listen attentively, acquire a rich vocabulary and speak in simple sentences to express themselves clearly. They are inquisitive and most readily ask questions and confidently initiate simple conversations. A few readily engage in extended dialogues about their experiences. Most happily sing familiar songs and enjoy participating in imaginative role play, for example in the 'fire station.' They handle books as readers, enjoy listening to stories and eagerly anticipate what happens next. Many show very good awareness that text and pictures convey the story. Nearly all recognise their name and most begin to recognise letters and sounds. Most steadily develop early writing skills through mark making, for example when taking 'messages.'

Progress in early mathematical skills is generally good. Nearly all count confidently to ten and many count objects to five with increasing accuracy. They make pairs and name shapes such as a triangle. Many use mathematical language and skills correctly when matching objects, describing their position and comparing their size. Children's awareness of money develops well, for example when they 'buy' snacks using real coins.

Progress in knowledge and understanding and in the creative and physical aspects of learning is generally good, but children's skills in using a range of ICT are less well developed.

Overall standards in Welsh language are good. Most show good understanding of everyday words and phrases in structured sessions. They enjoy singing songs and listening to stories in Welsh. Many count to ten, name colours and correctly describe the weather. A very few respond in Welsh spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

In line with their age nearly all children have an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. They understand the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Nearly all develop very

good social skills, eat a range of healthy foods prepared for them and enthusiastically participate in energetic activities, including games and drama.

All children demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Relationships within the setting are excellent and the development of children's collaborative skills through play is a strong feature. The positive role models set by adults help to ensure children feel safe and secure. They participate enthusiastically in structured games and their behaviour is very good. Nearly all show courtesy and appropriate consideration for others. They take turns, share equipment, look after resources and develop responsibility, for example by helping to tidy-up.

As they enter the setting nearly all children quickly become absorbed in the activities provided. For their ages all show good levels of independence. They have positive attitudes and sustain interest well, for example in response to visitors from the community. They are well motivated and clearly enjoy learning. Most readily make choices about how and what they learn within the setting and a very few suggest changes to activities and contribute to planning activities.

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

The setting provides a broad range of learning experiences that appropriately promote progress towards Foundation Phase outcomes. The provision meets well the needs of children and the community. Activities are stimulating and successfully engage children's interest. Fortnightly planning is based on the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework and the identification of skills to develop with individual children is a strong feature. Activities linked to broad themes encompass the required areas of learning. Practitioners ensure an appropriate balance of activities, although opportunities for children to consolidate skills in different contexts are not always developed. Planning builds well on children's prior knowledge and skills, but levels of challenge to enhance the skills of more able children vary. There is sound emphasis on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy, but the promotion of skills in ICT is less well developed.

Planning reflects a good understanding of the Foundation Phase Outcomes and provides a good basis to ensure the progressive development of children's skills. On occasions practitioners develop children's learning well, but planning provides too few details of the small steps in learning required to achieve a learning outcome.

Practitioners plan good opportunities for children to encounter new experiences, solve problems and encourage them to think for themselves. They know the children very well and learning experiences foster positive relationships, nurture respect and tolerance and promote awareness of other cultures, such as through celebrating festivals. Use of the grounds and visitors positively promotes wider awareness of the world. Furthermore, opportunities to learn about sustainability and the impact we have on the environment, for example through recycling, are developing well.

Good provision is made to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales and practitioners, who are all learners of Welsh, successfully promote the language during focused sessions. However, the incidental use of Welsh within the setting is less evident.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is effective, promotes high expectations and is skillful in motivating children to learn in a caring and supportive ethos. Practitioners have good knowledge of the Foundation Phase and use a range of strategies well to stimulate play and to structure learning in ways that the children enjoy. Good examples of modeling activities were observed and children were given sufficient time to develop their ideas and to complete tasks. In general, practitioners observe and intervene appropriately, encourage children to make choices and use questioning well. Teaching is most effective in focused sessions where resources are used well to extend learning. The setting leader provides a good model in this regard. Planning provides sound guidance for teaching, but details of the expected steps in learning for different groups of children are not always clearly enough defined.

There are good arrangements for the assessment of learning. Practitioners are developing procedures to match the needs of the setting. Day-to-day observations are recorded and good use is made of a skills checklist to profile children's achievements. This information is used well to evaluate individual progress and provides a good basis to link assessments to the learning objectives for different activities and to help plan the next steps of learning. Practitioners readily make time to be available for parents or carers to discuss their child's progress before and after sessions. A detailed report of progress is provided when children leave the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high standards of care, support and guidance. The arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. This provision contributes very positively to children's personal development and promotes their moral and social development particularly well. It nurtures a sense of curiosity about the world, fosters the values of honesty and fairness, promotes good behaviour and engages children in a range of community and cultural activities.

There are appropriate induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. Liaison with the receiving schools is sound.

Arrangements to provide children with personal and specialist support when required are established with relevant LA services. This includes arrangements to support and integrate children with ALN. The provision to support more able children is sound, but opportunities to tailor provision to their particular needs are not always fully developed.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a welcoming, friendly and inclusive ethos that values individual qualities. It provides a distinctive, high quality, warm and supportive environment for children. The excellent relationships within the setting do much to ensure children are free from undue anxiety. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity and foster sensitivity towards the needs of others. They strongly encourage good behaviour and ensure equal access to all aspects of provision. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities do not suffer disadvantage.

The setting is appropriately staffed for the number of children on roll. Overall it is well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum, but provision for ICT is limited. Furthermore, the use of resources, for example in English, Welsh and numeracy, is not always fully developed. The setting benefits from a high standard of purpose built accommodation and the manager is rightly proud of the scope the extensive grounds provide for outdoor learning. Regular use of this environment, together with the contribution of visitors, considerably enriches children's learning.

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

The setting manager ensures the whole nursery is exceptionally well managed. This results in a positive ethos where children and practitioners are valued and respected. As a result the play leader for the three year olds has developed her leadership skills well and provides a clear sense of purpose and educational direction within the setting. A range of clear policies and procedures are implemented consistently, but a few elements of strategic planning are not sufficiently formalised.

The manager and play leader communicate a clear vision for improvement, set high expectations and are successful in ensuring practitioners have a good understanding of their roles. Effective teamwork is well established. This is a particularly strong feature that helps develop and maintain the good work of the setting.

Systematic arrangements for appraisal and to foster professional development are implemented and practitioners regard these as effective. The provision incorporates the Foundation Phase principles well and practitioners reflect on professional advice and readily embrace national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

Improvement since the last inspection is good. A culture of self-improvement is well established. Practitioners take account of the views of parents, carers and children as much as possible. There are effective procedures to identify strengths and areas for improvement that involve all practitioners. The self-evaluation report is well structured and reflects the targets identified in the SIP. An annual audit of provision and the play leader's evaluations of progress, for example the impact of skills based planning, are good features. However, longer term strategic planning doesn't clearly identify how further improvements will be secured and resourced.

Networks of professional practice appropriately support practitioners' professional development. The setting has beneficial links with other settings through the LA that successfully encourage the sharing of good practice.

Partnership working: Good

The setting maintains and benefits from a range of strategic partnerships that impact well on the quality of service it provides. Practitioners maintain excellent relationships with parents and carers and day-to-day communication is friendly and effective in keeping them informed about their child's progress, the curriculum and planned activities. Parental involvement is strongly promoted through home/setting activities and the use of learning journals. This partnership contributes particularly well to children's wellbeing and good use is made of a range of media to keep parents up to date with important information.

Partnership working between practitioners is effective in developing the provision and appropriate links help to ensure a smooth transition to school. The setting makes increasing use of resources in the local community. For example, children enjoyed a visit from the fire service.

Partnerships with the LA and the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (WPPA) provide effective professional support and challenge. Practitioners value the support they receive from a range of external agencies. They are keen to respond to advice and benefit from training provided by the LA.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the needs of children and the curriculum. They are well deployed and each takes responsibility for an area within the setting. This ensures good quality displays, including children's work and ensures resources are both well organised and accessible.

Regular use is made of the 'outdoor classroom' the school grounds provide, but opportunities to integrate indoor and outdoor continuous activities are underdeveloped. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the setting's

finances. Strategic planning includes the provision of a monthly budget for the nursery, but the costs of meeting targets in the SIP are not identified. This limits the effectiveness of improvement planning over the medium term.

The systematic management of staff and resources, including available funding, impacts well on the quality of provision and the outcomes for children. This represents good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Twelve questionnaires and eight written comments were received. Discussions with several parents confirmed their high regard for the service provided by the nursery. Nearly all responses to the questionnaire were positive. Around three quarters of respondents indicated strong agreement with almost all items in the questionnaire. Very high levels of satisfaction with the setting were stated. In particular parents say children are helped to settle in well when they first attend and they feel confident about approaching the setting with suggestions or problems. Levels of satisfaction were reduced in relation to the range of activities provided. However, written comments provided a balanced view indicating that the activities provided are extensive, imaginative and child centred. The inspection found this to be the case.

Responses to discussions with children

During the sessions observed children settled happily in the setting. They have excellent relationships with their peers and with practitioners. An inclusive ethos ensures children 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)