



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

A report on

**Little Inspirations - Rhydyfelin
Rhydyfelin Integrated Children's Centre
Holly Street
Rhydyfelin
Pontypridd
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF37 5DB**

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

Little Inspirations is an English medium setting for naught to twelve-year-olds in Rhydyfelin in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The setting is registered for 25 three-year-olds per session and at the time of the inspection there were 13 children in receipt of funded education. Nearly all children come from the local area. The setting offers funded education for two sessions each day from 9.15am to 11.45am and 12.45pm to 3.15pm.

The setting is based in a children's centre with access to a shared outdoor area. Currently, there are a very few 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 lead practitioner took up her post in December 2015 and is supported by a team of 10 additional practitioners.

The setting was last inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales in September 2017. This is its first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

- Nearly all children's communication and numeracy skills develop well from their starting points
- Almost all children co-operate successfully with each other and share toys and equipment readily
- Most children sustain interest in activities and move confidently to another activity when ready
- Practitioners provide a good range of learning experiences that engage nearly all children successfully and develop their literacy, numeracy and physical skills well
- Almost all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice and use a range of strategies well to encourage and to motivate children to learn
- Arrangements for care, support and guidance are comprehensive
- A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual and cultural development well
- The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of its provision

Prospects for improvement

- The leader is committed to making improvements
- There are beneficial systems for identifying the setting's areas for improvement
- The lead practitioner monitors children's progress well
- Practitioners work together collaboratively and understand their roles and responsibilities
- Practitioners use information from training well to improve the provision
- Partnerships with parents and other agencies are worthwhile
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well

Recommendations

- R1 Use assessments to identify and plan the next steps in individual children's learning, systematically and effectively
- R2 Develop practitioners' skills in supporting children to think creatively and solve problems
- R3 Ensure that all aspects of improvement planning focus on improving outcomes for children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children enter the setting with the skills and knowledge expected for their age. During their time at the setting nearly all children make good progress, particularly in the development of their personal and social skills. A few children make very good progress.

Almost all children listen attentively. They pay good attention when others are talking and allow others to speak without interrupting them. Most children understand and follow instructions successfully such as putting their coats on before they go outside or sitting on the carpet ready for story time. Many children speak clearly and are happy to share information about what they are doing with familiar adults. Around half of the children talk confidently about past experiences, such as going on a boat while on holiday.

During story time, children pay close attention and most join in enthusiastically with stories and rhymes. They particularly enjoy joining in with a pirate poem; showing good recall of the text. A minority choose to spend time in the inviting book area and select favourite stories for practitioners to read to them. Most children enjoy mark making with a range of equipment and a minority write for a purpose. For example, they use marks to represent a message for pirates, asking them to bring their treasure back.

Almost all children's numeracy skills are developing well from their starting points. Many children develop skills in line with those expected for their age and a few children develop skills above those expected for their age. Most children apply their numeracy skills in different situations when encouraged by an adult. For example, they count five pieces of play dough treasure in a treasure chest successfully. Most children explore simple shapes in their play and around half make good use of mathematical vocabulary, for example describing a coin as being the 'small one'.

Almost all children's physical skills are developing well. Most children cope with fine motor tasks successfully. For example, they spread butter on their crackers independently at snack time. Almost all children use a range of tools such as rollers, spades and brushes independently. Almost all children develop good gross motor skills such as negotiating space on trikes and taking part in balancing activities. A few make good progress with their ball skills and enjoy making up their own simple ball games.

Most children make decisions about the activities they undertake and the resources they will use. Most explore their environment confidently and a very few are developing their problem-solving skills successfully. For example, they persist and try different approaches when trying to make a toy boat sink to the bottom of the water tray. However, most children's problem-solving skills are underdeveloped.

Many children access and use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently. For example, they use battery-operated voice recorders and research boats on a tablet with very little support.

Most children develop their Welsh skills well in relation to their starting points. Many join in with a range of Welsh songs and rhymes confidently and a few count to five in Welsh independently. Most children respond positively to simple commands given in Welsh during daily routines and use single words. For example, they say whether they want milk or water during snack time. A majority of children are beginning to name parts of the body in Welsh. However, very few children use Welsh spontaneously during their play.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children settle well as soon as they arrive at the setting. They co-operate well with one another and share toys and equipment with little support. A few children show consideration for others through offering food to friends or asking an adult if they would like some fruit during snack time. Most take good notice of instructions given by an adult and respond to requests. For example, they put their coats on before going outside. Almost all children help to tidy up with encouragement from practitioners.

Almost all children behave well. They look after the setting's resources appropriately and treat adults and children respectfully. Most children are courteous and show good manners when encouraged by practitioners. Most listen carefully at story time when adults explain that they need to sit down so that their friends can see.

Most children sustain interest in activities and move confidently to another activity when ready. Most make independent choices about what they want to play with from activities offered. Nearly all children show interest in the activities offered outside and particularly enjoy exploring magnetism through finding objects that stick to their magnet.

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

Practitioners provide a good range of interesting learning experiences indoors and outdoors that engage almost all children successfully. Long term plans cover all areas of the foundation phase curriculum suitably. Short-term plans focus well on developing children's literacy, numeracy, Welsh and ICT skills. Practitioners are beginning to focus on children's skills when evaluating planning. However, they do not use these evaluations to plan the next steps in learning for individual children effectively enough.

The setting uses visitors successfully to enhance the curriculum, including the local fire service, the local police force and a road safety team. Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn from visits within the local area and beyond. For example, they visit the local park, the grocers shop and the National Museum in Cardiff.

Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to learn to care for living things. They support children to plant and look after a range of vegetables, such as potatoes and beans. There are meaningful opportunities for children to look after living creatures, such as caring for pet fish.

The indoor environment provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, such as using peg boards, brushes, scissors and tweezers. The newly developed outdoor physical play area provides opportunities for pedalling, balancing and ball skills. It presents children with appropriate challenge and enables them to develop their confidence successfully.

There is good provision to develop numeracy skills. Most practitioners provide children with regular opportunities to match, count and recognise shapes and patterns. For example, children enjoy developing their mathematical skills when playing a number game on a tablet. Resources available, such as weighing scales, calculators and shape puzzles, provide children with a wide range of experiences that develop mathematical concepts well.

The setting provides a range of opportunities for children to develop their communication skills effectively. They share books, stories and rhymes with children extensively and model how to handle books with care. The environment is full of language with many captions and labels written in both English and Welsh. Practitioners provide interesting opportunities for mark making, which children take part in enthusiastically. These include using bingo dabbers to mark their journey across a large-scale pirate map. Provision for developing early writing skills, such as writing a shopping list in the role-play area, is also effective.

Practitioners use tablet computers well to support children in developing their ICT skills through encouraging them to use a variety of educational applications. Other opportunities to use ICT are available such as programmable toys, a desk top computer and battery-operated voice recorders.

Practitioners support children's Welsh language development successfully. They model Welsh through singing songs, 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 listen to traditional Welsh music and learn to clog dance as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Teaching: Good

Almost all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice. They use a range of strategies well to encourage and to motivate children to learn. Practitioners use resources imaginatively to capture children's interests, for example they create a pirate themed imaginative play area. They combine focused tasks with children's free play effectively. As a result, almost all children sustain interest in tasks and enjoy periods of uninterrupted learning.

Almost all practitioners build suitably on children's interests through consulting them about the current topic. They ask children what they already know and what they would like to find out. Over time, practitioners encourage children to identify the

things they have learnt, successfully. Almost all practitioners explain things clearly and a few make effective use of questioning. However, their strategies to develop children's creative thinking and problem-solving skills are limited.

The setting has a worthwhile range of assessment procedures. Practitioners observe children and identify what they can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. At regular intervals, they update these records to show children's progress over time. The lead practitioner uses this information to monitor standards in each curriculum area and produce an end of year summary. Practitioners record observations on planning systematically to show children's progress and responses to provision. They make appropriate use of this information when designing new activities.

Most practitioners make effective use of specific feedback to encourage children, such as 'good jumping' and 'good sharing'. They keep parents and carers well informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing. For example, practitioners involve parents in children's learning effectively, through 'home tasks' which are displayed in the setting.

The setting has developed a good range of strategies to promote positive behaviour and children respond to these well. All practitioners have clear expectations and explain rules to children appropriately. This ensures a team approach and consistency for the children.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has successful arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. During snack time, practitioners encourage children to eat a range of foods and provide water or milk to drink. Most food options are healthy. Children make choices about what they would like to eat and practitioners encourage them to try new foods such as sardines and kiwi fruit. The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to take regular physical exercise. This develops children's co-ordination successfully and encourages them to adopt a healthy life-style.

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 take care of resources effectively. As a result, children learn to cooperate with each other well. For example, they make up chasing games together in the outdoor area and hand out food during snack time spontaneously.

A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual and cultural development well. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children through for example, encouraging them to observe plants and mini-beasts in the wild garden area. Children have appropriate opportunities to find out about other cultures such as learning about Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability. For example, they encourage children to put their waste food in the composting bin and sort their recycling in the recycling area.

There are beneficial processes to support children with additional learning needs. The setting has effective links with a range of support agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met appropriately.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is welcoming, and practitioners are friendly and approachable. It is an inclusive community where all children are encouraged to take part and 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. For example, they explain why they need to sit down at story time. As a result, all children play and learn happily.

The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the foundation phase. It is situated within the children's centre and benefits from access to the outdoor area and sensory room. 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 lead practitioner makes creative use of the space indoors, which is attractive and welcoming. Resources and furniture are generally of good quality and appropriate. Designated learning areas make resources easily accessible for children.

The popular outdoor area has been developed successfully into a valuable learning environment. It supports the development of children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills well.

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

Leaders work effectively with setting staff to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children. They manage practitioners and children well to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following established routines. There is a strong commitment to teamwork and the lead practitioner has a clear vision to work collaboratively with colleagues to develop children's wellbeing and enhance their learning.

The lead practitioner ensures 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.

All practitioners have clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities. 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. However, practitioners' targets for improvement do not link to the setting's improvement plan consistently.

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

Improving quality: Good

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective and all practitioners are committed to improving quality. The lead practitioner makes good use of external reviews and support from the manager to inform the self-evaluation process.

The lead practitioner compiles information from foundation phase profiles to monitor children's progress over time effectively. Practitioners know what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve. They explain clearly what they have identified as priorities to raise standards. 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 ICT.

The improvement plan is a detailed document that sets out appropriate actions, cost implications, timescales and responsibilities. The targets in the plan come directly from the self-evaluation process and from identified priorities for the setting. However, priorities do not always focus sharply enough on improving outcomes for children. For example, leaders focus on developing the maths area rather than on improving children's numeracy skills.

The setting has a track record of making effective improvements through self-evaluation and improvement planning.

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. Useful noticeboards inside the setting, make clear the setting's ethos and expectations and encourage parents to take an active part in the life of the setting. Practitioners offer valuable opportunities for parents to come and play alongside their children during sessions. This allows them to see the sort of activities that their child takes part in and helps them to support their child's literacy and numeracy skills.

The setting has well-established links with the children's centre in which it is situated, and practitioners make beneficial use of the centre's facilities such as the sensory room and wild garden area. There are well-established arrangements for children's induction into the setting and smooth transition to the school. For example, children have settling in visits before they take their place in the setting and practitioners request useful information from parents about children's needs, likes and dislikes.

The setting has effective links with the local authority and access to regular advice and support from the advisory teacher. Practitioners make beneficial use of links with the local community to enhance the curriculum. For example, children visit the grocer's shop and regularly exchange books at the local library.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well. Leaders and managers make sure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well-trained practitioners to support the effective delivery of the foundation phase curriculum. Resources are plentiful and of good quality, for example the wide range of equipment to support physical development.

The setting ensures that staff can access training based on needs identified through the appraisal process. Leaders place a strong emphasis on working collaboratively and learning from each other. Practitioners make good use of training to improve provision, for example in developing the use of ICT within the setting.

Leaders plan effectively to resource identified priorities. For example, the setting recently purchased numerous resources to support the development of children's mathematical skills.

In view of the good teaching, the progress that children make and the quality of 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	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 partnerships 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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