



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

**A report on**

**Little Stars  
Maesyrhandir CP School  
Plantation Lane  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 1LQ**

**Date of inspection: May 2019**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Little Stars

Name of setting	Little Stars
Category of care provided	Sessional day care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Alison Ellis
Person in charge	Sally-Ann Phillips
Number of places	24
Age range of children	3 to 4 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	5
Number of children funded for up to five terms	12
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 11.30am
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	29/11/2016

A report on Little Stars  
May 2019

Date of previous Estyn inspection	12/11/2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	21/05/2019
Additional information	
Many children speak English as their first language. A few children are learning English as an additional language.	

## Summary

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Learning</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Care and development</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and assessment</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Non-compliance**

*No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.*

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve children's listening and early writing skills
- R2 Ensure that provision enables children to build on their skills progressively and successfully, including children's creative skills
- R3 Improve opportunities to promote diversity and cultural awareness

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children make confident choices about where they want to play and choose resources independently. They communicate their needs and preferences successfully. For example, they ask if they can have playdough or request that a practitioner joins them in the role-play area. Children are confident that they are listened to and their choices respected. Nearly all children choose who they play with and move from one activity to another effectively.

Nearly all children are secure and settled. They arrive happily and smile as they wave goodbye to their parents and carers. Nearly all form bonds of affection with practitioners successfully. They approach practitioners for reassurance and comfort, which they receive promptly. This makes them feel secure, happy and relaxed.

Most children contribute beneficially to themes and topics. For example, they tell practitioners what they already know about caterpillars and fruit. This enables practitioners to plan worthwhile activities based around children's existing knowledge and interests.

Most children interact well together and are developing friendships. They respond when prompted to say 'please' and 'thank you' during snack time. A few children show empathy towards each other. For example, they check on a friend that has hurt themselves and tell a practitioner that they are okay. Nearly all children show patience as they wait for others to collect their toothbrushes before cleaning their teeth. Overall, nearly all children behave well. However, a few disrupt others during group times.

Nearly all children enjoy their play and learning. They are interested and excited about their activities. For example, a group of children use magnifying glasses to go on a bug hunt in the outdoor area and are curious when they see maintenance workers cutting the grass.

Nearly all children are developing their independence skills well. For example, they use the toilet independently and wash and dry their hands without support. Many put their coats on confidently. Nearly all children develop independence skills well during snack time as they pour their own drinks and choose their fruit successfully.

### **Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Adequate**

During their time at the setting, most children make good progress from their individual starting points, in many areas of learning. They make effective progress in their personal and social development and many develop their thinking skills well. For example, they work out how to reorganise resources successfully to make a new target game which they play with a friend.

Many children develop their communication skills appropriately. For example, they chat happily to practitioners about their birthday. A very few children give simple

instructions to a friend successfully when playing a simple rolling game in the outdoor area. A minority of children look at books independently and turn pages successfully. However, a minority of children do not develop their listening skills in line with their age and stage of development successfully. For example, they lose concentration quickly during a small group story session and find it difficult to answer simple questions about the text. A minority of children take part in a few large-scale mark making opportunities such as painting on a chalk board with water successfully. However, most children do not experiment with a range of mark-making equipment or develop an understanding of writing for different purposes effectively. As a result, they do not develop their fine motor skills such as gripping pencils and crayons well enough.

Most children develop their numeracy skills well. They say numbers in order to at least ten and many count objects to five accurately. A minority of children make good use of mathematical vocabulary. For example, they tell a friend that they can have two more hoops as they play hoopla together.

Overall, most children develop their physical skills well. They run, climb and balance successfully in the outdoor area. A minority of children throw beanbags and hoops at a target with developing control. Many improve their coordination as they use a range of tools such as when they pretend to spread butter on toast in the role-play area.

A majority of children develop their creative skills through activities such as painting appropriately when given the opportunity. However, overall children do not experiment and express themselves using a wide range of media regularly. As a result, they do not make strong enough progress in their creative skills. Most children access and use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment effectively. For example, they drag and drop images successfully during a counting game played on an interactive white board.

Most children develop their Welsh language skills effectively. They respond to a range of Welsh words and phrases positively and join in with a few songs well. Most children use Welsh words such as colours and numbers successfully. A minority are beginning to use simple phrases when encouraged.

### **Care and development: Good**

Practitioners have a robust understanding of the setting's safeguarding policy and are fully aware of procedures to follow if they have concerns. They use the useful range of policies and procedures to create and support a safe environment for children. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

All practitioners encourage a healthy lifestyle. They provide children with nutritionally balanced snacks and drinks and promote oral health well. Practitioners provide children with regular opportunities for physical exercise in the outdoor area successfully. For example, children enjoy developing their coordination as they ride on balance bikes in the outdoor area. All practitioners have completed first aid training and know how to deal with accidents effectively. Practitioners follow the setting's procedures for administering medication consistently and complete records effectively. They practise good hygiene procedures such as wearing protective clothing during nappy changing and snack time.

Nearly all practitioners manage interactions with children successfully. They promote positive behaviour well through a consistent and kind approach and act as positive role models, treating all children respectfully. They follow the behaviour management policy, which sets realistic and clear boundaries for children. Nearly all practitioners acknowledge children's efforts and accomplishments and use praise effectively to promote children's self-esteem and confidence, for example when praising children for tidying up before group time.

Nearly all practitioners are approachable, know children well and show sensitivity to the needs of individuals. They deliver care in a nurturing manner and offer cuddles and reassurance when needed. Overall, nearly all practitioners promote children's play, learning and development successfully and meet their individual needs well. Nearly all practitioners strive to understand each child's individual routine and preferences. The setting has worthwhile systems to support children with additional needs, and practitioners work closely with key agencies and parents for the benefit of the child.

**Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Adequate**

A range of learning experiences promote children's personal and social, moral and spiritual development well. For example, practitioners encourage children to take turns using the binoculars as they hunt for bugs in the garden. They provide effective opportunities for children to learn about and care for living things such as when they support them to be gentle with a friend's kitten. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children successfully when they encourage them to plant wildflower seeds and observe them as they grow.

Nearly all practitioners engage children in conversation successfully and provide suitable opportunities for them to join in with songs and rhymes. A few practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to access books such as in a boat in the garden. However, the indoor story area is not sufficiently inviting, and story sessions do not engage children well enough. Practitioners provide an appropriate range of mark-making equipment such as pencils and crayons. However, they do not provide effective opportunities for children to explore a range of mark-making equipment or develop an understanding of writing for different purposes.

Practitioners provide a range of opportunities for children to develop their numeracy and ICT skills well. For example, they support children to program a battery-operated toy to move along a number line successfully.

Overall the setting provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area provides ample opportunities for running, balancing and target skills. It presents children with appropriate challenge and enables them to develop their confidence successfully.

Practitioners provide a few opportunities for children to paint and draw. However, they often focus on the end product rather than the process. For example, children fill an adult's drawing of a fish with pre-selected coloured tissue paper. This limits opportunities for children to explore and follow their own creative interests and ideas.



Practitioners support children's Welsh language development effectively. They model Welsh through singing songs, counting and reading a few Welsh stories successfully.

Many practitioners question children effectively and give them time to think before they answer. For example, they ask children to think about what made a loud bang heard from the room next door. Open ended resources such as guttering, and crates provide effective opportunities for children to explore and try things out. This supports children's thinking skills successfully.

Generally, most practitioners have a sound understanding of foundation phase practice. They explain things clearly, model activities well and combine focused tasks with children's free play successfully. As a result, children sustain interest in many tasks and enjoy periods of uninterrupted learning. Many practitioners are positive language role-models and introduce new vocabulary to children such as compass and millipede successfully.

The setting has sound assessment procedures. Practitioners observe children and identify what they can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. They record suitable observations to show children's progress and use the information appropriately to identify next steps in their learning. However, in a few areas, practitioners do not ensure that provision enables children to build on their skills progressively and successfully.

### **Environment: Good**

Leaders ensure that the setting is a secure and safe environment for children. They make regular safety checks of the building and practitioners complete daily safety checks of the environment to ensure it is safe for children. The premises provide a comfortable, stimulating and clean environment for children to learn and play. Leaders have established clear systems, policies and procedures to achieve this such as ensuring robust arrangements for managing access to the premises and receiving visitors. Practitioners follow safety procedures for children's arrival and departure effectively.

Leaders organise the play and learning environment to support children's independence effectively. For example, the construction area has open, low-level storage enabling children to identify and choose toys and resources easily. Toilets and hand-washing facilities are age-appropriate. This allows children to access them with little support. However, a minority of children cannot reach the coat hooks where their bags and jackets are stored, which limits their independence in accessing and looking after their belongings.

Practitioners promote children's sense of belonging effectively. For example, a large display shows photographs of children with items they consider important to them. The outdoor area offers an interesting and challenging environment for children's play and learning. Practitioners make regular use of this area and plan worthwhile opportunities for children to explore and develop their thinking skills such as exploring natural materials in the mud kitchen.

Leaders ensure that the furniture, equipment, toys and resources available to children are appropriate and meet their needs. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources, all within children's easy reach. Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, children wear traditional dress as part of their St David's Day celebrations. However, resources to promote cultural awareness and diversity are generally limited.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

Leaders share a clear vision for the setting to celebrate each child's individuality and support them to become confident and resilient learners. The person in charge works closely with the responsible individual and keeps them well informed through regular meetings and daily updates. She works effectively with practitioners to provide a caring and engaging environment for all children.

There is an up to date statement of purpose that ensures parents can make an informed choice about using the setting. The person in charge shares an appropriate range of policies with practitioners effectively and communicates her expectations clearly.

Overall, arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement are successful and all practitioners are committed to improving quality. The setting makes beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process. Nearly all practitioners know what the setting does well and areas that they have identified for improvement. For example, they explain how a change in their approach has supported children to develop their thinking skills successfully.

The setting's appraisal and supervision systems communicate high standards and review the performance of most practitioners well. Practitioners have good opportunities to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work and are clear about their targets for improvement. Nearly all practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact, such as improving practitioners' understanding of how to develop children's skills through block play. However, leaders do not always ensure that professional development opportunities improve practitioners' skills consistently in a few important areas such as literacy.

Overall, the setting makes good use of practitioners and resources to support children's wellbeing, play and learning effectively. Leaders make sure that the setting exceeds required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners.

The setting has a worthwhile range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Practitioners keep parents and carers informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing effectively through an open morning, a useful notice board and informal updates. There is a strong partnership with the school that supports children's learning well and helps prepare them for the next stage of their education. For example, children visit the school to access ICT equipment such as an interactive whiteboard. This helps them feel a part of the school and supports their ICT and numeracy skills effectively.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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