



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

**St Davids Nursery Plus (Mold Playgroup)
St David's Catholic Primary School
St David's Lane
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 1LH**

Date of inspection: June 2014

by

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Reporting Inspector**

for

**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

St David's Nursery Plus and Playgroup is an English-medium setting in Mold, Flintshire. It operates from a purpose built building in the grounds of St. David's Catholic School. It is an independent provision run by a management committee. This is a sub-committee of the school's governing body.

The setting provides sessional day care and education for children aged between two and four years old. It is registered for 18 children and offers afternoon sessions on weekdays during school terms. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children on roll, including eight three-year-olds that are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The four year olds who attend playgroup sessions receive nursery education in the school during the morning.

Most children attending the setting have neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds and live in Mold or close by. All are English speaking and British born. None are from ethnic minorities. No families speak Welsh at home. None receive additional support for learning.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in January 2014 and Estyn in May 2008. The present playgroup staff was appointed in September 2012 and the provision for outdoor learning has been improved since that time.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- most children progress well and achieve good standards;
- attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good;
- a good range of imaginative learning experiences is provided;
- effective care, support and guidance assures children's wellbeing;
- teaching is good and promotes very good relationships;

and

- partnerships with parents, community and supporting agencies are effective.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the lead practitioners provide clear direction and manage the setting well;
- high expectations and a teamwork ethos are evident;
- a culture of self-improvement is well established ;
- planning for further improvement is well focused;
- the management committee is strongly supportive;

and

- there is a good track record of improvement, particularly over the last two years.

Recommendations

R1. raise achievement, especially for able children, in the full range of literacy and numeracy skills;

R2. refine learning intentions in planning and use assessment information effectively to help guide the next steps in learning;

R3. place greater emphasis on improvement strategies to help achieve the setting's key priorities.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children come to the setting with levels of achievement in line with their age and stage of development. Most make good progress from their starting points and achieve good standards overall. They become confident learners as they enthusiastically explore their surroundings and try out new experiences, but able children do not always achieve their best.

Most children have well developed speaking and listening skills. Many spontaneously begin simple conversations, for example during role-play in the shop. They make their needs known, ask sensible questions and express themselves clearly. A few use a wide vocabulary and confidently engage in extended conversations about their family and what they are doing. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. A few able children handle books appropriately as readers and show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story. Mark making skills steadily develop and a very few make simple writing patterns.

Progress in early mathematical skills is generally good. Numeracy skills develop well as children count as part of daily routines, sing rhymes and play number games. Many have a good grasp of counting objects to at least five and show increasing awareness of one-to-one correspondence, such as when counting pebbles. They are beginning to use appropriate mathematical terms. However, able children seldom use a sufficient range of mathematical language when sorting and comparing objects and investigating shape and capacity. Children's competence in using a narrow range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is at an early stage.

Competence in Welsh is developing. Many children respond appropriately to the words and phrases used within everyday routines. They readily recite familiar rhymes and songs, but the spontaneous use of Welsh is not established.

Wellbeing: Good

With few exceptions children become confident learners. They engage in activities with enthusiasm and confidently make choices as they move between tasks. Most are inquisitive, well motivated and keen to learn. They sustain interest and concentration well and persevere with tasks for appropriate periods of time.

Children have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Behaviour is very good and with few exceptions the children have positive attitudes. They increasingly show consideration and courtesy when sharing resources or taking turns, for example, when using the computer mouse. Nearly all children work and play well together. They develop high self-esteem and steadily gain in self-confidence.

Many children clearly express their preferences when asked about activities in the setting. All take turns to undertake simple responsibilities as Helpwer Heddiw and help with tidying resources at the end of sessions.

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

A good range of imaginative learning experiences is well planned and this successfully promotes progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Good account is taken of Foundation Phase principles in the organisation of learning. Planning is well structured, promotes progression and is in line with children's needs. The provision strongly promotes positive relationships and respect. All areas of learning are well represented through interesting and well-resourced activities.

Planning provides a good framework for long and short-term provision. Broad themes are carefully chosen, such as the current focus on holidays. These provide relevant contexts for children to develop their skills. Planning is detailed and guides the provision in areas of play appropriately. Practitioners are flexible in implementing this planning. There is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and these build appropriately on children's prior knowledge and skills. Adult led tasks are well defined and broad learning objectives identified. However, too few details of how tasks can be enhanced are recorded.

Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. For example, a good variety of role-play activities are used effectively to promote speaking and listening skills. Similarly, children's counting skills are developed well, such as when shopping and sorting pebbles. The focus on ICT skills is developing well. Good opportunities are planned to perform with a microphone, operate controllable toys and run simulation programs using the computer mouse.

The Foundation Phase framework is used well to check that the activities planned promote relevant skills and that all areas of learning are covered. This helps to ensure appropriate progression in learning, but although weekly planning records learning objectives, too few details of how and what the children might learn are recorded to help maximise progress, especially for able children.

The provision for Welsh language development and to promote awareness of the history and culture of Wales is good. Welsh is spoken incidentally within daily routines and activities are planned, such as to celebrate St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. Teaching skilfully manages and supports children's learning. Practitioners have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievement. They provide good role models in language; interact well with children and respond effectively to their needs.

Daily routines are well structured and effective indoor and outdoor activities are well supported. A good balance of child selected and adult led tasks is planned and implemented. Practitioners know well the tasks they are to lead or support and successfully promote high levels of engagement in a wide range of activities. They steadily develop their expertise in challenging children to extend their skills and achieve their best. However, their understanding of how to develop learning inline with children's ability is variable.

Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately. They are enthusiastic and often use questioning and praise well to promote learning. In particular, practitioners develop communication and social skills very well. Learning through play is effectively encouraged.

Procedures for assessment are well structured. Individual assessment booklets are regularly updated and provide an informative profile of progress. Practitioners routinely record children's achievements. Their observations are linked to planning and often identify clearly the skills developed. This information provides a good basis to plan next steps in learning, but on occasions levels of challenge vary, especially for able children.

Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress. Informal day-to-day contacts and formalised meetings promote well the exchange of information about children's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for health and wellbeing is effective. Arrangements to assure children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. Healthy eating is appropriately promoted through the choice of foods offered at snack time and children enjoy regular opportunities for energetic play. The strong emphasis placed on personal and social development successfully promotes very good behaviour and relationships.

The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Positive values such as fairness, honesty and respect for others are successfully promoted.

Children are strongly encouraged to develop a sense of curiosity about the natural world and they respond with a sense of awe and wonder, for example when picking strawberries. They are sensitively encouraged to quietly reflect on their experiences each day in the setting.

Children are positively encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong and they are given clear boundaries for behaviour. Social skills, such as taking turns, sharing resources and showing consideration for others are very well promoted.

The emphasis on cultural development is less well established. However, there is evidence of activities that provide opportunities to learn about different cultures, for example finding out about foods from other cultures.

Practitioners successfully promote awareness of acting sustainably, such as through recycling, composting, growing plants and Forest School activities.

The setting has appropriate procedures to provide children with specialist support when needed. The arrangements to support and integrate children who need extra help with their learning are clearly documented.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff have a valid criminal records disclosure. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. These arrangements give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has an inclusive ethos and promotes equality of opportunity well throughout its provision. Practitioners treat all children with respect. They are supportive, foster positive relationships and take good account of children's different backgrounds. This helps ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others and use positive strategies to manage behaviour. Equal opportunities are well promoted. Arrangements to ensure any future child with disabilities attending the setting does not suffer disadvantage are appropriately documented in the school's policy.

The setting has sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. There are enough resources for the Foundation Phase, but the range is narrow in aspects of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The accommodation provides a safe and secure learning environment. Displays, including examples of children's work significantly enhance the indoor environment and the resources available in areas of play are well organised and accessible. Progress in developing provision for outdoor learning is marked. Good use is made of the local environment and occasional visitors to enhance learning.

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

The setting has established clear strategic direction and the impact of leadership is effective. A strong teamwork ethos is evident. Practitioners understand well their roles and responsibilities. The two lead practitioners set high expectations and focus strongly on meeting children's learning needs.

The setting is skilfully led and managed. A strong sense of purpose and shared values are embedded in the life and work of the setting. An appropriate range of policies and procedures are in place. Leadership successfully sustains improvements in educational provision. Day-to-day routines are well structured and the organisation of the playgroup is effective.

The head teacher, exercises appropriate oversight of the setting and a management committee is strongly supportive. The committee is well informed and its role in

strategic planning is developing well. Procedures to manage practitioners, including appraisal, are appropriate, but the targets set lack sufficient rigour.

The setting takes forward local and national initiatives well. In particular, Foundation Phase and day care provision are well developed. There is good emphasis on promoting equality, healthy lifestyles and sustainability.

Improving quality: Good

There is a good track record of self-evaluation and planning for improvement over the last two years. As a result the setting has made significant progress in addressing the recommendations made in the last inspection. The implementation of plans of action in 2013 result in enhanced provision for outdoor play, ICT and Welsh language development. The current targets for improvement are appropriate, although key priorities are not sufficiently highlighted to clearly focus the implementation of strategies for improvement.

The setting seeks the views of stakeholders and both the setting's practitioners and management committee are appropriately involved. Self-evaluation is embedded and the outcomes honest, accurate and well focused.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good range of successful partnerships that impact well on the quality of provision.

Close links with parents and carers are well established. They receive an informative welcome pack before their child attends the setting and information about events and the curriculum is provided regularly. Friendly relationships promote the effective exchange of information about children's progress on a day-to-day basis. Practitioners also meet with parents formally to discuss children's achievements and records before they transfer to school.

The setting is integral to the school's provision and reflects well the Catholic ethos. Partnership with the school impacts well on transition and the quality of practice. Shared activities, such as a sports day, are particularly beneficial.

The partnership with the local authority and other agencies, including the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, is beneficial in the provision of training and guidance. The impact of support and quality assurance provided by the local authority is appropriate.

Resource management: Good

The deployment of practitioners and the use and organisation of resources are successful in motivating children to learn. Monitoring is beginning to identify the impact of enhanced provision, for example in Welsh and ICT. However, planning for future resource needs is not always sufficiently detailed. Practitioners engage regularly in appropriate professional development. During training events they share best practice with other practitioners, but have not had opportunities, through visits, to learn from other settings.

The setting deploys its own resources, together with the funding received for early entitlement education to good effect. This impacts well on children's outcomes and represents 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 / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Mr Michael T. Ridout	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.uk)

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	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<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 partnership's conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<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>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<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>

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 which 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.