



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

A report on

**Little Learning Tree, Llandinam
Llandinam CP School
Llandinam
Powys
SY17 5BY**

Date of inspection: September 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

Little Learning Tree is an English medium setting providing nursery education for the children from the communities of Llandinam, Trefeglwys, Caersws and Llanidloes. It is based in Llandinam County Primary School.

At the time of the inspection, the setting had appointed a new interim setting leader. The setting is registered to admit 16 children from the age of three. The setting leader and the assistant practitioner run sessions in the mornings from Monday to Friday during term time. The headteacher of the local school is the responsible individual for the setting and the school's governing body act as the setting's management committee.

All children come from homes where English is the main language. No child has Welsh as a first language. Currently, the setting identifies no children as having additional learning needs.

The nursery is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) who last inspected it in November 2016. Estyn last inspected the nursery in 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The settings current performance is good because:

- Many children make effective progress in their time at the setting
- A majority of children talk confidently to one another and adults in the setting
- Many children's number skills develop well
- Nearly all children have positive attitudes to learning
- Nearly all children respond to adults' instructions well during learning activities
- All practitioners interact enthusiastically with the children, have strong relationships with them and manage their behaviour well
- Practitioners create an effective learning environment for the children
- The setting is a happy and welcoming place, which places a high priority on children's wellbeing
- The setting has established an inclusive ethos that promotes equality for all effectively

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The responsible individual has a strong vision to provide good quality early years education
- The new leader shares the vision and together they communicate this well
- All staff work together effectively as a team and understand their roles and responsibilities well
- Processes to evaluate the setting's performance are effective
- The improvement plan is a useful document that focuses practitioners on the areas that they need to improve
- The setting benefits from strong partnerships that have a positive impact on children's wellbeing
- There are appropriate arrangements to manage the setting's finances and resources

Recommendations

- R Ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging for all learners
- R2 Use assessment information effectively to feed into planning

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

Standards: Good

Many children make good progress from their differing starting points. Many speak clearly and are happy to speak to adults in the setting. Most children explore their surroundings and try out new experiences enthusiastically.

Many children listen and respond appropriately for their age and stage. Many listen to and follow instructions well, for example when getting ready for snack time. A majority of children recall prior learning well. For example, they recall the animals that they saw on a trip to the farm, during small world play.

Most children show an interest in books. They recall parts of favourite stories well. They look at books independently and with adults, pointing out pictures they like.

All children are beginning to realise some of the purposes of writing. For example during the daily task of self-registration, children mark enthusiastically against their photograph and name on a whiteboard. A few more able children are able to write the first letter of their own name. However, there are few opportunities to extend more able learners.

Many children develop effective early number skills. Many recognise numbers in their play. For example, when digging for numbers in the sand tray a few children recognised numbers to 4. Many children use mathematical language well, for example when describing the size of toy trucks and diggers in the outdoor environment.

Many children are able to use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment well. Many are confident using technology in their play such as using calculators, mobile phones and an electronic till in the shop role-play area. A few children are beginning to use screen controls to turn electronic devices on and off effectively.

Many children develop their physical skills well. For example, many children are able to handle playdough cutting tools effectively. Most children enthusiastically ride bikes during outdoor play sessions. Many are able to use the pedals independently.

Most children are developing an effective understanding of the Welsh language. Many children understand and respond well to basic instructions given by practitioners. A few children use vocabulary associated with colours and numbers during their independent play. Most children respond well during snack time to songs and games. However, very few children respond using simple phrases.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children have effective relationships with the adults in the setting. They enter the setting happily and confidently and most are happy to talk to practitioners. Many show good care and consideration for others. For example, they take turns when using the bikes outside.

Many children focus well on tasks for appropriate periods, such as copying sequences of coloured bears during a mathematical development activity. Most children behave well. They co-operate with one another during tasks. Many children contribute to ideas about what and how they would like to learn and consequently many show enthusiasm for learning. Most children show a good awareness of the need for washing hands before snack time and understand the need for good personal hygiene habits.

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

The setting provides children with a worthwhile range of learning experiences across all the foundation phase areas of learning. Practitioners add to these effectively by sharing resources with the primary school, for example using the outdoor play area and canteen building for snack time. The setting provides useful opportunities for children to learn outdoors, for example growing vegetables in the garden area and a visit to a local farm. As a result, nearly all children are developing a curiosity and awareness of nature and the environment well.

There is an effective mix of adult-led and child-led activities in line with good foundation phase practice. Practitioners encourage children to contribute ideas and suggestions for learning activities. This approach enables practitioners to respond to the changing interests of young children successfully.

Practitioners plan, with support from the local primary school's foundation phase teacher, to ensure that they cover all areas of learning suitably. They plan a suitable range of independent and focused learning activities. However, tasks are not always challenging enough to ensure that all children make good progress.

Practitioners ensure that there are good opportunities for children to use mark-making resources both indoors and outdoors, such as paint and chalk. Practitioners provide stimulating reading materials in all areas of learning. The provision for the development of children's numeracy skills is embedded well in the setting's routines, such as counting out plates and cups at snack time and counting the number of children present during welcome time.

There are good opportunities to develop children's ICT skills using a range of resources.

There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. For example, children make compost from left over fruit and vegetables.

Practitioners provide a good range of opportunities for children to hear the Welsh language, such as Welsh greetings, songs, rhymes and counting activities. However, the setting does not always have high enough expectations of children's learning in Welsh. Children have good opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions, for example when celebrating St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of the requirements of the foundation phase. They are good language role models and manage the behaviour of the children very well. They intervene appropriately and sensitively when necessary and use encouraging feedback and positive praise well. This helps children to experiment and persevere for age appropriate lengths of time and develops their willingness to share and take turns well. Practitioners use questioning effectively to get children to think about what they are doing, but they do not always use it to challenge all learners well enough or to extend their learning.

The setting is developing good procedures for observing and assessing children. Practitioners are beginning to use assessment to plan future learning opportunities effectively. This work is at an early stage of development.

The setting keeps parents well informed about their child's progress through regular informal discussions at the beginning and end of sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a happy and welcoming place, which places a high priority on children's wellbeing. Practitioners treat all children fairly and value their opinions. Established routines encourage children to eat and drink healthily and outdoor learning sessions provide the children with daily physical exercise. For example, there is daily access to a range of physical activities, such as bikes and a climbing wall. This encourages children to use equipment confidently and promotes children's understanding of sharing and working co-operatively successfully. The sharing snack box encourages children to bring in a healthy food to share with other children at snack time. This promotes the children's understanding of a need for a healthy diet.

A range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Through events such as 'Out of this World Day', the children tasted a range of tropical fruits at snack time. This encourages children to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.

At present, there are no children formally identified as having additional learning needs in the setting. Through the strong partnership with the school, suitable procedures and arrangements are in place to support children should the need arise.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting has established an inclusive ethos that promotes equality for all effectively.

High quality resources effectively support children's learning in all areas of the curriculum both indoors and out and are well matched to children's age and stage of development. Accommodation is secure and well maintained.

The setting has sufficient qualified practitioners to meet the needs of the foundation phase. Both the indoor and outdoor areas have stimulating learning resources in which children are happy to learn and play.

An appropriate range of children's work, photographs and displays enhance the learning environment. There are clearly defined areas of learning and this enables children to access resources easily and fosters independence well.

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

The interim setting leader has settled quickly into her role. Practitioners work together well as a team. They share roles and responsibilities effectively so that sessions run smoothly. The headteacher of the local school, who is also the responsible individual for the setting, has a thorough understanding of the setting's work. She offers good quality support and guidance for the setting leader. This provides continuity and gives the setting stability, allowing them to maintain and build on the progress made with developments such as improving children's opportunities to learn ICT skills. There is a formal and supportive performance management process in place.

The responsible individual has a strong vision to provide good quality early years education and to see the setting flourish on the school site. The new leader shares the vision and together they communicate this well. This leads to a strong sense of purpose and an effective focus on developing children's skills in a nurturing environment. Leaders have high expectations for children's behaviour and achievement and for practitioners' involvement in the setting's work. This builds a positive ethos where children and staff feel valued. Leaders establish useful links with parents and carers quickly, contributing effectively to children's wellbeing.

Leaders keep the governing body well informed about the setting's progress. A designated governor visits the setting regularly to develop first-hand knowledge of the setting's work. She has contributed helpfully to reviewing the setting's policies.

Improving quality: Good

With support from the local authority link teacher and the responsible individual, practitioners carry out a formal evaluation of the quality of their work and the standards children achieve each year. This helps them identify useful development priorities, which have led to regular improvements over time. These include improving standards in Welsh, extending the range of ICT resources and developing stronger links with the governing body. All practitioners are involved in the process and the responsible individual provides effective support including useful feedback from regular monitoring visits. The setting is sensitive to parents' opinions. However, it has only recently begun to consult them formally, using a questionnaire.

The setting identifies three priorities to work on each year and these are included in a useful setting improvement plan. The plan identifies appropriate targets, actions, resources and timescales to help practitioners make regular progress. Practitioners reflect on their progress in an annual evaluation that helps them build on improvements from year to year. However, the current improvement plan is not visible in the setting, to allow practitioners to refer to it regularly.

Practitioners reflect on their practice throughout the week, through informal discussions and evaluations of their planning. This leads to continuous improvements such as reviewing the resources in each learning area and improving communication with parents by sharing photographs appropriately on a closed social media site.

Partnership working: Good

The setting is outward looking with a strong welcoming ethos and benefits from a wide range of useful partnerships. The partnership with the local school is particularly strong and effective. The headteacher, in her role as responsible individual, and the governing body, provide stable strategic leadership that has enabled the setting to maintain the quality of its provision while staff changes take place. The interim leader receives helpful support with planning from the school's foundation phase teacher and children benefit from shared resources, including the use of the attractive outdoor area.

Parents and carers value the quality of the provision. They appreciate the welcoming ethos and opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. The setting shares information about children's progress informally at the setting door and has started to use social media to let parents see what their children are doing during the sessions. Parents receive a suitable welcome pack with useful information about the setting. However, this does not include sufficient information about the setting's policies.

The setting makes good use of partnerships with the local community to enrich children's learning experiences and support with fundraising. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed a recent visit to a local farm, bringing their topic to life. There are appropriate links with other agencies, enabling the setting to seek professional support for individual children as the need arises.

The setting benefits greatly from the advice and support of the local authority advisory teacher. This has helped establish good quality foundation phase practice in the setting.

Resource management: Good

The setting has enough suitably experienced staff to teach the curriculum effectively. Over time, practitioners have benefited from regular, good quality professional development provided by the local authority and from occasional visits to other settings. This has had a positive impact on children's standards and the quality of provision. For example, it has led to improved opportunities for children to develop their self-help skills at snack time by pouring their own drinks, and built practitioners' confidence in their ability to use simple Welsh phrases. Practitioners regularly reflect on their practice and identify training needs during annual appraisals. However, they are not involved in direct observation of teaching and learning to help improve their practice.

The setting benefits from a particularly good supply of interesting and attractive resources that support children's learning well, both indoors and outside. These include a new painting easel to allow children to experiment freely with paints, good quality bikes to practice their pedalling skills and interesting books to capture children's interest.

The responsible individual and the governing body take responsibility for overseeing the setting's finances appropriately. The setting makes the most of fundraising opportunities to help buy specific resources to support its priorities for improvement. However, the setting has not yet put in place a formal system for managing day-to-day expenses.

In view of the good standards, the high quality of the provision and the effective leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

The reporting inspector

Lisa Tomlinson	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.