



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

A report on

**Cewri Bach Playgroup
Ysgol Y Cribarth
Abercrave
Swansea
SA9 1XD**

Date of inspection: September 2017

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 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

Cewri Bach is located in the village of Abercrave in Powys local authority. The setting meets in two self-contained, purpose built rooms within Ysgol Y Cribarth County Primary School. It has its own entrance and enclosed outdoor area. The setting is registered to provide sessional day-care for up to 19 children aged between two and four years old. Sessions for funded three-year-olds take place between 9am and 12pm daily. At the time of the inspection 11 children are funded by the local authority to receive early years education. There are five practitioners, two full time and three part time. The lead practitioner has worked at the setting since it opened in September 2012. All practitioners have appropriate early years qualifications and suitable experience of working with young children.

All funded children speak English at home and are from white British backgrounds. No children are learning English as an additional language. The setting identified that there are a very few children attending with additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in June 2017. This is the first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Nearly all children make good progress from their starting point in all areas of learning
- Most children have suitable speaking and listening skills in Welsh and English
- Most children have good number skills and use mathematical language correctly
- Nearly all children settle into activities quickly, are motivated, well-behaved and have good social skills
- Learning experiences are interesting and engaging
- The setting creates a welcoming environment where children are valued
- Practitioners work well together and have a secure understanding of foundation phase practice
- Practitioners promote children's self-esteem well and value them as individuals
- The learning environment is well-resourced and stimulating, offering a good variety of learning opportunities for all children

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting has clear aims that help create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children feel safe, happy and valued
- The leader provides strong direction for the team of committed practitioners
- Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities
- Practitioners know their setting well and use self-evaluation regularly to support them to make improvements
- The setting has strong partnerships with parents, which makes a valuable contribution to developing children's wellbeing
- Practitioners are well qualified and experienced, and they manage the sessions well

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's independent learning skills

R2 Improve provision for developing children's problem solving and thinking skills

R3 Use assessment systems to inform children's next steps in learning effectively

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?	Good
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Standards: Good

Nearly all children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning, particularly in their literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills. Many children are able to recall previous learning well.

Most children speak in short full sentences. They make themselves understood and are confident when talking to both children and adults. Most children respond to, and carry out, simple instructions appropriately. Nearly all children answer simple questions well. For example, when investigating fruit, many children ask simple questions confidently. Many children listen attentively and join in enthusiastically with simple rhymes and songs in both Welsh and English.

Nearly all children show a keen interest in books. They follow stories read to them easily and respond appropriately when sharing stories with adults and other children. For example, they recall the story sequence of 'The Gingerbread Man' quickly, repeating lines from the story confidently and with good intonation. Most children enjoy being the storyteller of the week. They retell their chosen story to the group confidently, turning the pages appropriately. During focused activities, nearly all children make simple marks enthusiastically, with purpose and good control. For example, they draw large chalk people and attempt to write their own names. However, children's independent mark-making skills are less well developed.

Children's numeracy skills are developing well. Most children recite numbers up to six regularly in the daily routine. For example, they count the number of children present during registration. Most children apply this knowledge of numbers well in their play such as when counting the dots on a dice. Most children can name simple shapes and use mathematical language correctly when comparing the weight of fruit.

Most children use information and communication technology (ICT) within their play confidently. They operate remote control cars with growing skill and play a number game on the interactive whiteboard independently. However, in general, children's problem solving and thinking skills are not as well developed.

Most children show a very good understanding of an extensive range of Welsh vocabulary including weather, names of body parts and emotions. Nearly all children join in with a very good range of Welsh songs. Most children respond, with good pronunciation, to a range of questions, for example when talking about emotions. Most respond to simple instructions in Welsh and often use simple phrases spontaneously during the course of the day.

Many children demonstrate good physical skills. For example, they use their fine motor skills well when threading beads on a string. They steer bikes and ride on vehicles competently, negotiating the space and avoiding obstacles proficiently.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are motivated, well behaved and have good social skills. Nearly all are considerate towards others, such as when they share musical instruments.

Nearly all join in enthusiastically with learning activities and happily talk about their learning with each other and visitors. Nearly all children take responsibility for looking after equipment and tidying up. However, in general most children do not make regular choices about where they play or develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Most children explore their surroundings confidently and try out new experiences eagerly, such as tasting new fruits. They concentrate and persevere with activities for a suitable time. Nearly all understand the routine of the setting well when using a visual timetable. As a result, they settle quickly and confidently into daily routines.

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

The setting offers a broad range of worthwhile learning experiences that engage and interest the children well. Practitioners make good use of both indoor and outdoor areas to develop children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills systemically. For example, they use the outdoor shop to develop children's number recognition skills effectively. Practitioners plan activities flexibly and take good account of children's changing interests. For example, they responded to children's interest in exploring tastes and textures by introducing a theme about the senses. However, practitioners do not offer good enough opportunities for children to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills successfully.

The setting provides good opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills purposefully within their play. For example, practitioners offer worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills successfully using a range of computer programmes and interactive stories.

Practitioners move seamlessly from English to Welsh. They confidently and naturally model Welsh language, providing rich opportunities for children to hear Welsh spoken. They reinforce the routines of the setting, sing Welsh songs and introduce Welsh phrases and vocabulary linked to the topic. This means the children hear plenty of Welsh throughout the day and they respond by using their own Welsh language skills well. Learning about St. David's Day and the countryside and wildlife around them provides valuable experiences to help children to understand what is special about Wales.

An interesting range of visits and visitors contributes well to children's learning experiences. For example, visits from the fire service develop their understanding of who keeps them safe in the community. Planning to support children's understanding of other cultures and the wider world is developing suitably. Children have regular opportunities to taste foods from different countries and to listen to a range of stories from other cultures.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase practice. They work very well together as a team and demonstrate a good understanding of children's differing needs. They use ongoing positive praise to support children well as they persevere with adult led learning activities. However, in general practitioners do not provide enough opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their skills independently.

Practitioners have supportive working relationships with the children and set high expectations. As result, all children demonstrate good levels of self-esteem and contribute their ideas to discussions confidently.

All practitioners use Welsh regularly as part of everyday routines, this contributes to children's enjoyment of the Welsh language and improves their Welsh oracy skills effectively. All practitioners are good language models for the children and encourage the development of their vocabulary in both Welsh and English successfully. As a result, most children are confident speakers.

The setting's procedures for tracking children's progress is developing suitably. Practitioners have strengthened this process recently to include more regular assessments and strengthen links to future planning. However, using assessment information to identify children's next steps is at an early stage of development. Practitioners provide useful daily feedback to parents about what their child has been learning. Information is available to them at any time through the setting's 'open door' policy.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is very welcoming and creates a family feel, where all children are valued. As a result, nearly all children are confident. Practitioners establish a strong culture of respect for each other and resources. As a result, children take turns happily and genuinely enjoy being together.

The setting promotes children's awareness of healthy living well. There is a suitable range of healthy snacks on offer and daily opportunities for children to exercise. Practitioners have improved the opportunities for children to learn about caring for animals and the environment following a visit to another setting. As a result, children now feed the birds and have a good understanding of recycling.

The setting has clear positive behaviour management policy and procedures that all practitioners use consistently well. This contributes to the strong relationships between practitioners and the children. It helps children understand their feelings and emotions well, supporting positive behaviours effectively.

The setting has good procedures to support children with additional learning needs. These include a range of useful links with other agencies, which enables practitioners to gain advice and support when required.

Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is very inclusive and all children have equal access to all learning activities. Practitioners promote children's self-esteem well and value them as individuals.

Practitioners ensure that there are plenty of resources for children to use. This allows them to be active in their learning and to have time to sit quietly. For example, the 'cwtch corner' allows children to sit in a calm and tranquil area and just relax. Practitioners make imaginative use of all indoor and outdoor space on a very limited budget, creating a bright and stimulating learning environment that supports children's learning well. Attractive displays of children's work celebrate their success and provide useful teaching aids.

The setting makes appropriate use of the surrounding area, for example children go on walks to find out about patterns, numbers and road safety. Regular visits to the local post office to post mail and buy stamps and to the local park, increase children's communication skills and understanding of the world around them.

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

The setting has clear aims and objectives that help to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children feel safe, happy and valued. The leader provides strong direction for a small team of committed practitioners. She sets high standards and is a very good role model. There is a positive working atmosphere where practitioners communicate well with one another and readily share roles and responsibilities. As a result, daily routines are well established and this helps to create a calm and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

There is a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision, with the needs of all children firmly at the centre. Practitioners meet informally and monitor improvements successfully. They feedback ideas from training activities and from visits to other settings regularly, which helps to ensure consistently good quality teaching and learning. All practitioners are developing a more secure understanding of the expectations for good Foundation Phase practice.

The headteacher in his role as responsible individual, supports the setting well. He attends regular meetings with the setting's leader in order to keep up-to-date with what is happening, and to offer support with any issues that may arise. The setting has well-established procedures for staff appraisal which link well to priorities in the setting's improvement plan, and to individual staff needs. For example, practitioners have recently undertaken specific training to support children with their social and communication development. As a result, these children make very good progress in their learning.

Practitioners understand and respond well to local and national priorities. For example, they successfully develop the concept of healthy lifestyles through ensuring that children understand the importance of healthy eating, exercise and brushing their teeth and develop children's literacy and numeracy skills outdoors, effectively.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know their setting well and use self-evaluation regularly to support them in making improvements. They meet frequently to discuss the children's progress, and how they could further improve provision. This leads to beneficial changes, which have a positive impact on the children's learning and wellbeing. For example, practitioners have recently reorganised their procedures for recording observations of children's progress. As a result, they identify children's next steps in learning more effectively and adapt learning activities to meet the needs of individuals more clearly. However, this is at an early stage of development and is not having a full impact yet.

Whilst the setting's leader takes the main role for planning and for writing the setting's self-evaluation procedures, all practitioners feel that their contributions are valued. The resulting setting improvement plan outlines appropriate targets, together with relevant timescales, actions and success criteria. Practitioners have made positive progress towards meeting these targets, for example in developing children's Welsh language and numeracy skills. The setting consults parents appropriately through questionnaires and a suggestions box. Results from these have been very positive and parents appreciate the opportunity to give their opinion.

The setting has recently started exploring ways to take children's interests and preferences into account. For example, a recent topic on super heroes came directly from children's ideas about what they would like to learn about.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a broad range of beneficial partnerships. There is a strong partnership with parents, which makes a valuable contribution to developing children's wellbeing. For example, parents receive an informative booklet providing them with essential information about the setting and its main aims and objectives. Practitioners are always on hand to talk with parents about the day's activities as they collect their children. Regular workshops provide parents with useful ideas on how to support their child's learning at home. Parents actively support fundraising events and make a useful contribution to ensuring a good supply of quality resources.

Good arrangements are in place for the transfer of the children into school. Children are familiar with their new teacher, who visits the setting to read stories with them. The school willingly shares ICT equipment with the setting. This has a positive impact on improving children's skills. The setting has beneficial links with the local Cylch Canu. This supports children's Welsh language skills very effectively. For example, the setting recently took part in a song and dance Jamboree festival.

Practitioners work well with the local authority advisory teacher, responding positively to advice and support, for example on helping to develop children's numeracy skills outdoors.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced. They manage the sessions well, ensuring that children access the indoor and outdoor areas effectively. They engage in regular professional development opportunities to enhance their understanding of

good Foundation Phase practice. There are suitable staff appraisal systems in place, which are effective in assuring improvements. The setting has an appropriate range of resources to support children's learning well.

Practitioners attend useful training from the local authority regularly, and share and evaluate the impact of training to improve standards and to inform provision. The setting benefits from the support of the advisory teacher, who provides helpful advice and practical help. Practitioners have worked successfully to develop the outdoor area to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The leader and headteacher oversee the budget successfully. Practitioners consider all spending carefully to ensure efficient use of limited funds and the impact on children's learning. Although systems and processes to plan, monitor and review spending are quite informal, they link clearly to priorities in the setting's improvement plan.

In view of the positive outcomes for children and the range of good quality teaching and learning experiences available, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

The reporting inspector

Ellen Hobday	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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation 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