



*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**

**Sunbeams Playgroup  
Community Centre  
Ysgol y Waun  
Gwernaffield  
Flintshire  
CH7 5DP**

**Date of inspection: July 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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## Context

Sunbeams Playgroup was established in 1972 and is located in Gwernaffield, a village near the market town of Mold, North Wales. The medium-sized playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee and the general day to day running is carried out by two joint supervisors who are both qualified to level 3.

The playgroup is based in the Community Centre, next to the school. The accommodation is shared by other members of the village and this means that the practitioners have to set out and clear away the equipment before and after each session. Inside, there is one large room which is divided into areas for play with a small kitchen. The children share the school toilets and outside, the group has use of the extensive school grounds that include a field, garden, forest school and yard.

The playgroup operates during term time for two mornings a week from September to December, rising to four sessions a week from January. Sunbeams Playgroup is registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide sessional care for 20 children and the children attending the playgroup are aged between two years and three months and part time school age. The last Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales inspection was in December 2010 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

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 no child has 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. Nearly all children move from the playgroup on to the school next door.

Sunbeams Playgroup is a member of the Wales Pre-School Provider Association and receives support from Flintshire 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:

Children are confident learners.  
Teaching is good.  
Care support and guidance are good.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

Leadership and management of the setting are good.  
The playgroup has already made changes in the provision that benefit the children.  
The playgroup has an effective working relationship with the local authority.

## **Recommendations**

- R.1. Develop the outdoor provision by planning specifically for outdoor play and make more use of existing resources in particular the forest school.
- R.2. Provide more opportunities for professional development for the practitioners.
- R.3. Introduce mark making into all the areas of learning.
- R.4. Provide more opportunities for the children to do things independently.

### **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

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

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.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

**Good**

#### Learning experiences: Good

A range of experiences effectively develops the skills of the children. All children settle readily and quickly to the activities. Learning experiences encourage the children to develop physical and creative skills and develop their thinking skills, for example, where to put insects outside that they find indoors. Although children have a mark making table, opportunities need to be included in all areas of learning.

Children are encouraged to use the Welsh language particularly during circle time. They celebrate St David's Day, St Patricks Day and Chinese New Year.

Learning experiences provide opportunities for the children to develop relationships and show respect and tolerance for people from all cultural backgrounds. Children have experience of caring for plants by growing herbs that they use to smell and to taste to extend their learning.

Children are starting to understand about re-cycling as they take the peelings from their snack of fruit to the school composting bins.

Although planning engages all children and practitioners plan flexibly to take into account the interests and ideas of the children, planning specifically for outdoor play needs to be further developed to provide opportunities for exploration and discovery.

#### Teaching: Good

Practitioners use a good level of Welsh with the children particularly during circle time, however there are insufficient informal opportunities provided during the session for the children to hear and use the Welsh language.

Both practitioners manage the children well and are good role models.

They use language well and a range of questioning techniques to extend the learning of the children.

Both practitioners are aware of what they need to do and have high expectations of the children. Practitioners are well deployed and provide activities that meet the needs of the children.

An assessment book This is Me is completed and statements in the record are highlighted when the skill has been achieved. Although supporting evidence is noted, the assessment process does not always record how the children are working towards their individual learning goals or show clear links to planning.

Children are confident learners, but practitioners do not always intervene appropriately and children are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to do things independently such as pouring their own drinks, washing up and finding out for themselves.

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

The children have opportunities to share and to take turns particularly during circle time. They are effectively reminded of simple rules such as having kind hands. Simple rules of behaviour are effectively followed.

Risk assessments are carried out and the children are encouraged to tidy away equipment. The playgroup has appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding. One of the supervisors has attended child protection training in 2010 and the other is awaiting a course.

The setting effectively promotes the health and well being of the children and fosters values such as honesty fairness and respect. Children are encouraged to learn about the difference between right and wrong. They behave well, care about each other and are kind and thoughtful. Practitioners respond well and challenge any poor behaviour.

Although there are no children with additional needs attending, the setting has a 'Pathway' file with procedures that help to support the children and their families and help them to achieve. There are effective arrangements to support their health, well being and learning.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are happy and secure with the adults around them and they are confident to ask for support.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

Sunbeams Playgroup has established an ethos that is inclusive, values all and enables all to access the provision. There are two practitioners who have appropriate qualifications. One of the supervisors has worked in the playgroup for three years and has taken up the post of supervisor recently. The other supervisor is new to post this academic year.

The playgroup has a range of policies and procedures to support the running of the setting including an equal opportunities policy, complaints and child protection procedure. A behaviour policy that includes reference to bullying and ensures that any behaviour management issues are dealt with promptly.

There is a good supply of quality resources that are easily accessed by all the children that effectively support their progress. The setting is an attractive learning environment and accommodation is suitable and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the needs of the children attending.

The outdoor environment comprises of a large field, forest school, garden and yard and although providing a varied range of activities, the playgroup does not plan for or use these areas effectively to enhance the experiences of the children across all areas of learning.

There have been a few visitors to the setting from the local community, however there are too few opportunities for the children to visit places outside the playgroup.

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

The head teacher and one of the supervisors are the registered persons for the playgroup. A new committee effectively understand and fulfil their role and responsibilities and are informed by the registered persons of the performance of the playgroup. There is clear direction and a sense of purpose in the group. There have been improvements made and there is a positive ethos and high expectation for all. Values aims and objectives are shared.

Practitioners and children are managed well and leaders focus effectively on the needs of the children and their families. The setting has developed active links with parents to encourage support of their children's learning.

Relevant guidance and legislation is actively taken into account.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Sunbeams Playgroup has made good progress since the last inspection by Estyn. The playgroup has achieved the Quality Assured award from Wales Pre-School Providers Association.

Self evaluation has been carried out that identifies areas of strength and areas for development. Changes have been made in the playgroup as a result and practitioners are able to evidence where this has had a positive impact on the learning and development of the children, for example, in music and Information Communication Technology that have been developed over the past 12 months.



Although one of the supervisors has visited another playgroup there are insufficient opportunities for the professional development of practitioners including visiting exemplar settings.

Practitioners access Foundation Phase training and this has led directly to more effective planning and enabled greater consideration to be given to themes and topics.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The playgroup has a very good relationship with the school that is situated next door. The head teacher comes in to the group regularly and playgroup shares their outdoor resources and also joins in with assemblies. Children visit the school regularly and this provides a solid base for good transition arrangements. Fundraising activities are carried out linked to the school such as Jubilee Day and a Toddle Waddle.

The playgroup has visited a local farm in previous years and parents come in to talk to the children about the job they do but links with the community are underdeveloped. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and song sheets are sent home at the end of term so that parents are able to join with their children singing Welsh songs during the holidays, thereby strengthening the links between home and playgroup. Notes regarding special events are also sent out to parents.

There is a good working arrangement with the local authority teacher who provides welcome advice and guidance to the group on her regular visits. The practitioners stated that they have been very grateful for the support, particularly when completing self evaluation.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Although resources are managed and deployed effectively to support the learning of the children, outdoors is not used sufficiently well to develop the skills of the children across all areas of learning and the local environment is not used to progress the children and develop their learning of the world around them.

The setting makes good use of funding and uses resources from the liaison teacher to improve progress and outcomes for the children. Leaders have a good understanding of budget matters, prioritise these effectively according to plans for improvement and financial decisions are evaluated for impact on outcomes.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. (This is because there were only a small number of relevant children at the time of the inspection.)

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

Children are happy and enjoy coming to the playgroup.  
They like the staff and what they do particularly playing outside.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

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

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

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	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.