



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

**Cwmffrwdoer Under Fives
Cwmffrwdoer Primary School
Waunddu
Pontnewydd
Pontypool
Torfaen
NP4 6QZ**

Date of inspection: February 2012

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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Context

Cwmffrwdoer Under Fives is an English medium setting which meets in Cwmffrwdoer Primary School. The setting is based in a classroom next to the Foundation Phase area and almost all children transfer to the Reception class within the school in the September following their fourth birthday. The playgroup is open for five mornings and five afternoons and offers wrap around care should parents request this.

The playgroup is one of five in the local area operating under one manager and managed by a voluntary management committee. The setting is registered for up to 20 children and there are currently 19 children on roll. Eight three-year-olds and six four-year-olds are in receipt of funded educational provision. The children all speak English as their home language and, although there are currently no children who have been identified as having additional learning needs, the group is open to all and has previously supported children with additional needs. The children come from the local area and represent a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The area is rural and not regarded as being prosperous.

The classroom is light and airy and laid out with different areas of learning and the outside area, accessed directly from the classroom, has a large covered porch. The group has use of the school hall, the school grounds and a purpose built play area shared with the children based in the school.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in November 2010 and by Estyn in February 2006.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is judged to be good because:

- Leadership and management has impacted very strongly on standards and provision and supports both staff and pupils
- All children enjoy their time in the playgroup and make good progress in their learning across all areas of the curriculum
- All children behave well and form good relationships with one another
- The setting provides an exceptional range of exciting and stimulating activities which successfully engage all children
- There is a good balance between child selected and adult led activities
- Staff are extremely well trained and monitored by management and have good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and expertise

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- The setting has a long history of high quality self-evaluation which feeds into positive improvement and rising standards in provision
- The current highly effective self-evaluation document is owned by both staff and managers and is honest and helpful in identifying targets for improvement
- Action plans clearly indicate areas for improvement identified in self-evaluation and clearly defined targets indicate personnel responsible, costings and timescales. Regular reviews indicate that these targets are being efficiently and successfully addressed
- The management team is highly effective in its organisation, leadership and monitoring of the work of the setting and ensures that the needs of the children both as a group and as individuals are paramount
- Arrangements for staff development and for monitoring performance are exceptional

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1 Continue to develop children's input into the planned activities

R2 Continue to develop observations of children's progress and identification of their next steps in order to enhance learning

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how the setting 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?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make good and sometimes very good progress during their time in the playgroup. They enjoy learning and persevere at their chosen activities for considerable periods of time. All children make choices from the wide range of activities provided for them and happily share materials and resources. They enjoy listening to stories and show their interest and understanding through their reactions and responses. All listen attentively and carry out instructions willingly. They enthusiastically recall facts from previous discussions and express their preferences about what they construction toys they should have out that day. Most children recognise their name when they sit down at snack time and most older children are beginning to write their names independently when mark making and on their work. All children recognise and can name the initial letter of their name and many also know several other letter sounds.

All children are making appropriate progress in recognising numbers and many older children are learning numbers to ten. All know and recognise basic two dimensional shapes and many are able to draw them and to identify them in their work and in the environment. All children respond enthusiastically to music in their movement and dance sessions. Most are able to play an instrument in time to a beat and to vary the speed and volume when asked.

All children use a wide range of battery operated equipment confidently. Most use a camera to record their activities and to take photographs of each other and their helpers. They use telephones, calculators and keyboards correctly in their role-play and many use the computer, television and listening station independently.

All children are making good progress in the Welsh language. Many use the simple words and phrases they have learned when speaking to an adult; for example counting in Welsh or using the Welsh word for a colour without being asked.

Wellbeing: Good

All children, relative to their age, have a good understanding of how they can become healthy including the importance of food and exercise and explain that it is important to wash their hands to get rid of 'germs and nasties'. Almost all children show good levels of self-esteem and are motivated and engaged in their learning. All thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting and are eager to investigate and explore new learning experiences.

All children play together well and understand the need to share and to take turns. Where there is a dispute over whose turn it is to play in a particular area they make use of a sand timer and clearly understand that when it has run out it is time to change over which they do without a fuss. All children behave well throughout the session and respond very positively to encouragement from the practitioners. They are very familiar with the routines of the group and help to tidy up at the end of the session particularly well.

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

The playgroup provides children with an interesting and appealing curriculum which successfully stimulates their imagination and sustains their interest. Planning is initiated by the managers and personalised for the setting by practitioners who work closely together to meet the needs of both the group and individual children. The setting is beginning to involve the children in making decisions about future activities and about how activities can be enhanced.

An outstanding feature of the planning is the way in which the cycle links closely to observations and assessments of individual children to ensure that the next steps in their learning are met. This is sector leading practice. Areas of activity that are directly linked to language and literacy, mathematics, wellbeing or ICT are colour coded to ensure that progress is being made in meeting these targets. Planned activities are well focused on providing high quality experiences to ensure all children are well challenged and actively involved. Practitioners are continuously evaluating the impact of the provision on children's learning and take immediate action for example if an activity does not appear to be attracting children's interest or meeting the learning intentions. These evaluations are recorded on the Vehicles for Learning documents in each area of provision around the classroom or on sticky notes and are checked by the managers before planning for the following week. This highly effective practice not only ensures that the activities are meeting the identified learning intentions but also that any targets for individual children are being met. The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the Welsh culture and traditions is good, including the celebration of St. David's day when the children performed a simple Welsh folk dance they had been learning. Practitioners use incidental Welsh systematically throughout the session and this is beginning to impact on children's independent use of the language.

Good opportunities are provided for children to develop personal and cultural identities such as celebrations of Welsh festivals but also extend their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions, such as celebration of the Chinese New Year and Indian customs which provide them with meaningful experiences about the cultures and traditions of other peoples. The playgroup recycles paper and children show their understanding of this when they put used pieces of paper in the recycling container while they are tidying up at the end of the sessions.

Teaching: Good

The teaching across the curriculum makes a very positive impact on children's learning. Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations of the children. The present team of practitioners, although individually experienced in child development, have only been working together since September but share a real unity in their desire to provide high quality experiences for the children. They clearly enjoy their work and their enthusiasm impacts very positively on the children. Teaching is uniformly good and sometimes very good. Practitioners have a clear idea of the learning intentions they are addressing and use high order questioning to develop children's thinking. They show good understanding of when to intervene and when to allow children to explore and experiment for themselves. Stimulating learning experiences are provided across all areas of learning and good use is made of the resources available, including the use of technology.

An outstanding feature of the setting is the meticulous assessment of children, the record keeping and the link with planning. Opportunities for assessment are identified in weekly planning and observations entered into children's profiles together with more general observations and comments. Records are comprehensive and the outcomes of assessment very well used when planning future activities. Keyworkers keep records for the children in their groups but all practitioners contribute to observations and know all children well. Managers review children's profiles termly to ensure individual targets are being met and support staff with helpful and relevant suggestions. Parents receive a written report in October following baseline assessments. These reports focus on personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematical development together with a general comment. An exemplary feature is the inclusion not only of next steps in the children's learning but also specific suggestions of how parents can help. This assessment and record keeping, closely linked with planning, is sector leading practice.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good arrangements are in place to ensure children's health and wellbeing and these have a positive impact on children's development. The interesting and enjoyable activities encourage children to want to find out more because their learning is fun. Good emphasis is laid on the importance of being kind and thoughtful to others and all children understand what is unacceptable behaviour.

Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they start at the playgroup. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children. Children attending the playgroup move on to the school where the setting is situated and the managers work closely with the class teacher to support transition arrangements.

A good range of policies to ensure the children are safe is in place and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Learning environment: Good

The setting is attractive and welcoming. All children are made to feel important and valued members of the group. It is a calm, busy and purposeful place where all children are fully included in all activities and are treated equally.

A good ratio of well trained and experienced practitioners meets the needs of all children. They are very well aware of the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum and highly committed to their continued professional development. Resources are of a very good quality and quantity and the setting benefits from being able to share resources with others in the management group. All children have free access to a shared toilet facility with the primary school and to an outdoor play area which is hard surfaced throughout. The setting also has use of the school's hall and grounds.

The children's learning experiences are enhanced by a good range of visits to the locality and beyond and also by visitors including animals and a belly dancer.

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

High quality management of the setting is extremely effective in ensuring provision of a very high standard which impacts well on the children's progress. The group manager and her deputy visit the setting weekly and monitor the planning and assessment procedures in place. The managers provide highly effective support to staff in the setting and ensure that procedures for planning, observations and assessment are effective and attend to the needs of all children.

Staff in the setting meet together every week. Notes of their discussions are kept and show a real concern for the provision of high quality experiences for the children. Particularly good practice is the way in which practitioners regularly assess the impact the provision is having on the children's learning.

An outstanding feature of the setting, and sector leading practice, is the arrangements that are in place for the induction and monitoring of staff. These arrangements ensure that new staff have experience of the full range of activities within the setting during their probationary period. Staff supervision by the management is exemplary. They are currently building on an already efficient and

comprehensive system of appraisal with the development of observations of practitioners to feed more effectively into target setting. Staff are very appreciative of the opportunities for them to develop their professional expertise.

Overall the outstanding impact of the leadership has provided the setting with clear innovative strategic direction and fully committed staff. National and local priorities have been met and the setting has taken good account of Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authority initiatives.

Improving quality: Excellent

Procedures for self-evaluation are of a very high standard. The management of the group has consistently identified strengths and areas for improvement and has been highly effective in building on its strengths and tackled areas for improvement consistently and innovatively.

Self-evaluation involves all staff and takes into account their views, experiences and expertise. The present self-evaluation document for the setting has been put in place by the practitioners in conjunction with the management and good progress is being made and regularly evaluated

All staff benefit from attending training offered by the Local Authority. Additionally managers regularly review the training needs of the group and provide tailor-made training each term. The team leader meets regularly with those from the other settings and there are opportunities for visits between the settings. This enables them to share their ideas and good practice with the other providers. Managers routinely measure the impact of training in terms of its effect on children's progress and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

Parents and carers are kept fully informed about the work of the Nursery and their child's achievement and progress. Planning is displayed in the foyer where parents and carers wait to bring and collect their children and staff are always available to discuss any questions or concerns they may have.

Formal reports are provided for parents twice a year as are opportunities for arranged meetings with their child's keyworker. Parents, when necessary, are fully involved in decisions about their children. A useful partnership is in place with the Local Authority and the link advisory teacher visits regularly to support and give advice. Practitioners reported positively about this support and there is good evidence that they have acted on the advice received to good effect.

The playgroup enjoys very good links with the school. In addition to the access to different areas around the school the reception class teachers visits every fortnight to read stories to the children which greatly facilitates transition when the children are ready to move on.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of high quality resources which are well used to support the planned learning activities. Practitioners are effectively deployed to maximise children's learning and independence both indoors and out. Sharing of equipment within the group greatly benefits the individual settings as they have access to a wide range of interesting resources with which they can extend the childrens learning experiences.

The management committee manages its finances rigorously. It is mindful of the impact of its spending decisions on the quality of its provision and the progress children make. The setting gives very 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

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy coming to the playgroup. They like to play outside and to use construction toys and malleable materials. Most older children have made special friends who they like to spend time with.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

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.

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.