



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Carmel Pre-School Playgroup
Ysgol Bro Carmel
Carmel
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 8NU**

Date of inspection: June 2017

by

**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

Carmel Preschool is an English medium playgroup, which meets in a room in Ysgol Bro Carmel near Holywell, in Flintshire local authority. The setting opens for 5 afternoons a week from 12.30pm to 2.55pm. It shares the room with other users.

The setting is registered to admit 25 children between the ages of two and four years old. At the time of the inspection there were 10 three-year-olds funded by the local authority to receive early years' education.

All children speak English as their main language. Three full time and two part time practitioners work regularly with the three and four-year-olds. All have appropriate early years qualifications and have suitable experience of working with young children. A management committee manages the setting.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in January 2017 and Estyn in May 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Most children speak confidently to adults and their peers
- Many children develop their mark-making skills successfully
- Most children make suitable progress in developing their physical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Nearly all children are happy to leave their parents and settle quickly in the setting
- Most children demonstrate good standards of behaviour and are engaged and busy in their learning
- Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to learn through play and to be actively involved in their learning
- The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully in a caring and supportive environment

However:

- Children's problem solving skills are underdeveloped
- Planning for the development of children's literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills is not systematic enough
- Activities do not always extend the learning of more able children successfully
- Observations are not used effectively to inform planning
- Children are not regularly involved in planning their learning
- Practitioners do not use or plan activities outdoors well enough

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvements are adequate because:

- The leader works effectively with the team to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children
- Leaders share a worthwhile sense of purpose that promotes regular improvements
- All practitioners contribute informally to assessing how well the setting is progressing
- The management committee provides valuable support, particularly with managing the setting's finances
- The setting benefits from useful partnerships that have a positive impact on children's wellbeing

- Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum, and the setting deploys them appropriately to make best use of their expertise
- Practitioners benefit from useful professional development

However:

- The setting does not set high enough expectations for children's learning
- Roles and responsibilities are not defined well enough
- Annual appraisals do not lead to agreed targets linked to the setting's improvement priorities successfully enough
- The setting does not evaluate and monitor its work well enough
- The current self-evaluation report does not reflect the setting's work accurately enough

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all children make regular and systematic progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills
- R2 Ensure that planning develops the full range of children's skills, both indoors and outdoors, effectively
- R3 Use observations and assessments to inform planning, in order to ensure that all children make good progress
- R4 Improve strategic leadership and define roles and responsibilities clearly
- R5 Improve processes for self-evaluation and action planning so that they identify and address important areas for improvement
- R6 Implement effective systems for staff appraisal that link to the setting's priorities for improvement

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?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

During their time at the setting, many children make suitable progress in developing their skills and understanding in line with their age and ability. Most children speak confidently to adults and their peers about what they are doing. A few ask appropriate questions, for example, 'can you help me mend the Hoover?'. A majority of children demonstrate good listening skills and can follow instructions from adults and respond suitably.

Many children enjoy listening to familiar stories at story time. A minority of children handle a book as a reader, holding it appropriately, turning the pages carefully. A very few children recognise their name from their picture on the wall. Many children develop their mark making skills successfully. A majority of children demonstrate good control of a range of writing implements and write confidently for different purposes, for example when writing a postcard from their holiday and then posting it.

Many children make sufficient progress in developing their numeracy skills, for example when joining in with whole class counting. A majority of children count successfully. During registration time many count to ten and a few children count beyond. A minority of children can match and sort objects by size, for example when playing with plastic elephants. Many children explore the properties of shapes eagerly and a few are able to match and name simple 2d shapes when playing with a shape puzzle. However, children's skills in recognising and repeating patterns are less well developed, as is their independent use of mathematical language in their play.

Overall, children's competence when using ICT is developing well. Many children are confident in using a range of ICT equipment. They use tablet computers successfully to take photographs of each other. A minority are able to scroll through these photographs independently. Practitioners have supported the children to make a talking book and many children can press the button to hear their own voice unaided.

Many children are developing appropriate physical skills. A majority can jump with two feet to land on coloured spots outside and are able to ride bikes with increasing control.

Many children have an acceptable understanding of Welsh words and phrases used during routines. They readily respond to 'barod' when waiting to move to the next activity. However, in general, most children make little independent use of Welsh during their play.

Overall children's problem solving skills are at an early stage of development.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy to leave their parents and settle quickly in the setting. They are polite and courteous to each other, regularly saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Nearly all children make valuable choices about where they would like to play and what toys they would like to play with. Most children are able to stay on task for extended periods of time, for example when playing in the home corner.

Most children demonstrate good standards of behaviour and are engaged and busy in the setting. Many children follow the rules of the setting effectively. Nearly all children co-operate with each other well and happily wait their turn, for example when waiting to play in the water tray or the mud kitchen.

Many children ask for additional resources confidently, for example when asking for play equipment during water play. Many children help decide what will be on the menu for snack time. However, they do not regularly contribute to choices about themes and topics.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Adequate

Practitioners plan appropriate weekly activities across all areas of learning. These activities provide suitable opportunities for children to develop a broad range of skills. However, planning does not focus well enough on the systematic development of these skills. As a result, activities do not always cater for the needs and ability levels of all children successfully.

Practitioners offer valuable opportunities for children to develop their communication skills. They encourage children to listen and talk to adults and each other regularly. A mark-making area provides purposeful opportunities for children to develop their early mark making skills and to have meaningful opportunities to write for a range of purposes. For example, children write postcards from their holidays and then post them. A designated reading area provides children with appropriate resources to enjoy familiar stories. However, practitioners do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to develop their reading skills in other areas of learning.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills. Children have good opportunities to count, match and sort items in the role-play area. Practitioners provide a few worthwhile opportunities to recognise pattern. However, opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are currently under developed.

There are good opportunities to develop children's ICT skills using a beneficial range of resources. However, opportunities to develop and practise these skills, indoors and outdoors, are less well developed

Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions, for example, when celebrating St David's day. Practitioners provide sufficient opportunities for children to hear and respond to Welsh words and phrases during

routines. For example, many children say 'yma' at registration time. However, opportunities for children to develop their understanding of Welsh are less well developed in other areas of learning. The setting is beginning to offer suitable opportunities to develop the children's understanding of different cultures. However, this is at an early stage of development.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have positive relationships with the children, demonstrating care and respect for each child. As a result, children feel safe and secure and ready to learn. All practitioners are good language role models and, as a result, most children speak clearly and confidently. Practitioners manage children's behaviour well, providing regular opportunities to help children make the right decision.

Many practitioners have a sound understanding of child development and Foundation Phase practice. They provide appropriate opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. However, expectations of what children can achieve are not always high enough. Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of the benefits of asking questions to encourage the development of children's thinking skills. However, they are in the early stages of putting this into practice on a regular basis.

Assessment procedures are developing appropriately. Many practitioners make careful and detailed observations of the children. However, this is relatively new and does not always impact on improving the outcomes that children achieve. Practitioners keep useful profiles on children, which include annotated photographs and observations across the areas of learning. However, practitioners do not always use these observations to inform planning effectively. As a result, they do not always meet children's individual needs well enough for them to make systematic progress.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. Practitioners manage children's emotional wellbeing well and, as a result, most demonstrate high levels of self-esteem. Children are encouraged to wash their hands at the appropriate times. The setting promotes healthy eating effectively by providing children with the opportunity to choose the healthy snacks each week. There are sufficient opportunities for children to exercise through regular participation in action songs and outdoor physical activities.

The setting offers appropriate opportunities for children's spiritual, and moral development. For example, practitioners provide an interesting new fruit or snack, to promote a sense of awe and wonder and curiosity. However, opportunities to develop children's understanding of other cultures are less well developed.

The setting promotes opportunities for recycling suitably, for example recycling milk cartons and food waste. However, they do not always involve the children well enough.

There are currently no children identified by the setting as having additional learning needs. However, the setting has effective links with outside agencies and systems in place to support children and their parents if required.

Practitioners are vigilant and focus purposefully on keeping children safe at the setting. Most procedures are in place to promote children's safety, including regular risk assessments. However, checks are not always thorough enough to identify all potential risks. In addition, the setting does not adhere fully to all safe recruitment processes. Consequently, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements fully and give minor cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a warm, supportive and welcoming ethos, where all children have equal access to areas of learning. There are positive relationships between practitioners and children, and children feel valued. Children access resources easily and, as a result, they develop suitable levels of independence. There is a sufficient range of resources, including natural objects such as shells in the sand tray, to interest and engage children. The setting make good use of the learning space indoors. Resources are clean and well-maintained and meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The setting provide worthwhile opportunities to celebrate children's achievements. For example, children peg their mark making work on a washing line for all to see.

The setting is developing a suitable outdoor learning environment and is beginning to make appropriate use of the recent improvements. The setting also has access to the school's grounds and outdoor play equipment. As a result, children benefit from valuable opportunities to develop their physical skills on a regular basis.

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

The leader works effectively with practitioners to provide a caring and nurturing environment for all children. She manages practitioners and children appropriately to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following well established routines. Practitioners work well together and share responsibilities and support one another instinctively. They establish strong working relationships with the children. As a result, children are happy, co-operate well together and engage quickly with the activities offered.

The setting defines specific roles and responsibilities informally. Practitioners act on these appropriately, for example when ensuring that they carry out observations and assessments regularly. However, there are no formal job descriptions in place. This limits accountability and the effectiveness of the setting's performance management processes. Annual appraisals help identify suitable training needs. However, at present, they do not lead to agreed targets linked to the setting's improvement priorities well enough.

Leaders share a worthwhile sense of purpose that promotes regular improvements, such as recent developments in the outdoor area. They negotiate successfully with other agencies to support the shared use of the learning environment. However, they have not developed strong systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the setting to ensure that all policies and procedures are followed fully. The management committee provides valuable support, particularly with managing the setting's finances. Its role in supporting continuous improvement is less well developed.

Improving quality: Adequate

All practitioners are committed to making regular improvements, and self-evaluation is becoming an accepted part of the setting's life. All contribute informally to assessing how well the setting is progressing. The setting consults parents appropriately and is beginning to consider children's opinions. This is helping to build a suitable picture of the setting's strengths and supports leaders in identifying relevant areas for development. However, the current self-evaluation document does not focus well enough on children's standards, in order to identify the most appropriate priorities for improvement. It does not reflect the setting's work accurately enough and, as a result, the setting has missed important shortcomings, such as ensuring that staff files are fully up-to-date.

Leaders work appropriately with the local authority link teacher to develop and monitor regular improvements targets. This helps the setting to begin to strengthen the focus on developing individual children's skills and to use the Foundation Phase Profile to support assessment suitably.

The setting has developed suitable action plans for improvement. These have led to helpful improvements over time, which have a positive impact on children's learning experiences and wellbeing. These include providing a mud kitchen outdoors and developing effective communication with parents. However, they do not always identify timescales, costings and monitoring opportunities well enough. The leader evaluates progress with the plans honestly. However, this does not always lead to identifying clear next steps, in order to ensure continuous progress.

Partnership working: Good

The setting benefits from useful partnerships that have a positive impact on children's wellbeing.

Practitioners work hard to communicate effectively with parents, building up a strong partnership. They share information about what children are doing regularly, using a range of approaches, including good use of social media. They prepare attractive reports showing how well children are progressing and make themselves available on a daily basis to listen to any concerns. As a result, parents feel fully involved in the setting's life. They contribute supportively to fundraising and help provide useful resources for the children. This has been particularly beneficial recently in developing the outdoor area.

There is a constructive partnership with the school where the setting is based. Children benefit from becoming familiar with the surroundings and with school staff, ready for when they move on to the nursery class. There are helpful partnerships with the breakfast club and after school club, ensuring effective continuity of care for the children.

The setting has strong links with the local authority and receives regular advice and support from the advisory teacher. However, although this leads to regular improvements, leaders do not always act on the advice well enough to make the best progress. The setting has useful links with Wales Preschool Providers Association (WPPA) and other external agencies. This provides helpful information including advice and support for children with additional learning needs when required. However, partnerships with the local community are less well developed.

Resource management: Adequate

Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum, and the setting deploys them appropriately to make best use of their expertise. They benefit from useful professional development opportunities provided by the local authority. These have contributed to improved provision for numeracy and beneficial strategies to support children's speech and language development. Through visits to other settings, practitioners have useful opportunities to begin to reflect on their practice. However, in general, the setting's performance management procedures do not support practitioners' professional development well enough.

The setting manages learning resources well and provides a suitable range for children. These include interesting ICT resources and good quality wooden blocks. Leaders have worked hard to provide good quality resources to support children's physical and social development in the outdoors. The committee work alongside the setting leader to keep costs under review and manage finances appropriately. However, in view of the standards achieved and the quality of provision and leadership, the setting provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	18	15 83%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	18	15 83%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	18	14 78%	2 11%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	14%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	18	14 78%	2 11%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	18	12 67%	5 28%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		71%	28%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	18	14 78%	2 11%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	18	13 72%	4 22%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		83%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	18	11 61%	2 11%	0 0%	0 0%	5	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	18	15 83%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	18	12 67%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	3	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	18	12 67%	4 22%	2 11%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	31%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	18	13 72%	3 17%	2 11%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	18	10 56%	5 28%	2 11%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	18	14 78%	3 17%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	18	9 50%	4 22%	1 6%	0 0%	4	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	18	14 78%	3 17%	1 6%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	18%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Karen Swann	Reporting Inspector
Sheila Margaret Birkhead	Team Inspector

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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 partnerships 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.