



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

**A report on**

**Y Bwthyn Bach  
2 Brynhyfryd Cottage  
The Green  
Denbighshire  
LL16 5TL**

**Date of inspection: May 2017**

**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
<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

Y Bwthyn Bach is a private bilingual setting that opened in September 2012. It is situated on the outskirts of the town of Denbigh in Denbighshire.

The setting provides care for children from a few months old until they move on to the next stage of their education at three years old. The setting is registered to provide care for 26 children. Part-time care is provided for two-year-old children as part of the 'Flying Start' initiative, in addition to full-time education places for three-year-olds. During the inspection, there were no children who were identified as having additional learning needs. There were no children from ethnic minority backgrounds and all children speak English as their first language.

The setting has been registered since 2002 and is a member of Denbighshire County Council Foundation Phase Nursery Education Providers. It is also registered as a member of the National Day Nurseries Association Cymru (NDNA Cymru).

The setting has been staffed by a manager/owner since it opened. There have been staffing changes in the pre-school room over the last year. A new leader began in post during summer 2016, and the assistant has been in post for six months.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in May 2015 and by Estyn in March 2011.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Children settle quickly and feel safe there
- Children are happy and enjoy their time at the setting
- There is a positive and supportive relationship between all practitioners and children
- Practitioners pursue children's interests
- The leader works closely with the rest of the staff to create a welcoming ethos
- Many children are well-behaved
- The leader and assistant work very well together
- There is a very good partnership with parents and carers

However:

- Practitioners' planning is not always rigorous enough and does not identify the skills to be developed in all activities
- Not all practitioners model the Welsh language well enough
- Assessment procedures are not always used effectively enough to have a positive effect on children's standards
- Indoor resources do not provide enough opportunities for children to develop their skills effectively

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory because:

- Leaders have not succeeded in realising the setting's vision or promoting it successfully
- Leaders have not succeeded in meeting some of the recommendation from the previous inspection
- Practitioners do not have sufficient knowledge of the principles of the Foundation Phase
- Leaders' understanding of the quality improvement process is not good enough
- Leaders do not monitor teaching and learning appropriately
- The setting's development plan does not identify clearly enough its priorities for improvement

However:

- Leaders have succeeded in creating a homely atmosphere in which children are happy and where practitioners work together well
- Leaders make effective use of the outdoor area to stimulate children

## Recommendations

- R1 Plan rich and regular experiences for children to develop early literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the six areas of learning
- R2 Improve teaching and assessment in order to ensure that provision is effective and leads to the next appropriate steps in children's education
- R3 Ensure that the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements
- R4 Ensure a clear strategic direction for the setting
- R5 Strengthen the improvement plan by identifying clear actions, measurable success criteria, an appropriate timetable for action and regular opportunities to measure and evaluate progress
- R6 Ensure that strategic plans include allocating funding appropriately to address the priorities for improvement

### What happens next?

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector believes that this setting is in need of focused improvement. The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress each term.

## Main findings

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

#### Standards:

There is no report on children's achievement and progress in developing their skills or the Welsh language across the areas of learning. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

#### Wellbeing:

There is no report on children's participation and enjoyment in learning. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

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

**Adequate**

#### Learning experiences: Adequate

The leader provides an appropriate range of activities in order to provide children with first-hand experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas. Activities in the outdoor area enable a majority of children to make satisfactory progress across most areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. However, plans do not focus clearly enough on developing children's early literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the six areas of learning. As a result, many children's skills are not developed systematically enough.

The leader gives good consideration to a majority of children's interests by giving them appropriate opportunities to suggest interesting ideas to develop the theme. She creates a simple mind map with the children of their previous knowledge at the beginning of a theme, but she does not develop this sufficiently to extend their understanding further. However, children are given appropriate opportunities to choose their own tasks and activities in the indoor and outdoor areas.

Practitioners do not plan enough opportunities for children to hear or use the Welsh language. As a result, only a minority of practitioners make any use of the Welsh language when praising and sharing simple instructions. However, they plan opportunities for children to sing a few Welsh songs and nursery rhymes, and they succeed in encouraging a majority of children to respond fairly enthusiastically. Not enough opportunities are planned for children to listen to stories or respond to those that are read to them in Welsh. As a result, children are not given enough opportunities to hear Welsh to help them learn the language.

Children are given various opportunities to show respect for people from all cultural backgrounds, and the activities that are delivered enable them to learn appropriately about Welsh traditions and celebrations, by celebrating holidays such as St David's Day.

The setting makes beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences, although it does not make enough use of visitors to enrich pupils' experiences further. Practitioners provide exciting opportunities in the outdoor area for children to dig, plant and marvel at seeing flowers grow over a period of time. Children are given appropriate opportunities to choose their own tasks and activities in the indoor areas. Although focus tasks ensure that a majority of children are given opportunities to practice their numeracy and physical skills, activities do not give them an opportunity to stretch them enough.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners work well as a team, and all understand their roles within the setting. However, very few have an appropriate understanding of the principles and requirements of the Foundation Phase. They do not place enough of an emphasis on developing children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within the learning sessions. However, they ensure that there is a successful balance between activities that are led by adults and those that are chosen by children, both indoors and outdoors.

Practitioners make frequent use of purposeful questioning strategies in order to ignite children's natural curiosity effectively, for example by asking them about what they notice while exploring the outdoor area. Practitioners manage behaviour successfully and ensure that nearly all children sit quietly for appropriate periods to listen to a story.

A minority of practitioners speak Welsh with the children, while a majority speak English. As a result, only a minority of children develop a basic understanding of the Welsh language. A majority are limited to single words, such as naming colours and counting. As a result, nearly all children converse in English during play sessions.

Practitioners do not give children enough opportunities to discuss books. As a result, a minority of children show an interest in books, act like readers and speak appropriately with adults about what is happening in the pictures. Rare examples of where this happens include children looking at pictures of insects in a factual book in the outdoor area.

The setting's arrangements for assessing children's progress are beginning to develop. All practitioners praise the children orally regularly. They observe children daily and keep adequate records of their development. However, they do not make enough use of this information to stretch children further and plan their next steps.

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

The setting succeeds in creating a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos for the children, and all practitioners talk to them with care and respect. All practitioners treat children sensitively and fairly, and they respond to this positively. Everyone is given the same opportunity to take advantage of resources and activities, and practitioners promote fair play appropriately. As a result, nearly all children treat each other with care and respect.

The setting promotes the importance of eating and drinking healthily effectively by offering healthy cereal and a drink of water at snack time. Practitioners encourage children to take responsibility when pouring water from a jug successfully. Practitioners promote the importance of personal hygiene and taking care of the body appropriately by encouraging children to wash their hands regularly and to brush their teeth during the morning session. However, there are not enough opportunities to extend children's independence further by giving them responsibilities, such as 'helper of the day'.

Provision to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developing appropriately; for example, a comfortable and quiet spot is provided for children to sit quietly and reflect. The setting develops children's understanding of sustainability appropriately by visiting, for example, a charity shop to purchase resources for a theme. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop children's awareness of different cultures, for example by celebrating Chinese New Year and Diwali. Children are given regular opportunities to take part in physical activity sessions outdoors through activities that have been planned purposefully. Physical activities include riding bicycles, driving small cars and throwing a ball.

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

The setting does not currently have any children with additional learning needs. However, although the setting has appropriate procedures to respond to the needs of any children with additional learning needs when necessary, not all practitioners are clear about the steps.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting has an appropriate outdoor learning environment, which is a useful and interesting resource to enable children to experiment and play imaginatively. It offers children a cross-section of exciting experiences; for example, there are opportunities for children to dig soil and cook in the mud kitchen. The gardening shop is a good example of where children are given an opportunity to play imaginatively. This area is also a valuable resource for children to investigate and discover, and listen to the birds singing and observe them looking for mini beasts. It also provides good opportunities for them to practise their physical, creative and problem-solving skills. Practitioners use the space that they have in the outdoor area effectively.

However, there are few learning resources available in the indoor learning area, and the few resources that are available do not stimulate children; nor are they of a suitable quality to develop their skills.

Practitioners display some of the children's work in the learning room, and children take pride in seeing their work on the walls.

The building and grounds are clean and safe.



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

The leader is conscientious and ensures that all practitioners work well together to create a welcoming ethos, and nearly all children respond positively to this when they arrive at the sessions. She ensures that practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting and caring for each child. Leaders have a vision that is based on developing individuals physically, intellectually and socially in a bilingual environment. However, leaders have not yet succeeded in realising this vision.

The responsible person ensures that statutory policies are in place and manages the setting's funding appropriately; however, the leaders' lack of strategic direction impedes the development of the setting. The setting has introduced procedures recently to evaluate staff. However, there is not a sufficient focus on children's progress, achievement or standards. Staff evaluations are not based on direct observations and, as a result, suitable attention is not given to monitoring teaching or learning. In general, leaders do not share agencies' recommendations effectively, and some recommendations from the previous inspection have still not been met.

Leaders promote the importance of eating and drinking healthily and implement the Designed to Smile scheme appropriately. However, practitioners do not attend training frequently enough to improve provision and ensure that national priorities, such as developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, are given enough attention. The lack of training is reflected in the provision and commitment to the principles of the Foundation Phase, and this has an adverse effect on standards.

### **Improving quality: Unsatisfactory**

Leaders' procedures to improve the quality of provision are inadequate. Although they have received support from the local authority, leaders' understanding of what they need to do in order to improve is very limited. Although they have gathered parents' views through a questionnaire, they have not included their comments or considered the views of others when producing the document. This aspect of the setting's work was a recommendation following the previous inspection, and leaders have not succeeded in addressing it, or in improving provision to develop children's ICT skills.

The self-evaluation document has identified some areas for development, but it does not focus sufficiently on children's achievement. The report shows that leaders have identified a few relevant strengths and weaknesses. Some priorities are targeted in the improvement plan. However, the improvement plan does not identify actions or a timetable clearly enough, success criteria are not measurable enough, and there are no regular opportunities to measure and evaluate progress.

Practitioners are keen to learn and develop professionally, but they are given limited opportunities to receive training and to experiment with different ways of working. However, they make a suitable effort to respond positively to support and advice from the local authority.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

The setting has a good relationship with parents and carers. Parents appreciate the informal and daily contact with practitioners to discuss issues relating to their children. They are given relevant information through these daily conversations, and by displaying information on a noticeboard and in the form of newsletters. Parents appreciate the open door policy that exists for them to discuss any concerns with practitioners and the owner informally. New parents receive a useful information pack, which eases the step from the home to the setting. Parents are given a booklet at the end of their child's time at the setting, which shows their child's progress and achievement. A few charity activities are held in co-operation with parents.

Arrangements for transferring information about progress to the local primary schools are appropriate, and practitioners work suitably with the link officer in order to support children and their families. The setting uses a few community links effectively to support children's learning, which includes borrowing theme books from the library. However, leaders do not take enough of an advantage of opportunities to welcome visitors to the setting to enrich pupils' experiences.

The setting has beneficial links with local further education colleges to provide placements for childcare students. This enriches provision appropriately at times.

The setting has a supportive partnership with the local authority's advisory teacher. This partnership has been planned to support and to try to challenge practitioners to operate effectively and develop provision. However, it has not yet had enough of an effect on standards or leadership.

### **Resource management: Unsatisfactory**

Leaders ensure that the setting has enough practitioners with suitable childcare qualifications. However, they have not yet ensured that practitioners have received necessary or suitable training to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase, or to enable them to challenge children well enough. Practitioners have received very little training during the last year.

A majority of the resources that are available are within the children's reach, and this enables them to make some rare decisions about their learning. The setting uses the outdoor area effectively, but it is not used enough as a continuous part of provision. Indoor resources limit teaching and learning, particularly in terms of developing children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Practitioners' competence in the Welsh language is very limited, and provision is not adequate to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The owner has appropriate procedures to manage and review expenditure. However, they do not allocate funding effectively enough to address priorities for improvement.

Considering the significant shortcomings in provision and leadership, the setting provides unsatisfactory value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Gwawr Hughes	Reporting Inspector
Vanessa Bowen	Team Inspector

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## 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 partnerships 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 three to seven 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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation 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