



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

A report on

**Robins Nursery
St. Arvan's
Chepstow
NP16 6DN**

Date of inspection: December 2016

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

Robins Nursery is an English medium setting in the village of St Arvan in Monmouth local authority. The setting's registration allows it to care for up to 58 children between the ages of three months and four years of age, at any one time. At the time of the inspection, there were a total of 70 children on roll, many of whom attend part-time. Fifteen children are local authority funded. A very few children speak English as an additional language; however, none speaks Welsh at home. The setting currently has no children that it identifies as having additional learning needs.

The setting employs three full-time staff to provide education for funded children. A non-teaching manager oversees the setting.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in October 2016. Estyn last inspected the setting in October 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- In their time at the setting, most children develop an effective range of knowledge, understanding and skills across nearly all areas of learning
- Many children demonstrate useful thinking and problem solving skills
- Most children are developing highly effective oracy skills and express their thoughts and ideas using a wide vocabulary
- Most children are beginning to develop mark-making skills well and make marks to represent numbers and letters in an appropriate range of contexts
- Most children demonstrate strong numeracy skills and have a good understanding of numbers, and most count beyond ten confidently, in English and Welsh
- Nearly all children enter the setting eagerly and settle quickly; they behave well and are polite to each other and to adults
- Nearly all children engage enthusiastically in their learning, enjoy the learning activities on offer and work sensibly in groups and pairs
- The setting provides children with stimulating activities and experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning
- Practitioners guide children's learning beneficially, intervening at appropriate times to ask questions, challenge thinking and support their learning

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting's leader has established a clear vision that focuses on ensuring that all children make successful progress in a caring and happy environment
- Practitioners work together as an effective team
- Leaders ensure that staff meet regularly and use these times to monitor priorities efficiently
- The setting's leader understands well the areas in which the setting can improve and ensures that the team responds to advice and guidance successfully
- Regular observations of teaching in the pre-school room and suitable staff appraisal, communicates high expectations and identifies team strengths well
- Leaders and managers know the setting well
- Self-evaluation identifies the setting's strengths and a broad range of required improvements, although it is not always clear how leaders have identified the shortcomings
- Leaders and managers monitor the implementation of the setting's improvement plan efficiently

- Leaders are able to demonstrate a clear improvement in the setting's environment, provision and monitoring that have a positive impact on children's learning

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2 Ensure that planned learning activities provides suitable challenge for all children
- R3 Develop planning that allows children to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all areas of learning
- R4 Address the issue of health and safety identified at the time of the inspection
- R5 Ensure that development targets for practitioners link well with the setting's improvement priorities

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

In their time at the setting, most children make worthwhile progress from their starting points and develop an effective range of knowledge, understanding and skills across nearly all areas of learning. They recall previous learning ably and many demonstrate useful thinking and problem solving skills. For example, they are able to consider and predict what will happen when two materials are mixed, and explain their answers well.

Most children are developing highly effective oracy skills and express their thoughts and ideas using a wide vocabulary. They ask questions confidently and speak to adults and to each other, making intelligent, independent observations about their environment. For example, they discuss the workings of the water-dispensing machine effectively.

Most children are beginning to develop mark-making skills well. They show a good degree of control over simple equipment, such as paintbrushes and chalk. Many recognise a suitable range of letters and their associated sounds, particularly those in their name. They make marks to represent numbers and letters in an appropriate range of contexts, such as when writing on a blackboard. Nearly all children enjoy listening to stories and show a worthwhile interest in books in the setting. They can talk enthusiastically about what has happened in a book that an adult has read to them, commenting on the main events in good detail.

Most children demonstrate strong numeracy skills. They have a good understanding of numbers and most count beyond ten confidently, in English and Welsh. They are beginning to develop a useful mathematical vocabulary, which they use competently in their play activities. For example, they are able to talk about whether they need more or less of an ingredient, such as flour, when cooking. A majority of children show an increasing understanding of number concepts such as 'one more', when counting out objects in practical situations.

Nearly all children use a suitable range of ICT equipment independently as part of their play. For example, most are able to use a camera suitably. They understand that the keyboard on a computer controls what happens on the screen. However, they do not use a broad enough range of ICT resources consistently well across the areas of learning.

Nearly all children make worthwhile progress in developing their Welsh language skills. They join in enthusiastically with Welsh songs, such as those used to welcome children in the morning. Most can count objects to ten and can comment on the weather in Welsh. Most children recognise and name basic colours in Welsh and use this vocabulary well in their everyday play, such as when sticking coloured objects.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enter the setting eagerly and settle quickly. They behave well and are polite to each other and to adults. Nearly all children engage enthusiastically in their learning. They enjoy the learning activities on offer and work sensibly in groups and pairs. Many children are confident and independent learners. They concentrate on activities for a suitable amount of time and persevere with difficult tasks, for example when trying to release a dinosaur from a frozen egg.

Nearly all children are developing a good understanding of health and hygiene. They understand the need to wash their hands at suitable times, such as before cooking or eating, and do so independently. At snack time, all children sit together and share well. They chat sensibly and demonstrate useful social skills.

During daily activities, children are confident to put forward their ideas as to how their learning activities should progress and make suggestions about activities they would like to undertake. For example, they choose maturely between a cooking activity and adult-led activities outdoors. This helps to develop their independent skills well.

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

The setting provides children with stimulating activities and experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning. Carefully considered planning ensures that there is a particular focus on developing children's skills in each of these areas. For example, children learn how everyday materials, such as water, change when investigating melting of ice-cubes. This approach works well and, as a result, most children are making worthwhile progress in their learning. However, planning does not always consider children's differing abilities and challenge them consistently well enough. The setting's systems for ensuring that children develop these skills systematically are at an early stage of development. Practitioners do not take sufficient account of children's ideas at the planning stage.

The setting provides children with a comprehensive range of opportunities to engage with interesting activities outside of the main curriculum. For example, opportunities to learn French, to take part in gymnastics sessions and to learn swimming skills contribute well to children's wellbeing and develop their independent learning skills effectively.

Through daily practices and the planning for language and mathematical development, practitioners ensure that children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. However, practitioners have not yet developed planning to take into account the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks, or to develop children's ICT skills across the curriculum, systematically enough. As a result, children do not have strong opportunities to use these skills independently throughout the day.

Practitioners plan regular opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills. They use incidental Welsh during the day effectively, such as during number and creative activities and through singing Welsh songs. This is successful in

encouraging children to use the language. As a result, children's skills in this area are strong. Opportunities for children to develop their awareness of Welsh culture and traditions are appropriate. For example, they celebrate St David's Day by dressing traditionally and tasting Welsh foods.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Phase and of how young children learn. Throughout the day, they ensure that children have an effective balance between independent learning activities and those that adults lead. Practitioners guide children's learning beneficially, intervening at appropriate times to ask questions, challenge thinking and support their learning. During sessions, they respond well to children's suggestions, such as when deciding what to put in the messy tray. While practitioners provide specific learning sessions that target children that need more support, or that develop the more able, a minority of these activities do not consistently challenge all children suitably.

In a relatively short time, the setting's manager and room leader have developed highly effective systems to monitor and evaluate children's progress. A detailed baseline assessment and regular observations that link children's learning to Foundation Phase outcomes provide valuable information on children's development. However, this system is still in its infancy and does not yet influence strongly the planning of learning.

Practitioners inform parents well about their children's progress through a written report that details their child's development. Informal discussions and a useful parents' evening also provide valuable feedback to parents about their child's skills and their wellbeing.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. It has a worthwhile range of procedures and policies to promote this aim. For example, practitioners ensure that children understand the need to clean their hands before cooking and eating food. The provision of freshly cooked, healthy food at lunchtime contributes to children's wellbeing successfully. All children are able to get water from the water cooler independently.

Effective arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into routines each session. During play activities, practitioners discuss with children the importance of being kind and of sharing. The introduction of the 'Dream Diners' initiative encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour and act sensibly. This contributes to developing their personal and social skills beneficially.

Practitioners plan a useful range of activities and maintain a suitable variety of resources to help children develop their spiritual, moral, and cultural understanding. For example, their focus on activities to celebrate and understand Diwali, and the story of Rama and Sita, ensures that children learn about other cultures and beliefs appropriately.

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

The setting currently has no children that it identifies as having additional learning needs. Practitioners know the children well and, along with the new, more rigorous monitoring systems, they are able to identify children that may be working notably above or below expectation for their age more effectively. Practitioners plan specific sessions for a few children who they consider may benefit from practising particular skills. These link to Foundation Phase outcomes well. This system is in its infancy and it is too early to judge its full impact on children's learning.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to the curriculum and to all activities. Practitioners create a friendly and caring environment for children and, as a result, children enjoy attending the setting. Practitioners ensure that displays, resources and learning activities develop children's understanding of those from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. For example, they celebrate festivals from other countries and cultures, such as China, and read stories that emphasis individuals' different backgrounds.

The pre-school room provides appropriate learning facilities and there are sufficient resources in most areas of learning. Practitioners ensure that resources are organised so that children may access them easily. This supports the development of children's independent skills well. However, the range of ICT resources is more limited. The outside learning area is large and leaders are working well to develop it as a learning area. It provides an effective space for outdoor learning with a developing range of resources to stimulate and interest children. However, it is not an environment that supports the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills strongly enough. The inspection identified one minor issue that has an unfavourable effect on children's wellbeing.

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

In the relatively short time that she has been in post, the setting's leader has established a clear vision for the setting that focuses on ensuring that all children make successful progress in a caring and happy environment. The pre-school room leader, who is also new to post, works diligently with staff to support these aims. All staff have clear job descriptions and the whole team understands their roles and responsibilities clearly. As a result, practitioners work together as an effective team. Leaders ensure that staff meet regularly and use these times to monitor priorities efficiently. They have begun to take a more rigorous approach to staff training. As a result, they have ensured that many practitioners have a beneficial awareness of the requirements of the Foundation Phase, its pedagogy and practices. This helps to ensure that most children make strong progress in their time at the setting.

The setting's leader understands well the areas in which the setting can improve and ensures that the team responds to advice and guidance efficiently. Regular observations of teaching in the pre-school room and suitable staff appraisal communicate high expectations and identify team strengths successfully.

In many cases, practitioners have individual targets for improvement. However, these do not always link strongly with the setting's improvement priorities. Leaders have yet to ensure that the setting takes forward the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks well enough.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and managers know the setting well. They are developing and implementing an effective range of strategies and procedures to identify strengths and areas for development. For example, they have set in place detailed procedures to monitor children's progress. They recognise the need to focus self-evaluation processes on raising children's outcomes. From these procedures, the self-evaluation document identifies the setting's strengths and a broad range of required improvements appropriately. However, it is not always clear how leaders have identified the shortcomings from the broadly positive report.

The setting's improvement plan is a useful document that targets a broad range of worthwhile priorities. Each of these has clearly identified tasks and timescales and identifies what actions need to take place, by whom and by when clearly. Leaders and managers monitor its implementation efficiently. However, they do not always consider the impact of the targets in terms of children's progress, nor identify costs of these activities, in enough detail. In a short time, leaders are able to demonstrate a clear improvement in the setting's environment, provision and monitoring that have a positive impact on children's learning.

Partnership working: Good

Leaders are beginning to develop a useful range of partnerships that contribute to children's progress and wellbeing. They work closely with parents and ensure that they receive beneficial information about the work of setting's and their children's progress. This includes the efficient use of social media and the development of a new system for sharing valuable information on children's activities and progress. The development of 'stay and play' sessions allows parents to work and play with their child in the setting and gain valuable information about the setting's provision. The parent and staff association organises useful social events, such as a summer barbeque. These further help to develop successful relationships between practitioners, parents and children.

There are close links with other settings overseen by the same owner, and the linked school. This includes regular meetings where leaders share ideas and consider improvement strategies. This effective learning community enables the setting's leader to gain useful support and share good practices to improve the curriculum provision.

Practitioners co-operate effectively with the local authority support teacher and this contributes positively towards improving children's standards and helps to identify appropriate training opportunities. The strong link with the specialist Welsh adviser from the local consortium helps to ensure that children develop useful Welsh language skills.

The setting undertakes useful charity work, such as collecting food at Harvest for the local food bank. However, it has few links with the local community.

Resource management: Good

The setting's leader and the management committee oversee practitioners and resources effectively. All practitioners in the pre-school room are well qualified and leaders deploy them appropriately. Their practice makes a notable contribution to the children's outcomes. Leaders actively encourage further professional development and ensure that practitioners have useful opportunities to further their understanding of the Foundation Phase.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of their budget and oversee spending carefully. They ensure that the setting has sufficient resources for practitioners to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum well. However, they do not always link the budget to improvement priorities well enough, and as a result cannot evaluate how well spending decisions impact on children's outcomes.

The setting makes competent use of the pupil deprivation grant. However, leaders do not always focus it sharply enough on helping to overcome the additional barriers faced by disadvantaged learners.

In view of the strong standards achieved by most children, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Andrew Thorne	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 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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.