



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

**St Donats Nursery School
Atlantic College
St Donats
Llantwit Major
Vale of Glamorgan
CF61 1WF**

Date of inspection: October 2013

by

**Mary Dyas
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

St Donats Nursery School is situated in the grounds of the Atlantic College campus for international sixth form students, which includes St Donats Castle. The setting meets in the large airy college gymnasium and equipment, including tables and chairs, has to be taken out and stored away daily in a large cupboard off the hall. Children need to be escorted to toilets outside the hall across a small courtyard. The setting has full access to the grounds of the college and has been allocated a dedicated garden area where they are able to grow plants and vegetables. There is also a forest school area which is currently being developed as part of a project by some of the students.

Children come to the setting from a wide area and eventually move on to up to five different primary schools. The majority of the children are English speaking but staff have considerable experience of working with young children with little or no English from around the world. Provision is in place to integrate children with additional needs, although there were none on roll during the inspection.

The setting is registered to provide day care for up to 30 children under the age of 8 years and provides two sessions per day between 9am and 4pm with some children staying over the lunch break. The setting has recently decided to limit the numbers to a maximum of twelve per session to enable improved supervision especially outdoors. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children on roll including 14 three year olds. Twelve of these are in receipt of funded educational provision. Children are admitted at two and a half and can stay until they move on to primary school.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in June 2013 and Estyn in October 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is judged to be good because:

- All children make good progress during their time in the setting;
- All children are happy and relaxed in the setting and enjoy their learning;
- The provision for outdoor education provides unusually interesting and exciting activities to engage and stimulate the children;
- The setting makes good use of the local community; and
- The setting provides a happy and stimulating ethos that supports learning.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- There is an established system for self-evaluation and good evidence that targets for improvement are addressed and their impact evaluated; and
- Staff are highly committed to the work of the setting and share a focus on delivering good quality provision that meets children's needs.

However:

- Unsatisfactory progress has been made in addressing the recommendation to improve provision of the Welsh language since the last inspection.

Recommendations

- R1. Ensure provision for the Welsh language is improved
- R2. Develop the present system of setting targets for individual children to ensure that parents and carers are well informed about their child's progress and ways in which they can help them to improve.
- R3. Continue to strengthen the work of the management committee to provide support and challenge.
- R4. Ensure recommendations for improvement are fully addressed, particularly regarding the provision for the Welsh language.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children achieve good standards from their starting points. Their involvement with the activities that are provided for them supports their learning and enables them to achieve well. Their literacy and communication skills are developing well. Almost all children are very articulate and express themselves using appropriate vocabulary. All enjoy listening to stories and looking at books either alone, with an adult or with one or two friends. They handle books in an adult fashion and often retell the story to themselves. Children's mark making skills are also developing well and they enjoy a range of activities including scribbling in different materials and independently writing their name on the back of their work.

All children count to ten by rote in both English and Welsh. Older and more able children are able to count objects accurately to at least five and many recognise and can name numerals to ten. During their play they use mathematical words and phrases in correctly in context for example when they talk about objects being 'bigger' or 'smaller' and when they identify basic two dimensional shapes around the room.

All children are developing their skills in the use of technology and handle cameras and other electronic toys with confidence.

Children understand and use the Welsh words they have learned for colour and numbers and respond appropriately to the question 'sut wyt ti' during the morning group time. They join in singing familiar Welsh songs and choose to look at Welsh books.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy and feel safe in the setting. They understand that it is good to eat fruit and vegetables and know that chocolate should be kept for treats. All thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting and are well motivated and engaged in the activities that they choose. They come into the setting eager to see what has been set out for them and settle quickly to an activity. Children are confident and are involved in making decisions about their learning and choices in the setting.

All children behave well throughout the sessions. They are kind and considerate towards one another and share equipment. Children are happy and confident in the setting and make independent choices about their learning. They concentrate well on the tasks they have chosen and sustain interest and involvement for appropriate lengths of time.

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

Staff ensure that there is a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities available for the children each day. They plan together taking into account the children's interests. Planning is based firmly on the requirements of the Foundation Phase and activities build on children's previous knowledge and learning through use of the local authority's skills ladders.

A strength of the setting is the imaginative way in which the practitioners plan interesting and exciting experiences making good use of the unique opportunities offered by their proximity to the international college which enables the children to interact with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

Good attention is given to the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills and planned activities include differentiation to develop the learning of older and more able children. The setting has a strong focus on the development of children's creative skills through music and art.

Provision for the use of the Welsh language is adequate. Practitioners use some Welsh words and phrases during group time but there are many missed opportunities to promote use of the language incidentally during the sessions. Staff use the celebration of St David's Day well to develop the children's understanding of Welsh customs and traditions.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners ensure a good mix of adult led and child initiated activities both indoors and out of doors. Planning has clear objectives and activities successfully engage the children's interest. The staff are well qualified and have a good, practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and children are encouraged to think for themselves and to become independent learners.

Overall, procedures observe and record children's achievements are good. Staff regularly discuss the progress of individual children and ensure that their learning needs are met. Observations of children's progress, focussed on the development of skills, are regularly updated into the children's profiles. Individual targets are set for the children based on evidence from observations but these have not been shared with parents. Parents and carers have an opportunity to speak to the leader about their child's progress in the summer term when the child's assessment profile is shared with them. They also receive a report of progress based on the Foundation Phase areas of learning but there are no indications for the child's next steps in learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners in the setting are kind and caring and make good use of positive praise to encourage and support the children. Children are well cared for and they know who to approach if they need help.

Good arrangements are in place to promote healthy living. Children enjoy snacks of fruit and vegetables and discuss which foods are healthy and which are best kept for treats. There are daily opportunities for children to take physical exercise both indoors and when they go outdoors during the second half of the session. Children are encouraged to act sustainably and often visit the college's recycling area to sort the materials they have collected in the setting. Children also take responsibility for remembering to switch off lights when they go outside and know that this is to save electricity.

The setting's activities help to promote values such as fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong. Staff guide children to take responsibility for their actions and for resources and to understand that sharing and co-operating with others is important. There is a very strong caring ethos at the setting, which means that children settle quickly into the day's routine and are ready to learn.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, and takes full advantage of advice and guidance from the local authority pupil support service when required.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a supportive and caring ethos that is inclusive and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. All children have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and there is a good range of effective policies to ensure children's safety.

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced in working with young children. They work well together to create an interesting and stimulating environment to support the children's learning.

The outdoor area available to the setting comprises the extensive grounds of the college including parts of the castle and successfully provides high quality experiences for the children's play and learning.

Resources are of good quality and are used effectively to support the planned activities. The room used by the nursery has been decorated in bright stimulating colours chosen by the setting leaders and displays of current children's work enhance the learning environment.

The indoor accommodation is secure and good arrangements are in place to ensure the children are safe when they use the toilet and washing facilities and when they venture out to explore the outdoor areas. Particularly good use is made of the local community of the college and castle to enhance and enrich the children's experiences.

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

The leader, who is supported by a deputy and one other staff member manages the setting effectively. Parents of children attending the setting and members of the local community hold the setting in high esteem and particularly value the outdoor experiences provided for the children.

Practitioners work well together clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. All staff share values and aims that focus on providing the best possible experiences for the children. They contribute to the planning process and successfully create a learning environment that engages and stimulates the children.

There is an established annual programme of staff appraisal when roles are discussed and targets for training and improvement are agreed. Staff share a vision to provide good quality care and education for the children. There has not been a management committee in place in recent years due to a lack of parents with the time or interest to serve. However, this has recently been rectified and a new committee is about to be established to support the leader and her staff.

The setting has taken good account of national and local priorities for example, they are currently taking following a healthy eating scheme in line with national healthy eating strategies.

Improving quality: Adequate

The setting makes good use of its self-evaluation information to identify strengths and areas for improvement. All staff in the setting contribute to the self evaluation process. An improvement plan using the knowledge gained from the self-evaluation process focuses on raising standards by improving provision. Each term relevant targets for improvement are set and improvements in provision are evaluated in terms of their impact on the setting. However, the recommendation to improve provision for the Welsh language has not been adequately addressed over time and this remains a target for improvement.

Practitioners regularly attend in-service training courses provided by the local authority advisory service and the positive impact of these is seen in the teaching and in the wellbeing of the children. Practitioners have visited another local setting to see good practice and have implemented some of the ideas that they brought back.

Partnership working: Good

The setting enjoys a very strong partnership with the college. Staff and students visit the setting from time to time to talk to them and to share their culture and skills

Staff talk to parents every day at handover and a daily message outside the setting gives parents a brief summary of the main events of the session. The leader ensures that working parents have written notes to make sure they know what is happening and all parents and carers have the opportunity for an appointment to meet with the setting leader to discuss their child's progress at the end of the year. The setting does not yet share with parents the targets they are setting for the children

The setting enjoys a good relationship with the local authority associate advisor. Staff have listened to and taken advice which has had a positive impact on the teaching and learning; for example support with the self-evaluation process and support with enhancing provision for ICT.

Resource management: Good

Staff in the setting work well together – they support one another positively and all take a full role in supporting the children and in delivering the curriculum. They reflect together on their practice and evaluate the success of the activities they have planned. Resources available to the children are of good quality, are kept in good condition and are used well to support the planned curriculum

Practitioners support one another well when deploying themselves during the sessions. Day to day deployment is organised informally depending on the particular activities and numbers of children present. The nursery has a good range of resources to support the planned activities.

Although there has not been an effective committee in place the treasurer has continued to support the setting and manages the budget carefully. Day to day purchases are covered by petty cash and larger requirements are discussed with the treasurer. The setting gives value for money.

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

Mrs Mary Elspeth 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)

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 partnership's 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>

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.