



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

**Caerleon Cherubs Play Group
Caerleon Town Hall
Caerleon
NP18 1AW**

Date of inspection: July 2011

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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About the setting

Caerleon Cherubs is an English-medium setting which serves the town of Caerleon and the surrounding area. It meets in the Council Chambers in the centre of the town.

The setting serves a semi-rural area. The children who attend come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and all have English as their home language. None of the children speak Welsh at home. Ten per cent of children in the pre-school group have additional learning needs.

The setting is open from 9.00-11.30am for pre-school children aged three to four years and in the afternoon from 12.35-3.05 for younger children aged from two years and three months and also for older children who attend the school nursery class in the morning and come for wrap around care.

The setting is registered for up to 40 children when both the upstairs and downstairs rooms are being used. At the time of the inspection there were 19 children in the pre-school group, all of whom were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in October 2010 and this is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- Children are happy to come to the setting and are actively involved throughout the sessions
- All children enjoy their learning and make good progress
- The setting provides a good range of interesting and stimulating activities which motivate children to learn; and
- Relationships between staff and children are warm and caring

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leaders and staff work well together as a team
- All staff have a positive attitude towards improvement; and
- There is evidence that, over time, improvements have been identified and sustained

Recommendations

The recommendations for improvement are to:

R1 use the outcomes of self-evaluation more effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement so that development planning can focus on the areas identified

R2 ensure that planning for the outdoors is consistently in place and covers all the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase; and

R3 ensure parents are fully informed about their children's progress including the identification of the next steps in their children's learning

What happens next?

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

Main findings

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| Key Question 1: How good are outcomes? |
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| Good |
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Standards: Good

The progress of all children is good and they achieve well. Almost all children's numeracy and mathematical skills are good and most count by rote accurately and confidently to at least 10 and are able to count objects to at least 3 without support. Most children communicate clearly and are confident to talk to adults about what they are doing and nearly all carry out instructions promptly. All children enjoy stories in both English and Welsh and all show an interest in books and their content and handle them correctly. Many choose to look at books without an adult during their play. The majority practise writing and take opportunities to write notes on pads, using them across several different areas of learning.

Most children are making good progress in their understanding and use of ICT as they play confidently with a range of electronic toys and equipment. Children's Welsh language development is good and they make good progress. The majority understand simple words and phrases and around half are beginning to use the language spontaneously.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy in the nursery and enjoy their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners make them feel safe, happy and confident. All have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and that good food and exercise are important to make them healthy. Most identify healthy foods and things they should not eat. All children know that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and also before snack.

All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. All children behave well and are polite and show consideration for others when taking turns sharing equipment.

Most children make friendships in the setting and show care and concern for one another. Children play in self selecting groups, in pairs and independently depending on the activity in which they are involved.

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

Planning is done collaboratively, led by the leaders, and activities successfully engage all children. Planning is flexible and responds well to children's interests. Overall, it is well focused on meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Planning for the outdoors is less consistent.

All children are well supported and respected as individuals and this has successfully developed their self-confidence. They show respect for each other and are beginning to learn of other cultures and countries. All children are familiar with the routines established by the playgroup and are sufficiently confident to be independent learners. There are good opportunities provided for children to develop their basic skills, including their physical and creative skills and to understand the need to care for living things. Provision is made to ensure the coherent development of skills across the curriculum, including developing children's thinking skills.

Practitioners use incidental Welsh consistently throughout the session and children are encouraged to use the Welsh language as much as possible. Activities based around St David's Day are well used for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the traditions and celebrations of Wales.

Children are developing an understanding about sustainability through their active involvement in daily recycling of paper, card, plastic and left over food and they know that we need to recycle things so that we don't waste them.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase and a good knowledge of child development. They have high expectations of children in terms of their achievements and personal behaviour and these are realised in practice. Tasks are suitably challenging and often staff make good use of questioning to challenge and support children. Staff are good role models and children follow their example, thus ensuring good relationships in the playgroup. There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities. Staff show a good understanding of when it is appropriate to intervene in the children's play and when to leave them to discover and develop for themselves.

Assessment of children is carried out regularly and methodically. Practitioners make observations of children's progress which are then filed by keyworkers in the child's assessment profile. Achievements are noted under the 7 Areas of Learning identified in the Foundation Phase learning outcomes. These observations are dated and consequently illustrate progress made. These records are summarised each term and future opportunities and possibilities identified. Comments are detailed and helpful and combine to create a report for parents at the end of the year. Next steps in learning are not identified in these reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for the promotion of children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Day-to-day activities are well designed to foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth. Snack times are social occasions when children choose their food from a range of healthy foods and relax and converse with their friends. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children have a smooth induction into the playgroup and also when they move on to mainstream school. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The leaders are the responsible persons and all staff have received training and are aware of their responsibilities. There are good arrangements in place to support children with additional learning needs and the setting works in partnership with parents and other professionals.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is fully inclusive and is an integral part of the local community and staff know the children and their families well. They are experienced and well qualified and ensure that all children have equal access to all activities. Practitioners create a stimulating environment for learning and children are becoming confident and independent learners. The views and ideas of children are sought and included in planning for future activities. There is a good supply of quality resources that are easily accessed by all the children and effectively support their progress. The setting is an attractive learning environment with examples of children's work displayed around the walls. Visitors, such as a guide dog, a police officer with his motorbike and a guitarist, enhance the learning experiences of the children

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

The leaders focus well on the children and their individual needs and interests and succeed in creating a positive ethos in which staff work well together to provide interesting and stimulating learning experiences. The philosophy of the Foundation Phase is successfully incorporated into the work of the playgroup and outcomes for children are good. Good relationships exist with parents and carers and with the local primary schools.

All staff understand their roles and have taken appropriate account of relevant legislation and guidance. Legal duties are fulfilled. The playgroup also is successfully meeting national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation in the setting is developing well and practitioners know their setting. Formal self-evaluation is still in its early stages but there is a positive culture of informal reflection on practice. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a useful one which identifies many of the setting's strengths and appropriate targets for improvement. Evaluation of improvements in terms of children's progress is still at an early stage of development.

The leaders have established good links with other registered providers in the area and have attended meetings to share ideas and good practice.

Partnership working: Good

Results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. Practitioners speak to parents every day about what their child has been doing and celebrate success. They have created strong relationships with parents and carers and are beginning to put into place regular systems to keep them up to date with information about the activities offered to the children.

Good links with the local primary school provides additional resources and ensures that children have a smooth transition when they move on. The setting enjoys a very positive relationship with the Foundation Phase link teacher from the local authority who provides support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of resources which are managed and deployed effectively to support different areas of learning and individual learning needs. There are appropriate numbers of suitably trained staff to deliver the Foundation Phase. Use of the outdoors is currently insufficiently developed and planned for, though in the next school year the setting has plans to make use of an area which has been offered by the local infant school.

The leaders manage the finances carefully and try to link spending to areas requiring improvement. Overall the setting is well resourced and provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eleven parent questionnaires were returned. All responses were positive and 100% of parents and carers said they strongly agreed that:

- Their child was helped to settle when they started at the setting
- Their child is safe in the setting; and
- The setting is well run

There were six additional comments which were all very positive, particularly about the support received from the staff.

Responses to discussions with children

Most children were happy and confident when talking to a visitor. They spoke clearly and used age appropriate vocabulary. All said they liked coming to the playgroup and enjoyed their activities. They felt that they had many friends and were happy. Most knew what to do if they were unhappy or needed help.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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| 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.