



*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**

**The Old School House Day Nursery  
Old School House  
Heol Eglwys  
Penyfai  
Bridgend  
CF31 4LT**

**Date of inspection: 9-10 October 2013**

**by**

**Janet Marsden**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

The Old School House Day Nursery, which has been open since 2001, is housed in a converted school building that originates from 1898. It is very well renovated and situated in its own grounds in the village of Pen-y-Fai, Bridgend. Younger children are cared for in the main nursery building whilst pre-school children are accommodated in the purpose built Forest Cabin, which offers them free access to a varied range of both indoor and outdoor activities. The setting serves a wide area of the town and surrounding villages and the children move on to a number of different primary schools.

The nursery caters for up to 46 children from 0 to 5 years of age. It is open 52 weeks of the year from 8am to 6pm. Most children start school when they are four. There are currently 3 three year old children receiving government funding.

The children come from a variety of socio economic backgrounds. At present the nursery has no pupils with special educational needs but has appropriate plans and procedures in place to identify and cater for such needs. There are currently no children of a different ethnicity or any children learning English as a second language, though the setting has cared for children speaking Welsh or another language at home in the recent past.

Old School House Nursery is very ably managed on a day to day basis by the owner who lives on the premises. There is a warm family ethos to the nursery and children are very well cared for. Suitably qualified staff and practitioners, who are clearly devoted to the work they do, are responsible for the care, supervision and pre-school education of the children. The setting was last inspected by Estyn in 2008. The setting was inspected by Care Standards in Wales (CSSIW) in February 2013.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

Performance is good because

- the setting provides a wide variety of engaging and stimulating learning opportunities for children
- there are excellent opportunities for outdoor learning
- the setting actively promotes independence and confidence
- children are very well cared for in a happy 'family' environment
- children are carefully observed and assessed and pre-school staff know what they need to learn next
- there is excellent provision for children to learn the Welsh language

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because

- the nursery and pre-school facility is well led and managed by the owner
- all staff are hardworking and committed and know their strengths and areas for development
- the manager and staff are proactive in seeking personal development opportunities
- new pre-school staff have already made an excellent start in planning for improvement
- the setting has successfully addressed the recommendations from the last inspections

## Recommendations

R1. Further develop systematic planning for children with additional learning needs and for children that are more able and talented

R2. Further develop the leadership skills of pre-school staff

### **What happens next?**

The setting is not in follow up. The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

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

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

**Good**

#### Learning experiences: Good

Newly appointed pre-school practitioners collaborate well to plan a very good range of exciting activities that engage the interests and meet the needs of all the children very well. They have quickly developed a secure understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase and the expected learning outcomes for children.

Practitioners recognise the need to develop children`s skills systematically and place a strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all learning activities. There are excellent planned opportunities for children to develop confident ICT skills out of doors through communicating with staff, each other, the nursery office and kitchen via walkie-talkie devices.

The skilful way in which practitioners allow children to lead their own learning without loss of focus and structure, when playing in the forest school area or Rangers Garden is exceptional. Adults respect and value the children`s views and allow them frequent opportunities to give their opinions, overcome challenges and think for themselves. Practitioners strike a very good balance between safeguarding children and allowing them to take appropriate risks, for example when using the fire pit, operating the recycling pulley or negotiating the slopes in the Rangers Garden.

Practitioners know each child individually and have a good understanding of what they can do and what they need to learn. They offer effective support when children experience difficulties and allow them freedom to experiment and make mistakes.

Most focus activities are suitably differentiated with different learning outcomes for children of different abilities or through the amount of adult support given.

There is excellent provision for children`s Welsh language development. Practitioners are very good role models of bilingualism, seamlessly switching from one language to another when playing with the children and encouraging children to do likewise. They ensure that continuous play provision includes Welsh and English story books and that all the equipment children use is labelled in both languages at the children`s eye level. Opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the culture of Wales are good.

Forest school activities such as searching for Forest Fern, the Welsh puppet, and sitting on wooden toadstools to read or hear stories in Welsh and English, introduce an element of magic, awe and wonder that entrances the children.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good and at times excellent. Practitioners engage children's interests extremely well. They have a very good knowledge of how young children learn and they have a natural ability to make everything seem exciting and fun. When reading a story about being lost in a wood, for example, a magical atmosphere is expertly created. Questioning to check understanding, clarify points or extend children's thinking is skilful and does not break the spell.

Practitioners skilfully promote learning in a variety of different contexts and locations. They use a good variety of teaching strategies such as group, paired and individual work to cater for children's different learning styles and interests.

Practitioners observe children's development carefully. They keep and share detailed records of children's attitudes to learning and progress towards the expected goals. They are beginning to develop a wider range of assessment strategies to help them plan learning experiences in greater detail. Practitioners have recognised the need to develop their expertise in planning challenging experiences for children that have exceeded average expectation for their age group.

Annual reports to parents are detailed and clearly indicate what children have achieved. They are helpful in indicating the way forward. Parents meetings are currently informal. Parents receive daily reports on activities children have completed, in addition to any concerns or areas of special achievement. They are welcome to discuss issues at any time.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting promotes high standards of behaviour. Staff are exemplary role - models of good manners and consideration. Practitioners become the children's adult friends without losing their respect or allowing them to overstep the boundaries.

The setting uses daily routines and circle time well to promote a sense of taking turns, fairness and consideration for others. Snack time is used very effectively to develop children's social skills, good manners and sense of responsibility. For example, pre-school children count how many friends are present and use the walkie talkie devices to contact the office, successfully and politely ordering the right amount of fruit. They then take responsibility for giving choices, and distributing what their friends have requested.

Children volunteer on a daily basis for taking responsibility for different areas of their Forest Cabin. They monitor the mathematical development area for example, by

checking that the necessary equipment is available for children to use and then ensure it is put away correctly at the end of the session.

The setting has good arrangements with the local authority (LA) and specialist services for acquiring support for children with additional learning needs (ALN). The setting ensures that there are good arrangements for children to transfer smoothly to the local school and the manager is proactive in seeking the best possible outcome for those transferring to schools in other areas.

All safeguarding arrangements are in place. The safety and wellbeing of children is at the forefront of the work of the setting. All staff have DBS numbers and safe recruitment practices are observed. The premises are secure and the manager carefully ensures that staff fully understand all the necessary policies and procedures and that mandatory training is up to date.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides a happy, stimulating, attractive indoor and outdoor learning environment. Buildings are well maintained and decorated and full of high quality, attractive displays that celebrate children's work and interests. The provision for outdoor learning is excellent. The non-slip outdoor decking and, in particular, the Rangers Garden are used extremely well to promote a sense of fun, adventure and provide high quality learning experiences for children. The composting area, Bug Hotel and willow constructions promote a sense of curiosity and stimulate children's imagination very successfully.

The indoor cabin is kept clean and tidy and the children are encouraged to take pride in maintaining their living and working environment. There is an excellent variety of books and toys, quality learning materials and equipment for children to use. Literacy and numeracy are very well promoted in the learning environment through labelled interactive displays, number lines and bilingual signage. There are good opportunities for children to write, record numbers and make marks on a variety of surfaces. There are good resources for ICT.

The setting is an inclusive community offering equal opportunities for all. Staff promote equality and diversity appropriately through circle time, themes such as 'I am Special' that help children discuss and explore differences, and by involving children in a variety of cultural activities.

Good use is made of the local environment such as the park, church and village to enhance learning facilities. Children enjoy welcoming an interesting range of visitors from further afield such as Zoo Lab and the LA recycling team. Visits from the emergency services and health professionals extend children's understanding of the wider community and offer an insight into the world of work.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

The setting is very well led and managed by the owner on a day to day basis. The leader is passionate about her work and has high expectations of herself and her staff. The leader has a strong sense of purpose and direction and communicates this successfully to her team. The leader has recently recognised the need to enable new pre-school staff to develop their own leadership skills and independence in planning for improvement.

The leader is ably supported by a well-established team of staff in the main nursery that are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are hardworking and dedicated to the best interests of the children.

Pre-school staff that have recently transferred from working elsewhere in the nursery have very quickly understood their new roles. They have received good training and support in understanding the Foundation Phase from the LA and have made excellent progress. They are eager to learn and improve their practice. These practitioners have already made an impact on various aspects of practice such as assessment and planning and forest school provision.

There are good induction practices for new staff and suitable arrangements for performance management and appraisal. Practitioners receive appropriate professional advice and attend suitable training. Staff readily engage with activities to address national and local priorities such as outdoor learning, healthy eating and eco initiatives.

**Improving quality: Good**

The manager knows her setting well and recognises strengths and areas for development which she shares with staff. Priorities are set and appropriate actions are taken to move the setting forward. The new pre-school staff are already becoming reflective practitioners that understand the self-evaluation process well and are beginning to set their own priorities.

There is an obvious culture of self-improvement and good teamwork that permeates the setting. Many staff actively seek personal development opportunities and give freely of their time. This is a very strong feature of the work of the setting.

The self-evaluation process takes account of the views of staff and stakeholders, particularly parents and children. The self-evaluation document is honest and thorough. Development plans set suitable clear priorities that can be measured.

The setting has a long history of effective links with the local school. The leader has worked hard to establish new networks of professional practice with other pre-school settings to support practitioners' professional development. These are still at a fairly early stage of development.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Partnership with parents is a strong feature of the work of the nursery. Staff care deeply about the children and their families and there is an obvious bond of trust between parents and the setting. Communication is good and parents are well informed about events, health matters and what children are learning.

The setting works very successfully with the LA; the LA has provided considerable assistance in developing the Foundation Phase skills of new and existing staff. There are very good two way partnerships with the local school to which children transfer. Networking with other local pre-school settings is a developing area.

The setting has established suitable links with specialist services and seeks the advice of professionals such as health visitors, social workers and speech and language or hearing impairment specialists if any of the children give cause for concern.

The nursery has good relationships with the local community and children benefit from being actively involved in village life and local events.

### **Resource management: Good**

There is a good number of well qualified staff, suitably deployed across the whole nursery. There is a high number of staff in the pre-school area that promote learning successfully. Staff are suitably developed and given appropriate opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills. Staff advise and help one another and share expertise effectively with colleagues, in forest school provision for example, and this has enabled them to work in other areas of the nursery. Staff are given good opportunities to work with other age groups and gain greater insight into the way in which children develop.

There is a plentiful supply of high quality learning resources, including ICT equipment and attractive story books in Welsh, that successfully delivers the foundation phase curriculum. Resources are used effectively to support good learning outcomes.

The leader manages financial matters herself. She does this efficiently and prioritises spending in line with identified priorities for improvement. The leader makes good use of partnership arrangements and available funding to make improvements to the learning environment to address national priorities such as outdoor learning.

There are very few funded children at the setting and they receive a good pre-school education with high levels of individual attention. The setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Learners:**

When talking to children and observing them, it was clear that they love coming to nursery; they come in smiling and happy, settle quickly on arrival and readily engage in activities. They enjoy playing with their friends and clearly have great affection and respect for the adults. Children are very confident to give their opinions and make choices. They are eager to initiate conversations with visitors. The caring, inclusive ethos ensures children feel safe and secure.

#### **Parents:**

In conversation with the small number of parents, all are extremely complimentary about the setting. Their children love coming here. They say it is very well run; children are safe and happy and settle in very well. They would all recommend it to friends. Parents say that the caring staff are like an extension of their family; any concerns or problems they may have are dealt with straight away. The setting is very supportive of their families. Parents like the outdoor learning environment and emphasis on fresh air and healthy food. All feel that children make very good progress. They receive useful information and feel the setting knows each child well. All say, independently of each other, how impressed they are with the provision for Welsh language development.

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Mrs Janet Heather Marsden	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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.