



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

**Little Learning Tree
Llandinam
Newtown
SY17 5BY**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Peter Mathias

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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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 the Llandinam County Primary School. It provides for up to 16 children per session between nine and twelve o'clock on four mornings each week. Currently there are 11 children on roll who are rising three years of age and 12 who are three years old.

Children attending the nursery come from a wide range of backgrounds which are neither particularly advantaged nor disadvantaged. All come from homes where English is the main language. No child has Welsh as a first language. The nursery welcomes children with additional learning needs (ALN) and staff have received appropriate training. Currently two children are identified with ALN.

The nursery is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and was last inspected by that agency in February 2010.

The recommendations of that report have been thoroughly addressed. The nursery is also a member of the Pre-school Providers Association (Wales).

The setting has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- all children make good progress and achieve well, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world, their personal and social development and their creative development;
- all children enjoy their activities and maintain high levels of interest and enthusiasm;
- all children behave well and are considerate of each other and of adults;
- all children are very well cared for and supported;
- all practitioners have a thorough understanding of how to organise for children of this age and are well trained;
- the outdoor environment is very rich and stimulating; it is well used; and
- the nursery is well led and has a clear sense of direction in which attention to standards and wellbeing are central.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a very well-organised and committed team of practitioners;
- self-evaluation is thorough, well established and carefully linked to future improvement;
- links with other providers and partnerships within the locality and further afield are well used and are mutually beneficial;
- the setting has a successful record of addressing areas identified for improvement; and
- the leadership is continually striving to provide the best possible provision for all children who attend.

Recommendations

Inspectors have agreed with the school the following recommendation for improvement:

- R1 continue to develop practitioners' skills and confidence to extend children's use of Welsh in their daily activities;
- R2 extend children's skills in the use of information communications technology (ICT) by strengthening the provision of resources in this area of learning; and
- R3 refine systems for assessing children's progress.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

All children make good progress in all areas of learning. Starting with levels of basic skills which are in line with those expected of children of their age, all acquire new knowledge and understanding readily. Nearly all are outgoing and keen to discover for themselves. They concentrate hard and remain at their tasks for extended periods of time. They work and play busily together and with their adult helpers.

Nearly all listen carefully and follow instructions willingly. They apply their skills well in a wide range of situations. They talk with each other and with adults using good vocabularies. They all show an interest in books and follow a story well in words and pictures. They are beginning to make marks with a variety of writing tools and tactile materials, exploring the shapes that letters make. The majority are familiar with simple Welsh instructions and greetings. However, their oral responses are very limited.

Nearly all children have good basic counting skills, counting in English and Welsh within 10. They recognise and follow simple sequences and are beginning to use the language of shape and position in their play.

The majority of children's skills in order to use ICT are good. They know how to make a programmable toy carry out simple movements. They know how to operate a 'mouse' in order to 'click on' or 'click off' an image on the computer screen. However, their skills in using cameras to take still and moving images and their ability to interact with programs are limited because they have little access to these experiences.

A particular strength is in children's skills of enquiry in which nearly all have very well developed observational skills and an innate curiosity about the natural world. For example, when finding out about minibeasts, they show very eager enthusiasm to find, identify and study these in their natural habitat. They make decisions for themselves when doing this and when moving from one activity to another.

Wellbeing: Good

All children have a growing understanding of how to be independent of adults when dressing and undressing, for example when preparing for the outdoors. They know that fruit is good for them and being healthy involves physical exercise. They are increasingly able to visit the toilet without adult help and know the importance of 'washing your hands' afterwards and before eating. They know how to use hand cleaning gels after exploring in their forest area and before eating their picnic. Nearly all children have very positive attitudes to learning and many behave very well, showing real interest in their work and are anxious to please. Relationships

between children and between all children and their helpers are very positive. They are very well-behaved.

Nearly all children for their age are confident to make decisions for themselves. They respond positively to the choices which are available to them in both the inside and outside areas. They make suggestions about what they would like to do next and why they would prefer other options. A particular strength is their willingness to share and co-operate in their activities.

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

The setting provides well for all children and planning is in line with the Foundation Phase curriculum for children's learning. The curriculum is stimulating and uses the outdoors very well to provide a wide range of good quality learning experiences. Both indoor and outdoor experiences are carefully organised so that all children build successfully on what they already know and can do.

The learning experiences provided positively impact on children's attitudes to each other and their growing awareness of cultures and traditions which differ from their own. For example, the planning provides very well on a regular basis for children to learn about life in a wide variety of different countries.

The provision for outdoor leaning in the forest area and in the extensive grassed areas is outstanding. It is regularly and systematically used to enhance a wide range of skills. It is particularly well used for children to learn about how they themselves can help to protect and preserve their environment.

Overall, planning effectively encourages all children to develop their communication and numeracy skills. Planning and teaching places heavy emphasis on encouraging children to be independent and to think things out for themselves logically, for example when undertaking constructional tasks. Planning provide good opportunities for children to use their numeracy skills in a wide range of activities and to observe living things at first hand.

Children are beginning to use Welsh occasionally during their play and when talking to adults, for example at snack time. However, planning does not highlight sufficiently opportunities for this to be built upon regularly and systematically. Over their stay in the setting, all children have good opportunities to learn about some of the traditions and stories of Wales and to take part in Welsh music and dance activities.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is consistently good. All practitioners have a thorough understanding of how to plan and teach children of this age. They all support and extend each child's thought processes and confidence carefully and systematically. A particular strength is the overall high quality of support given to children with ALN.

All practitioners effectively encourage children's independence and willingness to co-operate with each other. They are very aware of how and when to challenge the more able and talented to go further and when to provide additional support. They are very conscious of when to intervene and when it is better not to do so.

There are rigorous arrangements for the day-to-day assessment of what children have learnt. Records are carefully kept for each individual child. These produce over time a detailed picture of what children know, understand and can do. However, systems to evaluate children's basic skills and maturity on entry and the progress they make by the end of their stay in the setting are at an early stage of development. These are not used to indicate the impact overall of teaching and learning and the progress children have made.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for health and wellbeing, including children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall with some outstanding support for those identified with ALN.

The setting successfully encourages all children to be healthy and to thrive as individuals and to have a curiosity and sense of wonder about the natural world. They are all encouraged successfully to be kind and considerate and to respect the rights of other children. All are given clear guidance on what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The setting has close and constructive relationships with other professionals and specialist services which are well used where necessary. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Arrangements for identifying and supporting children with ALN are very thorough and reflect the outstanding commitment of all practitioners to accept and include children with ALN into the setting. The provision of ongoing and informal support for these children is very well-organised and delivered. As a result children with ALN happily play a full part in the life of the setting and feel secure and safe.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting is attractive and well-organised to meet the needs of children of this age. There is a very positive ethos in which children are made to feel important and valued as individuals. All are encouraged to be confident and to know that they are well looked after by all adults.

There is a very good allocation of well trained and experienced practitioners to meet the needs of all children, including very advantageous support for children with ALN, where each of these children has a designated support assistant.

All practitioners are very committed to continuous professional development. Overall, the physical environment is excellent and has many outstanding features. There are ample resources which are of a very good quality. The setting has a well-organised and secure small outdoor play area with a veranda cover. The outdoor areas also include a large, carefully managed meadow and associated woodland as

well as a summerhouse and large play equipment. These combine to provide exceptional facilities for children to investigate, explore and enjoy.

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

The person in charge leads other practitioners very well and has a very clear understanding of how to organise for children of this age. By working closely with all other practitioners, much has been achieved in creating a hard working and enthusiastic team. Very good provision is the result of careful and systematic planning. This has developed through a process of continuous review and reflection on the needs of individual children.

Close links with the primary school on the shared site have been mutually beneficial, as have links with other primary schools.

There are rigorous arrangements for the work of the setting to be reviewed by elements of the governing body of the primary school. Financial matters and the outcomes of spending decisions are carefully monitored.

Much has been done in addressing nearly all of the local and national priorities and in encouraging new ideas for teaching and learning. However, only limited progress has been achieved in Welsh language development.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is well established and well used to identify where there are strengths and areas for development. All practitioners, parents and their children have been appropriately involved in this process. Their views are valued and acted upon to help to make improvements to the provision for children.

The self-evaluation process is carefully linked to the setting's improvement plan and provides a solid basis for continued improvement. Costs, success criteria and timescales are clear. There are good arrangements for staff development and staff appraisal. These are well used to extend further practitioners' expertise.

Partnership working: Good

All practitioners play a full part in working closely with teachers in the primary school and with teachers in the local area. An outstanding feature is the contribution by the person in charge, who has had a significant impact on the development of the Foundation Phase across the local authority, particularly in exemplifying good practice and the provision for outdoor learning.

Resource management: Good

All practitioners are well deployed and make good use of the resources and facilities available to them. The purchase of resources is carefully considered and spending decision thoroughly reviewed to ensure that they have a positive impact on the

quality of provision and the progress children make. The setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Eleven replies were received to the parent questionnaire. All have positive views and nearly all shared a very high opinion of the nursery. No parent expressed any negative opinions.

All parents indicated that they and their children liked the setting, settled in well, made good progress and behaved well. All considered that teaching is good and that their children are well treated, feel safe and are encouraged to be healthy. Parents agreed that they were kept well informed and that they were comfortable about approaching the nursery staff.

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Nearly all are confident when speaking to adults and are curious when meeting new visitors for the first time. They all like coming to their nursery and enjoy their activities. They say that they were all friends and like being with the other children. They know what to do and who to go to if they are unhappy or need help.

All children appreciate that they should be kind and behave sensibly. They know that they should help their teachers. All feel that they are well cared for and their teachers take a special interest in each of them as individuals.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.