



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

**Llay Park Playgroup
Park CP School
School Road
Llay
Wrexham
LL12 0TR**

Date of inspection: April 2012

by

**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

Llay Playgroup is situated on the premises of Park Primary School in Llay, near Wrexham. The playgroup was established around six years ago, and moved into the current premises in February 2012.

The village of Llay is a mixture of council and private housing, and there is an element of disadvantaged housing in the village and some families access Flying Start.

The setting is registered for 24 playgroup children and 28 children who require care provision. Fifty-seven three and four-year-old children currently attend the setting, which provides both morning and afternoon sessions. Eighteen children, all of whom attend the morning session, have funded places.

All children who currently attend the setting have English as a first language. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds. The setting is involved with the Wales Pre-School Association's Special Needs Referral Scheme to answer the needs of children with special needs. Currently there is only one child who has been identified with special needs.

The provision is managed by a voluntary management committee, and receives early education funding depending on the number of children who attend. The management committee and all staff are newly appointed.

The school was last inspected by CSSIW in December 2011, in its previous premises. This is the first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance at the setting is good because:

- children are happy and well settled;
- they make good progress in the seven areas of learning;
- the early skills of literacy and numeracy are of a good standard;
- the staff at the setting are caring and helpful, and support the children well; and
- the planning process, including the evaluation of focus tasks, is very effective in identifying the next steps of learning.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the supervisor and the remainder of the staff work together well as a team;
- the self-evaluation process successfully identifies appropriate areas for development;
- the process of relocating the setting to its new location was managed effectively; and
- the management committee supports the setting well.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 raise standards in information and communication technology;
- R2 create and implement action plans to address the areas for improvement identified in the self-evaluation process; and
- R3 integrate the use of the outdoor and indoor learning areas.

What happens next?

The management committee will prepare an action plan within 45 days to show how it will address the above recommendations. The local authority will monitor the implementation of the action plan and will report to Estyn on progress in about 12 months.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all children make good progress and achieve to an appropriate standard in across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. They are confident in making choices and are happy taking part in all the setting's learning activities. Most children stay on task for a good length of time with activities and share responsibility for tidying away equipment and resources at the end of the session.

Children's skills are developing well as part of various group and independent activities. Most listen well and can communicate confidently, discussing an appropriate range of topics within their experience. Nearly all children sing along enthusiastically in English and in Welsh to a lesser extent. They listen intently to stories and enjoy sharing books with adults in the reading area. The majority of children recognise their own name on coat pegs and placemats and the most able are able to write their names on pieces of work. Nearly all make marks on paper, in sand and on blackboards with chalk or water.

Most children can handle small objects and resources well, for example paint brushes, crayons, scissors or tools for manipulating clay. They enjoy their activities in the outside learning area, and show competence in controlling large bikes and cars, throwing and catching bean bags, and playing with hoops.

Most children can count objects accurately and use mathematical language correctly in activities. For example, they can put toy animals in order of size, and use expressions such as 'behind' and 'in front of', and understand the concept of 'tall' and 'short'. Overall, children's skills in using information and communication technology to reinforce and enrich their learning across the seven areas of learning are less well developed.

Children's independent learning is developing well through the setting's indoor and outdoor activities, as they make their own decisions on what tasks to undertake as they play.

Children make very little use of information and communication technology.

Nearly all children understand simple instructions in Welsh and many can use some words, such as colours or simple numbers in responding to simple questions. Most children answer the register in Welsh and, supported by adults, can count up to about five objects in Welsh. They enjoy singing Welsh songs along with the adults. Very few children use any Welsh spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

Children's standards of wellbeing are good. They arrive happy and smiling in the morning, and chat with the adults and each other, eager to share stories. Almost all children settle well on arrival and enjoy their learning.

Most children show an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily, and can identify fruit as being healthier than some other foods. Children enjoy healthy snacks at snack time, and talk to each other and the adults, making this session a useful social time. All children are enthusiastic about activities that involve physical movement, such as playing with bikes, hoops or bean bags, or generally in the outside learning area.

All children are confident to ask for help from adults and nearly all take responsibility for their personal hygiene. Most put their own coats and rucksacks on unaided or with a minimum of help from adults.

Behaviour is very good and all children are polite to both each other and the adults in the setting. They play well with each other and happily share toys and resources and take turns when required. They respond immediately to staff requests and instructions, and take responsibility for clearing up following an activity.

Children confidently make decisions about what they like and dislike playing with in the nursery and choose confidently where they wish to play.

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

The setting provides an appropriate range of stimulating experiences for children. Play and learning through first-hand experiences is central to the provision and successfully engages and holds children's interest.

Staff plan well for the development of children's language and numeracy skills in both indoor and outdoor learning areas, and take advantage of every opportunity to promote pupils' learning in those areas. There is very little planning for the development of children's information and technology skills.

All staff know the children very well, understand their specific needs and abilities and respond flexibly during activities. Planning for continuous and enhanced provision is appropriate, as is the planning for each session's focus activity. All staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities.

Planning for the development of the Welsh language is under developed, though staff work hard to develop children's Welsh language skills. They use some Welsh throughout the sessions, Welsh is visible in classroom displays and children are encouraged to use the language.

Staff plan for children to make very good use of the outdoor area, though this is not fully integrated into the setting's programme of activities. This restricts the free flow of children from the indoor area to the outside activity space.

Occasional visits in the locality develop children's respect for the environment. The setting is part of a community development organisation, and takes an active part in many community events. The setting effectively develops the Welsh dimension through the use of Welsh books and songs, and particularly during St David's Day activities.

Fairly recent work on the Chinese New Year and the use of multi-racial dolls and toys as part of the setting's resources help to increase children's understanding of the world in which they live.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Every member of staff has a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and work effectively to engage and motivate children. The setting's routines are well established and children feel safe. Staff provide a good language model for the children and children's communication skills improve as a result.

Staff work well together and there is clear consistency in the way they guide, and respond to, children. They manage the day to day running of the setting well, and share common expectations. The management of behaviour, for example, is very good, as children respond positively to the staff's consistent way of dealing with any unacceptable incidents.

The daily planning for focused activities is very effective, providing clear guidelines for the activity. The very prompt evaluation of the activity, coupled with the suggestions for the way ahead is particularly good, and one of the setting's strengths.

All staff members observe children during play and activities to monitor their learning in all areas of learning. They promptly record significant developments in both learning and wellbeing, and collate the information effectively in individual children's 'This is me' record books. This information is generally used appropriately to inform future planning, giving appropriate attention to different abilities.

Although there are no formal written reports for parents, they are kept well informed about their children's activities at the setting. Most parents are happy with the provision at the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting successfully promotes children's health and wellbeing. Staff are caring and kind, and support children through positive praise. Children are well cared for and they feel safe and know whom to approach if they need help. The setting's activities help to promote values such as fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong. Staff guide children to take responsibility for their actions and for resources and to understand that sharing and co-operating with others is important.

There is a very strong caring ethos at the setting, which means that children settle quickly into the day's routine and are ready to learn.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, and takes full advantage of advice and guidance by the Wales Pre-school Providers Association special needs co-coordinator, when required.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The daily routines at the setting promote equality and diversity well. All children are treated fairly, whatever their background and ability, and are encouraged to treat each other in the same way.

The new classroom, within a newly built part of the local primary school, is organised attractively provides an interesting environment for the children. There are appropriate displays, and words and numbers are prominently displayed to expose children to print.

There are ample resources to ensure that children can take part in a wide range of activities. They are of good quality and well maintained and easily accessible by the children. However, resources to develop children's learning in information and communication technology are limited.

The outdoor environment is well designed, and includes a good range of resources and equipment to promote delivery of all areas of the Foundation Phase. It is easily accessible from the inside learning area, and children use it daily.

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

The setting's supervisor is an effective leader. She promotes a strongly co-operative ethos where staff, children and parents feel valued and respected. All staff work together effectively to support children and help them develop, so that they get the most of their time in the nursery. Each one clearly understands her role and responsibilities, and they all show shared commitment to providing the best possible experiences for children in the setting.

The 'registered person' for the setting is the chair of the management committee and she, along with other members of the committee, is responsible for the overall management of the setting. Although the committee is small, it is committed to the setting. Members meet on a monthly basis, and monitor resources and organisation well.

The setting responds appropriately to national and local priorities. It is fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Adequate

Staff members know the setting well and have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for development, as shown in the self-evaluation report. They are reflective, and are keen to look for ways to improve provision at the setting.

The setting allows the views of children to be considered by providing them with the choices about what to do and where to play and discovering which activities they like

or do not like. To date, the setting has not taken account of parents' views as part of the self-evaluation process.

The self-evaluation report is a short, but useful, document, which successfully identifies the setting's strengths and identifies specific areas for improvement. However, there are no action plans that show how the setting intends to address the identified areas for improvement.

All staff are experienced in working in the Foundation Phase. They work hard to improve their own knowledge and skills and take advantage of training opportunities for the benefit of the children. Through training events provided by the local authority, they meet and discuss their work and how to improve provision with staff from similar settings in the area.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a strong working relationship with parents, who generally believe that the setting provides well for their children. The half-termly newsletter and the attractive website enables the setting to provide useful information both for existing parents, or to those of potential pupils.

There is a good working relationship with local authority, which provides guidance and training on a regular basis, as well as specialist support as required. The links with the primary school are very strong. Transition arrangements are robust, with visits by both teachers and children, coupled with a well-managed transfer of information, ensuring that the move from the setting into the school is smooth.

There are also strong links with the local community, and with the Welsh Pre-school Playgroup Association, particularly when addressing additional learning needs.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes very good use of staff time, expertise and experience to support children's learning effectively. Staff understand well the philosophy and principles of the Foundation Phase curriculum and, as a result, support the children in areas of learning well. They undertake regular training to update their skills.

The playgroup supervisor and the management committee undertake a robust process of annual staff appraisal.

The indoor and outdoor classrooms have resources of a good quality that are appropriate for the age of the children.

The management manages the setting's budget efficiently and has targeted finances effectively to develop the resources in the setting's new location. There is not enough action planning in place to ensure that funding is used effectively to support development in areas identified for improvement.

Overall, the setting achieves good outcomes for children and provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Parent questionnaires

Nine parents returned questionnaires and every one expressed satisfaction with the setting. All parents believe that teaching is good. They are happy with the way that their children are helped to settle in well when they start in the setting and feel that all staff treat their children fairly and with respect. Nearly all parents say that the setting is well run. Some parents felt that they would like more information about their child's progress and were not clear about the setting's procedures for making complaints.

Responses to discussions with children

The children like coming to the nursery and enjoy the activities. They are very confident when speaking to adults and visitors, and show genuine affection towards staff. They get on well with each other. The children said that the staff help them when they are upset. Children enjoy choosing what to play with and particularly enjoy the outdoor session. They are reminded daily of their seven golden rules and, as a result, know they should always try to be kind and share with others.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Terwyn Tomos HMI	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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
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.