



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

A report on

**Trehafren Children's Centre
Lon Derw
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1QB**

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

Trehafren Children's Centre is in Newtown, in Powys. The setting opens for five afternoons a week.

It is registered to take up to 24 children at any one time, aged between two and three years old. The local authority funds 14 children at the setting and Flying Start funds 24 younger children.

Nearly all children are of white British origin and speak English as their home language. Currently, very few children with additional learning needs attend the setting.

A manager and a volunteer board of trustees manage the setting. Four full time members of staff oversee the sessions and they are all suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The leader took up her post in September 2001.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in February 2016. Estyn inspected the setting previously 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:

- Most children make positive progress in their literacy and numeracy skills
- Nearly all children are keen and interested learners
- Nearly all children behave sensibly
- Practitioners plan interesting and effective learning experiences
- Practitioners challenge children to perform at their best at all times
- Practitioners work well together and their nurturing practices create an effective learning environment
- Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environments purposefully to support children's learning

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The manager and leader provide a clear strategic direction to the work of the setting and evaluate its practices well
- Leaders consider the views of everyone involved with the setting as part of the self-evaluation process
- Practitioners receive effective training to support their continuous professional development
- Beneficial use of external services supports children, the leadership and practitioners well
- Positive partnerships support the next steps in children's learning successfully
- Purposeful use of funds ensure improvements in the quality of provision
- The board of trustees supports the setting well to sustain effective provision, sound financial regulation and firm leadership practices

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's use of Welsh

R2 Ensure that children understand the purpose of every focus activity

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

Standards: Good

Most children make positive progress in relation to their starting points, which are often lower than expected for children of this age. They develop effective literacy and numeracy skills during their time at the setting. This is evident when they complete everyday and complex tasks successfully.

Most children develop strong communication skills. They speak clearly and make themselves understood effectively during regular activities. They listen and respond to instructions well. This is particularly evident when they purchase tickets for a place on the 'number train' to wash their hands, and when they make cupcakes with ladles and sieves in the mud kitchen. A majority of children use sophisticated language effectively in spontaneous and structured play.

Many children show increasing interest and awareness of books. They handle the books in the indoor and outdoor reading areas as natural readers. Many sit quietly and follow stories read to them well. They respond sensibly to the content of a story, such as when they discuss the characters and animals involved in the story of the nativity.

Many children make marks successfully. They enjoy practising their writing and use a variety of media such as paint, chalk, pencils and pens. A few children begin to form letters of the alphabet and numbers independently and in recognisable forms, such as when recording the first letters of their names during registration. Many children show that they understand the purpose of writing when they create shopping lists to purchase goods in the shop next door.

Most children use mathematical language purposefully and in relevant contexts. For example, they compare the lengths of carrots as 'long' and 'short' and state that potatoes are 'heavy' or 'light' when discussing their weight. Many children count, recognise and name numbers to ten confidently and a few count to 20 and beyond.

Most children choose relevant equipment and materials to solve mathematical problems effectively. They count the number of different beads accurately when picking them up with tweezers and group dinosaurs according to different characteristics. They compare two and three-dimensional shapes well when marking two-dimensional shapes on the floor with tape and rolling three-dimensional shapes down ramps.

Nearly all children are developing their use of Welsh appropriately. Many children sing nursery rhymes and songs in Welsh enthusiastically, and a few children follow instructions given in Welsh. However, the children's use of Welsh depends too much on adult prompting and very few children use the language spontaneously in their play.

Most children develop good thinking skills, which has a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve. For example, they work intelligently with others as they mix chalk colours in puddles in the rain and build their own family trees with people that they have drawn themselves. Most pupils develop their physical skills well, such as when they climb on outdoor equipment and ride bikes around the outdoor roadway.

Most children are beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) productively, when using tablet computers and through tasks involving electronic toys, cameras and compact disk players. They use educational software to develop their ICT and fine motor skills effectively.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children show motivation and interest in their learning and most children demonstrate good levels of engagement during tasks. They enjoy the activities and many share resources and work sensibly with other children. Most children demonstrate positive attitudes to new experiences, such as when rolling balls down troughs mounted on the outdoor fence.

Nearly all children are polite and behave well. They show respect to adults and to each other. Nearly all children listen carefully to practitioners, for example, when they bounce balls collectively into the air using a parachute. With adult prompting, nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly, after using the toilet, messy play and outdoor activities, developing a suitable awareness of good hygiene.

Most children are beginning to understand that they can make sensible choices during free play. They express personal opinions and preferences, such as when deciding to move from one area of learning to another independently, both inside the building and out of doors.

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors when they arrive at the setting and when they leave. Many children are confident and independent learners. This is especially evident when many of them explain sensibly to each other, without adult involvement, why they are writing their names and comforting dolls wrapped in shawls.

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

Practitioners plan well together to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which reflects the ethos of the Foundation Phase successfully. The planning meets children's needs and interests well and provides stimulating opportunities for them to learn independently. Practitioners allow children to contribute their own ideas to the planning of every theme. They balance adult-led and child-led activities effectively and plan successfully for progression in children's learning.

There are purposeful opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills. Literacy and numeracy tasks are prominent in all areas of learning

and challenge the children to perform at their best consistently. These include rich opportunities for role-playing in the construction area and kitchen, and to discuss how to organise and weigh ingredients to bake a cake.

The setting provides regular challenges to help children develop their problem solving skills. Examples include encouraging children to organise themselves in the best positions to create waves in a parachute and collecting the largest wooden blocks as a base for a tower.

Practitioners develop children's physical and creative skills successfully. They allow children to explore and experiment on climbing frames and practise kicking and throwing skills with a variety of equipment. The provision for developing children's ICT skills is effective, providing useful opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills further.

Practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to develop their understanding of Welsh by encouraging them to respond to simple phrases and instructions, and join in with songs and rhymes. However, practitioners do not support all children effectively to ensure that they use Welsh during independent play.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions and celebrations successfully. These activities include celebrating Saint David's Day and baking traditional cakes and 'cawl'.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences. Visitors, who include members of the emergency services, a dental hygienist and supermarket workers teach the children meaningfully about the roles of people in their community.

Practitioners provide interesting learning experiences that help children develop their understanding of the world, and encourage them to treat people from all cultural backgrounds with respect and tolerance. This includes celebrating the Chinese New Year and Diwali each year.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners are knowledgeable about the requirements of the Foundation Phase and have a good understanding of child development. They greet children enthusiastically and manage their behaviour positively and safely. Practitioners collaborate well and have high expectations for all children. They use questioning beneficially to develop children's thinking and communication skills. This is apparent when children discuss the characteristics of pinecones in the investigation area and measure the heights of different plants outdoors. However, practitioners do not always outline learning objectives clearly enough at the start of focus tasks to ensure that all children understand the purpose of the activity.

Practitioners complete daily assessments consistently on recording sheets, which align efficiently to the setting's planning processes. They encourage children to assess their own learning and they discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. This guides future planning to target individual children's

needs effectively. Practitioners share responsibilities as key workers successfully. This practice allows children to move freely and confidently between different learning areas, which affects their learning positively.

The systems for assessing and recording children's achievements are accurate and useful, and provide a secure starting point for every child. Practitioners assess individual children's outcomes regularly as they mature at the setting, supporting their transition to the town's schools successfully.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements and it provides them with an interesting book, recording their children's work. At the end of their time at the setting, practitioners also present an informative report on the children's progress, which is based on their daily observations.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Practitioners use group activities well in every session to consider each other's feelings. They encourage children to take turns politely during snack time, and to share equipment and food sensibly. Practitioners support the helper of the day to prepare and serve snacks and drinks, and there are valuable opportunities for children to reflect and say thank you regularly. As a result, the setting fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect successfully. Practitioners reinforce the importance of these principles daily, reminding children that they should always act responsibly towards each other.

There are worthwhile arrangements to promote children's health and wellbeing. These support children's learning effectively and contribute well to their overall development. For example, practitioners ensure that children understand that fruit and vegetables are part of a sensible diet.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to re-cycle paper, cardboard, and plastic, and to make models out of junk. Children compost food waste at the setting's allotment. These activities develop their understanding of sustainability successfully.

The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take good care of children when they arrive and when they are collected. This includes a thorough signing in system, which practitioners supervise. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners' use of positive behaviour strategies ensures that children feel happy and safe in their company. Children often ask practitioners for help and support, which they provide willingly.

The setting records children's learning needs accurately when they join and during their time at the setting. Practitioners review children's progress regularly and identify their starting points thoroughly using the Foundation Phase profile. As a result, the setting identifies and supports children with additional learning needs

purposefully. Practitioners work with appropriate agencies as necessary, in order to provide support as soon as possible.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a caring community that has a warm, family atmosphere. Practitioners encourage children to treat others with care and to show them respect, whatever their gender, race or background. It is an inclusive setting and all children have equal access to every learning experience, both inside the building and out of doors.

Attractive and informative displays enhance the learning environment and celebrate children's achievements well. The teaching areas are of an appropriate size for the number of children registered at any one time. The setting utilises available space well by using different areas intuitively, such as a well-supervised pedestrian area near the main entrance for large group activities.

Practitioners provide flexible learning spaces, which allow children to make independent choices in their own learning. The well-organised outdoor area includes growing and planting areas, climbing equipment and a marked roadway to ride bicycles and role-play as maintenance workers. Practitioners use facilities in the local area purposefully, such as utilising the town's parks, the shop next door and community amenities regularly.

The setting's learning environment is clean and orderly. All areas of learning have a good range of resources to support children's learning effectively. The setting maintains the building efficiently.

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

The manager and leader have established a clear vision for the setting based on a thorough understanding of its needs. The setting has established processes and rigorous quality assurance systems, which support improvements effectively over time and give a clear direction to the setting's work. The manager and leader set high expectations which focus well on the standards children achieve.

The manager and leader, ensure that the daily provision for all children is interesting and engaging through regular monitoring. They promote new developments purposefully and motivate practitioners to make improvements in a supportive manner. This has led to purposeful changes in the planning of outdoor experiences and a clearer understanding of children's starting points. The manager makes sure that risk assessments are thorough and robust and that practitioners follow policies and daily routines rigorously.

Practitioners work well together as a team. They have clear job descriptions, which enable them to understand and fulfil their duties successfully. Through regular discussions, staff meetings and training, they share important information purposefully and develop a consistent approach.

The manager and leader create an environment where children and practitioners feel appreciated, and therefore give of their best. The manager conducts efficient practitioner supervisions and appraisals and the board of trustees appraises the manager's work effectively.

The board of trustees receives useful information about the setting's day-to-day practices from the manager. Its members are supportive and ensure secure financial management. They challenge the setting rigorously to sustain its successful practices and to develop the areas identified as requiring improvements.

The setting focuses well on local and national priorities. Practitioners develop children's literacy and numeracy skills effectively, as well as developing the provision in the outdoor area well.

Improving quality: Good

The setting uses the local authority's self-evaluation guidance effectively to reflect on its provision and identify how and why certain areas need to be improved.

As a result, the manager and leader know the strengths of the setting well and the areas that need development. They have established consistent arrangements to monitor children's standards and the daily provision. They share information purposefully, including during regular staff meetings. This leads to worthwhile improvements to the provision, for example refining the assessment process to take into account national priorities.

The setting's self-evaluation procedures take account of the views of the dedicated practitioners, parents and carers, the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association well. These feed into the self-evaluation report effectively. The manager and leader set meaningful targets against suitable timescales and they prioritise these sensibly.

The manager allocates sufficient funding to meet the targets. The manager and board of trustees prioritise expenditure according to areas identified for improvement. This includes designating practitioners to specific groups of children and different tasks, which utilises their expertise well and has a positive effect on developing children's skills.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works effectively with a range of partners to improve provision and raise children's standards and wellbeing. The setting's well-established links with nearby schools supports children's transfer arrangements well. For example, the arrangements for sharing assessments and personal information help the children to settle quickly in their new schools.

Practitioners take active steps to involve parents and carers in the setting's life. The setting informs them regularly about all aspects of the setting's work. This includes providing useful homework bags, containing reading materials and mathematical equipment to help parents and carers support children's learning.

The setting uses community links successfully to support and enrich children's learning, which includes the use of a community allotment and regular visits to the town's parks and public amenities.

Practitioners work and liaise with a broad range of other partnership groups, which make a strong contribution to improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with business and financial advice, first aid training, food hygiene courses and safeguarding training.

A positive relationship with the local authority's advisory teacher and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association officer is beneficial, supporting the provision and children's standards during everyday tasks and administrative practices.

Resource management: Good

The manager and leader focus directly on improving all aspects of the setting's work by deploying practitioners intelligently and allocating resources effectively. They use practitioners in different roles over time to ensure that their skills develop purposefully to cater for the needs of all children at the setting. This includes supporting and utilising students on placements effectively.

Leaders enable practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge well. Consequently, a purposeful learning community exists, where effective collaboration between practitioners and other partners support all aspects of the setting's work. This includes effective practices with local schools, which provides a smooth transition for children into the next steps of their learning.

The performance management systems are thorough and ensure interesting learning experiences and sound teaching practices. The setting manages resources creatively to support learning. For example, it offers useful ranges of ICT equipment, including an electronic tablet, cameras, electronic toys and a compact disk player, which help develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively.

The manager and board of trustees use the budget well and prioritise spending against set timelines and responsibilities efficiently. Such practices create purposeful, regular and consistent improvements. The setting ensures that the use of funds has a direct impact on the overall provision and on improving children's outcomes.

The setting provides good value for money, due to the positive progress children make from their start points, the effective provision and the purposeful leadership.

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

Nicholas Jones	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.