



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

A report on

**Borthyn Bunnies
Borthyn School
Borthyn Road
Ruthin
LL15 1NT**

Date of inspection: February 2018

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Context

Borthyn Bunnies Playgroup meets in Ysgol Y Borthyn in Ruthin, Denbighshire. The setting is open term time only, for 39 weeks of the year. It offers early education sessions from 1.15pm to 3.15pm each day and an additional wrap-around care service from 11.30am until 5.30pm.

The setting's registration allows it to care for up to 20 children at any one time. At the time of the inspection, the local authority funds a very few children to receive early education. The setting has a very few children that it identifies as having additional learning needs.

Nearly all children are of white British origin. No child comes from a home where Welsh is the first language and a very few children speak English as an additional language.

There are two full-time staff at the setting. This includes the setting leader who took up post in 2017. In addition, there is one part-time member of staff.

Estyn last inspected the setting in November 2010. The setting received an inspection from the Care Inspectorate Wales in 2015.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Practitioners provide children with a wide range of interesting learning activities
- Adults consider carefully ways to help children learn through enjoyable and exciting activities
- Practitioners give children beneficial opportunities to be involved in forming the curriculum
- All practitioners make effective use of Welsh throughout the day
- Practitioners have an effective understanding of the ethos of the foundation phase and of children's learning through play
- Adults record important milestones in children's learning and use this information suitably to build a profile that shows what children know and can do in the setting
- The setting has effective arrangements to support children's understanding of how to be healthy and to encourage them to take physical exercise
- Practitioners liaise effectively with support agencies, such as speech and language services, when required and implement their advice well

However:

- Planning processes do not ensure that the skills that children develop build systematically and progressively as they move through the setting
- Practitioners do not consider well enough opportunities for all children to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- When planning learning, practitioners do not yet consider carefully enough the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy framework
- Assessments of children's knowledge and skills are not accurate enough and not used well enough

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The setting's leader works effectively to develop a vibrant learning environment for all children
- Leaders ensure that the setting runs well on a day-to-day basis, and place the wellbeing of children at the heart of its work
- The management committee is supportive of the setting's work

- The setting has suitable procedures for evaluating its provision and children's standards
- Leaders take good account of the views of parents and carers and consider their ideas and opinions well
- The setting uses a beneficial range of partnerships to support its provision and contribute to children's standards and wellbeing
- The setting's leader and management committee use available funds well to support the developmental aims of the setting

However:

- Leaders do not yet focus well enough on the important national priorities, such as using national frameworks for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills
- Systems for staff appraisal do not identify staff development and training needs well enough
- The management committee does not consistently identify and address important elements of the setting's work that need improvement
- The setting does not use self-evaluation well enough when deciding on priorities for improvement
- A lack of training means that leadership roles are underdeveloped

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that planning builds children's skills systematically, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Ensure that assessments are accurate and used well to track children's progress and plan future learning
- R3 Ensure that leaders and the management committee fulfil their strategic roles effectively
- R4 Use the outcomes of robust self-evaluation to develop and implement effective improvement plans

What happens next?

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

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?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

Practitioners provide children with a wide range of interesting learning activities. They consider carefully ways to help children learn through enjoyable and exciting activities. For example, they developed an indoor sensory walk where children stepped through different materials, such as cotton wool, ice and jelly. This helped to develop well children's understanding of a wide range of challenging concepts. Practitioners give children beneficial opportunities to be involved in forming the curriculum. Children's input at the start of topics and 'free-choice-Fridays' helps to ensure that the curriculum engages them successfully. The curriculum provides an appropriate balance and suitable opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the foundation phase areas of learning. However, planning processes do not ensure that the skills that children develop build systematically and progressively as they move through the setting.

Within the setting, children have suitable opportunities to develop their communication skills in practical contexts. For example, children develop useful mark-making skills when copying symbols and numbers into trays of glitter. Practitioners ensure that children have appropriate chances to further their numeracy skills, for example when sorting dragons by length. However, practitioners do not consider well enough opportunities for all children to develop their ICT skills. As a result, children do not practise and develop these skills across a wide enough range of activities. When planning learning, practitioners do not yet consider carefully enough the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy framework. They do not ensure that learning activities contribute well enough to developing these important skills.

All practitioners make effective use of Welsh throughout the day. They ensure that children have a wide range of opportunities to hear them speak the language. For example, when practising shapes and colours, adults ensure that they give the names in both English and Welsh. Practitioners use Welsh with children consistently at less formal times, for example at snack times. As a result, many children use a growing Welsh vocabulary in the setting confidently. Children have an effective range of opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions, such as through visits to the locality and the celebration of events such as St David's Day. For example, the children's homemade love spoons crafted for St Dwynwen's Day reflect a long-standing Welsh tradition.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners plan and deliver a good range of interesting learning experiences for children. They have an effective understanding of the ethos of the foundation phase and of children's learning through play. Practitioners engage with children enthusiastically and encourage them to participate in the learning activities on offer. For example, they join in when children are pretending that someone is injured and model a phone call to the ambulance service. They guide children well, questioning them while they take part in adult-led activities, for example asking pupils to describe what shapes they can identify when looking at a picture of a dragon. Practitioners encourage children to use simple Welsh throughout the setting and this helps children to develop a useful understanding of the language. However, on a few occasions, they do not intervene purposefully enough in children's independent play in order to develop their learning.

Practitioners record important milestones in children's learning throughout the day. They use this information appropriately to build a profile that shows what children know and can do in the setting. However, they do not use the information they hold well enough to plan learning at the right level for all children. They record children's skills on entry to the setting suitably. This allows them to note a baseline from which to track children's progress. However, the baseline assessments are not accurate enough and do not give a true reflection of pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, practitioners are not able to measure children's progress well enough.

Practitioners keep parents and carers informed of their children's progress regularly. They discuss the day's events with parents frequently and use a range of social media effectively to keep parents up-to-date. At the end of the children's time at the setting, they pass on the children's annotated record book. This gives parents a wide range of useful information about what their child has done and the skills and understanding the children have displayed.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective arrangements to support children's understanding of how to be healthy and to encourage them to take physical exercise. Practitioners ensure that children have only healthy snacks and drinks, such as cucumber, raisins and water. Children brush their teeth efficiently and wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before snack. As a result, many children understand the importance of these activities.

Practitioners ensure that they promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. They incorporate these principles into children's learning well. For example, children have daily opportunities to consider whom they would like to think about in prayer and reflection time. When deciding on a new uniform for staff, adults taught children about voting and allowed them to choose the uniform in a ballot. Practitioners praise children's actions appropriately and help them to understand the importance of good behaviour. For example, they discuss the importance of sharing toys and games, and of helping others at snack time. As a result, children are happy in the setting and their behaviour is consistently good.

The setting has effective arrangements for identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. Practitioners understand well their responsibilities and liaise effectively with support agencies, such as speech and language services when required. Practitioners implement the advice of specialists well, for example drawing up play plans for children who need support and ensuring that they implement them consistently. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has an inclusive ethos and practitioners ensure that all children have equal access to the foundation phase curriculum. They consider individual children's needs well. Adults place a worthwhile, appropriate emphasis on promoting and respecting others cultures and beliefs, for example through celebrations of holidays in other countries, such as Australia Day.

The setting has good quality resources that practitioners use well to support children's learning. They use the indoor and outdoor areas considerately and create an atmosphere in which children are happy to play and learn. For example, their effective use of the school's large outdoor play area gives children beneficial opportunities to play energetically and to use equipment, such as tricycles. Throughout the setting, practitioners display children's work well to celebrate success and enhance the learning environment.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The setting's leader has been in place for less than one year. In that time, she has worked effectively to develop an enthusiastic team and a vibrant learning environment for all children. She ensures that the setting runs well on a day-to-day basis and places the wellbeing of children at the heart of its work. She works diligently to implement processes to improve the setting's provision. For example, she has begun to develop and implement suitable systems to appraise and support staff. However, these new systems do not identify staff development and training needs well enough. They do not identify targets for improvement that support the delivery of strategic aims. As a result, they do not yet have a notable impact on the setting.

The setting's leader focuses well on providing children with engaging learning experiences. For example, she uses new planning procedures to ensure that children have effective opportunities to learn both indoors and out. However, leaders do not focus well enough on the important national priority of using national frameworks for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The management committee is supportive of the setting's work. Key members of the committee understand the setting's priorities for improvement. In recent months, their role had become more effective and they are beginning to identify ways in which they can challenge and support the setting appropriately. However, in the recent past, they did not oversee the setting robustly enough. As a result, they did not recognise or address important elements of the setting's work that were not taking place consistently, such as the implementation of setting development plans.

Improving quality: Adequate

The setting has suitable procedures for evaluating its provision and children's standards. Leaders take good account of the views of parents and carers and consider their ideas and opinions well. For example, parents' requests for more information about their children's activities led to useful procedures, such as posting a collage of photos of weekly activities on the notice board. The setting's self-evaluation report sets out clearly the standards that many children reach. It identifies suitably a few areas for improvement. For example, it recognises the need to improve provision for ICT. However, the setting does not use this report well enough when deciding on priorities for improvement. As a result, leaders do not address important shortcomings robustly enough.

In recent years, the setting has not had a clear development plan. However, the new leader has made a range of effective changes to the setting since her recent appointment. The development of the outdoors and improved opportunities for children to engage in independent learning have led to a vibrant learning

environment. The current plan identifies improvement priorities clearly. However, it is too early to measure the impact of changes on outcomes for children.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships to support its provision and contribute to improving children's standards and wellbeing.

Practitioners have a positive partnership with parents. They ensure that they inform parents well about all aspects of the setting's work. For example, they use social media constructively to make parents aware of useful information and share photographs of daily activities well through the setting's notice board. Parents appreciate this information and are confident to approach practitioners with any questions that they may have.

The setting has strong links with the local primary school in which it is situated. Practitioners use this link well to support children's learning. For example, they use the school's hall to enable them to practice Chinese fan dancing with the children. Adults have positive relationships with the school's staff. The weekly support of the foundation phase teacher helps practitioners to develop interesting and engaging learning experiences for children.

The setting is beginning to develop stronger partnerships with advisory staff from the local authority and with relevant voluntary organisations to broaden practitioners' understanding of effective practice. However, to date these relationships have not contributed strongly to the work of the setting.

Practitioners use links with the local community well to support children's learning. For example, links with local shops ensure that children have useful opportunities to gain real-life experiences, such as shopping for bread, fruits and vegetables.

Resource management: Adequate

All practitioners have appropriate qualifications to teach and care for the children at the setting. They have attended a few relevant training opportunities that develop their skills and knowledge suitably. However, there has been little training to support the development of leadership. While the current leader is diligent and enthusiastic and works effectively with children, the lack of leadership training means that this element of her role is at an early stage of development.

The setting has a broad range of learning resources that practitioners use effectively to support all children's learning. The setting's leader and management committee use available funds well to support the developmental aims of the setting, such as improving outdoor play provision.

Due to the shortcomings in provision and leadership, the setting offers adequate value for money.

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
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
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 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