



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

**Borras Park Infants School Early Education
Borras Park Infant School
Borras Park Road
Wrexham
LL12 7TH**

Date of inspection: January 2015

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

Borrass Park Infants School Early Education is an English medium setting in Wrexham, North Wales. It is located in a building within Borrass Park Infant School.

The setting has access to the school's extensive outdoor areas, including the use of the Forest School area. The setting is open for five afternoons per week. There are four practitioners employed in the setting.

The setting is registered to take up to 27 children and takes in children from the age of three. At the time of the inspection, 20 children attended. All are aged three and funded by the local authority. Nearly all children speak English as their first language. There are no children with additional learning needs.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in June 2014 and Estyn in May 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's is excellent because:

- Nearly all children make very good, progress during their time in the setting
- Nearly all children have very good literacy and numeracy skills
- Nearly all children listen well, are very articulate and confidently to talk to each other and adults
- Most children's Welsh oracy skills are very good
- Nearly all children's behaviour is exemplary
- Practitioners plan a range of highly stimulating learning activities
- Working relationships between children and adults are warm and caring
- The setting is a safe and vibrant learning environment where children settle in well and play co-operatively

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- Good teamwork and a positive learning environment enable children and adults to work and learn together effectively
- All practitioners feel valued and have high expectations of themselves and others
- High quality leadership contributes significantly to the wellbeing and very good levels of progress made by nearly all children
- The setting has a wide range of very successful partnerships that it uses well to improve children's wellbeing and outcomes
- The leader and practitioners have a clear picture of the setting's strengths and areas for development
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning are an important part of the setting's day-to-day practice and are effectively linked to improving children's wellbeing and improving outcomes
- The setting has a very good record of improvements in the standards that children achieve in Welsh, ICT and numeracy

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision and planning for developing children's understanding of other cultures
- R2 Involve parents and children more fully in the self -evaluation process
- R3 Review the impact of training effectively and use outcomes to inform future priorities for improvement

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

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

Nearly all children make very good progress, and a few children make exceptional progress, from their starting points across nearly all areas of learning. Most children develop a wide range of knowledge, understanding and skills that prepares them well for the next step in their education.

Nearly all children are highly articulate and convey their thoughts and feelings to adults and to one another using a developing vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. They share their ideas and talk about what they are doing confidently. Most children listen carefully and offer sensible suggestions to questions. All children are developing their mark making skills well. Many are beginning to recognise and write individual letters, especially those in their name. A very few children can write their own names independently after only a few weeks in the setting. Most children talk about their favourite characters in the stories they hear and comment on what is happening and what might happen next. Many are very interested in books and choose to read to themselves or to share books with their friends during free play and read simple signs around the room in both English and in Welsh.

Progress in numeracy is of a high standard. Nearly all children show a good understanding of numbers. Nearly all count confidently to twenty. Most children count and match objects accurately to ten and use mathematical language in an appropriate and relevant context. At snack time, many use mathematical language such as empty or full. They understand the idea of one more when serving fruit. They count their friends and can recognise and re-create patterns in their play, for example when setting the table with different coloured place settings in the role-play area. Without exception, they understand the passage of time by using an egg timer as they brush their teeth and many can sequence the days of the week correctly.

Nearly all children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently and independently as part of their play. Most are able to control battery-operated toys effectively and use the camera on a computer tablet with great confidence. Most children can use a simple paint programme to draw pictures and make patterns and can change the colour and thickness of the lines independently.

Nearly all children make very good progress in developing their Welsh language. Many can count to ten and most are able to recognise and name primary colours in Welsh. Most understand a wide range of questions and phrases and reply confidently and eagerly, using short phrases and simple sentences. All children join in very enthusiastically with songs and rhymes that effectively develop their Welsh vocabulary.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all children are enthusiastic and show a very positive attitude towards their learning. With very few exceptions, children have high levels of engagement and are

confident when making choices as they move between adult-focused and child led learning tasks, demonstrating high standards of independence. Most children are happy to discuss their work with each other, adults and visitors and take an active role in their learning. Most children remain busy and on task for appropriate periods of time.

All children show respect and demonstrate good manners. This is especially evident during snack time when they wait to wash their hands and share out the snacks. Nearly all engage well in conversation whilst enjoying each other's company. They develop good independent learning skills, for example when pouring their own water or milk during snack time, and are willing to take risks and learn from their mistakes.

Children have very good working relationships with each other and with adults. They increasingly show consideration towards others, such as when sharing resources or taking turns on the interactive whiteboard. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. Nearly all pupils have high levels of self-control and a maturity to understand the concept of taking turns. Most children demonstrate high levels of self-confidence. As a result, they readily undertake simple day-to-day jobs and tasks, such as acting as snack monitor, setting the table and recycling waste.

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

Practitioners plan a highly stimulating range of interesting learning experiences and fun opportunities for learning through play. These provide challenge for all children, including those who are more able, taking into account children's differing learning needs successfully. As a result, nearly all children make very good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and develop their literacy and numeracy skills very effectively. Children have many worthwhile opportunities to experiment and problem solve through high quality activities and experiences both indoors and outdoors. For example, when constructing a suitable pen for dinosaurs of different shapes and sizes, practitioners ask children to predict how many blocks they would need to fill a specific area.

Planning ensures that children are actively involved in their learning and have regular opportunities to make choices about what they want to do or learn. The setting uses the indoors and outdoors successfully to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum builds systematically on children's existing knowledge and understanding. For example, children enhance their numeracy skills by estimating the number of tadpoles found in the pond and then counting them. Planning for literacy allows children to share a range of high quality stories, both in English and Welsh, which develops their oracy skills well. There are abundant opportunities for children to mark make with different materials in most of the areas of learning and to recognise their names, for example when they self-register.

Practitioners plan for a good range of ICT skills, including the daily use of a tablet computer. This successfully allows children develop a range of effective ICT skills, for example taking videos of each other as they learn and then playing them back independently.

The setting plans for the development of children's Welsh language skills highly effectively, using rhymes, songs and instructions naturally throughout the session. As a result, most children are confident and keen to respond spontaneously as they play. The setting celebrates Welsh traditions and festivals such as St. David's Day. However, planning to support children's understanding of other cultures is less well developed.

The setting plans visits around the locality, which support the children's understanding of the world around them well. Visitors to the setting such as the police and firefighters further extend their knowledge of the world of work. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. For example, the setting recycles paper, plastic and food waste, and a recent recycling project, 'Recycle with Michael', reinforced the children's understanding of the need to care for their environment.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and an up-to-date knowledge of child development. Practitioners are highly motivated. They interact positively with children and this successfully develops children's self-esteem and confidence to try new activities and challenges. All practitioners are good language role models and this contributes to the very high standards of children's oracy skills and enhances their vocabulary effectively.

The appropriate pace of sessions means that children always have something new and exciting to engage their interest and motivate them to learn. Clear daily routines and effective teamwork provide a consistency of approach and enable children to know what to expect and to feel happy and safe.

There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. All practitioners intervene appropriately in play situations to move children's learning forward, often through the effective use of questioning or appropriate praise.

Practitioners assess children's progress regularly by observing and recording what children achieve. They use this information effectively to build a clear picture of what each child can do and to inform the next steps in their planning successfully. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. The setting provides useful information for parents by displaying a copy of the skills that they plan to teach within the current topic, on the noticeboard and a very informative end of year report. This helps parents to support their child's learning at home very effectively.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has beneficial arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. All practitioners are caring and supportive of the children and encourage them to develop a sense of respect and tolerance towards others. During snack time, children discuss the benefits of eating healthily and the importance of washing their hands.

Daily routines allow children to settle quickly and confidently and this contributes significantly to children's emotional and social development. The setting identifies children's learning and emotional needs well and works hard to meet them. It has clear procedures to support children with additional learning needs and has an effective network of contacts with external agencies in order to provide extra support and advice, as and when required.

An appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, and social development in a worthwhile way. They say a prayer in Welsh at the end of the day to give thanks for their friends and families. The setting promotes good manners, turn taking and respect very effectively. Through extended activities in the Forest School, children develop their understanding about how to care for the environment. This also fosters their sense of awe and wonder well as they observe nature first hand through their minibeast hunt and in observing the changing seasons.

The provision for cultural development is less well developed. Children listen to several stories from other cultures and a few parents from other countries share their traditions and customs. However, most children have a limited understanding of other customs and beliefs.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities. As a result, all children feel valued, are confident and happy, and enjoy talking to visitors about their learning experiences.

There are plenty of good quality resources for most areas of learning and these match children's needs closely.

Practitioners make effective use of all available space. They divide the class base into areas of learning successfully, including mark making, construction, creative and role-play. This allows children to move between these areas well throughout the sessions and access all resources readily. The environment is bright and stimulating, with good quality displays of children's work.

The setting has access to a range of outdoor areas, including their own enclosed playground and use of the school's extensive Forest School area. Practitioners use these very effectively to support a range of skills across the areas of learning, particularly children's literacy and numeracy skills. The use of raised beds encourages children to grow flowers and vegetables that attract insects and birds. They also keep chickens. This enables them to appreciate nature at first-hand.

The setting uses community resources well. The use of the local school grounds and visits to the local shops provide additional learning experiences that have a beneficial impact on children's physical development and social skills in particular.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
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Excellent

Leadership: Excellent

The setting's leader establishes a clear vision based on a drive to raise children's outcomes and deliver high quality provision, whilst maintaining a nurturing and happy environment. She communicates the setting's aims very effectively to practitioners and parents. This impacts positively on the very high standards that children achieve, the consistently good quality teaching observed and the highly stimulating learning experiences provided for children.

The setting's leader actively seeks out ways in which the setting can improve and responds quickly to any guidance and advice. Targets for improvement are challenging and the committed team of practitioners support these well. Clear and up to date job descriptions are in place. Consequently, all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities, work together successfully as a team and play an important part in moving the setting forward. They manage their time well and provide highly effective support for all children.

The setting makes very good use of a robust system of appraisal to support and challenge practitioners well. Targets link to appropriate training needs and directly to the setting's improvement plan. The setting makes strong use of meetings to discuss children's achievements and progress and to develop planning.

Practitioners are encouraged to take responsibility for key areas, making them feel valued and accountable. All practitioners have high expectations of themselves and others. They reflect well on their own performance and understand the need to offer and sustain improvements. The setting has made very good progress in taking forward national initiatives, especially in its effective use of outdoor learning to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

All practitioners know the setting well and demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are a regular part of their work. They contribute appropriately to an annual audit that identifies strengths and areas for development accurately. The setting leader gathers a range of suitable evidence to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. This work includes scrutiny of children's work, lesson observations and an appropriate attention to data. Despite this being a relatively new process it gives everyone in the setting a very clear and accurate picture of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.

Recent initiatives have led to improvements in children's outcomes, particularly their Welsh oracy skills, numeracy skills and wellbeing. It has also led to the high quality of learning experiences that practitioners provide.

The setting takes account of the views of parents and children appropriately but this has not yet had any measureable impact.

The setting's self-evaluation report is accurate and identifies clear priorities for improvement. The setting improvement plan links to this appropriately and outlines suitable targets and measurable steps to achieve these priorities. It also identifies practitioner training and resource needs, general costings and success criteria appropriately. The leader, with support from the link support teacher, is responsible for reviewing the improvement plan regularly.

Practitioners make effective use of training opportunities to keep up to date with Foundation Phase practice and to develop their use of assessment and tracking information in order to plan effectively for individual children's needs. However, the setting does not always reflect well enough on the impact of training.

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting has an extensive range of highly effective partnerships. Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. Leaders are proactive in sharing the setting's aim and objectives regularly with them. The setting provides high levels of information for parents via the setting's notice board and regular newsletters, through the web site and by daily personal contact. Parents have a very clear overview and understanding of the setting's aims and its areas for development, and feel that they play an active role in developing these. Parents are especially appreciative of the home visits undertaken prior to their child starting at the setting. By being able to observe children in their own environment, practitioners support each child's wellbeing and individual learning needs highly effectively on entry to the setting. This high quality induction helps children to settle quickly and confidently.

The innovative fortnightly 'video books sessions' further support parents in understanding how their child is progressing. They are able to see which activities their child has been involved in and share discussions about their progress with practitioners. The setting uses this opportunity to share information about child development with parents and to provide effective advice about activities that parents can do at home to support their child. In addition, they provide resources specifically tailored to the needs of individual children, for parents to use at home. An example is the informative parent workshop about developing number resources and ideas to support the development of mathematical skills. A Welsh language workshop supports parents successfully in developing their own their child's Welsh vocabulary. These resources often respond to children's particular interests that practitioners observe in the setting. This aspect of the setting's work is sector leading and helps parents to understand their child's developmental needs and how to support them in achieving these. This contributes significantly to the very high standards, levels of wellbeing and independence that nearly all children demonstrate.

There is a strong and beneficial partnership with the local infant school and the setting's link teacher, who works at the school. Practitioners welcome the support that they receive. It helps to improve provision through shared resources, enhance improvement planning and support the accurate tracking of children's progress successfully through shared expertise. This close working partnership allows children to transfer from the setting to the school nursery smoothly.

Resource management: Excellent

The setting deploys practitioners effectively and resources are of a high quality and support the learning needs of the children well. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children.

Practitioners take every opportunity to improve their professional expertise. For example, they have attended training to improve their Welsh language skills, and on planning for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum areas. This training positively influences the high quality of provision seen and successfully raises children's outcomes and levels of independent learning.

The leader and setting's management committee are well aware of resource needs and have a thorough understanding of budget matters. They prioritise these very effectively according to the setting's improvement plan needs. They evaluate financial decisions in order to identify impact on children's outcomes and wellbeing carefully. The recent purchase of tablet computers has had a positive impact on children's opportunities for using ICT and improves their ICT skills effectively. In view of the excellent standards that children achieve, the good quality teaching observed, the exciting provision, and the high quality of leadership, the setting provides excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

The Reporting Inspector

Mrs Susan Davies

Reporting Inspector

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)	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 3 to 7 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 which 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 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.