

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery Report on: Camrose and Roch Playgroup

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: S. Richards

Date of inspection: 24th and 25th September 2009

Contract number: T/026/09N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Camrose and Roch Playgroup

**Address: Camrose Community Centre, St David's Road, Pelcomb,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire**

Post code: SA62 6AA

Telephone: 01437 710872

**Person responsible for day-to-day management: Veronica Davies and Sheila
Lewis**

Position: Playgroup leaders

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five-point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no important shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings

1.0 Context of the setting

Context of the nursery setting

Camrose and Roch Playgroup is a voluntary playgroup managed by a parents' committee and registered with the Wales Pre School Playgroup Association. The playgroup was set up in 1974 and meets on five mornings a week in the Camrose Community Centre. The playgroup is open between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon for five days a week and 39 weeks of the year.

The Community Centre is set in a quiet location, at one end of a green field, which is used by the children as an outdoor play area. The playgroup has access to the community's large climbing frame, which is situated at one end of the field and has recently started to use the wooded area, which is found at the other end of the field. The inside activities take place in the large hall which has a kitchen and toilet area attached.

The playgroup has 24 children on roll, including 12 three year olds, nine being funded through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The setting accepts children from a wide rural area which is regarded as being neither socially advantaged nor disadvantaged. Children are admitted to the playgroup once they are two years of age and transfer to local schools in the term after their fourth birthday. One child recently celebrated his fourth birthday, but is no longer funded at the play group.

The setting aims to 'provide a quality structured learning environment that takes account of each child's developing needs. It is where the children can access a wide variety of experiences both indoors and outdoors that will encourage them to grow into confident learners. Hopefully each child will acquire skills to take their learning further into the big wide world.'

Currently, all the children come from English speaking homes except one, who comes from a Welsh background. The setting accepts children who have been identified as having additional learning needs and currently has one child receiving additional support. The ethnic composition of the group is very small.

Five members of staff work at the setting. Of these, one works for five sessions while the other four work on a part-time basis. One of the part-time employees provides support for a child with additional learning needs and works for two mornings a week as a 'Helping Hands' assistant. The two play leaders have worked together at the playgroup for almost 20 years and have a good knowledge of the area and its families. Three of the staff are appropriately qualified.

The playgroup was last inspected by Estyn in November 2003.

The last inspection by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales was in June 2009

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for Children's Learning.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Areas of learning	Grade for under-fives
Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity	1
Language, literacy and communication skills	1
Mathematical development	2
Welsh language development	1
Knowledge and understanding of the world	1
Physical development	1
Creative development	2

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of education	Grade for under-fives
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
Quality of planning for children's learning	3
Quality of teaching	1
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers	2
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community	1
The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing	1
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	1
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	1

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds

3.1 Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

Children's standards in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

The children enter the setting happily and confidently and immediately select activities, independent of their parents, from the wide range set out for them. They display sensitivity and respect for other children and for the staff. They show affection for their peers and readily share toys and equipment with them. During free activity, most of the children seek out a few of their peers to join in with their games and role play activities.

Children concentrate well for increasing lengths of time and display a high level of self-confidence, for example by asking for help when required. They take risks, both inside and in the outside play area and respond well to new challenges. They readily help each other and are patient with the younger children, for example they wait patiently for them to finish on the slide before taking their turn.

The children take responsibility for their own personal hygiene and understand that they must wash their hands after activities such as painting and before snack time.

Good features

Daily routines are well established and children know what is expected of them. They sit quietly while eating their snack and eat tidily. They automatically stack their empty bowls and mugs on the trays provided after completing their meal.

They enjoy experimenting with new learning activities for example when adding different materials to the play dough and when playing games on the computer. With prompting from staff, they are beginning to understand that they are responsible for tidying up after activities.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

Children's standards in language, literacy and communication skills are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

The children are making good progress in their language, literacy and communication skills. The majority of them can hold interesting conversations about their experiences with staff and visitors to the setting. They use a wide vocabulary and are confident enough to ask questions and to make alternative suggestions in response to questions posed by the staff. For example, the more mature children suggested alternative ways of getting to Scotland, when one child spoke about a forthcoming holiday.

The children can recall a wide range of songs and rhymes and take part in action songs with a great deal of enthusiasm.

As part of their daily routine, the children select and look at books while waiting for and after completing their snacks. During these times, the children focus well and enjoy sharing their books with their peers and staff. They handle the books carefully and correctly and the more able children can talk about the main characters and interpret the story by following the pictures.

Good features

Children listen well to peers and adults and carry out instructions accurately. They enjoy story time and respond enthusiastically to questions posed by the staff. Children particularly enjoy story time when it is held in the wooded area outside, for example when they shared the 'Monkey Puzzle' story at the end of the morning session.

The majority of children experiment with drawing and mark making in different contexts such as making patterns with their fingers in paint and with chalk on the small blackboard. A few children are beginning to understand the purpose of writing.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.3 Mathematical development

Children's standards in mathematical development are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The children are able to recall a good range of number rhymes and songs. Most of them can count to five and to recognise the numbers on a wall chart. A few are able to count to 10 by rote.

Most of the children can use mathematical vocabulary like 'big' and 'small' appropriately and know that the climbing frame is 'high up' while the plants are grown 'low down'. Through activities such as making play dough they are beginning to understand the concept of 'full' and 'empty'.

Many children can sort and match colours and are able to recognise and name 2D shapes such as squares, circles and triangle and match them to pictures on the wall. Their knowledge of 3D shapes is developing well through activities such as building towers with different shaped blocks. The majority of children can classify animals and match them to their correct habitat for example they place farm animals in a field and wild animals in the jungle.

A few children are able to copy simple patterns in the Numicon.

The children are able to recognise and sort some of the lower value coins and their understanding of the use of money is developing well through activities such as action songs and role play. Their understanding of the passage of time in relation to daily activities is progressing and they know that the two hands of the clock are on 12 when it is home time.

The more mature children are able to repeat the days of the week and a few can recall the names of the seasons and the months of the year.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but the more able children are not always challenged sufficiently.

3.4 Welsh language development

Children's standards in Welsh language development are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

Children know a wide range of songs and rhymes and join in enthusiastically, especially when contributing to action songs. They are able to count by rote to five and to name the most familiar primary colours in Welsh. They can also respond to questions posed in familiar context.

Most of the children understand and follow simple instructions given through the medium of Welsh and use occasional words during their play activities. The children use Welsh medium greeting at the beginning of each session and respond in Welsh during registration and use the words 'yma' and 'dim yma' appropriately.

At snack time, almost all of the children recite their 'thank you' poem in Welsh and sing their 'goodbye song' in Welsh at the end of the morning session.

Good features

The children enjoy looking at Welsh medium books and sharing them with their peers and staff.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings

3.5 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Children's standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

All of the children are eager to experiment and investigate both indoor and outside. They particularly enjoy exploring the wooded area and looking for plants and animals, including mini beasts, which live there. The more mature children know the names of the four seasons of the year and the impact the seasonal changes have on plants and animals, including the fact that many trees lose their leaves in the autumn.

They are acquiring a good understanding of how things grow and that there is a need to care for them. They know that flowers, fruit and vegetables need water and the warmth of the sun to help them grow. Through their snacks and by growing carrots and strawberries, they are beginning to understand which foods are healthy and which are not.

The children enjoy investigating with new apparatus such as torches and are able to name their various parts and describe their function. Much excitement was caused when they were able to compare the way that torches performed in daylight with their performance in a small, dark tent.

A few of the children can think imaginatively and creatively when asked to solve problems such as how to get their ball down from the branches of a tree in the outdoor play area.

Good features

Through visits into the community such as walking along the nearby lane, and trips to Treginnis Farm and Scolton Manor the children are beginning to learn about their locality and the environment around them. They are also beginning to appreciate that some places are far away, with the help of staff and parents, who take 'Grace', the school doll, to places of interest and on holiday with them. They take photographs of Grace and keep a diary of the places she visits, and the things she sees such as the cockpit of an aeroplane.

Through their role play and visits to places such as the dentist, and visitors to the setting, for example members of the local fire brigade, the children are learning about the world of work and the different roles that people play.

Children's computer skills are developing well. They are able to control the mouse and to play simple games with increasing success. They are also beginning to understand that changes occur when different materials and ingredients are mixed together, for example when making play dough.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.6 Physical development

Children's standards in physical development are good with outstanding feature

Outstanding features

Most of the children display outstanding balancing, climbing and sliding skills when using the large climbing frame in the outside play area. They can climb the steps and the climbing net with increasing control and can move through and roll over the wooden bars. They move rapidly down the slide and are able to stop and quickly stand up and move away from the climbing frame.

Children can pedal, push and steer the large toys outside with increasing control and make good use of the space available. They move around energetically and are able to differentiate between actions such as running, walking and jumping. A large number are able to throw and kick a large ball confidently with increasing control.

Good features

The majority of children use a wide variety of small tools such as glue sticks, chalks and paint brushes competently. They enjoy using their hands as well as brushes when painting on a large sheet of paper and are able to manipulate paint sprayers effectively when painting in the outdoors.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.7 Creative development

Children's standards in creative development are good with no important shortcomings

Good features

The children enjoy painting and making simple collages. Most of them are able to name the primary colours in both English and Welsh.

The majority of children display creativity and imagination when dressing up and during role play. For example, they take on the role of firemen enthusiastically and give detailed descriptions of the activities they perform.

The majority of children contribute creatively to action songs and enjoy making up their own sounds to accompany stories and rhymes. They use a range of musical instruments appropriately and enjoy music making independently and with others. They sing a good range of songs in both English and Welsh and a few of them sing confidently and with suitable expression.

Children focus for lengthening periods of time when rolling and shaping play dough for different purposes such as making cakes and cutting out butterflies.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but children's ability to explore different materials and to express their moods and feelings through movement are less well developed.

4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds

4.1 Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The setting has clear aims, values and principles which are well known to the parents and children which contribute effectively to the children's social and moral development. The staff act as good role models and encourage the children to show respect, courtesy and politeness towards each other and consistently praise them when they display good manners and behaviour. As the children mature they begin to understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

The setting promotes respect for diversity through a range of activities and the children learn about their own culture through the Welsh songs, rhymes and stories they hear, the Welsh greetings and phrases they use daily and by celebrating special days such as St. David's Day. They learn about other cultures by celebrating festivals such as Divali and Hanukkah.

The provision for children's spiritual development is progressing well. Children have opportunities to be quiet and to reflect on their experiences during snack time and the good use made of the outdoors enhances children's sense of awe and wonder at nature and the world around them.

The children are learning about their responsibilities to others by collecting for various local charities, for example collecting bottle tops to fund the purchase of wheelchairs and by sending parcels of writing and drawing materials to a school in Africa.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.2 Quality of planning for children's learning

The quality of planning has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

Good features

Following the introduction of the Foundation Phase, the setting changed its approach to planning. During this term a new approach is being trialled which is very much in its infancy.

The long-term planning identifies two or three themes which will be covered over three terms and repeated every two years. The current themes are 'Animals' and 'Autumn' and are appropriate to the developmental stage and interest of the children. They also contain a list of different festivals and special days which could be included in the planning and would appropriately enhance children's understanding of diversity and different cultures. The long-term planning also includes a 'Continuum' based on the Foundation Phase Outcomes which is produced by the local authority.

The medium-term planning includes a list of activities to be provided, stories to be read and songs and rhymes to be taught under the seven area of learning. It also includes an 'Enhanced Provision' list, which shows additional activities which could be included to extend the provision. There is also a list of skills which is linked to the authority's 'Continuum'. The skills are covered each week during periods such as story time, outside time and snack time.

The fortnightly, short-term planning sheet includes three columns under the headings 'Outcomes and Key Skills' to be covered, 'Activities' associated with them and 'Assessment /Evaluation'. Another sheet lists the activities to be undertaken during small and large group sessions.

The planning shows that children experience a wide range of interesting activities, have opportunities to work in large and small groups and are able to select activities during their 'plan, do and review time'.

Shortcomings

Short-term plans are not sufficiently focused on the needs of individual children. The mid-term plans, which are linked to the authority's 'Continuum', are not consistently reflected in the short-term plans.

4.3 Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

The staff provide a stimulating environment and a wide range of activities which interest the children and motivate them to experiment and investigate. Group times are well organised and a good pace is set to the sessions. Effective use is made of resources which compliment the learning and capture and retain the children's interest. For example stuffed toys and finger puppets are used during story times and real money is used when children perform some action songs.

The staff work well together as a team and set high expectations for children's learning which effectively supports their progress and achievement. Excellent use is made of the outdoor play area to provide children with enjoyable and challenging experiences which help to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

The staff make the most of things that happen unexpectedly, which capture children's interest and imagination and, whenever possible, link them to other areas of learning across the curriculum. For example, while sharing a story in the wooded area outside, children found mini beasts under some logs which led to a discussion about the creatures that live in woodland areas and the types of food they can find to eat there during the autumn.

Good features

The staff are developing a good understanding of the seven areas of learning and the teaching approaches associated with the Foundation Phase which ensures equality of opportunity and respect for diversity.

Purposeful questioning encourages the children to think critically and imaginatively.

All members of staff provide good support for children with additional learning needs that contributes successfully to their development and progress. Support staff from the authority and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership visit twice or three times a term and offer helpful advice.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.4 Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports for parents and carers

The quality of assessment and recording and reporting of children's progress and reports to parents are good with no important shortcomings.

Good features

The playgroup staff know their children's strengths and shortcomings and are sensitive to their needs. They observe children regularly during their play activities and keep written comments about their development and progress.

Each child has a personal file where examples of their work are kept. The files also contain copies of a baseline assessment, assessment observations written by the staff and comments made by the children.

Staff are available on a daily basis for discussions with parents and to talk about any issues of concern. Informative written reports are provided for the parents of three year old children at the end of the summer term.

There are appropriate strategies in place to assess and record the needs of children with additional learning needs and outside agencies are involved where necessary.

Staff write progress reports for the parents of the older children before they transfer to school which is called 'Moving On'. This provides the receiving school with useful information about the children's progress and development and helps them to get to know the children quickly.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings but the outcome of assessment is not used consistently to inform planning.

4.5 Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community

The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community are good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

Excellent relationships exist between the staff and parents as confirmed by talking to them and reviewing the parents' questionnaires. They are pleased with the information the setting provides about their children's progress and about the work of the setting.

Parents help out at the playgroup on a rota basis. They are clear about their roles and what is expected of them and make a useful contribution to the life and work of the setting. Parents also provide good support by raising funds and undertaking a range of activities such as washing aprons, repairing toys and equipment and painting the building.

Parents, with very young children, are encouraged to spend time at the playgroup, prior to their children starting at the setting, to prepare them for entry.

Good features

Most parents accompany children on trips and visits.

Good links exist between the setting and the local primary school, where most of the children transfer.

Very good use is made of the local environment to extend children's experiences such as walks along a nearby lane and visits to the local park. Visitors to the setting, such as a local doctor, also contribute effectively to the children's development.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing

The extent to which the setting contributes to the children's well being is good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

Staff know the children well and provide a very good level of care and support for each individual child, which contributes effectively to their all round development. Daily routines are well established and the children are made to feel safe and secure within the setting.

An informal risk assessment of the inside and outside environment is made by the staff on a daily basis. A formal assessment is also undertaken by the leaders each half-term and their observations are recorded as well as the actions taken to remove the danger and to ensure that the environment is fit for purpose.

The high ratio of adults to children ensures that they are well supervised at all times. This is particularly noticeable when children are playing on the large outdoor climbing

frame. This reassures the children and encourages them to experiment and to try new ways of using the apparatus.

Good features

The setting has a good range of policies such as a 'Health and Nutrition Policy', an 'Equal Opportunities Policy' and a 'Child Protection Policy' all of which contribute effectively to the children's well being.

The playgroup has a range of resources and equipment which are kept in good order and are appropriate for the age and size of the children. This contributes well to the development of children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children are encouraged to eat healthily and to exercise regularly and boisterous play is included in the setting's daily routine. If accidents occur, they are recorded in the accident book and parents are asked to sign the report.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.7 Quality of the leadership and management of the setting

The quality of leadership and management is good with outstanding features.

Outstanding features

The two leaders share the management of the setting and work together effectively to provide children with new and interesting experiences. They constantly evaluate the quality of provision and work hard to ensure that the playgroup is a happy, secure environment.

A process of self review was recently introduced and has started to impact the quality of provision and the children's standards of achievements. Parents are encouraged to make comments about the life and work of the setting, through discussions and by completing questionnaires, which effectively supports the self review process.

The two leaders undertake each other's appraisal and they both share the task of appraising other members of staff.

Good features

Good support is provided by the staff and the setting's management committee. The local authority's and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership's support

teachers visit at intervals and are providing the setting with some support which is helping them to improve.

All members of staff attend three or four courses a year and parents are also encouraged to attend courses provided by the local authority.

Good use is made of the resources available, particularly the outdoor environment which is having a positive impact on children's learning.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report

The playgroup has made good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

- R1 improve the quality of planning to ensure that focus is appropriately placed on the needs of individual children; and
- R2 improve the issues raised in the body of the report.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples' Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.