



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

**St Clares Nursery School
Clevis Crescent
Newton
CF36 5NR
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: June 2014

by

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Reporting Inspector**

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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About the setting

St Clare's Nursery is part of St Clare's School Porthcawl, which is a co-educational, non-selective independent school for children aged 2 ½ to 18 years. The school was established in 1938 by the Sisters of St Clares and is now part of an international group of schools that provides overall management. Children who attend the nursery come mainly from the surrounding areas, and from as far as Neath and Port Talbot.

The nursery (known throughout the report as the 'setting') caters for children aged two and a half to four years. Children may spend up to eight terms in the class before transferring to the reception class in St Clare's School in the September following their fourth birthday. Most children attend the nursery for a full day for at least two days a week. There are currently 18 children on roll in the nursery. Bridgend County Borough Council partly fund early years education places for nine four-year-olds and three three-year-olds in the nursery.

English is the predominant language of most children. A very few speak Welsh as their first language and very few speak other languages at home. A very few children have identified additional learning needs.

The Head of Prep at St Clare's School is responsible for the quality of education in the nursery. She oversees the two qualified teachers who are responsible for the day to day running of the setting. During the inspection the setting was also supported by two teaching assistants.

Estyn last inspected the setting in May 2008. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) do not inspect the setting.

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement on the current performance of the setting is judged to be excellent because:

- nearly all children make good, and most very good, progress during their time in the nursery;
- all children behave very well;
- teaching is excellent
- teachers and staff share high expectations of themselves and of the children;
- the management team has established an innovative and practical system of tracking individual and group progress that enables them to identify and address areas for development;

Good features:

- relationships between children and between adults and children are warm and caring; and
- all children are happy at the setting and enjoy their learning.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement of the setting are excellent because:

- leadership is highly effective;
- the setting has made very good progress in addressing the recommendations in the last inspection;
- the management team shares a vision for providing high quality care and education;

Good features:

- staff work well together as a strong team

Recommendations

R1. Further embed the assessment process

R2. Ensure the length of formal teaching times is appropriate for the age of the children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

Nearly all children make very good progress in all areas of learning. They achieve high standards for their age that exceed national expectations. Nearly all children are independent and confidently make choices about their learning. They are fully involved in the activities they choose and maintain high levels of concentration.

Nearly all children are highly articulate and convey their thoughts and feelings to adults and to one another clearly using a developing vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. They listen carefully and offer sensible suggestions to questions. When talking about a recent visit from a beekeeper most show good recall of what they learned; for example that the beekeeper wears special clothes and gloves so that he doesn't get stung. Nearly all join in with familiar rhymes and songs in both English and Welsh and enjoy actions and singing which enhance the experience. All children are developing their mark making skills. Many are beginning to recognise individual letters, especially those in their name. Older children are able to write some letters individually and are trying to write short sentences on their own.

Progress in numeracy is of a high standard. All children show a good understanding of numbers. Nearly all count confidently by rote to at least twenty. Nearly all older children count objects accurately to ten and most younger children to at least five.

Nearly all children use a range of electronic equipment confidently. Most are able to programme a toy to move around a grid and many use a computer to play age appropriate games. They are able to manipulate a mouse to select or move objects on the screen.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their Welsh language. They show a good understanding of the words and phrases to which they have been introduced and respond appropriately. Many show very good recall of the Welsh words they have been learning in the context of their current topic and can name several minibeasts in both Welsh and English.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enjoy their time in the setting. They arrive full of expectation for what they are going to do and settle quickly to their chosen activity. All children behave very well. They understand they must be polite and considerate to others and demonstrate this when they sit and listen quietly to adults during group sessions and

to their friends when they are expressing an opinion or answering a question. Nearly all children take turns well, share equipment, look after resources and develop responsibility, for example by helping to tidy up. When discussing a new topic many children make useful suggestions about what they already know and what they would like to find out more about.

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

The setting has developed a process of planning that successfully ensures coverage of all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Practitioners plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning activities based on themes that interest and engage all children. Practitioners know the children very well and respond appropriately to their varying needs, abilities and interests. Planning takes into account the use of skills ladders to ensure coverage of the range of skills. Planned activities successfully enable children to develop their communication, numeracy and ICT skills every day. Appropriate grouping according to age and ability during focussed teaching sessions ensures that individual needs are well supported and developed.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills and to learn about the world around them. Nearly all children learn to care about living things by sowing seeds and looking after the plants that grow in the garden. Welsh is used well during group times and practitioners reinforce the use of Welsh words incidentally throughout the sessions. Activities such as baking Welsh cakes and joining the main school for their Eisteddfod on St David's Day effectively promote the culture and traditions of Wales.

Teaching: Excellent

Leaders and practitioners all have very good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-selected activities across the curriculum. All practitioners have high expectations of themselves and of the children whatever their age or stage of development. Very good use is made of open questioning by practitioners to encourage children to think for themselves and to become independent learners. There is a good balance between adult support and intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas to develop their decision making skills. Teaching sessions generally have good pace and maintain children's interest. However, formal teaching sessions are sometimes overly long for the age of the children. Practitioners provide a highly

imaginative, interesting and exciting environment both indoors and outdoors that stimulates children to want to investigate and to learn.

Assessment begins with observation of children while they are engaged in their learning experiences. The information gathered informs the next steps in planning and contributes to the local authority's assessment document. The nursery has developed an innovative assessment tool from which they are able to track the progress of individual children. Using a baseline assessment, practitioners set both realistic and challenge targets for all children. Analysis of the data has enabled practitioners to identify both individual and group needs that they then address through planning and provision. This has had a very positive impact on children's progress and achievement. Although only in its first year of development, this unique and highly effective system links seamlessly into the main school assessment process. Nearly all pupils succeeded in exceeding their realistic targets and, in many cases, their challenge targets as well.

The setting provides parents with very good information about their child's progress through the year. This includes a formal parents evening in October to discuss targets, a full written report in December, an interim report in the spring term and a full end of year report.

Practitioners have put together a series of targets linked to progress in language and literacy, numeracy and personal and social development, which all children in the nursery have been working towards during the year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good arrangements are in place to support children's health and wellbeing. All children show a good understanding of what foods are healthy and they know that there are some foods that should be kept as occasional treats. They show understanding of sustainability when they follow the school's eco committee's procedures to recycle paper and plastic and to compost their left over food.

Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Children have good opportunities to experience awe and wonder at the world around them; for example, when they release the butterflies that they have observed developing from caterpillars.

Children who have been identified as having additional learning needs have full access to all areas of learning. Practitioners work hard to ensure that children's needs are clearly identified and individual learning plans are shared with parents and regularly reviewed. The nursery has worked well with outside agencies to meet the needs of such children.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

Learning environment: Good

The nursery is an inclusive community that respects, and celebrates diversity. All children have equal access to the full range of activities. The well- maintained building is bright and welcoming and accessed by both steps and a ramp. Displays of examples of recent children's work enhance the area and support the children's learning. There is direct access to the well resourced outdoor area which offers an abundance of opportunities to develop children's learning and skills.. Good attention is paid to safety and both building and outdoor space are secured while the children are there.

The school employs sufficient well-qualified practitioners who are experienced in working with young children. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. Practitioners work hard to meet the needs of all children and to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Walks around the extensive grounds and visits to the school's forest learning area help children develop a sense of curiosity about the world.

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

The setting is very strongly led by the teachers working closely with the school's Head of Prep. Practitioners have well defined job descriptions and they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. There are excellent procedures in place to ensure the management and development of staff performance. Whole school and personal targets are set. All practitioners share the high expectations of the management. The extensive work that has gone into developing the highly effective procedures for assessment and data analysis in the nursery is an example of this.

Practitioners work well together to create a very positive culture where adults, parents and children are valued and respected. They strive to give children the best experiences they can and ensure that they themselves are always doing their best. Teachers in the setting are included in the weekly staff meetings of the Prep School

and the Head of Prep also meets separately with the setting staff on a regular basis to discuss more specific issues. These meetings are critical to the monitoring of the school development plan and the identification of future priorities for school improvement.

Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities. They are fully involved in training an developments connected with the Foundation Phase and also with the Healthy Schools programme.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation is very much part of the work of the school and the setting is very much part of this. The self evaluation clearly identifies strengths and areas for development which are then fed into the school development plan. Progress towards targets is regularly reviewed and practitioners have a good understanding of the need to assess improvement against the impact on teaching and learning. The views of all parents of pupils throughout the school are sought during the autumn term through a questionnaire and a parental engagement group maintains an open forum where parents can have their say. All comments are considered and there is evidence that some have been included in the school's targets for improvement.

Practitioners in the setting are very open to advice and to new ideas. They share information and good practice with each other and are willing to try different ways of working to benefit the children. Practitioners have been very conscientious in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection. The embedding of these recommendations into the work of the setting has had a positive impact on children's experiences and learning.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents and carers. Newsletters and daily comments on the notice board keep them well informed and the nursery offers opportunities for parents to come to discuss their children's progress. Almost all parents speak highly of the work of the setting and all say their children enjoy attending.

Nearly all children move on from the nursery to the school's reception class. The nursery children are familiar with some of the routines of the school because their outdoor area is adjacent the infants' playground. A smooth transition is further enabled by visits from the reception class teacher to get to know the children. The professional advice received from the support teacher from the local authority

provides high quality support for the setting and there is good evidence that her advice has been acted upon to effect improvements that have had a positive impact on the learning experiences provided for the children.

Resource management: Good

There are sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners in the setting and they are deployed appropriately to make the best use of their experience and expertise. A good example of this is when they group the children by age and ability for focussed teaching. The available space indoors and outdoors is well used to provide a wide range of interesting activities to encourage children to investigate and to develop their skills. There is a good range of high quality resources that are used appropriately to enhance the planned activities.

Financial management is the overall responsibility of the group that owns the school. Within this, the Head of Prep has an annual budget that includes the nursery. The needs of the whole department, including the nursery, are carefully considered and the money is allocated appropriately with due consideration to the priorities in the school development plan.

In view of the fact that the setting is well resourced and that almost all children make good or very good progress, the setting is considered to give good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	11	11 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	11	10 91%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	10	9 90%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	10	9 90%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	14%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	11	10 91%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed	11	10	0	0	0	1	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
about my child's progress.		91%	0%	0%	0%		gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	29%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	10	9	1	0	0	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		90%	10%	0%	0%		
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	11	9	1	1	0	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		82%	9%	9%	0%		
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	11	10	0	0	0	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		91%	0%	0%	0%		
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	11	9	1	0	0	1	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		82%	9%	0%	0%		
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	11	10	1	0	0	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		91%	9%	0%	0%		
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Mary Elspeth 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)

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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.