



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

**Rydal Penrhos Early Years
Pwllycrochan Avenue
Colwyn Bay
Conwy
LL29 7BP**

Date of inspection: October 2013

by

**Mr Wil Williams
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:

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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

The nursery is an integral part of Rydal Penrhos School situated in the Rydal Penrhos Preparatory School building. Children attending the nursery come from the towns of Colwyn Bay, Conwy and Llandudno with many travelling from further afield.

The nursery (known throughout the report as the 'setting') caters for children aged three to four years. Children are admitted to the setting in the term in which they are two and a half years old and may spend up to six terms in the class before transferring to the reception class in the school. Most children attend for a full day for five days a week. There are currently 24 children on roll, the majority of whom attend fulltime for five days a week. Conwy local authority partly funds Early Years education places for two 3-year-olds.

Children of all ability and background are accepted to the setting. No child has identified additional learning needs. English is the main language spoken at home by nearly all children. The children are introduced to the Welsh language as part of the curriculum.

The headteacher of Rydal Penrhos Preparatory School, together with the Senior school's headteacher and the Board of Governors, is responsible for the quality of education in the setting. A manager and five practitioners staff the setting, all of whom are appropriately qualified to teach the early years. Specialist teachers are used once a week for gymnastics and music sessions.

This is the first time that Estyn has inspected the nursery setting independently of the school. The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in August 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- the setting provides children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning;
- there is good provision for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills;
- teaching is good with practitioners having high expectations of all children;
- assessment information is used purposefully for planning the next step in children's learning;
- there is good provision for promoting children's health and welfare;
- the setting helps children develop positive values and attitudes; and
- there is a good supply of good quality resources in all areas of learning.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the manager has a clear vision for the setting's development;
- the manager and practitioners work very closely as a team and have shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships;
- rigorous and honest self-evaluation has led to improvement in standards, pupils' wellbeing and management;
- of the setting's willingness to act upon advice and to undertake new ventures;
- the setting is developing well as a strong learning community;
- a good range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievements and welfare; and
- the setting provides good value for money.

Recommendations

R1. Provide more opportunities for children to increase their understanding and use of the Welsh language.

R2. Improve provision in the outdoor area.

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?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The setting provides children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and based firmly on providing high quality first hand, practical experiences. Themes such as 'The Rainforest,' engage children's interest and enable them to make good progress according to their age and ability. The enhanced provision, which incorporates most areas of learning, provides worthwhile experiences for children to make choices and to lead their own learning. Visits to the forest school which is the school grounds, provide exciting opportunities for children to explore the natural environment and to become independent learners. Regular sessions taken by specialist music and gymnastic teachers enhance children's learning experiences substantially.

There are good opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and to take an active role in the setting's recycling arrangements.

Practitioners use the daily focus tasks successfully for developing children's communication and numeracy skills. Children are encouraged to share their feelings and ideas as individuals and in groups, to listen attentively to others and to participate in role-play and other forms of imaginative play. Children have access to a variety of suitable story and information books. They learn individual letters and sounds and will regularly listen to stories read to them by adults. There are plenty of purposeful opportunities for children to experiment with mark making and to understand the different functions of writing. Through activities such as counting together, singing number rhymes and comparing objects of different sizes, children have valuable practical opportunities to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.

The school's extensive supply of information communication technology (ICT) equipment and resources ensures that children have opportunities to develop their confidence and skills in this area.

The constant use of incidental Welsh by practitioners during their interaction with children ensures that there is appropriate provision for Welsh Language Development. However, there are not enough opportunities in the continuous provision for children to increase their understanding and use of the Welsh language.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to celebrate the traditions and the cultures of Wales.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and of the Foundation Phase requirements. Members of staff have high expectations of all children and maintain a good balance between activities, which children chose and lead themselves and those that are under the direction of practitioners. The strong emphasis placed on learning through play, especially in the continuous provision and in the forest school, very successfully encourages all children's active involvement and participation in their learning. Focus tasks are thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of all children, including the more able and talented.

There is a clear focus to adult support, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and they do so sensitively and skilfully to encourage children to challenge themselves as they learn. Imaginative use is made of a variety of resources such as the rainforest area, to appeal to children's interest and improve learning. In both English and Welsh, practitioners are themselves good language models.

Practitioners assess and track children's progress and learning across all areas of learning very thoroughly and use this information purposefully for planning the next step in learning. Regular and detailed written reports ensure that parents are aware of their child's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for promoting children's health and welfare as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Working outdoors, and particularly participating in forest school activities, has a beneficial effect on children's spiritual and physical development and raises their awareness of the beauty of the world around them. During their daily involvement with the children, practitioners emphasise strongly the need for everyone to be kind to each other, to be honest and fair and to behave in a responsible manner. This greatly helps children in learning to differentiate between right and wrong. Regular opportunities for children to undertake responsibilities and to make their own choices about their learning contribute significantly towards their personal and social development.

Good induction arrangements help children to settle down quickly and easily at the setting. Practitioners know the children well and provide them with clear guidance during sessions.

The setting's thorough assessment procedures, together with the involvement of parents in the procedures, enable practitioners to identify children educational needs at an early stage. When the need arises, practitioners know how to access professional assistance from the local authority and other agencies.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child has equal access to all areas of learning and activities provided. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and on ensuring that every child and member of staff is free from any harrassment. The setting has enough practitioners who possess sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach every aspect of the Foundation Phase curriculum. A very prominent characteristic of the setting is the interesting learning environment created and the opportunities for every child to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is a good supply of good quality resources in all areas of learning including ICT, and these are carefully matched to children's development and learning needs. However, the outdoor area does not provide children with enough opportunity to support learning in the classroom. The building and the premises are of good quality and are used extensively.

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

The manager has a clear vision for the setting's development. She conveys high expectations and supports and challenges everyone to do their best. The positive ethos, which permeates through the setting, ensures that children and staff feel valued. The manager and practitioners work very closely as a team and have shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships. They ensure that they implement the Foundation Phase successfully.

During sessions, all practitioners have clearly defined roles and responsibilities especially in relation to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. In their role as key workers, practitioners support children with their personal and social activities, observe and record their development and provide them with additional support if the need arises. This ensures that teaching and learning are effective and that practitioners make a positive contribution to children's progress and development.

The setting's willingness to act upon local authority advice and to undertake national priorities and new ventures, is a strength. The positive relationship with children, parents and the school staff contributes substantially towards creating a strong sense of community.

Procedures for monitoring and appraising staff performance and for identifying individual and whole-setting training and developmental needs are thorough and effective. They have a very positive impact on the setting's development and on its ability to implement change.

Improving quality: Good

The manager has established rigorous and honest self-evaluation systems to which all practitioners contribute. This approach has been instrumental in establishing a culture of continuous improvement in standards, pupils' wellbeing and management. The setting uses the outcomes of local authority visits purposefully for identifying good practice and for prioritising aspects that it needs to improve. Questionnaires, as well as informal discussions, are frequently used to seek the views of parents. The manager addresses any issues raised by the parents immediately. Practitioners also encourage children to share their likes and dislikes about the setting.

Practitioners are able to demonstrate how, through self evaluation, they have instigated visible improvements in the provision for Welsh Language development, the implementation of new assessment procedures and the development of ICT. The setting's self evaluation report is of good quality and clearly identifies its strengths as well as aspects which need to be further improved. Information gathered through self evaluation has been used effectively to draw up a detailed development plan which notes how improvements are to be implemented.

Practitioners receive strong support through a programme of continuous professional development provided by the local authority and other local colleges. This has enabled staff to acquire new knowledge and skills and to deliver the Foundation Phase successfully. A good example of this is the way practitioners have been able to implement the local authority's revised assessment document. Training sessions also provide staff with valuable opportunities to share their practice with practitioners from other settings.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has established a good range of partnership activities which make a strong contribution to children's achievements and welfare and reinforce the provision.

Practitioners take active steps to involve parents in the setting. Parents are regularly informed of the setting's activities and receive comprehensive information when their children enter the setting.

There are strong links between the setting and the foundation phase classes in the school with the setting benefiting substantially from its use of the forest school. There are clear arrangements for transferring assessment information with the children when they start school.

The close co-operation between the setting and the local authority support teacher makes a very positive contribution towards improving the quality of the provision and standards. Practitioners work together effectively, share information about children and plan the setting's development collaboratively. There are appropriate links with the community with the setting supporting many local charity events.

Resource management: Good

There are sufficient good quality resources to support children's learning and the setting is appropriately staffed. Members of staff are well managed to make the best use of their time and expertise. The effective arrangements which exist to satisfy practitioners' development needs ensure that they possess current knowledge about recent developments in the Foundation Phase. Practitioners are very open to new ideas and willing to try out different ways of working and to share knowledge and ideas with one another.

The manager has a very detailed understanding of the setting's finances and is particularly industrious arranging fund raising activities in order to maintain and develop the setting. Spending decisions are evaluated carefully to ensure that they have a direct impact on standards of achievements and children's progress and wellbeing.

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

Mr Wil Williams	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)

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 partnership's 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>

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.