



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

**Cogan Nursery School
Cawnpore Street
Cogan
Penarth
Vale of Glamorgan
CF64 2JU**

Date of inspection: January 2013

by

**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 school'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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Cogan Nursery School serves a wide area on the outskirts of Penarth. The surrounding housing is mainly owner occupied with some local authority and housing association accommodation.

The school caters for children aged three to four years. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part time basis, at the beginning of the term following their third birthday. They spend up to five terms at the nursery before transferring to local primary schools. During the inspection, there were 64 children, from the full ability range, attending part-time. Children attend either the morning or afternoon session. They are taught by three full-time teachers and four teaching assistants, three of whom work full-time. Around 16% of children, are from homes where the first language is not English. There are no children for whom Welsh is the first language. Around 34% of children are on the additional learning needs register, none of whom has a statutory statement of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in January 2007 when the current headteacher was in post as acting headteacher. She was appointed as headteacher in September 2008.

The 2012-2013 individual school budget per pupil for Cogan Nursery School is £5,369 which compares to a national average of £6,276 for all maintained nursery schools in Wales.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- the school's nurturing ethos supports high standards of children's wellbeing;
- nearly all children behave extremely well and are enthusiastic learners;
- the school provides a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences within an exciting and creative learning environment;
- most children make good progress and achieve well in the seven areas of learning;
- most children make exceptionally good progress in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and apply these skills effectively across all areas of learning; and
- the quality of teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision for the future development of the school which all staff, governors and parents share;
- the school reflects carefully on its current practices, responds to new ideas and looks for innovative ways to improve its provision;
- all staff work well as a team to create a vibrant learning community;
- governors make an important contribution to the life and strategic direction of the school; and
- there is a good track record of improvement since the previous inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards in reading and writing for more able children

R2 Ensure that tasks are always well matched to meet the abilities of all children

R3 Focus more specifically on skills in teachers' short term planning

R4 Strengthen monitoring processes so that there is always a clear focus on standards

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it 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

Many children enter Cogan Nursery School with skills below those normally expected for their age, although skills in personal and social and physical development are generally at the expected level. During their time at school, most children make at least good progress in the seven areas of learning. Many children with English as an additional language make very good progress.

Most children make good progress in developing their communication skills. Most listen carefully and many participate in discussions well. They ask and answer questions using a vocabulary which is well developed for their age. Many children use pre-writing skills such as mark making with growing confidence. Many understand the purpose of writing and imitate this process in their play. They hold pencils correctly and have good pencil control. Most children listen carefully to stories and many demonstrate a clear understanding through their responses and comments. Many children retell familiar stories and a few do so using considerable detail. Nearly all children handle books correctly, turning the pages from left to right.

A few more able children are beginning to write their names and understand how writing consists of letter sounds. A very few are beginning to make sense of print and are ready to begin reading. However, this development is at a very early stage.

Most children use early mathematical skills correctly to count, sequence and match objects and to recognise and repeat simple patterns. Many recognise numbers to ten and a few collect the correct number of objects to match a single digit number.

A very few children add two single digit numbers by counting on.

Most children make exceptionally good progress in developing their ICT skills and apply these skills effectively across all areas of learning. They operate a range of ICT resources, such as tablet computers, remote control toys and digital cameras confidently and with increasing control. More able children scan independently quick response codes to find and use additional information about topics. They look at a painting by a famous artist, for example, and find other work by the same artist.

Most children persevere for a significant amount of time in activities of their own choice and show enjoyment and pleasure. Many children display a high level of independence when taking part in child-led activities.

Children's Welsh skills are developing well. Many children use basic language patterns correctly and respond confidently when asked simple questions by a familiar adult. Children learn specific language for a role play area, such as the three bears' house and a few use it in their free play.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Children are extremely happy coming into school. They display a very high standard of wellbeing and are confident in the learning environment. Nearly all engage with staff very readily and are keen to learn through play. They are fully involved in all activities and are very motivated to learn. Many children respond to questioning eagerly and in great detail. This has a positive impact on their oracy skills.

Behaviour is exemplary and all children show respect, care and concern for others. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about the activities they undertake. Most children make decisions confidently and are true independent learners. They develop valuable life skills from the high quality experiences provided at the school. They enjoy helping each other and co-operate well in group activities.

Most children have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise in relation to their age and stage of development. They participate enthusiastically in short sessions of physical activity at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. They understand why personal hygiene is important and have well established routines for hand washing.

The school arranges good opportunities for children to be involved in the local community, for example, when they participate in the Penarth Summer Festival.

Attendance levels have remained consistent over the past four years. Most children attend regularly and arrive at school on time. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to encourage good attendance.

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

The school offers many stimulating and imaginative opportunities for children to learn. Staff produce detailed mid-term plans which clearly identify the progression of skills. They plan creatively for literacy, numeracy and ICT in all areas of the curriculum. All staff respond to children's individual needs and use innovative programmes to ensure that all children are engaged effectively in learning.

Planning for Welsh language development is good and has a positive impact on children's standards. Teachers and support staff are effective Welsh language role models. They use a wide range of resources and carefully planned role play opportunities to introduce new vocabulary. Welsh songs and rhymes used in daily routines, reinforce language patterns successfully.

Provision for education for sustainable development is highly effective. The children are fully involved in recycling a wide variety of products and understand the importance of conserving water and electricity. They have extensive opportunities to grow produce and to learn about local wildlife.

The school has close links with schools in Spain and Lesotho. This enables children to develop a strong understanding of the wider world that is well above expectations for children of this age. As a result, the school is recognised as a Full International School by the British Council; one of a very few nursery schools with this award.

Teaching: Good

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. They use a rich variety of approaches and resources that maintain children's interest and make learning fun. The very positive relationships between staff and children create a supportive environment where children are confident in taking risks and trying out new experiences. Staff are very good language role models and, as a result, many children's oracy skills are well developed. Where teaching is best, staff plan stimulating learning experiences and use effective questioning to develop children's skills during activities. Lessons move at an appropriate pace and staff take good account of children's preferences which fosters independent learning. However, learning intentions in short-term planning do not always focus well enough on the skill progression for learners of all abilities, especially those who are more able.

Teachers monitor children's progress effectively using the school's tracking system. They use this information well to identify children in need of additional support. Staff encourage children to evaluate their own learning regularly and children are aware of their individual targets. Teachers have developed an age appropriate system for helping children to review their targets. As a result, many children know what they need to do to improve their work. The school keeps parents and carers well-informed about their children's progress through formal and informal meetings and useful written reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

All staff place significant emphasis on the wellbeing of pupils. They know them well, and always treat them as individuals encouraging them to learn at their own pace. There are appropriate policies in place to cover all aspects of health and wellbeing, including an age-appropriate approach to helping children learn about themselves and their bodies.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, cultural and social development. The Peace Garden, for example, offers children an opportunity for reflection and quiet time and helps them to understand that there are many different forms of worship.

The school draws on an appropriate range of services to support children and parents, such as using translators if necessary, when speaking to parents about their child's progress.

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

The school effectively identifies children's specific learning needs and offers a range of suitable intervention programmes. Play plans identify appropriate targets for improvement and staff review these regularly. Teachers track the progress of pupils receiving targeted support carefully and as a result, nearly all children make good progress.

Learning environment: Excellent

The inclusive, welcoming ethos of the school is an outstanding feature. Members of staff take very good account of the diversity of children's backgrounds and successfully meet their varied needs. They actively encourage children to share their own cultures and treat others fairly and with respect. For example, children with English as an additional language share songs in their mother tongue confidently and staff and children value this.

The learning environment is innovative and highly imaginative. Children's learning thrives in a stimulating, vibrant and exceptionally well resourced area. The school has invested in high quality resources to meet the needs of the children. This includes the provision of computerised tablets which allow the children to explore ICT safely and independently. As a result, many children use ICT confidently to access information at an appropriate level. All children have equal access to the curriculum and staff challenge stereotypes effectively. The children are tolerant towards one another and feel safe and comfortable in their environment.

Staff have developed an exceptionally creative outdoor environment that is used imaginatively to help children learn through play and first hand experiences. The school site provides a diverse learning environment with a variety of designated areas, such as a bird hide, planting area, theatre and forest school area. The innovative learning environment is constantly being adapted to suit individual and group needs and contributes significantly to the children's high standards of wellbeing.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision and provides strategic direction for the future of the school. She shares this effectively with staff, governors and parents. Teachers and support staff have clear roles and responsibilities. All have appropriate leadership roles within the school and they work very successfully together towards common aims. Staff display high expectations of themselves and others. There is a strong focus on creating an exciting learning environment in which children, staff and parents feel valued.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities well and help to provide the school with a strong sense of direction. The headteacher and senior teacher keep them well informed about the progress of new initiatives and children's standards and achievements. The governing body supports and challenges the school robustly in relation to the outcomes it achieves.

The school takes very good account of local and national priorities. All staff and governors have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Phase. The school has implemented it effectively and enthusiastically, particularly in relation to developing outdoor learning. Improving standards in communication and developing high standards of pupil wellbeing are at the core of the school's work.

Improving quality: Good

The school has developed a strong culture of self-evaluation that takes good account of the views of children, parents, staff and governors. As a result, leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a comprehensive timetable of monitoring activities that includes analysis of data, evaluations of questionnaires and observations of learning and teaching.

School improvement priorities link clearly to the findings of self-evaluation over the year. The school improvement plan is a useful document, which outlines specific actions, responsible personnel, key dates and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher and governors ensure that sufficient funding is available so that the school makes good progress in relation to all priorities. Success criteria for targets that relate specifically to pupil outcomes are often measurable. However, monitoring procedures and intended outcomes for a few targets do not always focus well enough on standards.

The school is a strong learning community. All teachers and support staff are actively engaged in increasing their professional knowledge, understanding and skills and this has a significant impact on the quality of provision and pupil outcomes. Teachers' involvement, for example, in a network of professional practice, securely based on action research, has improved boys' literacy through increased involvement in role-play.

Partnership working: Excellent

The school has developed a wealth of effective partnerships that widen the educational experiences available to children and parents. These have a very positive impact on pupil outcomes. Through the Welsh Government Families First programme the school works effectively with a wide variety of providers, such as, the educational psychologist, drug awareness programmes and adult education organisations. These provide parents with different opportunities to improve their parenting skills.

The provision of a food co-operative in the school encourages parents to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at reasonable cost. This enables the school to contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of its children. The active involvement of children in the venture means that staff can introduce more complex mathematical and organisational skills that nursery-aged children may not otherwise encounter. As a result, children sort, count and solve real-life problems confidently when packing fruit and vegetable orders.

The breadth of methods the school uses to communicate with parents is particularly effective. The school and its governors have embraced the use of information technology and social media. This ensures that all parents receive good and timely information about the school and its activities. The school has, for example, filmed parents, staff and friends reading stories and sharing other literacy and numeracy activities and uploaded them to the internet. This innovative use of technology is highly effective in supporting families to enjoy sharing books and activities with their children. Parents report that it has had a very positive impact on their children's enthusiasm for books and reading.

The school has strong links with other nursery and primary schools in the cluster and the local authority. This enables the school to share good practice and ensures children's effective transition to the next stage of their education. The use, for example, of a common electronic pupil tracking system ensures efficient transfer of assessment information and effective quality assurance and moderation of assessment.

Resource management: Good

The school makes very effective use of its staffing and financial resources. The headteacher, school administrator and governing body finance committee monitor the budget carefully. They ensure that spending decisions relate closely to school priorities and sufficient funds are available to secure additional staff for the summer term, as dictated by pupil numbers. Governors have earmarked the current surplus for a building project and have identified this clearly in the school development plan.

All teachers and support staff with responsibilities for groups of children make good use of planning, preparation and assessment time. A rigorous, but supportive, performance management system for all staff successfully identifies professional development needs. The headteacher and governors ensure that they provide opportunities to meet these needs. They have high expectations of staff to reflect on and evaluate their own developmental experiences.

Leaders deploy teaching and support staff effectively, using their time, expertise and experience skilfully to provide good learning experiences for all children. Staff's use of learning resources is imaginative and provides a highly interactive and exciting environment. As a result of the high standards most children achieve, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

No local or national comparative data is available for this school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Learner questionnaires

Due to the age of the children at the nursery, no learner questionnaires were completed.

Parent questionnaires

Ten parents or carers completed the questionnaire.

All parents or carers agree strongly that:

- their child was helped to settle in well when they started school

All parents or carers feel that:

- they are satisfied with the school and it is run well;
- the staff expect their children to work hard and to do their best;
- their child likes school;
- the teaching is of good quality;
- their child is making good progress;
- staff treat all children fairly and with respect;
- their child is safe in school;
- the school encourages their child to be healthy and to take regular exercise;
- they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem;
- they understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints;
- they are kept well informed about their child's progress;
- their child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular needs;
- the school helps their child to become more mature and take on responsibility;
- their child is well prepared for moving on to the next school; and
- the range of activities including trips and visits is good.

The responses to all the statements were very positive and above the national benchmarks.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Jane Rees	Reporting Inspector
Sarah Morgan	Team Inspector
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Amanda Stanford	Peer Inspector
Pauline Rowland	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.