



*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**

**University of South Wales Services  
Childcare Service Department  
University of Glamorgan  
Treforest  
Pontypridd  
CF37 1DL**

**Date of inspection: December 2014**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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**Publication date: 24/12/2014**

## Context

The University of South Wales Childcare Services is located in the Childcare Service Department of The University of South Wales in Treforest, Pontypridd, in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority.

The childcare centre is registered to provide full-time and part time day care for up to 70 children between the ages of three months and five years of age. Priority is given to the children of students and staff at the University, although the setting also admits children from the local community. There are currently six three-year-olds registered at the setting, although not all were present during the inspection. A very few children have additional learning needs and no children have English as an additional language or speak Welsh as their home language.

There are 22 staff employed within the Child Care Services Department, with two full time and two part time staff working in the pre-school room. All practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The childcare services manager has been in post since 2000.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in November 2014 and by Estyn in January 2009.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- practitioners provide a broad range of stimulating and exciting activities that interest and engage the children;
- there are valuable opportunities for children to develop their independent skills;
- working relationships between adults and children are very strong;
- practitioners make good use of effective questioning to support and challenge children's understanding;
- the setting provides good quality care and guidance for all children; and
- practitioners make good use of the indoor and outdoor environment to support learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- effective teamwork and a very positive ethos create a happy and purposeful environment for learning;
- leaders provide a clear vision for the setting, which is shared by all staff;
- leaders know what they do well and what they need to do to improve;
- training opportunities support staff development well;
- the setting pays good attention to local and national priorities, including a strong focus on children's Welsh language skills and wellbeing; and
- the setting has strong partnerships, particularly with parents.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve planning by identifying opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum clearly

R2 Ensure that the assessment of the progress children make is measurable against the Foundation Phase outcomes

R3 Ensure that leaders use formal observations of practitioners in order to maintain and improve outcomes for children

R4 Ensure that all actions and initiatives are measured in terms of their impact on children's outcomes.

### **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?

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 present 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 present 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 wide range of interesting learning experiences that engage all children effectively. For example, children have the opportunity to explore and describe an ice castle in the water tray linked to the topic, which develops their oracy skills well. The setting's medium and short term planning focuses on the areas of learning from the Foundation Phase successfully. There is a suitable balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children, and the setting makes good use of the indoor and outdoor environment. For example, children use their thinking skills well when talking about how someone has helped them during the session, or how they have helped someone else. They choose materials collected on a walk to create a winter picture independently. Although skills are not systematically planned for as yet, observations of practitioners and the children clearly show that an effective range of skills is being developed across areas of learning in the setting.

All planning identifies how children will develop their Welsh skills clearly and is beginning to recognise when children will have opportunities to improve their information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

All practitioners make good use of Welsh in planned activities and in their interactions with the children. Children are encouraged to use Welsh throughout the day. All children have good opportunities to develop their understanding of Welsh heritage and culture through planned activities linked to Welsh people and places, for example a trip to Cardiff Castle.

The setting makes good use of visitors to the setting. Regular visits from dance and music specialists develop the children's creative and physical skills effectively and worthwhile links with the campus gardening team help the children to learn about caring for their environment.

## **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Phase philosophy. They work well together and devise innovative ways to engage children purposefully and sustain their interest in learning activities, such as making a winter picture using natural materials collected on a visit to the forest school area. All practitioners provide an effective balance between child initiated and adult led activities, which allows children worthwhile opportunities to think for themselves.

All practitioners make good use of a wide range of questioning techniques, are sensitive to children's needs and know when to intervene in their learning beneficially. They encourage children to share their ideas and to talk about their learning. For example, children check the weather each day and report to the group. As a result, most children develop as independent and confident learners successfully and are developing good vocabulary in both English and Welsh.

Working relationships between the adults and children in the setting are very strong. All practitioners have high expectations of children and there is mutual affection and respect. All adults create a calm, purposeful learning environment and manage children's behaviour successfully. As a result, children feel safe and cared for, and behaviour is good.

Leaders have comprehensive systems for recording children's progress as they move through the setting. Practitioners maintain purposeful records of children's progress in individual child development profiles. These allow the setting and parents to monitor children's physical, social and emotional development effectively. They provide a clear picture of each child's strengths and areas for development. As a result, practitioners set clear targets for children that focus on their individual needs successfully. However, these do not always give an accurate enough assessment of individual children's progress against the Foundation Phase outcomes.

## **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting has a comprehensive range of procedures and policies to promote children's health and wellbeing well. Practitioners embed a wide range of activities such as teeth brushing, hand washing and healthy eating into the everyday routines of the setting effectively. All practitioners encourage children to act sustainably. A good range of displays and activities, such as junk modelling, helps to develop children's understanding of how to reuse materials purposefully.

The setting's provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. It has clear rules for children's behaviour, and a focus on 'kind hands' helps all children to understand this in a meaningful way. Procedures for developing children's social skills are very effective. Practitioners use meal times effectively to enable children to make choices independently. Well-organised routines ensure that children take turns, share and work co-operatively together. This is highly beneficial to the development of children's social skills. Many are able to take care of their own personal needs and can put on a coat and use cutlery correctly at the table. Stories and celebrations of festivals ensure that children develop a good understanding of the wider world and effective links with the

university chaplaincy supports their spiritual development well. The setting has clear, useful policies and arrangements for safeguarding children that meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Through its comprehensive assessment and recording arrangements, the setting identifies children with additional learning needs efficiently. Individual plans provide these children with targeted learning and allow practitioners to focus support effectively.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all activities. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes through the setting's use of golden rules. These promote good listening, honesty, gentleness, kindness and helpfulness and encourage all children to work together and have respect for others effectively. All practitioners respect children's views and opinions, for example when planning and discussing new contexts for learning. The setting helps children to learn about diversity effectively through a wide range of activities and celebrations. For example, children eat and drink Mexican food and drink and undertake interesting art activities to celebrate 'Cinco de Mayo'. The setting has enough suitable qualified and experienced staff to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum successfully.

The accommodation is well maintained and secure. There is a comprehensive supply of good quality resources that all practitioners use skilfully. Many of these are within easy reach of the children. This helps them to develop their independence and allows them to make choices about their learning effectively. The setting makes good use of the outdoor area to develop skills across a wide range of areas of learning. Examples include the use of wheeled toys and climbing equipment to develop children's physical skills and a growing area where children learn to care for plants. A wide variety of interesting displays, labelled in both English and Welsh, provides a stimulating learning environment. These celebrate children's achievements and encourage them to recognise print successfully.

The setting makes good use of a wide range of quality resources in the setting to support learning. The university campus provides beneficial opportunities for children to learn about the world around them.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The leader provides a clear vision for the setting, as a caring environment with a strong focus on supporting the health, wellbeing and education of the children. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities, and work as a team and with purpose to fulfil these aims. The leader communicates with stakeholders effectively through a range of comprehensive and informative documentation, such as the parents' information booklets. This keeps parents suitably well informed about the day-to-day work and life of the setting.



There are thorough processes in place to identify the training needs of practitioners. Leaders respond to these effectively, and provide practitioners with a good range of beneficial external and internal training opportunities across a wide range of relevant areas. These provide suitable opportunities for staff to share and develop their practice through staff meetings and informal observations of other practitioners. However, the setting does not currently include formal observations on the performance of staff, by leaders in their appraisal cycle.

The setting implements the Foundation Phase philosophy successfully. It actively involves practitioners in the local authority's Healthy Pre-School initiatives, which improve the provision for encouraging children's healthy lifestyles. The setting is beginning to adapt their planning to ensure a stronger focus on children's literacy and numeracy skills.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The leader and other practitioners know the setting well. They have a thorough understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve. They make good use of a comprehensive range of evidence to identify achievements and priorities for improvement within their strategic plan. Examples in the plan include detailed analysis of feedback from parents and external assessments, which the setting acts on to set meaningful targets for improvement. These targets link closely to self-evaluation and focus well on improving provision. However, targets identified do not always focus sharply enough on how actions taken will impact on improving outcomes for children.

All practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement. They attend a wide range of training events and feedback to all staff. This improves their practice and provision within the setting as a whole. An example includes the healthy pre-school initiative, which develops the setting's health and wellbeing practice very well. Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond to support from the local authority advisory staff positively.

The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection, in particular developing children's Welsh language skills. This has impacted positively on children's standards.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has strong and worthwhile partnerships with parents. Practitioners keep them well informed about what their children are learning, through the noticeboard, regular information about topics, and through daily informal contact. Comprehensive booklets and newsletters provide parents with a wide range of useful information about the setting's policies and procedures. The setting seeks the views of parents through annual questionnaires, via a comments box and through opportunities for parents to visit the setting and discuss their child's progress.

Most of the children in the setting do not come from the local community, so the setting provides detailed reports for local schools when children are ready to transfer there. When appropriate, for example when children have additional needs, the

setting makes beneficial arrangements to transfer relevant information. This ensures the smooth transition of children to the next stage of their education. Practitioners make effective use of the support from the local authority and other external sources to seek advice, to access training and to develop learning opportunities for the children. Examples include training to ensure that all staff have relevant high level qualifications to develop leadership in the setting, and regular attendance of staff at the local early years networking meetings to share good practice and learning opportunities with other settings.

Community partnerships, such as with the university campus, provide all children with a range of beneficial learning opportunities. An example is the effective use the setting makes of the campus forest area to support children's learning about the world around them. Builders working on the site visit the setting to talk about their work and the dangers of a building site. This promotes children's awareness of the world of work well.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning well. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified staff. They deploy practitioners' effectively to make the best use of their experience and expertise.

Appropriate arrangements for staff appraisal are in place. All practitioners share ideas and make worthwhile use of training to develop and improve their practice and to improve learning experiences for children. Examples include extensive training on healthy living and the development of the Welsh skills of all practitioners in the setting. This enhances the setting's provision for promoting children's health and wellbeing and has resulted in improvement in children's Welsh language skills.

Leaders have effective processes for keeping spending under review and allocate resources in line with identified priorities and areas for development. They purchase good quality resources, regularly review, and question whether they are cost-effective.

The setting successfully provides activities that encourage children to learn actively and make good progress. As a result, the setting offers good 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 inspection team

Mrs Janet Elizabeth Rowlands	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Thorne	Team Inspector

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.