



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

A report on

**Podlings Day Nursery
Brookvale
Wrexham Road
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 1HT**

Date of inspection: March 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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Context

Podlings Day Nursery is an English medium setting for three to four-year-olds in Mold in Flintshire. It is registered as part of a larger service which includes day care, wrap around care and holiday club provision. The setting provides education funded by the local authority during term time between January and July. It embraces a Montessori approach to early education and is registered to take up to 16 children per session in the pre-school room. At the time of the inspection there were three children funded by the local authority. The setting is open from 7.30am to 6.00pm. Funded sessions take place between 9am and 11.30am each day.

Nearly all children come from the local area. Currently, there are no children identified as having additional learning needs attending the setting. Very few children speak Welsh at home and no children speak English as an additional language. The present lead practitioner was appointed in March 2017 and is supported by one additional practitioner.

The setting was last inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales in May 2016. It was last inspected by Estyn in March 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Practitioners' caring approach creates a positive learning environment
- Almost all children have a positive attitude to learning and enjoy their time in the setting
- Almost all children co-operate successfully with each other and share toys and equipment readily
- Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice
- The quality of teaching is good
- Arrangements for care, support and guidance are comprehensive
- The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of its provision

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting's arrangements for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective and all practitioners are committed to improving quality
- The lead practitioner has developed a reflective approach, which supports improvement successfully
- Practitioners consult children and make worthwhile improvements in response to their views
- Practitioners benefit from useful training that has a positive impact on children's learning and development
- Practitioners work together effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities
- Partnerships with parents, feeder schools and supporting agencies are good

Recommendations

- R1 Develop the outdoor learning environment to enable children to explore, think creatively, solve problems and develop their physical skills consistently and successfully
- R2 Use assessments to plan the next steps in children's learning systematically and effectively
- R3 Improve practitioners' questioning skills to develop children's thinking and extend their learning

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?

n/a

Standards: n/a

There is no report and children's progress, standards in their skill's development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: n/a

There is no report and children's progress, standards in their skill's development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children 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

The setting embraces a Montessori approach to early education, which encourages children to be independent and lead their own learning suitably. There is a beneficial emphasis on learning through play and first-hand experiences that engage almost all children successfully.

Long term plans cover all areas of the foundation phase curriculum sufficiently. Short-term plans focus well on developing children's literacy, numeracy, Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Practitioners use children's interests as a starting point for planning effectively. For example, after hearing that a child's dog had puppies, practitioners planned a topic on pets. Practitioners are beginning to build on what individual children can do already. However, in general, planning to develop their skills progressively over time is underdeveloped.

Practitioners plan weekly learning experiences for the outdoor area and have made recent improvements to provision such as the mud kitchen. However, opportunities for children to play and learn in the outdoor area are inconsistent. When children do have access to the outdoors, the provision for developing thinking skills, creativity and problem solving is limited.

The setting uses visitors effectively to enhance the curriculum, including the local fire service, a story teller and a farmer with his sheep dog. Children have suitable opportunities to visit the local library and go on walks to the park. However, overall, practitioners do not plan enough visits in the local area.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to learn to care for living things. They support children to plan and look after a range of vegetables and flowers. There are meaningful opportunities for children to look after living creatures through caring for tadpoles and being gentle with farm animals who visit the setting.

The indoor environment provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills such as through using pegs, scissors and taking part in musical movement sessions. In the outdoor area, resources are not available, consistently resulting in limited opportunities for children to develop their pedalling, balancing throwing and catching skills.

There is good provision to develop numeracy skills. Almost all practitioners provide children with regular opportunities to match, count and recognise shapes and patterns. For example, children enjoy developing their mathematical skills when they create symmetrical butterfly patterns with paint. Resources available, such as weighing scales, clocks and shape puzzles, provide children with a wide range of experiences that develop mathematical concepts well.

Practitioners provide a good range of opportunities for children to develop their communication and literacy skills. They encourage children to join in with conversations and ask appropriate questions. Practitioners provide interesting books to support learning across the curriculum, such as a book about butterflies in the mini beast interest area. There are useful opportunities for children to mark make and develop their understanding of writing for different purposes. For example, practitioners support children to write a shopping list in the role-play area.

Provision for developing children's ICT skills is evident throughout the setting and supports children's learning in other areas well. There is an appropriate range of equipment available, including programmable toys, a digital camera, and a desk top computer, which children enjoy using.

Practitioners support children's Welsh language development successfully. They model Welsh through singing songs, reading stories, counting and using Welsh words and phrases throughout the session. They use Welsh to greet children on arrival and during other routines such as snack time. Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, they make love spoons and paper daffodils as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Teaching: Good

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice. They use a useful range of strategies to encourage and to motivate children to learn. As a result, children sustain interest in tasks and enjoy periods of uninterrupted learning. Practitioners' interactions with children are respectful and caring.

Almost all practitioners are good language role models for children and reinforce new vocabulary effectively, such as 'cocoon' and 'lifecycle'. They use questioning appropriately to support children's learning and help them make choices about what they would like to do next. However, they do not question children skilfully enough to extend their thinking and develop their problem-solving skills effectively.

Practitioners know the children well and manage their behaviour sensitively and effectively. They have clear expectations and explain rules to children appropriately. For example, they explain why we need to take turns playing on the computer. This ensures a team approach and consistency for the children.

Almost all practitioners support individual children's progress very well by encouraging them to recall the things they have learnt and make links to new learning. For example, after children share their knowledge about butterflies starting life as eggs, practitioners explain that frogs start life as eggs too.

The setting has useful procedures to observe children and assess their progress. Practitioners observe children and identify what they can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. They track children's progress appropriately using the foundation phase profile. Practitioners are beginning to identify children's next steps for learning suitably. However, in general, the setting does not use information from observations and assessments to feed into the weekly planning systematically.

Practitioners provide parents with useful information about the wellbeing and progress of their child through daily diaries and informal updates. As a result, parents feel very well informed about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. Practitioners provide nutritious food options through meal times and planned activities. As a result, children taste and learn about healthy foods such as pineapple. The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to take daily physical exercise through musical movement sessions.

Practitioners are good role-models and support children to develop respect for others and a sense of right and wrong successfully. They encourage children to share equipment and to look after resources effectively. As a result, children learn to share toys such as the floor puzzles without any fuss.

A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Almost all practitioners develop children's sense of awe and wonder effectively. For example, they encourage children to observe frogspawn turn into tadpoles over time. The setting provides worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about sustainability. For example, practitioners encourage children to recycle waste paper and re-use materials during craft activities.

The setting has an inclusive ethos and there are effective processes to support children with additional learning needs. These include appropriate links with a range of support agencies that help meet children's individual needs.

The arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and do not give cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is welcoming, and staff are friendly and approachable. It is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Practitioners lead by example in encouraging children to show tolerance towards one another and respect for the setting's equipment. As a result, all children play and learn happily.

The setting's accommodation is secure and well maintained. There are plenty of good quality resources across the areas of learning, which meet the needs of the children well. The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the foundation phase.

Practitioners take into account the diversity of children's backgrounds and celebrate the cultures represented within the setting meaningfully. For example, children enjoy looking at a colourful, traditional Mongolian coat brought into nursery by one of their friends.

The lead practitioner makes creative use of the space indoors which is attractive and welcoming. Resources and furniture are generally of good quality and appropriate. Practitioners have made recent improvements to the organisation of learning areas resulting in resources being easily accessible for children.

The accommodation is well maintained and secure.

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

The lead practitioner has a clear vision to develop children's independence and confidence to enhance their learning. She works effectively with setting staff to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children and manages practitioners and children well to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following established routines.

The lead practitioner has direct responsibility for the pre-school room. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and successful communication. Leaders ensure consistent improvements in standards and provision through regular informal discussions about children's progress and the effectiveness of provision. For example, a recent focus on developing children's Welsh skills has resulted in improved provision and better standards.

Leaders use appraisal systems successfully to communicate high standards and review the performance of all practitioners. Almost all staff have good opportunities to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. Targets for improvement link to the setting's improvement plan well. Practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities. However, job descriptions do not always record the specific responsibilities of different roles clearly enough.

The setting has an appropriate focus on national priorities, such as developing children's ICT, literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has effective systems to evaluate its performance and to set targets for improvement. Leaders take good account of the views of staff and parents and respond appropriately. They use information from any external reviews effectively to inform the self-evaluation process. Practitioners are committed to improving quality. They know what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve.

The improvement plan is a well-organised document that sets out appropriate actions, cost implications, timescales and responsibilities. The targets in the plan come directly from the self-evaluation process and form suitable priorities for the setting. However, there are too many areas for development, resulting in an inconsistent focus on a few important areas such as outdoor learning.

All staff are eager to take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact on the quality of the provision, for example by improving provision for language development.

The setting is particularly successful in involving children in self-evaluation. Practitioners make positive changes to the environment after asking children for their views about each area of provision. For example, mark making resources were re-organised to make them more accessible after a child suggested that they were hard to reach.

The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents are strong. Practitioners keep parents well informed about what their child is learning through newsletters and regular feedback at the end of sessions. A useful noticeboard inside the setting displays the focus for learning each week. This supports parents well and they appreciate knowing about the activities their children are involved in.

There are well-established arrangements for children's induction into the setting and smooth transition to the school. For example, the teacher from a feeder school visits the setting to meet the children and discuss their individual needs.

The setting has useful links with the local authority and receives regular advice and support from the advisory teacher. The setting makes effective use of links with the local community to enhance its curriculum. For example, children visit the local library regularly to exchange books loaned to the setting.

Resource management: Good

Leaders and managers make sure that the setting has enough well-qualified and well-trained practitioners to deliver the foundation phase curriculum. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. For example, there is a wide range of equipment to support imaginative play.

The setting ensures that staff access training based on needs identified through the appraisal process. Practitioners make good use of training to improve provision, for example by improving provision to develop children's language skills.

The manager uses funds appropriately to address priorities. For example, the setting recently purchased a digital camera to enhance provision for ICT. The manager monitors the setting's budget effectively and has suitable systems for keeping spending under review.

In view of the good teaching, the progress that children make and the quality of indoor provision, the setting provides good 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