



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

A report on

**Tremorfa Nursery School
Mona Place
Tremorfa
Cardiff
CF24 2TG**

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by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Tremorfa Nursery School

Tremorfa Nursery School is a maintained nursery school in Cardiff local authority. It mainly serves the community of Tremorfa, but it also attracts children from other areas of the city. It provides part-time nursery education for three and four-year-olds, with different groups attending the morning and afternoon sessions. Children start in the nursery at the beginning of the term after their third birthday and stay for up to five terms. In addition to the headteacher, the school employs two full-time and two part-time teachers and six other foundation phase practitioners. Three further members of staff provide wrap-around care at lunchtime and every afternoon for up to 16 children per day.

There are currently 79 children on roll. Around 23% come from ethnic minority backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. There are 12 different home languages. No children come from a Welsh-speaking home. Around 15% of the children are on the school's additional learning needs register, with around a half of these receiving nursery enhanced funding from the local authority. The school uses this funding to employ additional staff to support these pupils.

The school was last inspected in December 2013. The current headteacher was appointed as the permanent headteacher in October 2015, having served as the acting headteacher for just over five terms.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Tremorfa Nursery School provides children with an exciting, safe and happy place to start their educational journey. The stimulating experiences on offer every day for children in the exciting indoor and outdoor environments engage them all extremely well. This outstanding provision contributes significantly to the highly positive attitudes that children develop towards learning at a very early age.

The headteacher, staff and governors share a vision for the nursery and its children and families that encapsulates their passion for early years' education. The school's inclusive nature and the commitment of the staff to meeting the needs and interests of every child are exemplary. It means that children receive a wealth of opportunities to develop their independence and gain the skills that will set them up for life.

Leaders, teachers and practitioners provide exceptional support and guidance for families before and during their children's time at the school. This secures high levels of involvement from parents, helps them to support their children's early learning well and increases their chances of making good progress at the school.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Refine self-evaluation and school improvement processes to focus more closely on children's outcomes
- R2 Capitalise on children's high levels of engagement to maximise the progress they make in developing specific skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to developing independence and highly positive attitudes to learning in very young children and its use of reflective, daily evaluation meetings to plan for progression for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Good

When children start in the nursery, many have limited communication, personal and social skills. Despite this, most settle quickly into school life and soon learn the daily routines and the expectations of staff. During their time in the school, most make at least expected progress from their starting points. Children with English as an additional language, particularly those who have attended the school's pre-nursery groups, develop their listening and understanding skills swiftly and are soon able to communicate effectively with their peers and with adults.

Most children listen to, understand, and respond well to instructions and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Most make themselves understood and many use a suitable vocabulary to talk about their work and answer questions. Many older and more able children speak particularly confidently to adults. For example, when buying goods in the nursery shop, they name the different fruits and vegetables correctly and describe them appropriately when tasting them in the play kitchen. Many pupils with English as an additional language use their early language skills purposefully, especially when engaged in a task they enjoy. For instance, having been inspired by a bird-watching activity, they identify toy birds correctly and describe their features precisely.

Many children enjoy story-time and sharing books with adults. They concentrate well for their age and join in with familiar or repeated phrases. A minority of children predict what might happen next in a story and suggest how characters might feel, for example, when walking through deep mud in 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Nearly all children borrow books and language packs eagerly from the school library to take home and share with their families. Despite their obvious enjoyment of books and stories, only a very few children use the book corner without adult encouragement.

As they progress, most children use a wide range of mark-making implements competently to draw, make patterns and begin to write in most areas of learning. A majority of children understand that writing conveys meaning. A good example of this is where a few older, more able children use emergent writing to label the assault course to direct other children to the start and finish.

Children's numeracy skills progress appropriately over time. Many count by rote to at least 5 in English and Welsh. A few recognise numbers to nine correctly and count out items accurately in the block play area, for instance. A minority of children use money meaningfully, and understand that they can exchange money for goods in the nursery shop. For example, a more able child serves a customer with eight potatoes and charges £8 for them. Many children use mathematical vocabulary naturally and appropriately in their play. In the water play area, for example, they describe test tubes and jugs as full or empty and use the terms 'more' and 'less' correctly to compare the amount of water in containers.

Most children develop age-appropriate ICT skills to support their learning. They operate a range of suitable devices purposefully and know that these can help them to share their learning with others or look at things differently. For example, they use

tablet computers proficiently to take photos of their own work and that of their peers, and display them on an interactive whiteboard so that they can share and talk about their learning with others. They use projectors adeptly to explore how they can use shapes and colours to create shadows on a screen. This enables them to put shadow pictures together and to consolidate their learning on shape and colour mixing.

Most children respond to and use familiar Welsh words and simple phrases appropriately. During snack time, for instance, many ask for their fruit in Welsh and say thank you on receiving it. Nearly all join in singing a familiar song, pronouncing the words correctly, and a majority know colours and numbers to ten. A few children use their Welsh occasionally as they play, but most only do so when prompted by an adult in group situations.

Children's physical skills build very well as they progress through the school. Most move confidently and challenge themselves in the outdoor environment. They run, jump and climb proficiently. They enjoy demonstrating their physical competence and strength by pushing and pulling heavy wheelbarrows and manoeuvring child-size diggers and tools in the building area. As a result of their advanced gross motor skills, many children develop good fine motor skills. They handle malleable materials, such as dough, with dexterity to make animals' faces, and use delicate pincer movements to pick up tiny eyes and other small parts to add detail to their models.

Through taking part frequently in activities that require them to solve problems, many children develop valuable thinking skills and a minority of older children are beginning to explain their thoughts with increasing clarity. For example, they demonstrate that they understand cause and effect by identifying that pushing the pump in the water play area makes water pour through the holes in the guttering.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Children at Tremorfa Nursery take a lead role in determining what and how they learn. This outstanding feature of the school's work means that most children develop high levels of self-esteem and demonstrate considerable enthusiasm for learning from an early age. Over time, many become ambitious, confident and capable learners as they engage with new experiences and develop the confidence to take measured risks and challenge themselves, for example when handling newts in the pond or climbing a tree in the forest area.

Nearly all children develop exceptionally strong attitudes to learning. They are highly motivated and participate eagerly in their activities, particularly when mirroring adult activities with which they are familiar. For example, children show genuine excitement when they buy real lemons from the role play shop and, on their return to the play kitchen, peel, cut and juice them so that they could pretend to make a lemon cake.

Within a short time of starting nursery, most children demonstrate very high levels of independence. They move confidently around the indoor and outdoor environment and change activities with remarkable control and self-discipline for such young children. Their levels of perseverance in completing a task, especially one they have

instigated themselves, are high. For example, two children work co-operatively to fill large containers from the water butt in the garden and carry them to the log cabin to clean it. They make at least three trips and, as they do so, describe the reasons behind their 'important job' in detail, demonstrating their commitment to their chosen task. Similarly, many children show considerable resilience when they face difficulties completing a task and readily seek other solutions when their first approach to a problem is unsuccessful. When a more able child realises how long it will take him to transfer coloured water from one place to another using one syringe, for instance, he devises an ingenious way to use five syringes to transfer larger amounts each time.

Nearly all children interact positively with others, and treat staff, visitors and their peers with respect. They are particularly confident to approach familiar staff for comfort and support when they need it. Behaviour is exceptionally good for children of this age. They play alongside each other and collaboratively, in line with their stage of development, and show growing consideration and understanding of the needs of others. Many remain calm when others disagree with them, sensitively seeking adult support to resolve a dispute when sharing tools in the role play kitchen. Nearly all children respond well to the inclusive nature of the nursery and develop a sense of fairness and tolerance of others. For example, when working in forest school sessions with children with physical needs, they understand the need to move around carefully and considerately.

When children start school every day, nearly all settle extremely well and quickly and demonstrate high levels of engagement in tasks of their choice. Most children work productively on their own, but soon grow to understand the benefits of collaborating in pairs and groups. Many demonstrate respect for the contributions of others, for example, when listening to their peers talking about members of their extended family.

Children develop an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily and nearly all enjoy a healthy snack every day. Most children relish the constant access they have to the outdoors and take advantage of the many and varied opportunities they have to be physically active. Their eagerness to build, redesign and use a large-scale, challenging obstacle course in cold weather is an excellent example of the enjoyment they derive from being active outdoors and getting plenty of fresh air.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The school's exceptional curriculum provides children with a wealth of exciting opportunities across foundation phase areas of learning. The breadth of experiences available inside the nursery and in the outdoor environment inspires children to want to learn new skills. Skilful modifications to resources, experiences and the learning environment, often prompted by children, maintain their interest and encourage them to return to activities or areas to consolidate previous learning while all the time having fun. The staff's thorough knowledge and understanding of the children's backgrounds and needs help them to provide a curriculum that reflects the diversity of the children in the school and its locality particularly well.

All teachers and practitioners have a strong understanding of foundation phase principles and practice that underpins everything they do and guides all the decisions they make in relation to the curriculum. For example, their highly creative use of the extensive outdoor environment is exemplary. It provides children with an extensive range of opportunities, such as investigating wildlife in the pond, climbing trees in the forest area and building large-scale houses for mini-beasts that many children would be unlikely to experience outside school. This gives them the confidence to take measured risks in a safe environment that helps them to cope with life in the real world.

Staff ensure that children make strong progress in all foundation phase areas of learning over time. Planning is detailed, but flexible and responds well to the needs and interests of children. Particularly beneficial are the school's daily planning and evaluation meetings that enable staff to reflect immediately on the successes and challenges of the day. This system of appraising planning and the progress of children so promptly is a strength of the school's work. It enables staff to adapt planning and provision every day, take good account of children's suggestions to change and extend activities, and build carefully on their previous learning. A good example of this is the staff's response to a request from children to use their emergent writing skills to create signs to indicate the start and finish of the outdoor assault course.

Nearly all staff are skilled foundation phase practitioners who have an exceptionally thorough knowledge of the children's stage of development and level of skills. They question children sensitively to explore their understanding and extend their thinking. They match learning experiences particularly well to children's interests to inspire and secure their participation and wellbeing. The school's strong focus on maintaining high levels of children's engagement means that, very occasionally, staff do not maximise children's progress in developing specific skills.

Embedded in teachers' planning are a wide range of interesting opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills across the areas of learning. During continuous and enhanced activities, staff are skilful in encouraging children to talk purposefully about their activities. They model language very well. They speak clearly and ask purposeful, open-ended questions that require children to think carefully and give extended answers. This supports children to develop their vocabulary, extend sentence structures and build the confidence to communicate effectively. During snack and group times, teachers and practitioners encourage children to use their Welsh language skills appropriately to ask for their fruit and drinks or to count the number of children present, but staff's use of the Welsh language outside these sessions is limited.

Children have free access to high-quality children's books and other written material and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their early writing skills across the curriculum. For example, staff encourage children to write shopping lists in the school's greengrocer's shop and to label diagrams in the investigation area. School leaders, supported by parents, have made a conscious decision to manage children's access to ICT carefully. This means that, where children use ICT equipment, it is purposeful and supports their learning appropriately. For example, staff encourage children to use tablet computers to photograph their work so that they can reflect on their learning in groups later on, and they offer opportunities for

children to use projectors to explore light and shadows, and operate remote control cars to develop their understanding of direction and simple programming.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Teachers and practitioners know the children and their families exceptionally well as a result of the very strong links they establish with them before and during their time at the nursery. This means that staff become extremely adept at recognising the progress children make and identifying when they need further challenge. A particularly powerful feature of the school's work is the planning and evaluation meeting that takes place each day after school. This enables staff to discuss children's progress and next steps so that they can prepare effectively for the next day. In addition, there is a comprehensive strategy meeting every term, during which staff discuss the needs of every child and identify any significant concerns that may need further intervention or referral to an outside agency. Effective collaboration with external agencies supports staff to identify children's additional learning needs early on.

The provision for children with additional learning needs is outstanding. The school's coordinator has a detailed knowledge of every identified child. She works closely with other practitioners and external agencies, and secures the commitment of parents from the outset to ensure that the school meets the needs of every child. Detailed individual development plans include measurable and challenging targets for children. They provide useful support for staff working with them and enable the coordinator to review children's progress every week.

The school establishes exceptionally productive relationships with parents, often well before their children start school. An extensive range of pre-nursery provision, including a weekly parent and baby group, a toddler group, and a link-up programme for children about to start nursery provides rich opportunities for staff to make strong links and build lasting, purposeful connections with families. Highly effective parental engagement and communication is firmly embedded into the school's work and continues once children are in nursery. There are many opportunities for parents to learn about the school's curriculum and how they can help their children to progress, and also to support their own learning and development. These include useful workshops, a borrowing library of books about topics such as child development and behaviour, and accredited courses, including do-it-yourself (DIY) and paediatric first aid that support parents' own skill development and wellbeing.

The school promotes all aspects of healthy living very effectively. Staff provide children with plenty of valuable opportunities to take part in challenging physical activities every day. The school has appropriate arrangements to support healthy eating and drinking. For example, staff consolidate children's awareness of the importance of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables by setting up a greengrocer's shop in which children become familiar with and taste a wide variety of different fruit and vegetables.

The school nurtures children to become exceptionally resilient and independent learners at a very young age. Staff encourage them to influence the learning environment particularly well, and frequently use children's ideas to guide the experiences on offer and adjust planning to take their ideas into account. For example, staff noticed how engaged children were when creating magic potions in

the muddy kitchen outside. They enhanced the water play area inside to include coloured water, test tubes and syringes and harnessed children's natural enthusiasm to make potions, create their own recipes and explore the properties of water. Children's enjoyment of learning in this area is infectious and staff capitalise on this to consolidate and extend their manipulative and problem-solving skills.

The school is highly inclusive and nurtures respect and strong moral and social values in its children. Staff provide good support for children to develop an understanding of their cultures, the local community and the wider world through celebrating the rich diversity and heritage of children's home countries, including Wales. For example, children bring in photographs of their extended family and their home countries to share with others and prompt interesting discussions about traditions, language and culture. The school's positive approach to managing behaviour and helping children to develop relationships with their peers is extremely successful. For example, when two children had a dispute over equipment, a teacher handled the situation very sensitively and, in line with the school's restorative approach, helped the children to understand why their actions may make another child sad.

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

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which she shares effectively with staff, governors and the school community. Senior leaders know the professional strengths of staff very well and they use this knowledge skilfully to share leadership responsibilities purposefully amongst teachers and practitioners. The headteacher and staff are passionate about children's wellbeing and this underpins the school's work effectively. Leaders model and promote the school's values well and this supports an ethos that fosters effective collaboration between staff.

Leaders plan an annual cycle of self-evaluation activities that helps them to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They gather relevant, first-hand information to assess their strengths and areas for development. This includes focused observations, scrutiny of planning and children's work, and data analyses. Leaders generally use the outcomes of monitoring appropriately to set priorities for improvement. The senior leadership team regularly evaluates the progress the school is making towards meeting their improvement priorities. However, targets do not always identify the intended outcomes for children specifically enough. This means that it is sometimes difficult for leaders to measure progress accurately when they undertake monitoring activities.

Members of the governing body are suitably involved in the life of the school. Governors visit regularly to gain first-hand information about provision and standards, and contribute directly to setting school improvement priorities. They support the school well and, overall, fulfil their duties appropriately. However, their annual report does not contain all the required information. The school involves stakeholders in self-evaluation appropriately. For example, the headteacher encourages parents to record their comments and make suggestions about the school's vision and values on a reflection board in the foyer. Parents welcome this opportunity and feel that the school values their views and responds positively to their suggestions.

The school addresses national priorities well. For example, leaders and staff have already begun to consider their provision in light of the new Curriculum for Wales. The principles and philosophy of the foundation phase are well embedded throughout the school's provision. This has a notable impact on children's engagement in learning and in the progress they make during their time at the school.

Leaders ensure that all staff have suitable opportunities for effective professional development. All teachers work regularly with staff in other schools to share ideas to improve their own and others' practice during training sessions and through professional collaboration. For example, the school works with a cluster of local schools to improve children's emergent writing and provide tasks that engage boys. This school-to-school working has a positive impact on the development of the school's teaching and learning strategies. The school shares its own good practice effectively with visiting teachers and through its role supporting non-maintained settings. As a result, practitioners continually reflect upon their own practice and the quality of children's experiences. They take good account of the professional teacher standards to inform performance management and secure professional improvement.

The school is extremely well equipped and staffed and leaders ensure that staff make good use of all resources available to them. Leaders use funding wisely to create and maintain an exceptionally stimulating and engaging learning environment both indoors and out, providing a wide range of interesting learning spaces. Staff use these environments very effectively to develop children's independence and to improve their sense of wellbeing.

Leaders and governors monitor the school's finances carefully to ensure that they allocate funds beneficially and address school improvement priorities appropriately. Leaders and staff are very proficient in accessing additional grant funding, which they use creatively to support families and benefit children's progress and wellbeing. For example, the family engagement officer's collaborative work with parents and community agencies ensures that parents are engaged in their children's learning. This benefits children's progress and adds considerable value to the work of the school.

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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