



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

A report on

**Cwmffrwdoer Under Fives
The Ebenezer Centre
Hanbury Road
Pontnewynydd
NP4 6QN**

Date of inspection: October 2017

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

Cwmffrwdoer Under Fives is in Pontnewynydd on the outskirts of Pontypool in Torfaen local authority. The setting is registered to take up to 40 children from birth to 12 years old. At the time of the inspection, there were 15 children on roll, including 13 children who receive funded education provision from the local authority. All the pre-school children speak English as their home language. There are no children in the setting with additional learning needs.

The setting is one of six groups in the local area overseen by a manager and deputy manager. The manager has been in post since 1992. The setting is run by a voluntary committee. There are three members of staff in the setting, all of whom are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in February 2012 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in January 2015.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children make good progress from their different starting points
- Most children develop their communication and numeracy skills well
- Many children develop good physical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Nearly all children are eager to learn and settle to activities quickly
- Children enjoy the activities and concentrate well
- Practitioners work well together and manage children's behaviour effectively
- Practitioners plan worthwhile learning experiences that ensure children enjoy their time at the setting
- There are beneficial opportunities for children to make decisions and initiate their own play
- There is a happy, warm and caring ethos in the setting

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting's management team has a strong and clear vision for the setting
- Managers work together effectively and share responsibilities well
- Managers have high expectations of practitioners and convey this effectively
- There are effective performance management procedures in place that include all staff
- The management team knows the setting well and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement
- The setting's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are well established and effective
- There are strong links with a range of strategic partners that support the setting's work well
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children in their learning

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision to develop children's use of everyday Welsh
- R2 Plan regular adult directed activities to ensure children learn new skills and knowledge effectively
- R3 Extend the use of questioning to develop children's thinking skills purposefully

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?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children make effective progress from their different starting points and develop a good range of independent skills across the curriculum. They acquire new knowledge readily and recall previous learning well. For example, the children talk enthusiastically about what owls eat, following a recent visit to the setting. They enjoy exploring their surroundings and actively engage in new experiences.

Most children develop good literacy and communication skills. They listen attentively and talk confidently about the things that interest them, such as autumn leaves. Most children join in with familiar songs and rhymes happily and respond to questions and instructions appropriately. They listen well to stories and show their interest and understanding through comments and questions. Most children recognise their names as they self-register. Many children make marks competently, such as using paintbrushes and water to form marks on chalk boards.

Most children are developing number skills well. They count to ten accurately in everyday routines, such as finding out how many children are at playgroup. They demonstrate an awareness of numbers around them and readily count during their play, such as counting play figures as they put them on blocks. Many children use appropriate mathematical language to identify different sized blocks and paintbrushes.

Many children are skilful in using a range of ICT equipment. They use a digital camera independently and add different visual effects confidently. They use mini metal detectors to locate objects in the sand successfully.

Most children are developing good physical skills. They ride bikes competently and use tools with control and accuracy, such as when cutting vegetables.

Many children are beginning to develop good problem-solving skills. For example, they select suitable resources when working out how best to make car parking spaces.

Children are beginning to respond appropriately to simple Welsh words and phrases and greetings used by the practitioners. Many count to ten and greet one another, with support. They are beginning to join in with simple rhymes and songs. However, in general, their Welsh language skills are at an early stage of development.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy and relaxed in the setting. They are eager to learn and settle to activities quickly. They persevere for reasonable periods of time when playing, for example when clipping pegs onto the edges of tubs. They make choices about what they want to do, such as selecting materials to make a leaf man. They play well together, take turns happily and share equipment appropriately. Levels of engagement in activities is high and children are happy to sit on a mat and listen carefully to practitioners and one another.

Most children demonstrate good levels of behaviour and are polite and courteous to one another and adults in the setting. Most children develop good self-help skills, such as putting their coats on and off, washing their hands and pouring their own drinks.

Many children talk confidently about their likes and dislikes and are developing their role in making decisions in the setting well. For example, they contribute ideas for what they want to learn at the beginning of topics and place happy and sad faces in different parts of the setting to show if they enjoy playing there.

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

Practitioners plan worthwhile experiences that ensure that children enjoy their learning. Activities are engaging for children and build steadily on what they know, can do and understand. There are beneficial opportunities for children to make decisions and initiate their own play.

Practitioners provide children with good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of learning. There are useful opportunities for them to recognise their names and to experiment with mark making. Practitioners encourage children to look at books regularly in a designated and comfortable book area. Relevant books are available across the setting, such as factual books about autumn next to a display of leaves and conkers. Practitioners promote children's speaking and listening skills well through daily routines and in their play.

The setting provides many opportunities for children to count, for example counting scoops of flour and salt to make dough and parking bikes in the correct numbered bays. Practitioners encourage children to use mathematical language in their play regularly, through talking about big and small paintbrushes and selecting heavy and light blocks. They develop children's ICT skills appropriately, for example through providing a digital camera, mini metal detectors and recordable talking spots for them to use. There are planned opportunities for children to develop physical skills through regular participation in moving to music sessions and using bikes and large scale mark making activities in the outdoors.

Practitioners are beginning to introduce children to a suitable range of Welsh words, phrases and rhymes. The setting has recently identified a Welsh champion to co-ordinate provision and planning. However, this is at an early stage of development and consequently practitioners do not plan enough opportunities to promote the language during daily routines and when children are playing.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about living in Wales and Welsh culture. For example, children learn about the history of their local area meaningfully when they handle artefacts and visit a local coal mine.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners understand the ethos of the foundation phase well and provide rich opportunities for children to learn through first hand experiences. They choose topics relevant to young children, such as investigating the natural world around them, and include children's ideas in their plans. Practitioners identify and record children's interests daily and respond quickly to these. For example, after observing a child showing great interest in tills and money, practitioners added real coins to play tills and planned a visit to local shops to help children learn about shopping and handling money. However, opportunities for children to learn new skills and knowledge directly from adults are not yet fully developed in the setting's current planning system.

As a new team, practitioners work well together and manage children's behaviour effectively. They meet together daily to evaluate how well children are learning and regularly change their plans to suit the children's needs and interests. Practitioners use appropriate and varied teaching strategies confidently to support children as they learn through play. They are beginning to extend the types of questions they ask children, to promote their thinking skills more readily. However, this is at an early stage of development.

Practitioners gather information systematically to understand what children can do when they start at the setting. They observe and monitor children's progress carefully and use a colour coded system well to make sure that they develop their skills successfully over time. There are effective arrangements to record and measure children's progress at the setting. For example, practitioners use the foundation phase profile appropriately to keep track of how well children are developing.

Practitioners provide parents and carers with useful information about their children's progress through formal and informal consultations and an informative end of year report.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. Practitioners help children to understand why exercise is good for them. They promote children's physical fitness effectively. There are worthwhile opportunities to use bikes and participate in lively movement sessions, where children dance and move around to a range of music. The setting provides children with healthy snacks and drinks and teaches them to wash their hands before eating. Children have beneficial opportunities to learn to share with others and co-operate with one another, such as when deciding how to organise ingredients for cooking a pasta bake in the outdoors.

There are regular and purposeful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability through turning off lights, keeping doors closed in winter and using water sparingly. Practitioners promote good behaviour consistently and children have a clear understanding of the setting's rules.

There is a good emphasis on children's spiritual, moral, social and spiritual development. The setting develops children's sense of awe and wonder well by encouraging them to observe bugs in the garden and arranging for living creatures to visit. For example, children were excited to see owls in the setting recently and learn about their flying and eating habits.

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

There are suitable processes and procedures in place to support children with additional learning needs. For example, managers have recently appointed a speech champion to support children with communication difficulties. The setting accesses professional help and support for children and their families as necessary, and practitioners use the information effectively to support the specific needs of children and families well.

Learning environment: Good

There is a happy, caring and inclusive ethos in the setting and all children are treated fairly and equally. Practitioners greet them warmly on arrival and make sure that parents feel welcome to discuss issues and concerns. This supports children's wellbeing effectively. Practitioners develop positive working relationships with children, which ensures they feel valued. Practitioners know the children well and listen to their views and ideas carefully. They treat all children fairly and provide equal access to activities. There are worthwhile opportunities to help children develop tolerant attitudes and begin to gain a suitable understanding of other cultures such as when they celebrate festivals such as Holi and Diwali.

The setting provides good quality resources that support the requirements of the foundation phase well. These are within easy reach for the children, which allows them to make purposeful choices and work independently.

The accommodation is secure and well maintained. The indoor area is bright and welcoming and displays are attractive and reflect recent learning. This helps to create an interesting and stimulating environment for the children.

The outdoor garden is used effectively, with a good range of apparatus to provide large scale activities such as water pipes and funnels and an outdoor kitchen for messy activities. The setting uses the local area well to take children on nature walks and visits to the park. These activities contribute to children's understanding of seasonal change effectively.

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

Managers have a strong and clear vision for the setting, which is shared successfully with staff and parents. There is a strong focus on providing a learning environment that is safe and stimulating where children are happy and well supported in their learning and development.

Managers work together effectively and share responsibilities well, providing a happy and exciting environment where children learn and grow. They have high expectations of practitioners and convey this effectively. Managers and practitioners communicate regularly regarding the needs and interests of individual children and work closely to ensure these are met successfully. Through regular staff meetings, managers keep practitioners well informed. For example, they make sure that practitioners know how they need to adapt the provision to respond to children's needs effectively.

There are effective performance management procedures in place that include all practitioners. Through annual appraisal meetings and reviews, managers identify personal training needs and agree targets with practitioners to help improve their practice. They provide valuable support through regular and less formal supervision meetings. This gives practitioners worthwhile opportunities to discuss any concerns and helps them progress towards meeting their appraisal targets.

The setting pays good attention to local and national initiatives and responds enthusiastically to opportunities to develop and improve provision. For example, following advice from the advisory teacher, the setting has improved opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoor garden area.

Improving quality: Good

The management team knows the setting well and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Processes for self-evaluation are embedded in the setting's work. Practitioners work together effectively to identify strengths and areas for development regularly and plan how to move forward effectively. For example, they have improved opportunities for children to learn to recognise numbers in the outdoors by providing useful number lines and a digital thermometer. Managers consult practitioners, parents and children appropriately to help them develop an accurate picture of the setting.

The current self-evaluation document identifies strengths and areas for development effectively. Managers make good use of information gathered from monitoring and self-evaluation to produce useful improvement plans. They promote national priorities appropriately, such as outdoor learning and developing children's Welsh language skills. They ensure priorities for improvement link effectively to available funds and monitor progress regularly.

The current improvement plan is a comprehensive document. It identifies a broad range of suitable priorities that focus well on improving outcomes for children. Practitioners update and evaluate the improvement plan regularly. The setting has made appropriate progress towards meeting the current targets and there is a positive impact on practice and outcomes for children. For example, practitioners now record the impact of training on provision in the setting more clearly helping them to apply new ideas and strategies more effectively.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has good links with a worthwhile range of partners which support the children and practitioners well. Managers provide parents with useful information about their children's progress through informal verbal reports at the setting door and, more recently, through displays of photographs in the setting. This builds a constructive relationship with parents which helps children to settle and make good progress. The setting has effective links with the local primary school to support children's transition to the next stage of their education. There are valuable partnerships with the local community. For example, officers from the emergency services visit the setting, helping develop children's understanding of people who help us effectively.

Practitioners benefit from advice and guidance from the local authority advisory teacher in developing and improving the learning environment. They attend regular meetings and training that provide them with useful opportunities to share ideas and concerns with other practitioners. Within the group of settings, team leaders meet regularly to share good practice and to ensure that each setting has sufficient resources to meet children's needs.

Resource management: Good

The setting uses its resources well to support children. Managers deploy practitioners purposefully and move them between the groups to make most effective use of their strengths and expertise. For example, a practitioner skilled in developing children's language and communication has recently taken responsibility for addressing this area of development.

Practitioners benefit greatly from attending a range of training provided by the local authority. This improves their understanding of how to meet children's needs and develop their skills effectively. For example, following recent training, practitioners have provided a quiet area inside to allow children the opportunity to spend time in a calm and reflective space. This contributes positively to children's wellbeing and good behaviour.

Managers make sure that the setting has plenty of high quality resources that support the delivery of the foundation phase well. Together with the practitioner, they monitor and evaluate how well resources meet children's learning needs effectively.

Managers have a good understanding of the budget and spending decisions are in line with targets in the setting's improvement plan. The setting has made effective use of the early years pupil development grant to improve children's communication skills.

In view of the positive outcomes for children and the quality of provision, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

The reporting inspector

Debbie Collins	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.wales)

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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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