



*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**

**Llysfaen Play Group  
Ysgol Cynfran  
Llysfaen  
Conwy  
LL29 8SS**

**Date of inspection: June 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: 18/07/2012**

## Context

Llysfaen Playgroup has been running from the current premises for 5 years. The playgroup is located in Llysfaen, a village near Colwyn Bay, North Wales. The medium-sized playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee and the general day to day running is carried out by two supervisors and practitioners.

The playgroup is based in the Community Centre in Llysfaen, next to the school. The accommodation is shared by other members of the community and this means that the practitioners have to set out and clear away the equipment before and after each session. There is an entrance hall outside the room that has information for parents to view when they drop off or collect their children. Inside, there are two rooms, a large playroom and a smaller room used for snacks and quieter play. The main room is divided into areas for play and outside, the group has their own enclosed space. The playgroup also has access to the school grounds that include a field, adventure playground, sensory wildlife garden, forest school and yard.

The playgroup operates during term time for five sessions a week and is open from 9.15am to 12.30pm. Llysfaen Playgroup is registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide sessional care and the children attending the playgroup are aged between two and four years of age. The last CSSIW inspection was in June 2011 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

There are four practitioners working in the playgroup who are all qualified to either level 3 or 4. There were four children present aged three who were eligible for funding during this summer term.

The playgroup is English speaking, providing care and education for children from families for whom all this is their first language.

Ethnicity is all White British and one child had additional needs.

The playgroup has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. Nearly all children attending the playgroup are from the village and are from mixed socio economic backgrounds. All children move from the playgroup on to the school.

The playgroup is part of the Flying Start initiative and a member of the Wales Pre School Provider Association

Llysfaen Playgroup receives support from Conwy Early Education.

## 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:

Learning experiences are interesting and varied.  
Children are settled and make good progress.  
Teaching is good.  
Care support and guidance are good.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

All practitioners effectively evaluate and reflect on their practice.  
There is an effective working relationship with the Early Education teacher.  
Both the playgroup and the school are keen to further develop their relationship for the benefit of the children.

## **Recommendations**

R1. Develop the planning of focused activities.

R2. Develop observation and link more closely to skills.

R3. Further develop the existing good relationship with the school.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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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.

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

Nearly all practitioners use a good level of Welsh during circle time, but this needs to be developed with opportunities throughout the session.

All children learn effectively about the culture and traditions of Wales by dressing in Welsh costumes, sharing Welsh cakes, making representations of leeks, drawing flags, sharing stories about Wales and enjoying Welsh songs with a range of puppets.

Children learn about other festivals such as Chinese New Year and Poppy Day.

Children learn to count by using a programmable toy, Bee Bot and through a good range of number games. All children have opportunities to develop skills in all areas of learning and Precious Experiences books show good practice in these

The playgroup makes good use of the immediate environment for activities and provides a good range of experiences, for example, posting cards in the village and using the forest school.

Children have experiences of caring for living things by growing plants, looking at chicks and observing horses in the field next to playgroup.

All staff have input into the planning of activities and provide a range of interesting and stimulating experiences such as the smelly box. The planning and recording of focused activities needs to be more effective with clear skills to be developed linked to the framework for learning. The ideas and interests of the children although taken into account need to be shown on plans and any adaptations clearly noted.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners make helpful suggestions to improve, for example, how to use tweezers and a magnifying glass to enhance their play.

All practitioners manage the behaviour of the children effectively and are good role and language models. Practitioners give good explanations to the children and they make good use of questioning to extend the learning of the children. A good

introduction at breakfast time informs the children what is going to happen during the morning.

Regular meetings ensure that practitioners are well briefed and up to date with the development and progress of the children.

Practitioners attend courses to effectively update their knowledge and extend their practice. All practitioners are deployed well including any students on placement and a practitioner visiting the setting to develop Welsh with the children.

Strategies used encourage the children to become independent learners and the environment ensures that they can help themselves to resources, however nearly all activities are already set out for the children when they arrive.

Practitioners make observations of the children but the entries are not always linked to skills. A treasure book contains photographs of the different areas of learning. Samples of children's work are kept in a file but these are not always effectively annotated. There is time before and after the session for parents to talk to staff and discuss their progress and an assessment record is given to parents when their children leave the setting.

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

Playgroup provides good guidance to the children and their parents and there are good links. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding children and two staff have attended child protection training.

All children know the routines well and the playgroup effectively helps children to distinguish right from wrong and encourages them to help each other.

All practitioners are trained in first aid. The setting has good arrangements for providing children with additional needs specialist and personal support. Children integrate well and planning and support systems meet their needs, for example, the Individual Play Plans. Practitioners work closely with parents and professionals in support of these children and they make good progress in the playgroup.

Playgroup promotes the health and well being of the children and encourages them to develop curiosity about their lives, those of others and the world around them. The playgroup fosters values such as honesty and fairness and respect. Playgroup encourages the children to make decisions and develop an understanding of living and sharing with others. The older children were observed to be helping their younger friends.

There are good transition arrangements for the children when they are joining or leaving the playgroup and there are good developing links with the school next door.

The setting has appropriate risk assessments to keep the children safe.

### **Learning environment: Good**

A good range of policies and procedures support the running of the playgroup. The playgroup welcomes all children, offers equal access and is fully inclusive.

The Community Centre room is set out into different areas of play and abundant resources are easily accessible for the children, so that they can help themselves. This ensures they settle very quickly to the activities when they arrive and are confident to develop their play. As the rooms are shared, the practitioners have to set out and clear away the activities every day. Resources are suitable and sufficient to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and a good match to the stage of development of the children and meet any additional learning needs.

Well trained experienced practitioners and volunteers such as students, meet the needs of the children. Practitioners are qualified to levels 3 and 4 and have knowledge of the Foundation Phase outcomes. Practitioners use training well to improve their own knowledge, understanding and skills.

The immediate environment around the school is used effectively and outdoor resources are shared with the school that develop the children's learning of the world around them.

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

Leaders create a very positive ethos within the group. They understand their roles and responsibilities and are kept informed about the group. A management committee meets every term and the playgroup responds very positively to national and local priorities, for example, re-cycling, Designed to Smile dental health programme and Flying Start. Fundraising activities encourage parents to be part of playgroup life for example a recent coffee morning. Staff and children are valued and respected.

They are involved with training and developments within the Foundation Phase. There is a sense of purpose and a need to make improvements, for example, the resources shared with the school and to develop the setting.

Staff are enthusiastic and well motivated and this has a positive impact on the group. They receive regular advice and guidance from Wales Pre-School Providers Association, the local authority teacher, the co-ordinator from Flying Start and outside agencies if there are concerns. Leaders respond quickly and effectively to any advice and guidance and ensure changes impact positively on standards and quality of provision.

There is a strong culture of self reflection and improvement that maintains and develops the setting and practitioners feel strongly that the setting will continue to improve.

Practitioners have annual appraisals, peer observation and supervision that lead effectively to improvements in practice.

A welcome pack for parents ensures that they are kept informed about the running of the playgroup.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Weekly staff meetings to develop planning effectively contribute to improving quality in the playgroup. Self evaluation identifies areas of strength and areas needed to improve. A 'developing the setting' plan ensures that the setting moves forward. The development plan is used during the year, following self evaluation which is carried out during the autumn term. Areas to be developed include Welsh, planning and observation. The setting has made good progress since the last Estyn inspection.

Questionnaires are sent out to service users and regular feedback gathered from staff, children and parents leads effectively to the development of the setting. There is a suggestion box in the entrance for parents' comments and ideas to develop the provision.

There is a good relationship with the school and the playgroup and head teacher are keen to further build on these links.

A quality review report is completed annually and questionnaires feed into this report to improve the service and the outcomes for the children.

Staff attend courses to update their knowledge and practice and benefit the children. The forest school develops outdoor learning and a range of effective relationships improves the quality of provision in the setting.

### **Partnership working: Good**

There is a good partnership with the school and the playgroup is hoping to further develop this. The playgroup uses the school grounds and this relationship contributes effectively to the transition arrangements when children leave the playgroup to go on to school. A good level of information about the children goes onto school with them. Children in the playgroup are able to have a school lunch or bring a packed lunch to eat.

There are good relationships with parents through fundraising activities such as the coffee morning. A notice board and talking to practitioners keeps them up to date with what is happening in the playgroup.

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 setting works with Wales Pre School Providers Association and a visiting practitioner has worked with the playgroup to develop the Welsh language.

The playgroup works in partnership with a local secondary school and provides good support and placements to students. This is an effective way for the student to develop their own skills and provide extra help for the children.

There is trust and clear lines of communication between partners that contributes effectively to the learning and development of the children.

**Resource management: Good**

Resources are used well to develop skills across all areas of learning. All practitioners are involved in the management of resources and they make suggestions for new equipment that are formally recorded during staff meetings. There is a good range of high quality resources that contribute well to the progress and achievements of the children and motivate them to learn.

Practitioners are well deployed including students and make effective use of the shared outdoor areas with the school including the adventure play area, sensory wild life garden, the forest school, the yard and field and the playgroup's own enclosed outside space. The playgroup is also a member of the toy library and has resources from Flying Start, and early education.

Leaders have an appropriate understanding of budget matters and ensure that any extra resources will benefit the children and improve standards.

The setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

Parents and children are very happy with the setting.

Children enjoy coming into the group and like to play in the trees and on the play equipment.

## Appendix 2

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

Anne Manning	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](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.