



*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**

**Abergele Play Group "Little Stars"  
Community Centre  
Market Street  
Abergele  
LL22 7BP**

**Date of inspection: December 2012**

**by**

**Anne Manning**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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**Publication date: 07/01/2013**

## Context

Abergele Playgroup was first established about 36 years ago. The medium sized setting is situated in the community centre in the small seaside town of Abergele in North Wales. The setting is managed and run by a core team of qualified practitioners and a supervisor.

The playgroup is held in a busy community centre and this means that the practitioners have to set out and clear away the equipment every day. The playgroup has the use of one large room that is divided into areas for play. Outside; there are good opportunities for a variety of outdoor activities in an enclosed garden area and a smaller yard with a hard surface.

The setting is open during term time for four mornings and children are aged from two to three years of age. The playgroup is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 35 children who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in June 2011 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

At the time of the first inspection there were four children present aged three and on the second morning there were six children aged three. None of the children are eligible for funding during this Autumn term.

Abergele Playgroup is English speaking, providing care and education for children from families for whom nearly all this is their first language. Nearly all are White British and one child this term has additional needs.

The group has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. Nearly all children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds.

Abergele Playgroup receives support from Conwy Early Education and is a member of Wales Pre-School Providers Association.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

Children and their families are well supported.

There is a good range of interesting learning experiences for the children that include visits within the community.

All teaching is good.

There is a consistent, well motivated and experienced team of practitioners.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

Leadership and management of the group are good.

The setting has made good progress since the last inspection

There is an effective working relationship with the local authority.

The playgroup has a good range of resources.

## **Recommendations**

R.1 Develop outdoor opportunities, using the grassed area, to build on the experiences and activities of the forest school.

R.2 Continue to develop links with the local community and extend the learning opportunities for the children.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill 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

Flexible planning engages all children and activities are provided that challenge and extend their thinking, in particular the forest school experiences such as how to keep warm, building a fire and finding out the best way to crack ice using a stick. Activities such as celebrating the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee encourage all children to help each other and work together towards a common goal.

Learning experiences in the playgroup promote the spiritual development of the children and they have been learning about the nativity story. All children learn effectively about caring for living things by planting and looking after sunflower seeds, making bird feeders and through their nature experiences at the forest school.

Although the setting ensures a range of activities indoors and outdoors, use of the grassed area is under developed and provides too few opportunities for activities that reflect and build on the forest school learning experience.

Learning experiences actively develop thinking and wider skills and enable children to progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. The curriculum builds effectively on their knowledge and skills and experiences effectively develop relationships, tolerance and respect for all. There are good opportunities to develop skills in Information Communication Technology. The children use a light box, programmable toys such as Bee bot, phones and keyboard to extend their knowledge and expand their skills.

There are a good range of mark making and early writing skill opportunities including using blackberries by squashing the fruit to extract the juice. There are very good opportunities for stories and language and good coherence across the curriculum. The children have made books about their experiences such as building dens and playing in a mud kitchen.

The children effectively learn about food and where it comes from by visiting the café next door and making soup in the playgroup. They celebrate festivals, for example, Chinese New Year when they made their own dragons and tasted Chinese food using chopsticks. Children have good opportunities to learn about the traditions, culture and celebrations of Wales. The children celebrate St David's Day and have

enjoyed painting their own representations of daffodils. They are encouraged to use the Welsh language during the session and particularly at story time in the library.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners understand the Foundation Phase outcomes and requirements and they actively promote the children's learning through play. All practitioners use a range of good questioning techniques to challenge and extend the knowledge of the children. They all know when to intervene and when to observe. Although they have high expectations of the children including those with additional needs, a few opportunities are missed for the children to do more independently, for example, collecting plates and pouring their own drinks.

Practitioners speak a good level of Welsh during the session and whilst visiting the library, a librarian reads the children a story through the medium of Welsh.

Two practitioners are qualified to level 3, one has almost completed level 3 and two are qualified to level 2. The supervisor is starting a level 5. Both the liaison teacher and the forest school teacher are supportive and effective in developing and extending the teaching skills of the practitioners.

All practitioners provide a balance of experiences that effectively meet the needs of the children. Additional practitioners are well deployed and all intervene appropriately in the play of the children to extend and develop their knowledge.

Practitioners observe and assess the children regularly to measure their progress and note when the children need more opportunities for skill development, however this is not always consistently recorded or reviewed. There is time before and after the session for parents to talk to practitioners and discuss the progress of their children. A written assessment record is available when children leave the setting.

The practitioners share ideas and adult support is well focused and makes a good contribution to the progress of the children. Practitioners provide helpful oral feedback and spend time with individual children discussing what they are doing and how it can be developed or improved.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

Learning experiences promote the children's personal development and their moral social, spiritual and cultural growth. The setting has undertaken risk assessments to keep all children safe and there are appropriate policies and procedures for child protection linking to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

Abergele Playgroup develops and promotes the health and well being of the children. The children have opportunities to choose and decide and develop an understanding of living and sharing with others. All the children behave well and playgroup helps the children to take responsibility and help others through a range of activities and learning experiences.

The setting has effective arrangements for providing children with additional needs specialist and personal support. Practitioners work closely with parents and professionals to assist these children and they make good progress in the group.

The setting effectively promotes the health and well being of the children by serving healthy food for the snack and providing outdoor play.

**Learning environment: Good**

The playgroup welcomes all children, offers equal access to the curriculum and is fully inclusive. The learning environment supports the children in their play both indoors and outdoors.

Sufficient well trained and experienced practitioners meet the needs of the children and their understanding of the Foundation Phase outcomes is evident in their day to day work. Practitioners use training well to improve their own knowledge, awareness and skills and this has a positive impact on the education and progress of the children.

A fine supply of varied, good quality resources in all areas are well matched to the learning and developmental needs of the children and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The room is set out so that all children can help themselves to resources. This ensures they settle quickly to the activities when they arrive and are independent. The accommodation is suitable and children have opportunities to engage with the community to enhance the facilities at the setting.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

Practitioners are enthusiastic and well motivated and all are aware of and fulfil their roles and responsibilities. They are fully focused on the needs of the children. Leaders have created a very positive ethos within the group where the children are valued and respected. There is a sense of purpose and high expectation.

Practitioners respond quickly and effectively to any advice and guidance from the local authority teacher and ensure changes impact positively on standards and quality of provision. Appraisals improve practitioners and develop their expertise. The group has established effective links with parents to encourage them to support the learning of their children.

Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities and there is clear direction in the group that promotes and sustains development.

National and local priorities are taken into account such as Designed to Smile helping children to take care of their teeth.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The playgroup has undertaken self evaluation and there are processes in place to evaluate the strengths of the setting and areas for improvement. The playgroup ensures that this results in positive gains for all the children.

The playgroup is committed to valuing the views of all. All practitioners contribute to the process and use the information gathered day to day from the running of the setting to successfully identify new resources. Practitioners have good opportunities to become involved in training and professional development such as the forest school.

Practitioners are developing links within the local community. They have made good use of Foundation Phase training to improve their practice, the curriculum and organisation within the group and have made significant and consistent progress since the last Estyn inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The playgroup works in partnership and clear communication and trust is established between all concerned that benefits the children and their families. There is a good relationship with parents and they are involved in decisions about the learning of their children. A newsletter every half term keeps them informed and updated with what is happening in the playgroup.

A sound partnership with the local school actively contributes to facilitate the transition arrangements when children leave the group to go to school.

The setting has effective partnerships with the library, a local café and a residential home that support the progress of the children, however as the playgroup is situated in a small town links with the local community to extend and develop the learning of the children are insufficient.

The early education teacher works effectively in the setting and practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance. The playgroup also works with other organisations such as the Wales Pre-School Providers Association to support the children and their families.

### **Resource management: Good**

There is a good range of high quality resources that are managed well and actively contribute to the progress and achievements of the children. All practitioners are well deployed and the resources in the playgroup effectively motivate all the children to learn. The children benefit from a weekly visit to the local library and a forest school experience extends their knowledge of the world around them.

The playgroup has two outdoor areas and these are used to enhance the learning of the children. The playgroup makes good use of their current resources and future needs are planned for. Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of budget

matters and ensure that any extra equipment and experiences will benefit the children and improve standards and well being.

The playgroup gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. (This is because there were only a small number of relevant children at the time of the inspection.)

### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children are happy and busy at the playgroup. They enjoy going to the library and playing with all the toys. They liked going to the forest school, breaking ice on the pond and drinking hot chocolate by the fire but they did not like their toes being cold.

## Appendix 2

Anne Manning

Reporting Inspector

### **Copies of the report**

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.