



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

**Abermule Little Rascals
Abermule Community Primary School
Abermule
Montgomery
Powys
SY15 6ND**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

Mary Dyas

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 Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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About the setting

Abermule Little Rascals meets in the community centre attached to Abermule Primary School. It is an English-medium setting serving the local community and has the use of one room in the centre with a kitchen area and access along a corridor to a securely fenced outdoor grassed area. The room is used by other groups and equipment has to be set out and put away daily. The playgroup is open from 9.15am to 11.45am from Tuesday to Friday during school terms.

Children attending the setting are considered to come from mostly advantaged homes and almost all move on to the primary school for the next stage in their education. At the time of the inspection there were seven children in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority. All children speak English as their home language and there are no parents who are Welsh speaking. There are no children with additional learning needs but the setting is inclusive and has good arrangements in place for any necessary provision

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in September 2011 and by Estyn in March 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- All children make good progress across all areas of learning;
- The setting provides a good range of interesting and exciting activities which engage and motivate the children;
- All children are happy in the setting and have good relationships with the adults who work with them;
- The teaching is good overall; and
- The setting is very well led and managed.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader and her team have a strong commitment to improve standards and provision; and
- The current process of self-evaluation clearly reflects the needs of the setting and forms an effective basis for planning for improvement.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure the daily use of incidental Welsh throughout the sessions in order to improve provision for standards in Welsh language development.

R2 Further develop the outdoor provision to offer children regular access to all areas of learning outside as well as inside.

R3 Develop processes to ensure parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, wellbeing and development.

R4 Ensure systems are in place for performance management of staff and identification of their training needs.

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: **Good**

Practitioners work very well together to plan a wide range of activities which stimulate, engage and challenge most children to learn effectively. Plans are based on ensuring coverage of the areas of learning using the Foundation Phase Development Profile and on specific needs identified from observations of children's learning.

Practitioners know the children very well and respond appropriately to their varying needs, abilities and interests. Planning clearly addresses the needs and interests of the children and learning experiences successfully enable children to develop communication, numeracy and ICT skills every day.

Welsh is well used during group time through reading stories in Welsh and singing Welsh songs but the consistent use of incidental Welsh throughout the session to develop children's independent use of the language is limited. All children celebrate and learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate St David's Day. The setting provides opportunities for children to learn about other cultures through their celebrations of festivals such as Chinese New Year and Divali.

All children are beginning to understand the need for recycling. They place their leftover snack into a waste bin which the 'helpwr heddiw' empties into a larger one outdoors and then they watch it being collected weekly by the refuse lorry.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. All practitioners are aware of the learning objectives for activities and have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase principles and practice. They use a wide range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning experiences which interest and appeal to children of all abilities.

Adults give children sufficient time to complete a task or to develop an idea and generally intervene appropriately and sensitively when needed. Teaching is most effective when practitioners use open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking. Children's progress and wellbeing are tracked across all areas of learning and this information is used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Informal assessment is effective in identifying individual progress and planning for the next steps. However, the formal recording of observations is still in the process of development. There is a daily verbal exchange of information with parents and carers during the handover at the beginning and end of sessions but as yet no opportunities for parents to receive more specific information of their child's progress and what they can do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they start at the playgroup and the setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children. Almost all children attending the playgroup move on to the school where the setting is situated and the playleader works closely with the class teacher to support transition arrangements. The setting has good arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing and, although there are currently no children with additional learning needs, there are effective policies and procedures in place. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. Practitioners have received recent training and are aware of their responsibilities. A good range of policies is in place and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners create a warm and caring family atmosphere in the setting where children are valued and shown respect. All children behave well and relationships between children and between children and adults are very positive. The playgroup is an inclusive community which respects and celebrates diversity. Every child has access to all areas of learning and to the rich experiences provided and all make

good progress. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The playgroup has access to a grassed outdoor area which is accessed along a corridor from the classroom. This area is used daily and plans are in place to develop it further to reflect the principles of the Foundation Phase.

Practitioners are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to create a stimulating environment for learning. Practitioners regularly attend training courses to update their knowledge, understanding and skills. The group is well resourced with a range of high quality equipment which is used appropriately to support children's learning.

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

Strong and positive leadership is a strength of the setting. The playleader has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. The current improvement plan identifies appropriate areas for attention which are effectively addressed and progress monitored. Self-evaluation is an on-going process and has brought about improvements in many aspects of provision such as the increased involvement of the staff and management committee in the setting's self evaluation. Due to changes in management, the process for performance management has lapsed but the playleader and management committee are aware of this and plans are in place to address the issue.

Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities and use training effectively to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Under the guidance of the playleader, the management committee have a good understanding of what the setting needs to do to improve and take a real interest in the day to day work of the playgroup.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has good processes to evaluate its strengths and areas for development and practitioners demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement. The setting's has been involved in self evaluation for two or three years and the present document is detailed and comprehensively addresses the three key questions for inspection. Areas of success and improvement are clearly identified and targets for improvement are have been set and are being worked towards. Progress towards targets is meticulously recorded. All staff and the management committee are aware of the self evaluation process and the current targets for improvement and are involved in the annual review and evaluation.

The playleader and her staff respond well to advice and support, ensuring that changes result in improvements in children's standards and quality of provision. Practitioners make good use of Foundation phase training but have not yet had the opportunity to visit other settings. Overall, the playgroup has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

Parents and carers are kept well informed through newsletters and an informative notice board in the waiting area. The setting informally seeks the views of parents and carers on the work of the playgroup during discussions at the beginning and end of the sessions. The playgroup is very much at the heart of the local community and close links with the weekly toddler group which meets in the same building support induction of new children into the setting..

The setting has good links with Abermule Primary School and benefits from the advice and expertise of the headteacher and Foundation Phase teacher. The playgroup is also able to borrow equipment from the school. The Local Authority advisory teacher visits the setting regularly and provides advice and support which is much appreciated and there is good evidence that this advice has been implemented to good effect in improving the provision for the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of resources which are well used to support different learning experiences. Practitioners are effectively deployed to maximise children's learning and independence both indoors and out.

The treasurer of the management committee manages its finances efficiently. The committee is mindful of the impact of spending decisions on the quality of provision and the progress children make. The setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (fewer than 10).

Responses to discussions with children

Due to the small number of children present in the setting there is also no report on discussions with children.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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

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 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.