



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

A report on

**Clawdd Offa Playgroup
Ysgol Clawdd Offa
Ffordd Clawdd Offa
Prestatyn
Denbighshire
LL19 8AZ**

Date of inspection: May 2016

by

**Nicholas Jones
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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Context

Clawdd Offa Playgroup is an English medium setting located in Ysgol Clawdd Offa, Prestatyn, in the Denbighshire local authority. It opens for five days a week and the setting has three full time and one part time practitioner.

The setting's registration allows it to take up to 16 children in a session. It accepts children from two and a half to four years old. At the time of inspection, 29 children attended the two sessions. The local authority funds 16 of them.

Nearly all children are of white British origin. Very few children speak Welsh as their first language. Currently, there are very few children with additional learning needs.

The two leaders began their posts in September 2008. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in December 2015. Estyn last inspected the setting in May 2013.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because of the:

- Children's positive progress from their start points
- Children's good understanding that keeping healthy is important
- Positive relationships between adults and children
- Well-structured planning of learning experiences
- Satisfactory teaching and suitable assessment practices
- Diligent care provided by the practitioners
- Effective use of the school building, the setting's out of doors area and the school's grounds

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because of the:

- Beneficial partnerships with the school's nursery class, which supports and guides the setting purposefully
- Conscientious leadership
- Practitioners' willingness to attend training and accept advice
- Lack of rigour that exists in implementing and monitoring the plans for improvement against appropriate actions and timescales
- Absence of any quality assurance controls to monitor the setting's strategic direction, self-evaluation and financial regulations

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the children's use of Welsh
- R2 Provide better opportunities for children to visit and learn about the local community
- R3 Improve the delivery of focus tasks to challenge children according to their abilities
- R4 Ensure that practitioners use daily assessments and children's targets effectively during tasks to improve individual children's outcomes
- R5 Develop effective management systems to monitor the strategic planning, self-evaluation, financial regulation and the quality of teaching and learning

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?	Good
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Standards: Good

Many children have secure starting points when they start at the setting. Most children achieve good standards by the end of their time at the setting. They make consistent progress in developing their skills and gaining knowledge and understanding of how to complete everyday and more complex tasks.

Most children express their feelings and emotions well through interacting enthusiastically with each other in the indoor areas of learning and the outdoor quadrangle, which the setting shares with the school's nursery class. Most children sustain sensible discussions with adults and each other about books when seated in the book corner, when discovering numbers in jigsaws and through co-operating in boisterous play in the school's outdoor area during weekly bike riding sessions.

Most children speak clearly and make sure that others understand them when responding to adult and peer questioning during tasks. They listen to instructions from others and implement them effectively. This is particularly evident when experimenting with different textures, such as gloop and dough and when counting dots on dominoes.

Many children show interest in books and enjoy their content when discussing characters confidently with adults and other children, which include zebras and other jungle animals. They handle the books in the reading area as natural readers and follow stories read to them well. They respond sensibly to the content of the story. A majority of children use sophisticated language purposefully, in spontaneous and structured play, when play reading and highlighting events in books to each other. They identify a character's personality traits and can explain clearly, why they prefer some characters to others in a story.

Most children experiment with mark making effectively and nearly all children attempt the first letters of their names on coloured birds independently. Most children enjoy the writing experiences through using a variety of media such as paint, coloured pens and pencils. For example, most children in turn stand at an easel for sustained periods to paint zebras.

A few children begin to form letters of the alphabet and numbers independently and in a recognisable form when handling pencils and crayons. The majority of children explain the purpose of writing in the correct context. Around half the children recognise their own and other's names when they arrive at the setting and self-register. Many children share ideas enthusiastically about what they are trying to explain or record on paper.

Most children use mathematical language purposefully and in relevant contexts. Most count, recognise and name numbers to five confidently and a few count to 15 and beyond. The majority of children understand clearly how to begin bonding

numbers to five through arranging objects such as large pebbles in different baskets or stacking numbered building blocks. Most children choose relevant equipment and materials to solve practical problems effectively, for example counting dots on dominoes and chanting numbers up to 20 as they record each other's presence at the start of every session.

Nearly all children use a good range of mathematical language when playing together. For example, they describe jungle animals as 'small' and 'big' when observing elephants, snakes and parrots during role-play activities on a safari bus. They also use numbers practically and successfully when discussing 'more than' and 'less than' when comparing the capacity of containers during outdoor water activities.

Nearly all children group different types of objects by colour, size and shape correctly. They discuss different shapes sensibly whilst resolving shape puzzles and cutting out different shapes with scissors. The majority of them explain that two-dimensional shapes are flat and that three-dimensional shapes such as a ball are round. During play activities with boxes, they articulate effectively that they can hide inside a box because it is three-dimensional, but cannot enter a square or rectangle when drawn on paper.

Nearly all children listen to music with enjoyment and create drumbeats when dancing around the room during story time. Most children have developed good thinking skills and this is having a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve. For example, they work with others intelligently when tearing paper and using glue to create a zebra and when sequencing black and white blocks to make a cane.

Most children use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively when using electronic tablets to pair numbers and in everyday activities such as using mobile phones, cameras and kitchen equipment in the role-play kitchen and tools at a workbench.

A few children understand what to do when directed in Welsh and very few children use Welsh without adult prompting. Around a half, sing songs in Welsh accurately when directed by practitioners before leaving the setting. The children's use of Welsh depends too much on adult prompting and most children do not use the language regularly and incidentally to convey their understanding.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children, in relation to their age, have a good understanding of how they can stay healthy. They wash their hands thoroughly before eating their snacks and drinking. They do this without much encouragement. They have a good understanding that a healthy diet includes fruits and vegetables. They explain intelligently that exercise keeps you fit and physical activities, such as riding bikes and chasing each other, make your heart beat faster.

Nearly all children behave well. They are polite and respond with respect to adults and each other. Most children show good levels of self-confidence, for example when sharing equipment in the role-play kitchen and when dressing themselves in aprons for messy outdoor play with gloop and water.

Most children show motivation and interest in their learning. They enjoy the activities in the areas of learning and share and work sensibly with peers. They wait their turn patiently to paint at an easel and engage willingly in focus tasks with adults when asked to participate. Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors when they arrive at the setting and when they leave.

Most children demonstrate positive attitudes to new experiences and learning and they are confident and independent learners. They enjoy their time at the setting and they are eager to discuss their favourite activities. Most children understand that they have rights as individuals and that they have the right to express opinions, for example when deciding to remain at a focus task indoors or to join in outdoor play, such as bouncing balls to each other and adults. As a result, most children show high levels of motivation, engagement and focus.

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

The setting delivers the curriculum effectively and it reflects the ethos of the Foundation Phase well. The learning experiences target children's needs and interests successfully and stimulate them to learn purposefully.

Practitioners plan learning experiences thoroughly and co-operate well with the school's nursery class teacher to enrich and organise the curriculum. Practitioners discuss the themes and activities in weekly practitioners' meetings and the guidance of the school's nursery class teacher supports them to produce coherent and well-structured planning documents. All practitioners therefore, collaborate efficiently to provide flexible and purposeful activities both indoors and out of doors for the children.

The stimulating learning experiences, which include challenges with paper and glue, and physical tasks with a basketball net out of doors, provide continuity and progression in children's learning. The curriculum challenges all children in all areas of learning, especially in literacy and numeracy tasks. It builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills.

Practitioners provide positive opportunities for children to take risks and to develop into independent learners. They focus on developing children's physical, thinking and creative skills intelligently. Literacy and numeracy tasks are evident in all areas of learning, which promotes effectively the development of children's speaking, listening, early writing and mathematical development. The setting co-ordinates the planning of literacy and numeracy skills efficiently. This ensures that there is coherence in the children's experiences across the curriculum. A few adults communicate appropriately with children in Welsh.

The planning of mark making and number tasks across all areas of learning are stimulating and engaging. They are progressive and challenging, which encourages children to begin to form letters and numbers in recognisable forms. The provision for developing ICT is thorough, which enhances the development of the children's ICT skills.

Children do not visit places outside the setting regularly. As a result, children do not get enough opportunities to learn about their community and local area. The children learn purposefully from people who visit the setting and the school, such as the emergency services, visitors with reptiles and Chinese dancers with dragons.

The setting provides sound opportunities for children to develop their personal and cultural identity. They celebrate and learn successfully about Welsh festivals such as Saint David's day. They also research and discuss purposefully about other cultures, such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Teaching: Adequate

All practitioners have up to date information about child development and are knowledgeable about the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They have appropriate expectations, however, they do not deliver focus tasks effectively to challenge children according to their abilities. At times, the delivery of tasks lacks pace and does not engage all children purposefully.

Adult intervention in continuous and enhanced tasks is sensitive, which encourages children to motivate themselves as they learn. The leaders plan a good balance between child selected and practitioner led activities. However, many focus tasks do not challenge the more able children enough. All practitioners are positive as children arrive and they continue with this enthusiasm throughout the session.

The system of sharing duties is established and key workers focus on specific groups of children appropriately. However, this practice does not challenge all children to perform at their best at all times. All practitioners are active and understand the importance of providing broad opportunities to learn through play and practical involvement.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively, safely and effectively. They are good language models themselves in English and provide an exciting environment inside the building and out of doors. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment successfully in all activities. They use a suitable range of questioning to develop children's thinking and communication skills. The provision for developing children's Welsh language skills is satisfactory.

Practitioners share information about children regularly. They discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. Overall, practitioners complete daily assessments regularly and consistently. They record observations and assessments diligently to measure children's progress in their personal diaries and in each child's progress record. However, practitioners do not use daily assessments and children's targets effectively during tasks to improve individual children's outcomes. Therefore, practitioners do not target the next steps in children's learning rigorously.

The setting informs parents and carers appropriately about their children's achievements. Information is available to them at any time through the setting's open door policy.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements exist to support the health and wellbeing of children. These arrangements contribute well to the development and general welfare of children and support their learning effectively. The setting offers positive opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children. For example, practitioners foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect sensibly, through consistent opportunities for children to discuss feelings and say thank you.

This is evident as they take turns politely when eating snacks and drinking around the dining table. The setting has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to re-cycle paper, cardboard, plastic and food in conjunction with the school. This begins to develop their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. Children are happy and safe in the company of adults at the setting and they often ask for help and support. All practitioners have suitable qualifications and experience and the ratio of adults to children is favourable. The setting uses practitioners' expertise well when supervising activities. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The setting is a safe environment and the practitioners take good care of children when they arrive and when they are collected from the school's foyer.

The setting records children's learning needs effectively when they join and during their time at the setting. The setting reviews children's progress regularly following an initial assessment of their starting points. Therefore, the setting targets children appropriately with additional support when needed. The practitioners discuss these with suitable outside agencies, which include local authority support officers and the school's staff and headteacher. One of the leaders is the additional learning needs co-ordinator and she is familiar with the procedures necessary to support children with any particular difficulties.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and equipment. Practitioners know the children well and their individuality is recognised. Every child has equal access to an interesting and varied curriculum inside the building and out of doors.

The setting promotes a positive ethos through its daily activities and the approach adopted by the practitioners. Everyone places a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting achieves this successfully through the celebration of different festivals from around the world such as Diwali, the Chinese New Year and using dolls from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

The setting uses its resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Children are encouraged to move freely around the areas of learning and to participate in various activities. This includes free movement between inside and outside the building to share the out of doors

area with the school's nursery class. The resources are accessible to all children, which promotes their sense of responsibility successfully. Continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enrich learning, share resources effectively. Their use by the children has a positive effect on their learning.

An effective outdoor area exists, which includes growing and planting opportunities in pots. The setting uses the school's facilities well, which includes outdoor areas to play boisterously on bikes, a running track in summer months and gardening areas to grow plants. This also includes the regular use of the school's grounds for environmental investigations such as bug hunts. The setting is located within the school building. As a result, it is of good quality, safe and well maintained.

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

The leaders are conscientious. During the last year since the setting's re-location to another room in the school, the leaders have worked well with the school's nursery teacher, who spends one session a week at the setting, to target improvements in planning positive learning experiences. This has led to improvements in teaching and in the practitioners' better understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Practitioners receive relevant and appropriate training, which has a positive impact on the quality of provision. This includes joining the school's staff for child protection training and utilising the local authority's expertise for Foundation Phase developments and training courses.

The leaders work closely with all practitioners to create a positive ethos, which encourages and values teamwork. The leaders, guided by the local authority's support teacher and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association for administrative support, have recently introduced a number of strategies to move the setting forward. However, the developments underway, including assessments to identify the starting points of every child, have not established themselves sufficiently to date to demonstrate their impact on challenging all children according to their abilities.

The leaders' strategic objectives, plans and policies focus directly on improving provision to target children's needs. However, the setting's implementation and monitoring of the plans for improvement against appropriate actions and timescales are not rigorous. As a result, the leaders do not conduct regular evaluations to ensure that the setting meets its improvement targets in full.

The setting does not have a management committee to ensure that the leaders understand their roles fully. Quality assurance systems do not exist and financial regulations including the auditing of accounts are not operational. Therefore, the lack of rigour and robustness in the setting's management practices are important shortcomings that affect the quality of leadership at the setting significantly.

The setting is by now using the guidance of the school and outside agencies, such as the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association more effectively.

All the agencies involved with the setting are in the process of addressing the lack of monitoring controls that exist to quality assure the setting's working practices. However, the lack of quality controls is an important shortcoming that the support agencies have not addressed over many years. Even though self-evaluation practices exist, the lack of rigour in monitoring the systems for improving quality has affected adversely the setting's clarity and thoroughness concerning its self-evaluation procedures.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders ensure that all practitioners contribute fully to the self-evaluation process and final document. The leaders manage the setting diligently based on suitable assessments of its strengths and weaknesses. The leaders do not evaluate the quality of teaching and learning with enough rigour. However, they do target training and development opportunities effectively.

Self-evaluation and development planning is a regular part of the setting's working life. It identifies priorities for improvement, monitors provision and assesses children's outcomes appropriately. However, even though the process is established, it is not rigorous and the leaders are not accountable to any monitoring body regarding the quality of their work. The setting does not have a management committee to affect the processes of improving quality, which includes monitoring the setting's finances. As a result, sustaining effective practices and implementing changes are not secure and robust.

The self-evaluation does not take account of the views of children and parents and carers with enough detail. The setting has made inconsistent progress in response to the recommendations of the last inspection, including lack of appropriate challenges for children and the rigour of assessment practices.

The lengthy development plan notes many areas that need improving. However, the setting does not monitor its daily and long-term plans in enough detail to ensure that improvements are effective and completed in full.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to experiment with different ways of working. The practitioners are very receptive to new ideas, suggested by the school, the local authority and Wales Pre-school Providers Association's advisory teachers. For example, advice on how to improve the self-evaluation, through marking the setting's work against specific criteria and recording the starting points of children, has affected the quality of learning experiences well.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works appropriately with partners to improve provision and children's standards and wellbeing. The impact of strategic partnerships on children's standards and wellbeing is positive, especially the setting's strong links with the school. The setting uses its links with the school effectively to support children's learning, such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The setting is located in the school and it has a successful relationship with the school staff, which includes the nursery teacher advising and teaching in the setting for one tenth of the week. This supports the learning experiences and children's transfer arrangements well. The arrangements for transferring assessments and personal information are effective and benefit the children as they settle at the school.

The setting's partnerships with the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association are also beneficial. A suitable relationship with the local authority's advisory teacher and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association's officer supports the work of the setting.

Practitioners work and liaise with other partners, who make a beneficial contribution to improved provision, for example additional needs support. These also include agencies that support the setting with first aid, Foundation Phase and safeguarding training.

Practitioners take appropriate steps to involve parents and carers in the setting's life, however this is an area of development noted by the setting, as is improving community links. The setting informs parents and carers appropriately about aspects of the setting's work.

Resource management: Adequate

A professional learning community exists within the setting. This enables practitioners to share their professional knowledge effectively. Generally, the setting's provision is good and the standards and wellbeing of the children are positive. However, the leadership practices are adequate due to a lack of rigour in monitoring the work of the setting. The lack of quality assurance practices concerning leadership and management roles and no regulation of financial matters are important shortcomings.

The leaders ensure that the setting has enough qualified practitioners with appropriate training. The strong links with the school encourages a culture of collaboration between practitioners and other partners involved with the setting, which includes the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. The training opportunities for practitioners are purposeful. The co-operation and joint working practices with the school's nursery teacher is very beneficial and this is a strong feature of the provision.

The setting provides the best standards of accommodation and resources possible within its budget. The setting manages its resources suitably to support learning and to create improvements in the setting. The leaders use the budget to prioritise spending in line with their planned actions for improvement effectively. However, the setting does not monitor and audit financial matters with enough rigour.

Even though children's outcomes and the setting's provision are good, the setting provides adequate value for money because of the important shortcomings in its leadership practices.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Appendix 2

The Reporting Inspector

Mr Nicholas Jones	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.wales)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These seven areas 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.