



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

A report on

**Craig Y Don Playschool
Community Centre
Queens Rd
Craig Y Don
LL30 1TE**

Date of inspection: January 2018

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

Craig y Don Playschool meets in a community centre in Llandudno, in Conwy local authority. It offers early education sessions from 9.00am to 11.00am and from 1.00pm to 3.00pm daily for 35 weeks of the year. The playschool also opens over lunchtime and until 6.00pm in the evenings to offer wrap-around care.

The setting is registered to take up to 26 children under 12 years old at any one time. During the inspection, there were eight three-year-old children attending the setting. Of these, seven are funded by the local authority to receive nursery education. Nearly all children speak English at home and a very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The sessions are run by three full-time and one part-time member of staff, including the setting leader who took up her post in 2012.

The group was inspected by Estyn in October 2011 and by Care Inspectorate Wales in October 2017.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is adequate because:

- Most children develop effective speaking and listening skills
- Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and settle quickly
- Most children follow routines confidently and relate well to one another
- Practitioners plan carefully to cover all areas of learning effectively
- The setting makes good use of visits to enhance children's learning experiences
- Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies and encourage children to build helpful relationships effectively
- There is a calm and welcoming ethos in the setting

However:

- Children, including those who are more able, do not always progress well enough during the sessions
- Planned tasks do not meet the needs of all learners well enough
- Practitioners do not ensure that children have consistent opportunities to choose freely from a full range of activities during free play

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The setting leader has a positive vision for the setting
- Practitioners work well together as a team and support each other in their day-to-day work
- The setting leader actively seeks helpful support from outside agencies
- The committee supports the setting well
- The setting can point to effective improvements since the last inspection
- The setting has developed successful partnerships that have a positive impact on standards and provision in the setting

However:

- Procedures for following up on decisions made in meetings are not robust enough
- Systems for setting and reviewing targets to support practitioners to make effective progress are not well developed
- Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision are not strong enough to identify the most important priorities for improvement
- Current improvement targets are not always defined clearly enough to measure progress effectively and ensure that the setting moves forward successfully

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all children progress effectively during the sessions
- R2 Ensure that adult led activities engage and challenge all children successfully
- R3 Ensure that good quality activities are available consistently for children to access independently indoors and outside
- R4 Strengthen the strategic management of the setting
- R5 Improve arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to identify the most important priorities for improvement and plan effectively to address them

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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

Most children make appropriate progress with learning the setting's routine and developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, they join in singing familiar songs and rhymes happily and repeat simple Welsh words and phrases regularly. However, a minority of children, including those who are more able, do not always make enough progress in developing their skills, including their number skills during the sessions. This is because activities are not always sufficiently challenging or engaging.

Most children develop effective speaking and listening skills. Nearly all children make themselves understood effectively. They respond well to sung instructions to come and sit on the mat and answer questions about the weather appropriately. Many speak confidently to ask for resources or talk about what they are doing, such as to explain that they are "looking for a monster" outside. Most children develop their early writing skills appropriately. They use big pieces of chalk to make marks enthusiastically in the outdoor area and handle different sized pens appropriately to mark-make on large pieces of paper indoors. A few children make recognisable marks and understand that print has meaning. Most children enjoy stories and remember what they have heard well. A very few children are beginning to recognise their names. However, not all children engage well enough in the activity to develop their skills effectively.

Many children develop appropriate numeracy skills. They begin to count how many children are in the group and to recognise the number on the wall chart. However, they do not always make enough progress with developing their numeracy skills during the sessions. Most children are beginning to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately. They handle remote controlled toys confidently and understand how to switch them on and off.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills well. They make good use of outdoor equipment to learn to balance and jump, and persevere to use the pedals on bikes. Many are beginning to use their fingers skilfully to close the zip on their coats with adult support. Most children develop worthwhile creative skills.

Nearly all children hear Welsh regularly and are familiar with the sounds and rhythm of the language. They are beginning to use a few simple Welsh words and phrases regularly. For example, they count to three in Welsh during their play with adult support.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children come into the setting confidently. They develop good working relationships with practitioners and respond positively to instructions. They understand the setting's routine and follow it well. For example, most children know when it is time to tidy up and join in helpfully. Most children are learning to share

and take turns appropriately. They behave well around the setting and relate well to one another. Most children concentrate for suitable periods, such as when they listen to a story. They are curious and eager to take part in the activities on offer.

Most children develop their independent learning and self-help skills meaningfully. For example, they choose resources confidently when given the opportunity, and practise putting on their outdoor clothing regularly. Nearly all children join in activities that help keep them healthy. They happily eat fruit, and drink milk or water. They wash their hands before eating regularly with adult support and learn to brush their teeth regularly. Nearly all children enjoy being active in the outdoor area.

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

Practitioners' planning ensures that children take part in an appropriate range of activities across all foundation phase areas of learning. They use interesting topics and themes to engage children in learning, for example they plan activities using popular stories as a stimulus for work and play. Planned tasks usually have a suitable focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, for instance useful opportunities for mark making to support children's early writing development appropriately. However, tasks do not always provide the right level of challenge for children, especially the more able. In a few instances, the activities on offer do not sustain children's interests well enough.

There is good provision to develop children's Welsh language skills, for example during story times when they work out where Smot the dog has gone. Practitioners plan worthwhile activities for children to develop their ICT skills, for instance by providing them with opportunities to use controllable floor toys. There are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their creative skills, for example when painting using brushes, or printing with their fingers and different objects.

The overall organisation of the provision does not always ensure a good balance of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to decide what or how they would like to learn. This limits the development of pupils' independent skills at times.

The setting makes good use of visits to enhance provision. Recently, such experiences have enabled children to begin to shape their learning environment and learning experiences. For instance, children chose resources for the role-play area following a visit to a local café.

Teaching: Adequate

Most practitioners have a suitable knowledge and understanding of the ethos of foundation phase education. Generally, practitioners structure tasks successfully to develop children's skills, knowledge and understanding. However, they do not always provide a good enough balance between adult-led tasks and activities that children choose for themselves. For example, children do not have consistent access to all areas of continuous provision so that they can follow their own interests and practise or refine their skills regularly.

Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies and encourage children to build helpful relationships effectively. This creates a calm learning environment where children learn and play together positively. Most practitioners intervene in learning at appropriate times, for example to support children to re-focus or occasionally to extend the learning by asking useful questions. However, overall, practitioners do not always have high enough expectations for children's progress in sessions or over time.

There are suitable arrangements to observe and record children's interests and progress in sessions. Practitioners are beginning to use this information successfully to identify what children have learnt and what they need to learn next, for example when working with two-dimensional shapes. Arrangements to use this information to plan children's next steps in learning are beginning to develop appropriately. The setting has suitable procedures to track children's progress over time. Parents receive valuable information about their child's progress through regular informal meetings and reports that are more detailed when their child transfers to school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting supports children's health and wellbeing effectively. Practitioners help children understand about healthy eating and drinking by providing fruit and healthy drinks at snack time. They provide plenty of opportunities for children to be active and enjoy the fresh air by giving them regular access to outdoor play equipment such as bikes. As part of the daily routine, there are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn the importance of good personal hygiene habits, including washing their hands before eating and brushing their teeth regularly.

Regular elements of the setting's routine provide helpful opportunities for children to begin to develop their social and independent learning skills well, such as during tidy up time and when dressing for outdoor activities. However, practitioners do not always make the most of opportunities for children to develop these skills during snack time. The setting fosters children's understanding of important values such as fairness and courtesy well. Practitioners take good advantage of spontaneous opportunities to develop children's sense of awe and wonder and appreciation of the world around them, for example by looking closely at a wiggly worm in the garden area. Arrangements to develop children's awareness of the importance of recycling are developing appropriately, such as through recycling waste food and paper.

Through regular observations and assessments, practitioners identify children's additional learning needs suitably. The setting has appropriate links with professional services to provide children with support when required.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a calm and welcoming ethos. Practitioners ensure that children have equal access to activities. They support children successfully to develop tolerant attitudes towards each other and positive attitudes to learning.

Practitioners organise the indoor learning environment effectively. They ensure that it is attractive and that a good supply of quality resources are available for children to use. These include interesting natural resources in the finding out area. They celebrate children's work in attractive displays. The learning areas indoors support the setting to meet the requirements of the foundation phase framework appropriately and cover a suitable range of learning experiences. The outdoor areas offer useful opportunities for learning. These include a recently developed garden area, which children access with adult support. Managers make sure that the learning environment is secure and appropriately maintained.

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

The setting leader has a positive vision for the setting as a caring and safe environment where children develop their personal and social skills well ready for the next stage in their education. This creates a warm, welcoming and supportive ethos in the setting. Practitioners work well together and support each other effectively in their day-to-day work. There is a rota on display which ensures that they are clear about their daily duties and they carry these out efficiently. Practitioners share roles and responsibilities suitably, reflecting their different expertise. However, they do not have current job descriptions that reflect these effectively. There are regular staff meetings each term, which provide useful opportunities for sharing information and ideas and establishing suitable expectations. However, systems for following up on decisions made in the meetings are not robust enough. As a result, progress with meeting objectives is often slow.

The setting follows appropriate procedures to manage the performance of staff. Recently, these have involved practitioners in developing aspects of the provision where they have particular interest and skill, such as improving planning and supporting children's Welsh language development. However, systems for setting and reviewing targets to support practitioners to make effective progress are not well developed. The setting leader actively seeks helpful support from outside agencies, including the local authority link teacher and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. She communicates regularly with the committee, who provide valuable support, particularly with overseeing the setting's finances.

Improving quality: Adequate

The setting's processes to evaluate its performance are developing appropriately. The setting leader actively seeks advice and support to improve its practice. For example, practitioners use the local authority format appropriately to support them in evaluating the setting's work. This helps them begin to understand their strengths and areas for development suitably. Practitioners contribute to the evaluation appropriately through discussions in staff meetings and the setting consults parents and children annually as part of their quality of care review. Leaders analyse the findings from questionnaires promptly and act on any suggestions efficiently. However, the setting's self-evaluation processes do not always focus well enough on the progress children make and the effectiveness of the provision. As a result, the setting does not always identify the most appropriate priorities for improvement.

The setting plans appropriately for improvement over time. For example, the leader can point to effective improvements since the last inspection, particularly in developing children's Welsh language skills and improving opportunities for mark-making. However, current improvement targets are not always defined clearly enough to measure progress effectively and ensure that the setting moves forward successfully. As a result, progress against targets, such as developing the outdoor area, has been slow and has had an inconsistent impact on children's learning. The setting has identified that it needs to establish systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, but these are not yet in place.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has developed successful partnerships that have a positive impact on standards and provision in the setting.

There is a strong partnership with parents, which support children's wellbeing effectively. Practitioners post useful information about the setting's work on the notice board. This includes information about how the setting runs as well as the activities planned for the week. The setting uses social media effectively to inform parents about the activities their children have been involved in during the sessions. Practitioners ensure that parents have regular opportunities to hear about their children's progress at the end of each session.

The setting leader makes good use of links with the local community to extend children's learning experiences and improve the quality of the provision. For example, a local community group has helped clear the setting's garden area and children learn to enjoy books through regular visits to the mobile library.

The partnership with the local authority is meaningful and productive. Practitioners benefit from regular support with developing their provision, for example, they improved the quality of circle time by splitting into two smaller groups acting on the link teacher's advice. They access training offered by the local authority and other agencies regularly. There is an appropriate partnership with the nearby school. The setting leader shares information about children's progress at the setting at the end of the academic year. This helps prepare the way for children to move onto the next stage in their education suitably.

Resource management: Adequate

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced. Many practitioners are pro-active in seeking out professional development to support their work. For example, the setting leader has recently completed a higher level qualification to support her in her management role. Most practitioners make the most of opportunities to attend training run by the local authority to continue their professional development. This contributes appropriately to their understanding of foundation phase practice. However, practitioners do not always monitor the impact of their training on the work in the setting well enough. In general, practitioners do not benefit from opportunities to visit other settings to share good practice.

Overall, leaders ensure that the setting offers an interesting range of resources that supports children's learning well. For example, practitioners prepare good quality

playdough to help children learn about their senses. There is a good range of ICT resources, a useful range of books attractively displayed in the book area and good quality bikes for use outdoors. However, occasionally the resources provided, such as the jig-saws, do not challenge the more able children well enough.

The setting has a thorough understanding of its running costs and reviews these regularly with support from the committee. It uses grant funding appropriately to buy specific resources to meet needs identified through local authority support, such as ICT equipment. Practitioners attend useful training funded from the early years development grant. This helps improve their understanding of how to develop children's basic skills appropriately, including their communication skills. However, children eligible for funded early years education do not receive their full statutory entitlement free of charge at the setting.

In view of the standards achieved by the children and the suitable provision and leadership, the setting provides adequate value for money.

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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
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 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