



*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**

**Little Stars under 5s  
Leisure Centre Demountable  
Mill Lane  
Caldicot  
NP26 4BN**

**Date of inspection: February 2012**

**by**

**Mary Dyas**

**for**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<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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## About the setting

Little Stars Under Fives is an English-medium setting which meets in a purpose built building in the grounds of Caldicot Leisure Centre. The accommodation comprises two spacious rooms which are set out to provide for the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Outdoors there are both hard standing and grassed areas securely fenced off with free access from the building.

The setting serves the town of Caldicot and the surrounding area. The children attending the nursery are considered to come from a wide range of social backgrounds and almost all children have English as their main home language. No children are from homes where one or more parent speaks Welsh. The setting welcomes all children and makes good provision for those with additional learning needs. At the time of the inspection 8% of children had been identified as having additional learning needs.

The setting is open from Monday to Friday in the morning from 9.30 to 12.00 for children aged three and four years and in the afternoon from 12.45 to 2.45 for two-year-olds. Children make the move from the afternoon to the morning session in the term following their third birthday. At the time of the inspection there were 25 children attending in the morning of whom 19 were three-year-olds and six were four-year-olds. All were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2010 and by Estyn in March 2006.

## 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 current performance of the setting is good because:

- Children enjoy their time in the setting and make good progress
- The setting provides a good range of stimulating and interesting activities which engage the children and support their learning
- Children are polite and well behaved in the setting. They understand the rules and routines of the group and play co-operatively together; and
- Relationships between children and adults in the setting are warm and caring

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Practitioners are very committed to the setting and are keen to provide good quality education for the children in their care
- There is a strong sense of unity and co-operation between practitioners; and
- The self-evaluation process is in place and there is evidence that targets for improvement are being addressed

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations for improvement are to:

R1 Improve standards in, and provision for, Welsh language development

R2 Continue to develop planning for the outdoor area to ensure a range of activities which reflect those available indoors

R3 Continue to refine the Learning Journals to ensure information from observations of children's learning is used not only to inform planned activities but also to identify children's progress in learning

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

All children, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well in relation to their starting point and make good progress in all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. Almost all children develop a wide vocabulary and the majority of children speak in full sentences. All understand and follow instructions accurately, answer questions appropriately and most speak to one another while at play. Almost all children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes and listen attentively to stories, showing their interest and understanding through relevant comments and questions.

All children make good progress with mark making and they experiment confidently with a range of instruments when doing this. Many children are trying to write their name unaided and a few can already do so successfully. Nearly all children use mathematical language correctly when comparing length, height or the size of things and most three year olds count objects accurately to at least five. Many four year olds are able to recognise numbers to 10. All show an awareness of the everyday use of IT when engaging in role play.

All children develop good physical skills and are developing their level of independence and self-confidence. Many children concentrate for extended periods; for example when building a castle with plastic bricks with a group of friends. All recognise that Welsh is a different language and are beginning to use some of the words they have learned. They answer the register in Welsh and understand more than they speak.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All children are very happy in the playgroup and enjoy their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners enable them to feel safe, happy and confident and they return the affection and respect they receive from them. All have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and know that good food and exercise are important to make them healthy. All children go to the toilet unaided and wash their hands afterwards and also before snack.

All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. All children behave well during the sessions and help to tidy up at the end. They know the routines well and anticipate what is going to happen next. Nearly all are aware of the needs and feelings of other children and adults and show concern for them. They make friendships in the setting and they are clearly very fond of one another.

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

Practitioners plan together. Planning is firmly based on the Foundation Phase learning outcomes and occasionally responds to the immediate interests of the children. A good range of learning experiences is planned and overall there is good provision for the development of children's literacy, mathematical knowledge and skills in ICT. Although there is no formal planning for differentiated activities to meet the needs of individual children, this is carried out informally as staff know the children very well and respond to their individual needs and abilities.

Through their daily play together, all children develop strong relationships with one another and with the adults who care for them and demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other. Children celebrate the Welsh culture in a range of ways when they celebrate St David's Day and are increasing their understanding of other peoples when they enjoy celebrating other festivals such as Divali and Chinese New Year.

Although the setting makes use of the outdoor area for a number of activities, specific planning for the outdoors is still in the early stages of development.

Provision for the Welsh language is adequate. Practitioners do not develop children's Welsh language skills well enough. Although they use Welsh for whole group activities such as registration or during singing and story sessions, incidental Welsh is not used regularly by all practitioners. Children are not always encouraged to use Welsh. Children celebrate and learn about Welsh festivals such as St. David's Day. Children are learning about recycling and sustainability when they recycle plastic and foil and the food scraps from their snack time.

**Teaching: Good**

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

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

Formal recording of children's learning is still developing. Practitioners know the children well and children's progress when working on a focused task is carefully

noted and well linked to the learning objective. Practitioners are beginning to support this with incidental information from observations to inform the completion of a Learning Journal. Informal links with parents and carers are strong and there are good opportunities for the exchange of information when they bring and collect their children. A written report is provided at the end of the summer term covering progress in all the Foundation Phase areas of learning and providing parents and carers with an opportunity to comment. The reports do not yet provide information on the child's next steps in learning.

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

The care, support and guidance of the children in the nursery is a strength. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children and staff provide good role models which encourage children to treat one another with kindness and respect. Transition into the group is smooth because many children have previously attended both the toddler group in the local Baptist church and the afternoon sessions at Little Stars and are familiar with the staff and the routines of the setting.

The provision made for children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good

Practitioners have good experience of working with outside agencies and following individual play plans to support children with additional learning needs.

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

### **Learning environment: Good**

A particular feature of the setting is the sense of inclusiveness. Children with additional learning needs are fully integrated into the routines of the sessions. The setting is fully inclusive, treats all children equally and successfully promotes the importance of valuing diversity. All children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Indoors the playgroup presents an attractive and welcoming environment. The two rooms have a good variety of displays of children's work which are relevant to the current topic and all children have access to all areas of provision.

There are sufficient trained practitioners with an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase to ensure all children's needs are met. All practitioners are keen to improve their own knowledge and attend regular training. Good resources are available and these are used appropriately to develop the children's skills and understanding. Children's experience of the world around them is enhanced by an appropriate range of visits to, and visitors from, the community.

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

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

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

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self evaluation in the setting is developing and practitioners know their setting well. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a realistic one owned and shared by all practitioners and which identifies many of the setting's strengths and appropriate targets for improvement. Progress is regularly monitored and recorded. Evaluation of improvements in terms of children's progress is still at an early stage of development. Practitioners regularly attend cluster meetings where they are able to share good practice with those from other settings.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Practitioners are part of the local community and relationships with the parents of the children in their care are very positive. Results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. Parents are provided with a half termly newsletter which gives information about the upcoming topic and ways in which they can support their children.

Good links exist between the setting and some of the primary schools which the children move on to. The setting is a member of the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. It enjoys a very positive relationship with the Early Years link teacher from the local authority who provides support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the children.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has a good range of up-to-date resources which contribute effectively to children's learning. Good use has begun to be made of the available space outdoors to provide a range of interesting learning experiences for the children. The supervisor deploys staff on a daily basis appropriately and makes positive use of their individual strengths.

The supervisor and her deputy are well supported by an experienced treasurer who has a good understanding of the budget and the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixteen questionnaires were received. All were positive and indicated that parents are very pleased with the setting. They report that their children are very happy and almost all feel their children are being well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy coming to the playgroup. They like to play outside and to use construction toys and malleable materials. Most older children have made special friends who they like to spend time with.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## 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 partnership's 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>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.