



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

**3 @ Cradoc
Cradoc C.P. School
Cradoc
Brecon
Powys
LD3 9LR**

Date of inspection: February 2012

by

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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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Context

3 @ Cradoc is an English medium pre-school setting based in Cradoc Primary School. Cradoc is a small rural community near the market town of Brecon in Powys.

The children who attend the setting come from the local area that is described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. All the children have English as their first language and a very few come from homes where some Welsh is spoken. A very few have ethnic minority backgrounds. At present no children are identified as having additional learning needs (ALN).

The setting is registered to provide care and early years education for 16 children from the age of three to admission to school. It provides morning sessions daily during term time and has 12 children on roll. The local authority funds places for each child up to 10 hours per week.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in June 2010. This is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

This is a happy, vibrant setting because:

- children achieve well and make good and sometimes very good progress;
- high quality care, support and guidance assures children's wellbeing;
- a wide range of imaginative learning experiences and effective teaching successfully engages children as learners; and
- the learning environment and the partnerships with parents and the school are excellent.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for further improvement are good because:

- the setting is very well led, managed and developed;
- a strong teamwork ethos and clear strategic direction are evident;
- self-evaluation and planning for improvement are well established; and
- there is a strong record of securing progress towards the setting's goals.

Recommendations

In order to improve further the setting should:

R1 enhance skills of information and communication technology (ICT);

R2 continue to integrate planning and assessment strategies and to focus the next steps in learning for children of different abilities; and

R3 structure actions to implement the setting's goals and evaluate their impact.

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

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all children who come to the setting have well developed skills for their age and stage of development. They quickly settle and appear happy, inquisitive, confident learners as they eagerly engage in play activities. Their personal, social and communication skills are particularly well developed and with very few exceptions they make at least good and sometimes very good progress. All apply their skills purposefully as they try out new experiences.

Nearly all children have very good skills in language. They speak clearly, use an increasing vocabulary and readily initiate conversations and ask questions. Many sustain simple extended dialogues, for example about their play or life at home. Most readily participate in group discussions, demonstrate good listening skills and follow instructions well. They readily sing songs, chant familiar rhymes and happily engage in role play. They enjoy stories, attentively follow the pictures and text and handle books as readers. Most recognise their name and a majority begin to identify letters and sounds. Most develop early writing skills well, for example as they make appointments at the vets.

Good progress is evident in early mathematical skills. Most confidently match and order objects and develop counting skills well. They count groups of objects to five with increasing accuracy, develop a good understanding of money; reliably name common shapes and begin to describe their properties. Most gain confidence in using appropriate mathematical language, for example positional language to describe where a toy is.

Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and good in the creative and physical aspects. However, children's skills in using ICT are underdeveloped.

Most children respond confidently to Welsh in structured situations. They readily sing songs and use familiar vocabulary to count, describe the weather and participate in games. However, very few use Welsh spontaneously during play.

Wellbeing: Excellent

With very few exceptions children enter the setting with confidence and happily engage in a range of play activities. They are cooperative, well motivated and inquisitive learners who work well as individuals or in small groups. The level of concentration and sustained interest is excellent.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Most readily make choices about how and what they learn and they are encouraged to help plan which activities to have in the setting. For instance, they suggested activities and resources for the outdoor area.

In line with their age most children have a good understanding of how they become healthy, both through the foods they eat and the physical activities they undertake. They enjoy energetic indoor and outdoor activities and help to prepare healthy snacks. They understand the need for hygiene and wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. The children develop very good social skills during snack time. Furthermore, community involvement is evident through fundraising activities, such as serving refreshments at a coffee morning.

All children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem and many show an impressive level of independence. Relationships within the setting are excellent. Practitioners are positive role models and this helps children feel safe, happy and secure. The children take turns, share equipment and help tidy resources sensibly. They are considerate and often show spontaneous courtesy to others.

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

The setting provides an imaginative range of well planned learning experiences that meet well the needs of children and the community. This provision engages children in enjoyable well structured activities. Long, medium and short term planning is securely based on the Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework and links activities closely to relevant areas of learning.

Practitioners work very well together to implement activities that challenge children to learn effectively. Detailed fortnightly plans ensure an appropriate balance across the different areas of learning and builds well on children's prior knowledge and skills. There is good emphasis on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy, but activities involving ICT are less evident.

Planning reflects a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and assures the progressive development of children's skills. Well chosen themes promote continuity and assist the provision of meaningful contexts for learning. There is a good balance of activities that well promotes progress towards Foundation Phase outcomes. Many opportunities are planned for children to encounter new experiences, solve problems and encourage them to think for themselves. Practitioners know the children very well and increasingly plan focused activities to match their differing needs and abilities.

The learning experiences encourage positive relationships, foster respect and tolerance and promote awareness of other cultures, such as through celebrating festivals. There are a good variety of indoor and outdoor activities. The use of visits and the school grounds successfully promotes understanding of the natural world. Awareness of sustainability and the impact we have on the environment is also well promoted.

Good provision is made to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales and practitioners, who are learners of Welsh, successfully promote use of the language. This is clearly evident in everyday routines.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is effective. It is successful in making learning fun because practitioners skillfully promote a wide range of learning experiences. They have a secure understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a range of strategies well to stimulate play and develop the learning activities in ways that engage children's interest. Practitioners ensure children have enough time to complete tasks and skillfully build on their ideas. They observe and intervene appropriately. Practitioners encourage children to make choices and use questioning well to develop thinking skills. Teaching is most effective when the focus is to challenge children to extend their learning and the setting leader often provides an exemplar in this regard. Planning provides clear guidance for teaching and the identification of small steps in learning for different groups of children is a positive development.

Arrangements for assessment are comprehensive and well structured. A baseline assessment is implemented and day-to-day observations are recorded. These are used well to praise children's achievements. Practitioners have skillfully adapted procedures to match the needs of the setting. Focused assessments are a key feature and a database is used effectively to compile individual profiles. The outcomes of assessment provide a good basis to link assessments and learning objectives more closely and thereby to help plan the next steps of learning.

Practitioners make time, on an informal basis, to be available for parents or carers to discuss their child's progress before and after sessions. Informative reports of progress are provided when children leave the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

High quality care, support and guidance are provided and this impacts particularly well on relationships within the setting. Children's health, safety and wellbeing are skilfully promoted, with good emphasis on spiritual, moral social and cultural development. This has a significant impact on children's personal and social development.

The setting strongly promotes positive values, including fairness, honesty and respect for others. Children are sensitively encouraged to take responsibility, show initiative and to behave well. They develop a good understanding of living and sharing with others and are encouraged to pause and reflect on the wonders of the natural world. The celebration of festivals and the making and tasting of different foods well promotes awareness of different cultural traditions.

Induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting are effective. Close liaison with parents and the school helps to ensure a smooth transition.

Arrangements to provide children with personal and specialist support when needed are well established. The setting draws on expertise within the school and maintains links with relevant LA and health services, such as to assist the integration of children with ALN. The support provided for more able children is sound and this provision is a current focus for improvement.

Systematic procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Risk assessments are routinely implemented, such as for visits. All practitioners are trained in first aid and have valid a criminal records bureau disclosure.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting has a welcoming, supportive and inclusive ethos. Appropriate account is taken of the diversity of children's backgrounds and they are treated as individuals. Excellent relationships are a cornerstone of the life and work of the setting and practitioners sensitively encourage understanding of different customs and traditions. They consistently promote high standards of behaviour and ensure equality. The consistent implementation of established policies ensures children are free from undue anxiety. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

There are sufficient practitioners for the number of children. The setting is well resourced to provide for the Foundation Phase curriculum, although provision for ICT is limited. The accommodation is well suited to the setting's needs. The use of space is carefully considered and the organisation of resources imaginative. Displays significantly enhance the classroom and use made of the school grounds to provide meaningful contexts for learning is excellent. The integration of indoor and outdoor activities is developing well.

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

The setting is very well led, managed and developed. This results in a friendly supportive ethos of mutual respect. A clear sense of purpose and direction is evident and a range of detailed policies and procedures are implemented well. The school's headteacher and governing body are appropriately involved in strategic planning and in maintaining oversight of the setting's development. The contribution of a link governor is enthusiastic and supportive.

The setting leader skillfully creates clear vision for improvement, sets high expectations and is successful in ensuring other practitioners have a good understanding of their role. A culture of self-improvement and good teamwork permeates the life and work of the setting. This is a particularly strong feature that assures high professional standards and enables the setting to build on its success.

In collaboration with the school arrangements for performance management and appraisal are systematic and well focused. The process sets meaningful targets and is effective. Practitioners respond positively to professional advice, attend appropriate training and readily embrace national and local priorities. The provision incorporates the Foundation Phase ethos very well.

Improving quality: Good

Procedures for quality improvement are well established and effective. A reflective culture of self-improvement is evident and there is a good track record in meeting

previous goals. Practitioners endeavour to take account of the views of parents, carers and children as much as possible. There are systematic procedures to identify strengths and areas for improvement and the goals identified are both relevant and achievable. However, the absence of simple plans of action leaves the means of their achievement unclear. The self-evaluation document is comprehensive and links closely with the annual audit of provision and the SIP. Evaluations of progress towards the setting's goals are a helpful feature of the SIP, but these seldom focus sharply enough on the impact of initiatives.

Networks of professional practice support practitioners' professional development well. The setting has beneficial links within the school and networking across a local cluster of settings successfully encourages the sharing of good practice.

Partnership working: Excellent

A number of beneficial partnerships impact significantly on children's progress and wellbeing. Practitioners have excellent relationships with parents and value their opinions. There is a suggestions box and questionnaires are implemented annually to seek their views. Day-to-day communication is relaxed and friendly. Information is freely exchanged about the children and their achievements. A range of media, including a website, newsletters and a notice board, is used well to communicate information about the curriculum and events. Parental involvement is well promoted, for example, they assist with visits, the loan of resources, fund raising and working parties.

The setting is an integral feature of the school. The partnership between the nursery/reception teacher and the setting leader considerably enhances systems and practices within the setting. Furthermore, close links with the staff help to ensure a smooth transition to school life.

Good use is made of some resources within the community to enhance learning. The setting is working to improve this aspect of the provision.

Joint planning with the LA, including the provision of training and the input of an advisory teacher in providing both support and challenge, is effective in helping the setting to move forward and strengthen provision. Practitioners value and respond positively to the advice and recommendations of partner agencies.

Resource management: Good

The deployment of practitioners and the use and organisation of resources is efficient. Sufficient good quality learning resources are easily accessible. Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced in working with young children and effective routines ensure the best use of their time and expertise. Furthermore, systematic arrangements to review and support their professional development are implemented.

An annual audit highlights any resources needed and careful thought is given to the allocation of funding to meet the setting's needs. A good example is the recent development of an area for outdoor play.

Careful stewardship of the available funding is evident. However, the evaluation of spending decisions is insufficiently formalised.

Resource management is good and the use of funding represents value for money because the children thrive and achieve well.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report:

Parents:

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Learners:

During the sessions observed children settled happily on arrival. They have excellent relationships with their peers and with the adults. An inclusive ethos ensures children feel safe and secure. This was clearly evident in their confidence to initiate conversations and state their preferences. All children demonstrate a strong sense of trust and know that practitioners provide them with care and guidance.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

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| Michael T. Ridout | 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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

Glossary of terms

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| Areas of Learning | <p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development |
| CSSIW | <p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p> |
| Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) | <p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnership's conditions of registration.</p> |
| Foundation Phase | <p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p> |
| Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP) | <p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p> |
| Local authority advisory teacher | <p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p> |
| Mudiad Meithrin | <p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p> |
| National Childminding | <p>This is a professional membership association working</p> |

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|--|---|
| Association (NCMA) | 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. |