



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

**Brynteg Nursery School
High Street
Abersychan
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 7DG**

Date of inspection: May 2012

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 school'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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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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

Brynteg Nursery School is situated in the village of Abersychan, near Pontypool in the county borough of Torfaen. The school serves the local area and there are currently 51 children on roll, all aged between three and four years. Many children who attend the nursery come from homes that are socially and economically disadvantaged. Seven children attend on a full time basis; of the remainder, all attend for either the morning or afternoon sessions. One child is 'looked after' by the local authority and approximately 6% of those who attend the nursery are considered to have some degree of additional learning needs. Two children receive support from outside agencies.

There are currently no children who have English as an additional language and no child speaks Welsh as a first language at home.

The school was last inspected in May 2006 and the current headteacher has been in post since 2009.

The 2011-2012 individual school budget per pupil for Brynteg Nursery School is £6,937, which compares to a national average of £5,986 for all maintained nursery schools in Wales.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the school is good because:

- nearly all children make good progress and achieve well in the seven areas of learning;
- standards of children's wellbeing are high;
- nearly all children behave well and are motivated to learn;
- the quality of teaching is good; and
- the school provides a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences, particularly in the outdoor environment.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision that is shared by all stakeholders;
- the Foundation Phase has been implemented very effectively;
- all staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation process and in agreeing priorities for improvement;
- the headteacher is innovative in her resource management; and
- the school works effectively with parents and other partners to improve the quality of its provision.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school needs to:

- R1 improve standards in boys' language, literacy and communication skills;
- R2 ensure that adult led activities consistently meet the needs of pupils of all abilities; and
- R3 ensure that targets set in the nursery development plan are specific, measurable and directly linked to pupil outcomes.

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children enter Brynteg Nursery School with appropriate skills normally expected for their age. During their time at school, nearly all children make good progress and achieve well in the seven areas of learning.

Generally, school assessments show that boys enter school at a lower level of development than the girls. This difference in performance decreases as they progress through the school, although girls continue to perform better than boys in language, literacy and communication.

The achievement and progress of children in lessons are good and appropriate for their age.

Nearly all children make good progress in their communication skills. They listen carefully during focused sessions and join in confidently with small group discussions. Most children engage happily in conversations with both adults and their peers in their work and play. They use a growing vocabulary to ask and answer questions at a level appropriate to their stage of development. Most children make good progress in developing their early writing skills. They understand the purpose of writing and use mark making techniques to replicate writing across the different areas of learning. A few children are beginning to write their names and understand how writing consists of letter sounds, some of which they can correctly identify. Nearly all children listen carefully to stories, demonstrating a clear understanding through their reactions and comments. Many children retell familiar stories with picture prompts and understand the difference between words and pictures. Nearly all children handle books correctly, turning the pages from left to right. However, boys do not engage independently in reading and writing tasks as readily as girls.

Children make good progress in developing their numeracy and information and communication technology skills and apply these skills effectively across all areas of learning. Most children use early mathematical skills correctly to count, sequence and match objects and to recognise numerals and simple patterns. Many operate a range of information and communication technology equipment, such as computer tablets and digital cameras, with control and confidence.

Children's thinking skills are developing well. All children will make decisions about their learning and independently access the resources they wish to use. Many persevere for a good length of time on adult led activities and those they have chosen independently. They work well collaboratively in pairs and in groups to investigate and solve problems.

Children with additional learning needs achieve very well in relation to their abilities and starting points.

Children's Welsh language skills are developing well. Nearly all respond with understanding to a variety of simple commands and instructions in Welsh. Most children can count beyond five, name basic colours and talk about the weather in Welsh. A few children are beginning to use Welsh spontaneously and in the correct context within the nursery.

Wellbeing: Good

All children feel safe within the school; this view is supported strongly by their parents. Children are developing a keen awareness of how to stay safe and be healthy and why it is important to do so. For example, they understand the importance of brushing their teeth and are aware of possible dangers associated with roads when out in the local community.

Nearly all children are very well behaved throughout the day. They are enthusiastic learners, courteous towards adults and considerate to each other. They are able to share resources with their friends and follow the nursery rules and routines well. Nearly all children demonstrate high levels of independence in all areas of the learning. Most children concentrate well in sessions, although a few lose concentration when whole class sessions are too long.

All children are able to make decisions about what and how they learn and input effectively into weekly evaluations. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities such as collecting and preparing their own snacks and the role of 'helpwr heddiw'.

Attendance has increased steadily over the last three years and was around 89% in the last academic year. Punctuality has also improved. Nearly all children arrive before the registers close.

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

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets effectively children's needs and interests. It fully meets all the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Staff work together well to provide a wide range of learning experiences that stimulate and engage all children. This is particularly evident in the outside areas.

The school provides well for the development of children's speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. Detailed planning ensures that children's skills are developed progressively.

Provision for Welsh language development is good and has a positive impact on children's standards. Resources such as puppets, songs and published and school-made texts are used effectively to introduce new vocabulary and reinforce language patterns. Staff are good Welsh language role models. They use Welsh consistently throughout the day in their routines and when giving instructions.

The school successfully promotes opportunities for children to care for the environment through recycling, switching off lights and making compost. There is an effective eco group and the school has successfully achieved its second green flag

award. Weekly forest school sessions further children's understanding of the world around them and how to care for it. The school has developed appropriate links with a school in Africa which raises children's awareness of life in other countries.

Teaching: Good

A particular strength in the overall quality of the teaching is the close working relationships that exist between staff and children. Staff use positive approaches to maintain high standards of behaviour and to praise children's good work. All staff foster children's independence successfully by encouraging children to think for themselves. Staff use a rich variety of approaches and resources that maintain children's interest for long periods of time and make learning fun.

There are clear learning intentions for adult led activities. However, these are not always adapted well enough to ensure they match the needs of children with different abilities.

All children's progress is monitored effectively using the school's tracking system and the child development assessment profiles. This information is used well to identify children in need of additional support. The school gives parents regular feedback on how well their child is doing in school in addition to their written annual progress report. Staff encourage children to evaluate their own learning regularly and this informs future planning. However, this is focused on children's interests rather than on extending their learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school promotes the importance of healthy living well and regards the health and safety of its children as a major priority. There are appropriate arrangements for ensuring good behaviour and preventing all forms of harassment such as bullying. The school promotes good attendance through the use of awards and certificates. Children's social, moral and spiritual development is well catered for. Opportunities for them to become aware of their own and other cultures are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The procedures and systems for identifying, supporting and monitoring pupils with additional learning needs are thorough. Additional support provided within classes and during withdrawal periods is highly effective. Individual educational plans are appropriate and are regularly evaluated, updated and shared with parents. The school has very good links with a range of specialist services including sensory services and speech and language therapy.

The school has procedures and has an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

Brynteg Nursery is a happy school. It is fully inclusive and all children have equal access to everything it provides. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure those with disabilities are not disadvantaged in any way.

The internal accommodation is clean and well set out, with three distinct zones which focus on different areas of learning. The outside area is excellent. Staff have

created a stimulating learning environment in which numerous man-made structures have been blended creatively with the natural environment to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences. The outdoor facilities include a forest school, adventure trail, mud kitchen, pond and stage. There is a good supply of learning resources across the school including laptop and tablet computers.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of direction that puts children at the heart of the school's work. She has successfully built a committed team of teaching and support staff that share common values and have a good understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn.

The headteacher and assistant head collaborate well to lead and manage the school. The school is well run and parents have confidence in the leadership team. All members of staff have well defined roles and responsibilities, which they carry out efficiently. They are open to new ideas and respond positively and consistently to changes designed to improve the quality of the provision and children's outcomes.

Performance management procedures generally identify individual and whole school areas for improvement effectively. However, whilst professional development targets are clear and measurable, those linked to pupil progress are less so.

The governing body is supportive and meets its statutory obligations through regular policy reviews. A recent positive development is the programme of individual governor visits and the feedback they give on their focused observations. These visits are increasing governors' understanding of the school's work and are beginning to develop their ability to fulfil their role as a critical friend.

The school takes good account of local and national initiatives such as the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the development of children's skills in using Welsh as a second language. The Foundation Phase has been implemented very effectively throughout the school.

Improving quality: Good

All staff share a commitment to improve the quality of the education they offer children. They are fully involved in the self-evaluation process and in agreeing priorities for improvement. Discussions about progress towards targets in the nursery development plan are a feature of regular staff and governing body meetings.

The school uses available data on progress and achievement well to allocate children to groups where their learning needs can be met most effectively. However, targets for raising children's standards of achievement in the nursery development plan are not always specific or indicate clearly enough how success in achieving them will be measured.

Strong relationships and good communication with parents enable the school to find out about their opinions and to take account of them. There are well established

procedures for evaluating children's involvement in the learning opportunities offered. Staff listen to children's suggestions and take them seriously. For example, they recently provided real tools in the construction area and have started building a pond in the garden in response to their requests.

The school's involvement in networks of professional practice has a positive impact on the education provided. For example, the school has worked in partnership with another nursery school evaluating the use of computer touch screen technologies to improve children's information and communication technology skills.

Partnership working: Good

The school collaborates productively with a wide range of partners. Links with parents, business and the wider community are particularly strong and have enabled the school to make considerable improvements in the quality of its provision. For example, its collaboration with a computer company supports the active engagement of staff, families and partner schools in developing the information and communication technology skills of both children and adults. Those parents who have been involved value the opportunity they have had and children's competence in using information and communication technology has improved as a result. Partnerships with feeder primary schools ensure that children's transition from the nursery to the next stage of their education is managed as smoothly as possible. The school engages in a mutually beneficial partnership with a local comprehensive school to provide work placements for students studying childcare courses.

The school is pro-active in drawing upon the support and specialist expertise of officers from the local authority, for example to provide training for staff in areas identified for improvement.

There are very good joint working practices with the neighbouring playgroup, which is based in the community hall. Nursery children use the hall once a week for physical development, while children from the playgroup access the nursery's outdoor areas. This reciprocal arrangement benefits children in both settings and has a positive impact on their physical development and wellbeing.

Resource management: Good

All members of staff are appropriately qualified and their skills are deployed well. Arrangements for their continuing professional development are linked closely to children's needs and to help them meet targets for improvement in the nursery development plan. Teachers and support staff play a significant role in planning, monitoring and assessing children's outcomes. They are given appropriate preparation time to fulfil their duties.

The headteacher is highly skilled at accessing good quality equipment and resources that cost very little. Members of staff plan for the use of these resources extremely well in order to stimulate children and support their learning.

The governing body and headteacher monitor expenditure very carefully to ensure that money is spent wisely to the benefit of the children. The overall quality of the provision and children's outcomes are good. The school therefore provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

No local or national comparative data is available for this school.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

There were 36 responses to the parents and carers questionnaire. The responses to all statement were very positive and above the national benchmarks.

All parents say that they are satisfied with the school and that their children make good progress. They all state that their children like the school and that their children are safe there. All parents say that pupils are well behaved and believe that staff treat all children fairly and with respect. All parents say that their child was helped to settle in well when they first started school and feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

Nearly all parents feel that they understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints and that they are well informed about the progress their child makes at the school.

Nearly all parents feel that the school is well run and that their child is well prepared for moving on to their next school.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Sarah Hurst	Reporting Inspector
Stephanie James	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
Claire Pritchard	Peer Inspector
Lynda Ryan	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.