



*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**

**St Mary's Playgroup  
Cabin  
St Mary's School Ground  
Caergybi  
Ynys Mon  
LL65 1TR  
United Kingdom**

**Date of inspection: March 2014**

**by**

**Anne Manning  
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:

<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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## Context

St Mary's Playgroup is based in the grounds of St Mary's School in Caergybi on Ynys Mon. This English-medium playgroup is overseen by a qualified manager with practitioners who carry out the day-to-day running of the group. The playgroup meets in a cabin which comprises of one large room divided into areas of play.

The playgroup is open daily during term time and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 30 children.

All the children who attend the playgroup are British and nearly all use English as their first language. A few children had additional learning needs.

The children who attend the group mostly live in the local area and come from a range of backgrounds.

The playgroup receives support from Ynys Mon Early Entitlement and is a member of Wales Pre-school Providers Association. There were five funded three-year-old children on the first inspection afternoon and two present on the second. Early education is offered every afternoon from 1.00pm to 3.00pm.

The last CSSIW inspection was in December 2013 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

## 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:

- all teaching is good;
- there is a good range of interesting learning experiences; and
- care, support and guidance for all the children are good.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership and management of the setting are good;
- practitioners effectively reflect on their practice and make changes to benefit the children;
- self-evaluation identifies areas for development; and
- the setting has made good progress since the last inspection.

## **Recommendations**

R.1 To continue to develop planning by linking it more effectively to observation and assessment and include an evaluation.

R.2 To continue to develop assessment by using observation opportunities from focus activities and clearly identify the next steps.

R.3 To further expand risk assessments.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to 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**

Planning includes a good range of interesting learning experiences that successfully engages all children. Indoors and outdoors are used to develop skills effectively, however planning is not linked sufficiently well to observation and assessment or evaluated. Overall children make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and develop appropriate skills. Good organisation ensures children settle quickly to activities and learn successfully. Experiences effectively encourage children to form relationships with each other and with adults around them and to show respect for all cultural backgrounds.

The curriculum builds appropriately on children's existing knowledge and understanding and provides opportunities to develop thinking skills across all areas of learning. Skills in literacy and numeracy are embedded successfully into the experiences of the children and a good range of information communication technology including a computer and battery operated toys successfully ensure that the children develop effective skills.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills by sharing books including those written in Welsh and by story telling. There are good opportunities to develop early mark making through a range of different medium such as coffee and for children to recognise their names.

All practitioners use an exceptionally good level and frequency of Welsh and they encourage the children highly effectively both during circle time and throughout the session. As a result the children are extremely confident and very keen to respond. They celebrate traditions and festivals such as St David's Day and those of other cultures including Chinese New Year.

Children have opportunities to learn effectively about caring for living things by visiting many places outside the playgroup, such as to the nature reserve where they feed the ducks and to the country park. Regular visitors including Road Safety and a visit to the train station successfully increase the children's understanding of the world of work.

## **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners are well briefed and deployed. They have up to date knowledge of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase and as a result move all the children's learning forward. All practitioners use language well and are consistently good role models for the children. Practitioners all employ positive strategies to encourage the children to learn, join in and to share equipment exceptionally well.

Without exception practitioners are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to let them discover independently. Practitioners successfully plan activities and use indoors and outdoors for a good range of activities that meet the needs of the children.

All practitioners know the children well and as a result there are high expectations. Without exception practitioners extend children's play successfully using an effective range of teaching strategies that promote independent learning and provide challenge. Adult support is well focused and makes a highly significant contribution to the quality of the children's learning.

All practitioners use an excellent level of Welsh with the children and successfully encourage the children to listen and respond. Circle times are used highly effectively to share stories, re-cap on the session and listen to the views of others.

Although practitioners carry out useful observations of the children that inform assessment records and parents are appropriately involved in supporting the learning of their children, observation opportunities resulting from focus activities are not sufficiently utilised and the next steps are not always clearly identified.

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

The playgroup has a good range of policies and procedures to support the children and effectively promote their health and wellbeing including their moral, social and cultural development. The spiritual development of the children is successfully nurtured by a short prayer before snack time. There are appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and the practitioners have undertaken training. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Children learn very effectively about simple rules such as sharing and successfully learn to distinguish right from wrong. The playgroup successfully fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect and effectively develops an understanding of living and sharing with others. Children are highly confident learners who ask for help and have good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative, for example when being Helpwr Heddiw.

The children are starting to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by growing plants in the garden, observing living things on their visits to the nature reserve and using a range of technology. Children are involved in

caring for their environment with opportunities for composting and collecting rain water for their plants.

The playgroup provides a good level of guidance and because practitioners know the children well they respond highly effectively to their needs and as a result children are happy and feel secure. Without exception children settle exceptionally well and quickly into the setting and there are good transition arrangements with the school.

Practitioners employ positive behaviour strategies using effective explanations and high levels of praise that encourage the children to successfully take turns and listen. They provide consistency and an excellent level of individual support to assist children with additional learning needs and work well with parents and other professionals. As a result children achieve and make very good progress and their families are well supported.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The playgroup has effectively developed a well established ethos that is inclusive and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. Children are spoken to in their first language. The setting actively develops tolerant attitudes through a range of different learning experiences and good day-to-day practice. Equal access to the curriculum is offered. Although there is an effective range of policies and procedures that actively support the children, and promote their health and well being including equal opportunities and complaints, risk assessments contain insufficient detail.

There are sufficient, valued practitioners who have knowledge and expertise with relevant, appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children. Without exception practitioners create a stimulating environment for learning indoors and out and are well informed about what they need to do to help the children to succeed.

There are good opportunities for safe outdoor play and resources are used effectively. They are appropriate and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and successfully support the needs of the children in all areas of learning. The accommodation is used effectively, secure and well maintained to support the learning of the children.

The local environment, community and visitors to the setting are used consistently well to enhance the facilities at the setting and enrich the experiences of the children.

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

The setting is well managed and there is a positive ethos, clear direction and sense of purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement. Values, aims and objectives are shared and all are working for the benefit of the children. Practitioners are well deployed and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There are high expectations and the focus is on the children making progress.

The leaders fully understand their roles and are effectively informed about the performance of the setting. Relevant legislation and guidance are taken into account and leaders are involved in national and local priorities such as Designed to Smile and the Ynys Mon Healthy Pre school scheme, that impact very positively on the health and well being of the children.

Learning and teaching are organised well with good parental links to support the progress of the children. An effective training programme and appraisals ensure that practitioners are aware of what they need to do and can improve their knowledge and practice.

Implementation of policies and initiatives is effective. Leaders have high expectations for improvement and development and ensure that the Foundation Phase is successfully delivered.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting has made good progress since their previous Estyn inspection. Practitioners, the registered person and local authority teacher are able to evidence how the provision and standards have been improved. There is effective leadership, and as a result the children have continuity of care and settle quickly and learn successfully in the playgroup.

Self-evaluation effectively identifies areas for improvement. Practitioners know the setting exceptionally well and as a result strengths and areas for development are recognised and action is taken to implement good practice and make changes that ensure positive gains and successful improvements for the children. For example, the changes to the outdoor area have enabled more independence and further skill development opportunities for the children.

There is a positive culture of self-reflection and practitioners are open to new ideas and try different ways of working. All practitioners are engaged in professional development and attend courses that effectively raise standards and highly successfully support the well being of the children. They actively share their expertise and knowledge to benefit each other and ensure a positive impact on the setting.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The playgroup works effectively with partners for the benefit of the children and a range of partnerships makes a strong contribution to the progress of the children and their wellbeing and successfully enhances and supports their learning.

There is clear communication between parents and the playgroup and they have information about the setting and are involved in supporting the learning of their children and the work of the playgroup. Parents are also successfully informed of their child's progress by speaking to the practitioners and by an on going assessment record.

There is a highly successful relationship with the school that ensures an effective transition to support the children. Resources are shared, for example the mini bus. There is an effective partnership with the local authority advisory teacher who visits the setting, providing guidance, which impacts positively on the achievements of the children and enhances the work of the setting.

Partnerships within the local community such as the visits to the nature reserve and visitors to the setting successfully add another dimension to the children's learning.

The setting has an effective partnership with other professionals to ensure an excellent level of support for any children with additional learning needs. Practitioners successfully work together as a team and effectively share information for the benefit of all the children.

### **Resource management: Good**

All practitioners are well deployed and manage a good range of resources successfully to motivate and encourage the children to learn. There are good opportunities for a range of learning experiences both indoors and in the outdoor environment where the playgroup are able to access school resources to effectively develop different skills. A very good supply of high quality resources is well matched to the stages of development of the children and meets any additional learning needs.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of budget matters and future resource needs are well planned for and prioritised to develop the provision and improve outcomes and the well being of the children.

The funding that is received is used effectively and the setting provides good value for money.

## **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

Mrs Anne Elizabeth 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))

## 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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.