



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

**Llangollen PG
The Youth Centre
Willow Hill
Llangollen
LL20 8HH**

Date of inspection: February 2014

by

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Reporting Inspector**

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

Llangollen Playgroup is an English-medium setting. It is based at the Youth Club in Llangollen in Denbighshire, but also meets in Ysgol Bryn Collen once a week. The children attending have a range of backgrounds. Most live in the town of Llangollen and a few further afield.

The setting provides sessional day care and education for children aged between two and four years old. During school terms it offers morning sessions on weekdays, except Tuesdays and afternoon sessions on a Monday and Friday. It is registered for 26 children. At the time of the inspection there were 19 children on roll. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership fund six three year olds up to 10 hours per week, but not all attended the sessions inspected. Nearly all the children are English speaking and British born. None is from ethnic minorities. A very few families speak Welsh at home. At present none of the children attending the setting need extra support for learning.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in February 2012 and Estyn in February 2008. There have been no changes in staff for seven years and recently established links with the school assist the sharing of Foundation Phase practice, facilities and resources.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Adequate
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- a wide range of imaginative learning experiences is provided;
- children's personal development and wellbeing is very well promoted;
- teaching skilfully promotes incidental learning;
- practitioners and children have good relationships;
- partnerships with parents and the community are good and
- the setting has a lively, friendly and inclusive ethos.

However,

- planning and assessment are insufficiently detailed to assure the progressive development of children's skills.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the setting is well led, managed and organised on a day-to-day basis;
- imaginative use is made of indoor and outdoor resources;
- links with Ysgol Bryn Collen are developing well;
- recent self-evaluation identifies relevant areas for improvement.

However,

- there is a mixed picture of improvement since the last inspection; and
- it is too soon to judge the impact of current initiatives.

Recommendations

R1. enhance provision to promote greater independence and extend children's literacy, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills;

R2. improve planning and assessment to provide better guidance for teaching and ensure progression in children's learning;

R3. establish an effective management committee;

R4. formalise self-evaluation and develop plans to help implement improvement strategies;

R5. plan opportunities to support practitioners' professional development.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/a

Standards: N/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: N/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The setting provides a wide range of imaginative activities that engage the children's interest well. This provision is in line with children's needs and provides good opportunities to promote the Foundation Phase outcomes. Activities are systematically planned in areas of play and this helps ensure well-resourced activities offer good opportunities for learning. Activities, including tasks led by adults, are well defined each week, but too few details of the learning objectives are recorded.

The setting leader plans for the areas of play and practitioners are flexible in implementing this planning. There is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities. These provide a good basis to build on children's prior knowledge and skills. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills. For example, the book corner is inviting and encourages children to browse and talk about stories with an adult. In another activity, counting trucks on a model train, children are encouraged to count accurately by using a finger to guide them. However, the focus on ICT skills is very limited.

Records of planning provide appropriate details for activities in all areas of play and practitioners know well the activities offered. In particular, their knowledge of the tasks they are to lead is good. Broad topics provide a good framework to ensure

progression in learning. Records show the skills framework is used appropriately to check that the areas of play are resourced to promote relevant skills. However, little is recorded in weekly plans to indicate how and what the children might learn.

Practitioners know the children very well. Learning experiences foster positive relationships, nurture respect and increasingly promote awareness of other cultures, such as through celebrating Chinese New Year.

Good use is made of the local environment and the community to enhance learning. This successfully promotes wider awareness of the natural and man-made world. However, the focus on sustainability is insufficiently developed and opportunities to integrate indoor and outdoor activities are very limited.

The provision for Welsh language development and to promote awareness of Welsh history and culture is developing. Some Welsh is spoken within daily routines and activities are planned to celebrate St David's Day.

Teaching: Adequate

Teaching skilfully promotes incidental learning, makes good use of praise and sets high expectations for good behaviour. Practitioners provide positive role models; they interact with children very well and respond effectively to their personal needs.

Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. Daily routines ensure children's engagement in a wide range of activities. Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately when needed. Practitioners successfully promote a positive learning environment. They are enthusiastic and often use questioning and praise well to promote learning. High expectations of children's personal development are clearly evident. Learning through play is appropriately encouraged. However, on occasions adult led tasks are over structured and limit opportunities for choice and independence. Practitioners informally discuss activities, but there is little recorded evidence of how to develop the learning objectives.

The arrangements for assessment are insufficiently developed. There is little evidence of recording observations and assessments of children's achievements, although individual assessment booklets are completed before transfer to school. Practitioners are beginning to record achievement and next steps in learning, but overall insufficient use is made of assessment information to help shape future learning.

Parents' benefit from informal communication with practitioners about their child's progress before and after sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The quality of care, support and personal guidance is good. This impacts very well on children's personal and social development. The strong emphasis placed on moral and social development is a distinctive feature of the provision.

Arrangements to assure children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. Healthy eating is promoted appropriately through the snack time menu. The promotion of children's personal development is good. This encourages a sense of curiosity about the world, fosters the values of honesty and fairness, successfully promotes good behaviour and engages children in a range of community activities. There are good opportunities for spiritual development and the promotion of cultural awareness is developing.

The setting has appropriate procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required and liaises well with agencies in the community. This includes appropriate arrangements to support and integrate children who need extra help with their learning.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff have valid criminal records bureau checks. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a happy, lively learning environment. It has an inclusive ethos and treats all children equally. Practitioners are supportive and foster good relationships. This helps ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners strongly encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others and skillfully manage incidents of misbehaviour. Equal opportunities are well promoted, but arrangements to ensure any child with disabilities does not suffer disadvantage are not sufficiently formalised.

There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. There is a basic sufficiency of learning resources to deliver the Foundation Phase, but provision for ICT is very limited. Imaginative use is made of available resources and the local environment to enrich learning. There is sufficient indoor accommodation, but there is little scope for outdoor play next to the building.

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

The setting is well led and managed on a day-to-day basis by an enthusiastic leader. She sets high expectations for children's care and personal development. A happy teamwork ethos permeates the life and work of the setting. A statement of purpose and an appropriate range of policies are in place. A clear sense of purpose and shared values are evident in pastoral aspects, but strategic direction to improve educational provision is not sufficiently formalised. Practitioners work well as a team and have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Day-to-day routines are well established and the organisation of playgroup activities is good.

The contribution of the management committee in helping to establish strategic direction, monitoring developments in provision and ensuring accountability is developing. However, no records of committee meetings were available for scrutiny during the inspection.

Practitioners contribute to an annual appraisal. This process identifies individual needs appropriately, but there is no evidence of setting targets. Records show training needs are identified, but there is no recorded evidence of planning to promote practitioners' professional development.

The setting is working to embrace national and local priorities. The provision embraces well the Foundation Phase philosophy and approach; there is strong emphasis on equality, but the setting has been slow to promote healthy eating and awareness of diversity and sustainability.

Improving quality: Adequate

The recently implemented process of self-evaluation provides a perceptive analysis of the setting's strengths and identifies relevant areas for improvement. The setting has no formalised arrangements to promote self-evaluation or to systematically plan to implement strategies for improvement. However, there is good evidence of improvements in key aspects of provision since the last inspection. Although not all the recommendations have been fully implemented, both the self-evaluation and discussions with practitioners confirm appropriate awareness of areas for development in the setting's practice.

Formalised procedures for self-evaluation are not securely established. There is purposeful discussion among practitioners, informal account is taken of the views of parents, but there are no formalised arrangements to seek and take account of the views of stakeholders.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working has a positive impact on children's learning. The setting's relationship with parents is very positive. Informal and friendly day-to-day contacts enable the effective exchange of information about the child. Planned activities are discussed and parents readily contribute to playgroup events.

The setting has close and effective links with children's services in the community. When the need arises parents and children benefit from these networks of support.

Links with Ysgol Bryn Collen, the receiving primary school, are well established. Current initiatives to share educational resources and practice with the playgroup are steadily developing. The local authority promotes this initiative, but it is too soon to judge its impact.

The partnership with the local authority and other agencies, including the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association, is beneficial. The impact of support and quality assurance provided by the local authority is appropriate.

Resource management: Adequate

The management of available resources is successful in creating a wide range of learning opportunities. Practitioners are well deployed, sessions are well structured and resources well organised. However, opportunities for practitioners' professional development are missed. For instance, visits to other settings to share good practice have not been taken.

Imaginative use is made of funding available to the playgroup. This is evident in the good range of well-resourced activities. However, the management committee's annual accounts were not available for scrutiny. Appropriate arrangements to claim income for funded places; ensure the payment of staff and monitor finance are in place, but there is no record of planning to match spending to the setting's needs or evaluate the impact of expenditure.

The positive impact of provision on children's wellbeing represents value for money, but some aspects of learning and teaching are less well developed.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Michael T. Ridout	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)

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

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.