



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

**Gofal Plant Gogerddan
Meithrinfa Plas Gogerddan
Penrhyncoch
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3EB**

Date of inspection: June 24, 25 2013

by

Branwen Llewelyn Jones

for

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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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Publication date: 23/07/2013

Context

Plas Gogerddan Nursery is a purpose built nursery opened in 1996 on part of the campus of the University of Wales Aberystwyth near the village of Penrhynoch. The contract with the university ended in March 2012 and the present manager established Gofal Plant Gogerddan Childcare Ltd. in October 2012. It is registered as a private nursery under the Children Act of 1989. The nursery is open for fifty one weeks a year from 8.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. The area is one which is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged.

The nursery is registered for forty nine children. The preschool room has thirty two children on the register who attend a variety of sessions during the week. Eighteen of these children receive funding. On the day of inspection there were nine funded children present, two of whom come from Welsh backgrounds. Children from many cultural backgrounds attend the setting and there were three of different ethnic backgrounds registered at the time of inspection all of whom speak English as a second language. There was one funded child at the time of inspection identified as having additional learning needs.

The nursery includes an entrance hall, office and staff room. The entrance hall is used also by the three year old children for daily Welsh sessions, cookery and gardening clubs. There is a large room with appropriate toilet facilities, a kitchen and other rooms for younger children. Outside there is a paved area and a large grassed area.

Five practitioners are employed to work with the three year old children and all have appropriate qualifications in early years education including one who has qualified teacher status. The lead practitioner supports the team of staff who work with the children. She is also the proprietor and manager. The last inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales was on 22 November, 2011. The setting was inspected by Estyn in July 2007.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- the children receive excellent support and care which ensures they feel safe and flourish in the happy and vibrant atmosphere of the setting;
- the learning environment and relationships between adults and children and with parents are excellent;
- children's achieve well and make good progress from their starting point;
- they enjoy a wide variety of exciting experiences which match very well their interests;
- the teaching is of a consistently good standard;
- practitioners use a wide range of imaginative experiences which engage the interest of all;
- children are confident and independent learners who play an active part in their learning, and
- the assessment by observation is used effectively to plan the next steps.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- there is a strong culture of professional reflection which is founded in excellent self-evaluation;
- the leader has a very clear and strongly held vision of the way forward;
- the excellent leadership is innovative and very high expectations are set for all;
- the excellent system of induction, mentoring and appraisal has a very positive effect on practitioners' performance and children's achievements;
- the setting improvement plan is innovative and ambitious and progress towards achieving its targets is excellent;
- practitioners have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and how to meet the needs and interests of individual children;
- the setting demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous professional development particularly in terms of developing innovative teaching strategies, and
- practitioners work exceptionally well as a team.

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's skills in the Welsh language

R2 Ensure that focused tasks are not over-directed

*Elements of the recommendations are identified in the setting improvement plan (SIP)

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which 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?

Good

Standards: Good

Every child achieves well according to their starting point and stage of development and each child makes good progress in all the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase.

Almost every child develops a sound vocabulary and knowledge of language patterns. The majority understands and follows instructions correctly and answers questions appropriately. With the encouragement of adults the majority speaks in full sentences. They all listen with interest to stories, concentrating well and they recite together parts they know. The majority develops a wide Welsh vocabulary and they sometimes use this during role play. Not every child, however, always speaks Welsh without adult encouragement

They enjoy singing songs very much and enunciate clearly. The majority enjoys browsing through books and all choose books voluntarily, handling them like readers. All enjoy mark-making both indoors and in the outside area and they experiment confidently with a wide range of materials. Every child uses mathematical language correctly when comparing the length, height or size of objects when playing. The majority uses fingers to count and recognises common shapes. All develop their information and communication technology skills well through using a computer and appropriate programmes and by using the compact disc player. Every child shows good creative skills when engaged in role play, in dance and in their art work.

All develop exceptional levels of independence, self-confidence and self-control. The majority concentrates for extended periods while playing or exploring outdoors and all enjoy their learning very much.

Wellbeing: Excellent

The children, without exception, are eager to come to the nursery and enjoy every minute of their time there. Relationships within the setting are excellent. The close and warm relationship between the adults and the children makes them feel safe and happy. The self-confidence and contentment of the children show that they are appreciated and respected and they, in turn, respect and like the adults. They show concern for one another, the practitioners and visitors.

All children have an extremely positive attitude to learning and take an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences both indoors and outdoors and behave very well. They are always well-mannered and all show consideration towards others. The majority of children makes friends in the nursery and they are very fond of one another. An outstanding feature is the way in which the majority is sensitive to the needs and feelings of their friends. All make firm decisions and choices about their

learning and all are very confident. They look for their friends to play with them and show concern for them.

All children understand that eating healthily, dental hygiene and keeping fit are important for their health and they name healthy foods and things they should not eat. They enjoy eating lunch together every day and they behave very politely at the table. Children go to the toilet independently and then wash their hands.

They enjoy their visits to the local community, for example, to the post office and the university's natural area and they take part in many fundraising activities which include people in the community.

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

The standard of planning is good. Before planning, practitioners evaluate the week's provision and results. They discuss all children's achievements, progress and individual needs and consider assessments they have made through observing the children. They include children in planning by asking them about their interests and what they like doing; this is a very good feature. Practitioners use all this information well to inform the next cycle of provision; as a result, planning responds very well to children's interests and needs. A wide range of interesting and active learning experiences is planned which enables children to make good progress towards meeting the outcomes of the Foundation Phase. Planning is flexible and practitioners adapt it to meet children's interests. Adults build on children's knowledge, understanding, skills and interests well and in a way that is meaningful to them.

Practitioners give children good opportunities to develop into enthusiastic, confident and independent learners and to develop good creative, physical, linguistic and mathematical skills. Children receive very good opportunities to explore their natural environment by exploring the university's large natural area where they enjoy investigating the bamboo jungle, woodlands, stream and meadow. They learn about sustainable development by collecting waste food, paper and plastic for recycling.

By being involved in their interesting experiences and co-operating within the setting's close learning community children have good opportunities to develop a strong relationship with others. They show respect and tolerance towards all, including people from other cultural backgrounds.

Children receive a good model of the Welsh language in their daily sessions. Practitioners extend children's Welsh through rhymes, songs and stories which contain rich language and a wide vocabulary. They celebrate the Welsh culture by holding a St David's Day concert and celebrating Saint Dwynwen's day and cooking traditional Welsh foods.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and of current developments in the field; this provides a firm foundation for and gives clear direction to the provision. They understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase well and they have high expectations of all children according to their stage of development. Behaviour is managed in a very sensitive and positive way and as a result children learn important lifelong attitudes including showing respect, sensitivity and kindness towards others.

Practitioners use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies to stimulate children effectively. They make good use of open-ended questions to extend children's learning and their thinking skills and the flexibility of teaching meets pupils' individual needs well. Teaching is at its best when children choose what they want to do and have ample time to investigate and enjoy their experiences. There is, however, a tendency at times to over direct focused tasks.

Children have good opportunities to make decisions and choices about their learning and this promotes well their independence and self-confidence. On the whole, practitioners give children enough time to immerse themselves in their learning experiences, for example, when going out to play and exploring and they intervene only if there is an opportunity to extend their learning. The children have continuous access to the outdoors and this enriches well their learning.

Practitioners know and understand the children very well. They assess through observing the children at their learning experiences identifying significant things and discussing their findings with one another. Practitioners feed the information that is gathered into the next cycle of planning; the impact of this is seen in good provision. They keep continuous records of children's achievements in their "Learning adventure" which include useful and thorough information together with pictures which give a clear history of all children's experiences, progress, development and achievements presented in a very interesting way; this is a very good feature. Children's progress is measured regularly in all learning areas and practitioners use this information well to meet children's needs and interests. Parents receive their children's "Learning Adventures" when they leave to go to school. These contain every child's story of their time in the nursery which is meaningful to parents and easy to understand.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners have created a homely atmosphere in the setting where the children feel very comfortable and happy. All children are appreciated and practitioners show respect for their ideas and interests.

They develop well children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit by providing snacks of cereal and milk and through regular dance and physical exercise sessions. Children's curiosity about their own lives and beliefs and those of other children are developed well through celebrating the Chinese New Year and Hindu parents come in to celebrate Diwali with the children. They celebrate the

main Christian festivals such as Christmas and Mothering Sunday. Children's sense of awe and wonder about the world around them is promoted well through the good opportunities they have to explore the natural world surrounding the setting. Staff nurture well the values they believe are necessary to the development of the responsible child. The children learn about the importance of fairness, honesty and truth by following the staff's personal example. The provision enables the children to socialise well, to take responsibility, to display initiative and to develop a good understanding of living and sharing within their small community. They know well the difference between right and wrong in the context of their lives in the setting and have regular opportunities to make decisions and they enjoy every experience.

The effective arrangements which exist to support children's health and wellbeing contribute well to their general development and wellbeing and support their learning. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The setting has an appropriate policy for safeguarding children and staff are aware of it and know well the steps to be taken. Every practitioner has received child protection training and all necessary procedures for safeguarding are in place, meet regulations and ensure children's safety at all times. The provision for children with additional learning needs is good and children make good progress.

Learning environment: Excellent

There is a very welcoming, warm and inclusive ethos in the setting. Adults show great affection and kindness towards everyone and all children are valued. The excellent relationships which exist are the foundation of the life and work of the setting and practitioners know the children and their needs and interests very well as a result of the key worker system which the nursery uses. They respond to these needs by using their good knowledge of children's backgrounds. All children have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and practitioners place a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. As a result of the affection and respect for the child and the values and standards shown by staff, children develop tolerance, positive attitudes towards their learning and very good behaviour. Children show great interest in and kindness towards their peers, adults and visitors.

There is an excellent supply of resources of the highest standard which is used very effectively to support learning and teaching. The ratio of adults to children is excellent and staff are well qualified. They address the requirements of the Foundation Phase very successfully and children have interesting experiences which respond exceptionally well to their interests and their stage of development. The building is a purpose built nursery and has excellent facilities. The room is sufficient in size for the number of children on the register. They have ample room to role play, paint, browse through books and all enjoy their excellent outdoor experiences. An excellent feature is the continuous use made of the outdoors, especially the university's natural area to give the children unique experiences.

The setting has positive policies and procedures which are known to all for dealing with problems of aggressive behaviour, promoting equal opportunities and human

rights. These are monitored and implemented effectively. The group is registered with the CSSIW and there were no recommendations in the last report.

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

The leader gives very clear and firm direction to the life and work of the setting and the improvement process. She has an exceptionally clear vision of the way forward which is firmly grounded in a thorough understanding of child development. She puts all her efforts into achieving this vision in her successful efforts to ensure all children fulfill their potential. The child and his/her needs and unique interests are at the centre of everything and the leader has created a very happy and positive ethos.

Her leadership is innovative and she has very high expectations of all. Her philosophy is exemplified in the rich, first-hand experiences children enjoy and the organisation which enables children to make decisions and choices about their learning. She is a strong driving force and her leadership is dynamic. She develops practitioners very well through numerous opportunities to engage in professional training. The effect of this is seen in the creative provision and the emphasis on teaching strategies, namely scaffolding and sustained shared thinking, to extend children's thinking skills.

The setting improvement plan which is derived from the setting's self-evaluation gives very strong direction to the nursery. The leader is very aware of everything that happens in the setting and she understands and fulfills her role in an exemplary way. She knows the setting's performance well and uses robust information to make effective decisions. She discharges her legal duties fully. National and local priorities are met according to the requirements of the Assembly and the authority, for example, the requirements of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners fulfill their roles exceptionally effectively showing strong commitment from which the children benefit. All contribute to strategic planning enthusiastically. The leader shares the values, aims and objectives she wishes to promote by personal example and through ongoing discussion and staff development.

She has implemented an innovative system for mentoring and inducting staff which is undertaken by an experienced teacher and a group leader. This has a very positive impact on practitioners' performance and as a result on children's achievements. New staff are also inducted by them and they benefit from a period of settling in the nursery. The leader is firmly committed to continuing professional development in order to develop innovative approaches to teaching and she has succeeded in developing a team of practitioners who work extremely effectively with one another. Relationships with parents are excellent and contribute significantly to children's learning. The leader fulfills national and local priorities

Improving quality: Excellent

The procedures for self-evaluation are excellent. The setting makes excellent use of its self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation report identifies strengths and areas for development very well and leads to robust strategies for improvement which ensure positive advantages for all children. The leader consults with staff, parents and carers very thoroughly to inform the self-evaluation. She uses information received from parents to gather opinion and identify areas to be developed. She also makes extremely effective use of the support of the local authority's Foundation Phase advisory teacher and staff implement her recommendations effectively.

Following the self-evaluation process, a setting improvement plan is produced which shows an excellent awareness of the nursery's performance. The plan is innovative and ambitious and gives clear direction to the life and work of the nursery. Progress towards achieving its targets is excellent and is monitored regularly. It focuses on raising standards by setting challenging targets to improve provision. The creative, active and child-centred experiences which meet extremely well children's needs and interests have been implemented as a result of the robust process of self-evaluation which ensures a very positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing.

Practitioners, including the leader, have an annual interview to evaluate performance and to identify their professional development needs. They attend all in-service training courses provided by the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin regularly in order to develop new teaching methods. The positive effect of this can be seen on teaching and children's wellbeing as they implement what they have learned. The leader has visited other settings in order to see good practice and they attend training meetings with other practitioners which are organised by the local authority in order to discuss current developments; this is a very good feature.

Partnership working: Good

The setting co-operates well with others to present learning experiences. The leader works very closely and effectively with the local authority's Foundation Phase advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. Positive results of this partnership can be seen in the improvements in provision and standards. The nursery works well also with the NDNA and practitioners attend training courses arranged by Gogerddan Childcare Ltd. linking with other nurseries in the area.

The setting works closely with stakeholders, especially parents, and it is very willing to consult with them and receive suggestions from them. There is a notice board for parents about the nursery's activities and suggestions from parents are invited. There are also good partnerships with schools which facilitates their transition when children leave. Teachers from local schools have visited the children and setting to meet them before they begin.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are deployed well in order to make the most effective use of their expertise and ensure good provision. Staff use indoor resources effectively in order to provide interesting experiences for children. They measure the effect of resources on learning and teaching and plan for resource needs in the future. They use the outdoors continuously to develop children's skills in every learning area and this is one of the strengths of the setting's provision.

Leaders make the best use of the setting's resources and of funding to offer the best provision and succeed in so doing. The setting prioritises its expenditure in order to respond to its targets for improvement. Financial decisions are evaluated effectively by the leader in order to ensure positive outcomes in raising standards. The setting provides very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parent questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received.

Responses to discussions with children

During the sessions observed children were eager to come to the nursery and settled happily on arrival. Their relationships with their peers and adults are excellent. The inclusive ethos ensures they all feel safe and secure. This was evident in their confidence to initiate conversations and ask questions. All children demonstrate a strong sense of trust and know that practitioners are there to help them.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Branwen Llewelyn Jones	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

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

Glossary of terms

<p>Areas of Learning</p>	<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
<p>CSSIW</p>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<p>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</p>	<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>
<p>Foundation Phase</p>	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
<p>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</p>	<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	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.

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.