



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Little Stars Daycare
Cwmfelin Community Hall
Jenkins Terrace
Cwmfelin
Bridgend
CF34 9LA**

Date of inspection: February 2015

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

Little Stars Daycare opened in April 2013 and serves the village of Maesteg and the surrounding community. The setting meets for five days per week and is located within Cwmfelin Community Hall, Maesteg. There is access to a grassed and barked area for the purpose of outdoor play. There are 11 members of staff employed in the setting.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 29 children and takes in children from birth up to three years of age. The setting also runs an after school club for children up to 11 years of age. At the time of the inspection, 17 children attended, of whom fewer than six are aged three and funded by the local authority. All children speak English as their first language. There are no children with additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in July 2014 and this is the first Estyn inspection.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- All practitioners have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase
- They have high expectations of children and deliver a wide range of stimulating learning experiences
- Planning focuses suitably on the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills across a broad range of areas of learning
- Practitioners are good language role models, contribute to the good standards of children's oracy skills and enhance their vocabulary effectively
- Regular high quality observational assessments enable practitioners clearly to identify children's next steps in learning and inform future planning well
- The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully
- The setting is a warm and inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities and are valued highly
- The accommodation is well maintained, bright and secure

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leadership team provides focused, robust and inspirational leadership, which results in very high standards of teaching and learning
- A clear sense of purpose pervades all aspects of the work of the setting and leaders fully support staff and challenge them appropriately to improve and develop their skills and knowledge
- Leaders establish and communicate a clear vision based on a drive to raise children's outcomes, deliver high quality provision and provide a nurturing and happy learning environment
- The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well and all practitioners are clearly committed to improving quality
- The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships, which support children's learning well and impact positively in enriching their learning experiences
- The setting provides good value for money

Recommendations

- R1 Increase opportunities for children to use and apply their problem solving skills
- R2 Further develop processes to enable children to make decisions about their learning
- R3 Include specific timescales, costings and more measureable success criteria in the setting's improvement plan

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

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

Wellbeing: N/A

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

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

All practitioners are involved in planning a range of interesting learning experiences that engage all children successfully across all areas of Foundation Phase learning. The curriculum builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills and encourages them to be independent learners. However, opportunities for children to apply their problem solving skills are underdeveloped.

Children have regular opportunities to count and to recognise numbers, shapes and colours. For example, they count the number of aliens' pants and match them successfully. The 'Three Bears' role-play area provides purposeful opportunities for children to sort by size and shape and develops their understanding of ordering appropriately. Practitioners promote children's early mark making skills particularly well, using a range of media including paint, and using a simple draw programme on the computer. Effective registration routines encourage children to recognise their names and those of their friends quickly. Practitioners extend children's early reading skills well by regularly sharing stories and rhymes with them.

Planning focuses well on the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills across a broad range of areas of learning. It is sufficiently flexible to enable practitioners to respond spontaneously to the changing interests of very young children. Practitioners use the outdoor environment imaginatively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. For example, children compose tunes and experiment with making different sounds in the new outdoor music making area.

There are extensive opportunities for children to hear spoken Welsh and to encourage them to speak it themselves. Practitioners use the Welsh language very well and it forms an integral part of daily routines. The setting promotes children's understanding of Welsh culture and heritage successfully through regular visits to the local area and celebrating national events such as St. David's Day.

The setting plans beneficial visits around the locality, which support children's understanding of the world around them well. Visitors to the setting such as the police and firefighters further extend their knowledge of the world of work.

Teaching: Excellent

All practitioners have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase. They have high expectations of children and deliver a wide range of stimulating learning experiences. All practitioners use a comprehensive range of teaching styles and approaches that effectively motivate children to learn. They provide a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences. Practitioners use circle time well to encourage children's good speaking and listening skills, while small group work develops children's personal and social skills and thinking skills very effectively. Clear daily routines and effective teamwork provide a consistency of approach and supports children to know what to expect and to feel confident, happy and safe.

Sessions progress at a lively pace, which keeps nearly all children interested and engaged. Learning experiences have clear intentions and outcomes for learning, enabling practitioners to focus well on the specific skills that they are developing. All practitioners suitably intervene in play situations to move children's learning. They make effective use of questioning and ongoing praise to reinforce children's understanding. They are exceptionally good language role models and this contributes to raising children's oracy skills and enhances their vocabulary successfully. Practitioners know the children well and manage their behaviour highly effectively. Positive reinforcement enables children to be familiar with expectations and daily routines and develops their confidence to try new experiences and to become independent learners, for example when putting on their coats, serving themselves water at snack time and when tidying up and trying different foods as part of their work on Chinese New Year.

Regular high quality observational assessments of individuals and groups of children enable practitioners clearly to identify children's next steps in learning and inform future planning well. All practitioners work superbly together as a team and share observations. This enables them to be well aware of the support individual children require and to understand how to fully support the less able and extend learning for the more able. This is sector leading and leaders have beneficial professional partnerships with other local settings to share this good practice.

The setting keeps parents very well informed about their child's progress and informative end of year reports contain annotated photographs and identify next steps for learning well. Practitioners share these plans with parents each half term and, in addition, provide useful informal feedback and resource ideas on a regular basis to allow them to support their child's next steps in learning very successfully.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements are in place to support children's health and wellbeing and to encourage them to take care of themselves. The setting makes appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. For example, children eat

fruit and other healthy snacks and drink water at snack time. Regular planned physical activities, such as daily music and movement sessions and external sports skills coaching, promote children's physical fitness successfully.

A worthwhile range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development positively. Celebrating festivals, such as Chinese New Year, helps children to understand better the world in which they live. Practitioners encourage children to take responsibility for their actions, to share equipment and to take care of resources. They help children to manage their feelings and to develop self-awareness well. Children are beginning to play a part in deciding areas for development within the termly topics but this is at an early stage of development. Daily routines, such as snack time, provide worthwhile opportunities for children to develop important social skills such as co-operation and independence. Caring for pet fish and growing their own plants encourage children to look after living things appropriately.

There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. A visit to a local recycling centre helps children to understand how card, paper and glass is sorted and recycled. This reinforces children's understanding of the need to care for their environment.

The setting currently has no children with additional learning needs. It does, however, have very clear procedures to support children with additional learning needs and an effective network of contacts to provide extra support and advice, should the need arise.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a warm and inclusive community, where all children have equal access to activities and are valued highly. Children feel confident and enjoy talking to each other, staff and visitors. Practitioners encourage children to think of others less fortunate than themselves by raising money, for example when making and selling cakes to raise funds for a local charity.

There are plenty of good quality resources across most areas of learning and practitioners ensure that they match children's needs closely. Practitioners make very effective use of the available space and ensure that labelling on displays and storage boxes is bilingual. These are useful and engaging resources to promote children's early word and number recognition.

The accommodation is well maintained, bright and secure. There are clearly designated learning areas and this enables children to access resources easily and fosters their independence well. Practitioners create a bright and stimulating environment for learning. The setting's outdoor area is safe and secure and practitioners use it well to provide a wealth of interesting experiences across the curriculum.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Good

Leadership: Excellent

The setting's leadership team provides focused, strong and inspirational leadership, which results in very high standards in of teaching and learning. It focuses well on providing the best possible educational experiences for all the children. A clear sense of purpose pervades all aspects of the work of the setting. Leaders fully support staff and challenge them to improve and develop their skills and knowledge further.

Leaders establish and communicate a clear vision based on a drive to raise children's outcomes, deliver high quality provision and provide a nurturing and happy learning environment. They actively seek out ways in which the setting can improve and respond quickly to any guidance and advice, adapting it to suit the setting and its children's needs. There is a strong focus on ensuring that any change impacts positively on provision and children's wellbeing.

All staff demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities and play an important part in moving the setting forward. Clear and up to date job descriptions are in place. Leaders have high expectations of themselves and staff and all practitioners model these expectations extensively within their classroom practice. They work together successfully to support each other to meet the settings aims and manage their time effectively to provide high quality support for all children.

The setting makes very good use of a highly effective system of appraisal to support and develop practitioners. Staff targets for improvement are challenging and well supported by a committed team of practitioners. Leaders actively source and provide extensive training opportunities. They are exceptional and enthusiastic role models, who make superb use of meetings to discuss children's achievements and progress. This informs future planning well and enables them to deliver high quality learning experiences through a range of skilful and innovative teaching methods.

All practitioners feel valued and are becoming reflective practitioners who understand the need for continuous improvement. They strive to enhance children's learning experiences and to sustain improvements. The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives, especially in its planning for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills. It also promotes healthy eating and the use of outdoor learning well.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well and all practitioners are clearly committed to improving quality. They strive hard to find ways to make learning experiences exciting and motivating for children and to make sure that they are happy and eager to learn. Leaders and managers monitor planning and assessment information well. Weekly meetings ensure that the setting addresses day-to-day issues speedily and identifies longer term priorities for improvement successfully.

Leaders use this information well to write an honest self-evaluation report and to develop an appropriate setting improvement plan. The priorities generally relate well to improving outcomes and provision for children. However, leaders do not always analyse success well enough in improvement planning in terms of measureable outcomes for children or identify specific costings and timescales. On a very few occasions, this makes it difficult to judge the effect on children's outcomes. The setting reviews the plan on a regular basis and takes the views of parents into account appropriately. For example, leaders are currently establishing a parent committee, which will work alongside leaders and managers to develop ideas for topics and to share in making decisions about future development priorities.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond positively to support from the local authority advisory teacher, resulting in improvements to the quality of learning experiences provided, for example the development of the outdoors to support children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Practitioners make very effective use of training opportunities. This is highly beneficial to the setting's planning and assessment procedures in particular.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships, which support children's learning well and impact positively in enriching their learning experiences. Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. They receive useful and relevant information via the setting's noticeboard, newsletters, website and via daily personal contact. As a result, parents feel well informed and knowledgeable about the settings day-to-day work and value the quality of care and concern shown by practitioners towards their children.

A valuable partnership exists with local primary schools. This promotes a smooth transition for children from the setting to the next stage in their education. The setting has a range of effective partnerships with the community. For example, regular visits by local sports, dance and music clubs promote children's physical and creative development well.

There is a worthwhile partnership with the new local authority advisory teacher and practitioners welcome this advice and support. Practitioners benefit from this support in developing and improving the quality of the learning environment and on planning for literacy and numeracy skills development. This improves children's oracy and counting skills in particular.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes effective use of staffing and resources to support high quality teaching and learning well. Leaders and managers ensure that there are enough suitably qualified and experienced practitioners to support the effective delivery of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Practitioners make good use of training opportunities and colleagues skills and expertise to improve provision and outcomes for children. For example, fluent Welsh

speaking practitioners support children's Welsh language development well. All practitioners share ideas from training and visits to other settings in order to improve the quality of their teaching and to enhance provision.

The setting has suitable processes in place for keeping spending under review. Leaders budget carefully for the purchase of resources and allocate funds appropriately to the setting's main priorities for development. The setting successfully promotes activities that encourage children to learn and progress. As a result, it 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

Mrs Susan Davies	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

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

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the 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.