



*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**

**Giggles Playgroup  
Gwaunmiskin Road  
Beddau Square  
Pontypridd  
CF38 2AU**

**Date of inspection: January 2013**

**by**

**Mrs Janet Marsden**

**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 Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW..or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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**Publication date: 19/02/2013**

## Context

Giggles Playgroup is situated in the centre of the village of Beddau near Pontypridd. The setting opened in its present form in September 2004. The previous playgroup closed in December 2003 when the building was condemned. The current owner, who was a helper at that time, has worked very hard to raise sufficient funds and provide suitable accommodation to enable the playgroup to continue.

Although the village of Beddau contains some private housing there is also a considerable proportion of social housing. There is high unemployment in the area. A high percentage of children come from young and single parent families.

The setting is registered to take 30 children per session and offers places to children from the age of two. Most of the children leave to start Primary School at three, resulting in constantly fluctuating numbers, with three year olds leaving the playgroup regularly throughout the year. Currently, there are 6 funded three-year olds registered and no four year-olds.

There are no children at present from ethnic minority groups. A tiny minority of children do not have English as their first language. A small percentage of children have additional learning, or special needs.

Giggles is the main preschool setting in Beddau and feeds the surrounding English speaking primary schools and occasionally the local Welsh school. It also feeds a number of primary schools outside the Beddau area. Children with special needs that will go on to schools with special need provision or specialization also attend the setting.

Giggles Playgroup was last inspected by Estyn in November 2006. The setting was last inspected by CSSIW in November 2011.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Giggles playgroup provides well for the needs and early educational development of young children. Most children make good progress and achieve an appropriate standard across the seven Foundation Phase areas of learning apart from in Welsh language development, where standards and progress are adequate.

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.

Children's standards of wellbeing are good. Behaviour is good and most children learn to respect each other and play well together.

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners own language skills provide a very good role model for children. As a result, children's speech develops well.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Children are well cared for and they feel safe; they know whom to approach if they need help. There is a warm, welcoming ethos to the setting where care, respect for others and equality is effectively promoted and diversity is celebrated. The setting has very good arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs.

The setting is well managed and efficiently run by a deeply committed leader and enthusiastic hardworking staff. The leader and her staff are committed to self-improvement and further development. Formal systems for self-evaluation are at an early stage of development. The leader is very proactive in developing a good range of partnerships that effectively promote children's good achievement and wellbeing.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting has made good progress since the last inspection and has fully addressed all the shortcomings found at that time.

- The leader and her staff are committed to self-development
- The leader is very proactive in developing a good range of partnerships that help staff to learn new skills, develop new ideas and establish good practice.

## **Recommendations**

- R1. Raise standards in Welsh language development
- R2. Improve the quality and use of self-evaluation
- R3. Continue to improve systems for formal assessment and use of data

### **What happens next?**

'The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.'

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Most children make realistic progress from their starting point and achieve to an appropriate standard across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning, apart from in Welsh language development, where standards and progress are adequate. They are confident in making choices and are happy taking part in all the setting's learning activities. Most children concentrate very well on their tasks and persevere for a good length of time to overcome difficulties, such as balancing cakes on a tray, for example. They take some responsibility for tidying away equipment and resources at the end of the session.

Children's skills develop well as a result of engaging in group and independent activities. Most children listen well to instructions and communicate with growing confidence. Many children successfully use short sentences when discussing their work or when playing with their friends. Nearly all children sing along enthusiastically in English and in Welsh to a lesser extent. They generally concentrate well when listening in a group to stories that interest them and thoroughly enjoy sharing books with adults in the reading area. Many children are very eager to 'read' to their friends or toys and a few like to read alone. Many children recognise that newspapers and magazines contain information; a few 'read' these for themselves. A few children recognise their own names on registration cards and many recognise the initial letter of their name. The most able children ask practitioners to show them how to write their names and successfully trace the letters. Nearly all children make marks on paper during their play in the post office and in other areas of learning; they understand that writing carries meaning.

A majority of children can count a small number of objects accurately and use mathematical language correctly in activities. For example, when weighing objects in the post office, many accurately use expressions such as 'heavier' and 'lighter', 'larger' and 'smaller'. When sorting letters for posting, the most able children correctly identify and match 2D shapes and sort stamps into colour groups. A majority of children of three correctly match a short sequence of objects.

Most children use information and communication technology confidently to reinforce and enrich their learning across the seven areas of the Foundation Phase. They engage in a range of simulations and games using a laptop and operate a digital camera with great interest and growing skill. Many of them successfully operate a toy car, enabling it to make turns.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Children's standards of wellbeing are good. They trust the adults who care for them completely. Most of the children arrive happy and smiling in the morning, eager to find their friends and chat with the adults. All the children settle well on arrival and enjoy their learning.

Most children are becoming aware of the importance of keeping the outdoor environment clean and safe for play. Working with an adult, they take turns to make risk assessments, checking that the gate is locked, litter is removed and toys are in a safe, clean condition. Most children show an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily, and can identify cucumber and carrot 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, or climbing on large play equipment in the outside learning area.

All children are confident to ask for help from adults and many take responsibility for their personal hygiene. Most put their own coats with a minimum of help from adults.

Behaviour is generally good and most children are polite to the adults in the setting. They begin to respect each other and play well together. They happily share toys and resources and take turns when required. Most children generally respond readily to instructions, and begin to take responsibility for clearing up following an activity.

Children begin to make decisions about what they like and dislike playing with and choose confidently where they wish to play. Most children can handle small objects and resources well, for example paint brushes, crayons, spoons and scoops or scissors. They enjoy their activities in the outside learning area, and show competence in controlling large bikes.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

The setting provides an appropriate range of stimulating experiences for children that hold their interest and enable them to explore for themselves.

All staff know the children very well, understand their specific needs and abilities and respond flexibly to ensure that activities match the needs of individuals. Planning for focussed, continuous and enhanced provision is appropriate. All staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities.

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. Planning for the development of children's information and communication technology skills effectively supports the Foundation Phase areas of learning.

Systematic planning for Welsh language development is at an early stage, though staff work hard to improve children's Welsh language skills. They read a few stories in Welsh and use some Welsh words and phrases during play sessions, Welsh is visible in signage and children are encouraged to use the language.

Staff plan for children to make very good use of the outdoor area and outdoor learning is fully integrated into the setting's programme of activities. Caring for the new pets and examination of minibeasts in the garden, help to promote an understanding of the need to care for all living things.

The setting plans well for developing respect for the environment through imaginative involvement of the children in routines that encourage minimising waste and keeping the outdoor surroundings clean.

The setting takes an active part in community events. It effectively develops the Welsh dimension through the use of Welsh books and songs, and particularly during St David's Day activities.

The leader has established links with a nursery school in Uganda and this helps children successfully understand more about the world in which they live.

## **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching overall is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use an appropriate range of approaches that engage and interest children. Rules and routines are well established and children feel safe, secure and cared for. Practitioners own language skills provide a very good role model for children. As a result, children's oracy skills and vocabulary are enhanced and improved.

There is a strong sense of co-operation, mutual support and teamwork amongst all practitioners in the setting. This ensures that staff work well together to provide consistency of approaches in, for instance, managing children's behaviour or intervening appropriately in children's play.

Practitioners know the small number of children in the setting very well. Staff make their own assessment of what children know, understand and are able to do when they enter the setting and at intervals throughout their time in playgroup. They make careful observation of children during play and active learning to monitor their progress and development in all areas of learning. This information is generally used appropriately to inform future planning, particularly for less able children. A more systematic and detailed approach to assessment is at an early stage of development.

Parents are continually kept well informed about their children's wellbeing and their educational progress. Reports to parents are generally evaluative and give parents a clear picture of their child's strengths.

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

The setting successfully promotes children's health and wellbeing. Children are well cared for and they feel safe and know whom to approach if they need help. Day-to-day activities foster values such as honesty, fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong. Practitioners effectively encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and resources and to understand the importance of living and sharing with others.

The strong caring ethos of the setting means that children settle quickly into routines when they start and are ready to learn.

The setting has very good arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, including those with challenging behaviour. The leader and her staff liaise very effectively with health visitors prior to children entering the setting at the age of two and staff are quick to recognise and note any areas of concern themselves. The leader is proactive in seeking advice and funding for individual needs and responds rapidly to address any developmental or learning issues. A positive working relationship exists with outside agencies and the local authority.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All staff are aware of their roles and of the importance of this aspect of their work.

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

### **Learning environment: Good**

The building, despite its age and prefabricated construction, is brightly painted on the outside and warm and welcoming inside. Parents feel confident to enter the setting and there is a strong sense of community and support for the family.

There is sufficient space for the number of children across the two rooms. Attractive interactive displays and examples of children's work provide a stimulating environment for learning. Words and numbers are prominently displayed to promote children's knowledge and understanding.

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.

There are ample good quality resources to ensure that children can take part in a wide range of activities. Resources are well maintained and stored where children can easily reach them.

The outdoor environment is easily accessible to the children who use it daily in all but the most extreme weather conditions. There is a safe concreted area to the front of the building and a large grassy area behind. There are painted games on the ground and garden areas for growing plants have been created. A good range of resources and outdoor equipment extend and complement the indoor learning environment and promote the delivery of Foundation Phase principles.

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

The setting's owner is an effective leader. She is passionate about her work and eager to develop herself and her staff to their full potential. 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 make the most of their time in the playgroup. 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 setting responds appropriately to national and local priorities. It is fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The leader knows the setting well and generally has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Staff are reflective, and are keen to look for ways to improve provision at the setting.

Formalised systems for involving all stakeholders in self-evaluation and developing suitable, manageable action plans are at an early stage of development. The self-evaluation report is a recently compiled document that correctly reflects the strengths and areas for development of the setting. Action plans have not yet been fully implemented.

The setting allows the views of children to be considered informally 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 leader is fully aware of the importance of meeting national and local priorities and engages well with any available training. All staff are experienced in working in the Foundation Phase. They work hard to improve their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the children.

### **Partnership working: Good**

A good range of partnerships appropriately promotes children's good achievement and wellbeing.

Parents value the work that the setting does and consider that their children are very happy and make good progress, particularly in speaking. The setting has a very good reputation locally for supporting parents and families, in managing behaviour, for example.

The strong sense of dedication and team work in the setting means that practitioners work well together to plan and assess children's learning and to share ideas. This partnership contributes significantly to children's progress and wellbeing.

There is a positive relationship with CSSIW, the local authority and Wales Pre-school Providers Association. The leader is extremely proactive in developing effective partnerships with other professionals both to develop her own professional practice and to provide as well as possible for the children. Very good links exist between the setting and local health care professionals, and with experts in special needs. This benefits the children with additional learning or special needs who attend the playgroup, and their parents.

Very good links exist between the setting and local Primary Schools or Special Schools to which children transfer. As many children transfer to school very soon after they reach the age of three, arrangements are often informal and reactive. Where practicable, children make visits to the nursery classes; the setting leader is proactive in ensuring that detailed information on individual children's needs is provided.

Good use is made of community links with local people such as the postman and local shopkeepers and staff at the library to enhance children's learning experiences. Visits from the police, fire-fighters, and other professionals further develop their knowledge and understanding.

**Resource management: Good**

Good use is made of staff time, expertise and experience to effectively support children's learning. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum and monitor the day-to-day provision in areas of learning well. Staff are dedicated and willingly give their own time for the benefit of the children.

The indoor and outdoor classroom areas are generally well resourced. Resources are of a good quality and are appropriate for the age of the children.

The leader efficiently and effectively manages a very small budget. Fluctuating numbers of funded children occasionally has a negative impact on forward financial planning. This is mainly addressed by imaginative fund raising and support from friends of the setting.

The setting achieves good outcomes for children and provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

#### **Questionnaires**

The sample of questionnaires was too small to provide suitable data. There were only 6. It is worth noting however that all had been returned. There were no negative responses.

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

All children say that they like coming to the playgroup and enjoy the activities on offer. Most children are confident when involved in role play and when speaking to each other, to adults and to visitors. They are eager to greet their friends on arrival and show genuine affection towards staff. The children said that their helpers are kind and they go to them if they were unhappy or need some help. Most of the children particularly like playing outside and enjoy being able to choose what to play with. They know they should always try to be kind and share their toys.

## Appendix 2

**The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate**

Mrs Janet Marsden	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>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<p>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.</p>

<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.