



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

**Llandogo Early Years
Millennium Hall
Llandogo
Monmouthshire
NP25 4TJ**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Reporting Inspector

for

**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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About the setting

Llandogo Early Years is an English-medium setting serving the village of Llandogo and the surrounding area, including a number who live in England. It meets in the village hall.

The setting serves a rural area and children attending the setting are considered to come from mainly advantaged backgrounds. Ninety five per cent of children over three years old have English as their home language and no children speak Welsh at home. Fourteen per cent of the children have additional learning needs.

The setting is open on Monday and Tuesday afternoons and on Wednesday to Friday mornings during the school year. It is registered for up to 24 children aged from two years and six months to five years and children stay at the setting until they move on to the reception class in Llandogo Primary School which is next door to the hall. Eight three-year-olds and thirteen four-year-olds were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority Early Years Partnership at the time of the inspection.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2010 and this is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The quality and standards of provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

- All children are happy in the setting and enjoy learning
- The setting provides a wide range of stimulating, learning experiences to attract and involve the children
- All children are well behaved
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and caring; and
- A strong partnership exists between the setting and the primary school

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- There is a well established process of self-evaluation and planning for the future
- Targets for improvement are regularly reviewed
- There is evidence that improvements have been made and sustained over time; and
- Staff in the setting work well together and share a desire to provide the best learning environment for the children

Recommendations

The recommendations for improvement are to:

R1 continue to develop the children's use of the Welsh language; and

R2 continue to develop and embed the very good procedures for assessment and reporting to parents

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations

Main findings

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

All children enjoy experimenting with mark making equipment using a variety of pens, pencils and crayons. Many are interested in writing and make the most of opportunities to write, for example when choosing the snack they would like. Most older children know many initial letter sounds and a few are beginning to blend simple three letter words. Many children achieve good standards and make good progress in areas of learning from their starting point. The majority are constantly engaged in tasks and many acquire new knowledge and understanding and enjoy the challenge of varied activities. Nearly all are confident learners and they are willing to learn from their mistakes and try different ways.

The majority of children have good communication skills and listen carefully to instructions. Many are interested in and like to experiment with a variety of techniques and materials, including paint, sand, water and collage. Nearly all children join in with songs and rhymes and all listen attentively to stories and enjoy sharing books with adults and with their friends. All children apply mathematical skills well to a range of play activities. The majority use mathematical language in relevant contexts across all areas of learning. They make patterns and understand sequence. The majority of children enjoy using a cash register and often incorporate it into their play.

Children's progress in Welsh is good and most understand and carry out simple instructions and join with rhymes and songs. A majority are beginning to use Welsh words and phrases spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are very happy in the setting and enjoy all their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners make them feel safe, happy and confident. They know they are important to the adults and they return the affection and respect they receive from them. All have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and that good food and exercise are important to make them healthy. All children go to the toilet unaided and wash their hands afterwards and also before snack. All children make friendships in the setting and show care and concern for one another.

All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. They all behave well and kindly. They are polite and show consideration for others when taking turns. A very good feature is the way in which all children make choices and decisions about their learning and demonstrate a high level of confidence and independence. The majority work well together. Many make decisions about their learning and decide for themselves what they want to do. Children were observed to make very confident choices when they arrived in the group going straight to their favourite activity. Children are all involved in the planning process and work with the adults to create a topic web of appropriate activities. A particular feature of the setting is the way in which children are encouraged to add their own suggestions either by writing or drawing on the web.

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

Staff work well together to plan a range of tasks which interest, stimulate and engage the children. As a result they learn effectively and make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Planning takes into account the views and interests of the children which involves and motivates them in their learning. Learning experiences are well focused on meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and the curriculum builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning experiences are effective in developing children's basic skills, including their creative and physical skills and their understanding of the need to care for living things. The school's outdoor area is used to good effect to support children's learning and the setting has the use of a dedicated area in the school organic garden.

Provision for Welsh language provision is good. Welsh is used consistently throughout the session by all practitioners and children develop their knowledge and St David's Day is well used to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of Welsh customs and traditions. All children are beginning to appreciate other cultures as they study festivals across the world such as Divali and the Chinese New Year. The setting involves all children in recycling a variety of resources which are put into labelled bins. Leftovers from the children's snacks are saved for the school compost bin.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a wide range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. All intervene appropriately and make good use of questioning to challenge children and to extend their thinking. There is a good mix of planned activities and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. Practitioners are very enthusiastic and fully committed to supporting children and to providing high quality all round provision.

There are excellent arrangements in place for the assessment and recording of children's progress. Examples of sector leading practice can be seen in the organisation of daily observations, and in the setting's recent involvement in the web-based tracking system adopted by the primary school which will provide effective information for the receiving reception class teacher. Another good feature is the identification of success criteria in staff recording sheets for adult led focus activities. These enable staff to provide appropriately for children of different abilities.

Parents and guardians of children in the setting are particularly well informed about the progress of their children. Termly parents meetings are supported by a summary of their child's recent progress and two targets for improvement. All parents receive an end of year report on their child which indicates progress under all the areas of learning and includes a comment on the child's next steps in learning. Parents are also encouraged to contribute comments on their child's report.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision made for children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The day-to-day activities are highly effective in fostering values, such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth. Children have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly.

Arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs are effective. Children with additional learning needs have appropriate targets identified in an Individual Play Plan. This is shared with parents and reviewed termly. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children and food procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they start. Almost all children move on to Llandogo Primary School and the very good links that exist between the setting and the school ensure a smooth transition.

Children, and their parents or carers say they feel safe in the setting. A good range of policies to ensure the children are safe is in place and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. The setting makes thoughtful use of the space available but unfortunately is not able to display children's work on the walls. The regular use of the beautiful school grounds enhances the children's learning and gives them opportunities to explore things which interest them. This promotes their good creative and problem solving skills and further increases their ability to concentrate and to persevere with experiences they enjoy.

The ratio of adults to children is good and practitioners are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to create a stimulating environment for learning. Practitioners regularly attend training courses to update their knowledge, understanding and skills. The group is well resourced with a range of high quality equipment which is used appropriately to support children's learning.

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

The setting leader is well qualified and experienced. Teamwork is a real strength of the setting and practitioners work closely together and support one another very well. They are constantly seeking to provide the children with high quality, stimulating and interesting experiences which address their needs.

The management committee officers are very committed and work hard to raise money and also to foster a sense of community. Annual questionnaires seek the views of parents and carers and there is good evidence that concerns have been dealt with. The playleader ensures that they are kept well informed of the activities of the setting and ensures that agreed priorities are addressed appropriately.

Improving quality: Good

The setting makes effective use of its self-evaluation information to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation report is thorough and leads to sound strategies for improvement which will ensure positive benefits for each child. The leader consults with parents, carers and children to inform self-evaluation. The information received from questionnaires to parents is used well to identify areas for development.

An improvement plan has been produced using the knowledge gained from the self-evaluation process. It shows the leader's sound knowledge of the setting's performance and focuses on raising standards further by improving provision and setting clear targets to achieve this.

Practitioners regularly attend in-service training courses provided by the Local Authority advisory service regularly and the positive impact of these is seen in the teaching and in the wellbeing of the children.

The setting has recently established a professional learning community with the primary school to monitor the effectiveness of their assessment tracking programme and the impact on children's learning.

Partnership working: Good

Parents and carers are kept well informed through newsletters and an informative notice board in the waiting area. An annual questionnaire to parents and carers shows many positive responses and the setting has made quick and positive responses to the very few less positive comments. In addition parents have good opportunities to see the work of the setting at first hand when they take their turn on the duty rota. The setting is very much at the heart of the local community and the children make frequent visits around the village. Visitors are welcomed and include the local community support officer, local residents who come to talk to the children about their experiences and parents who are invited to share a skill or an interest.

The very good links with the primary school include fortnightly attendance at an assembly led by visitors from the local church, older children coming to play their instruments to the children and Foundation Phase teachers who regularly visit to read stories. Good relationships exist with the Local Authority link teacher who visits regularly and supports with practical help and advice. Practitioners welcome her input and have acted on her advice to make changes to improve the provision.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of good quality resources which are appropriately used to support different learning experiences. A particular strength is the outstanding way in which all practitioners are deployed to maximise children's learning and independence both indoors and out. Practitioners are deployed to make the most effective use of their expertise and to ensure good provision and particularly good use is made of the school grounds.

The management committee and involved parents work together to balance the financial needs of the setting against the available finance. Spending is carefully considered but the committee does not yet reflect on the effectiveness of their spending against the quality of outcomes for the children.

Overall, the setting provides value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eight questionnaires were returned. All were positive and 100% of parents strongly agreed that:

- There is a good range of activities/visits
- Their children are well prepared for school
- They are satisfied overall with the setting; and
- Their child likes the setting

Responses to discussions with children

Most children were confident when talking to a visitor. They spoke clearly and indicated that they liked coming to the nursery and enjoyed their activities. They felt that they had many friends and knew what to do if they were unhappy or needed help.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.