



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

**A report on**

**Mochdre Playgroup  
Mochdre Infant School  
Station Road  
Mochdre  
Conwy  
LL28 5EF**

**Date of inspection: February 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
<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

Mochdre playgroup is an English-medium setting located in Ysgol Babanod Mochdre, in the village of Mochdre, Conwy local authority. The setting is open five days a week, between 12:30pm and 3:00pm. The setting is registered for 26 children between the ages of two to four years. At the time of the inspection, there were up to 14 children present, including five children who receive funded education from the local authority.

At the time of the inspection there were a few children identified as having additional learning needs. There are a few children from ethnic minority backgrounds. No children have Welsh as their home language.

The setting employs four members of staff. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The leader has been in post for more than two years.

The Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) last inspected the setting in January 2015 and it was last inspected by Estyn in June 2011.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is adequate because:

- The setting provides a worthwhile range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences both indoors and outdoors that engage and interest nearly all children well
- Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about Welsh language and culture
- Most practitioners intervene appropriately in children's play and model learning appropriately to develop children's skills
- The setting is a welcoming and inclusive community, and daily routines, both indoors and outdoors, help children to feel comfortable and safe
- The setting's practice ensures that children eat healthily and engage in physical activity on a daily basis
- The learning environment is stimulating and interesting for children

However:

- Opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills are not planned systematically
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching and practitioners do not always challenge and engage children well enough
- Information from assessments and observation is not used to plan the next steps in children's learning effectively or involve all practitioners
- The use of visits to the community and visitors to the setting to enrich children's learning experiences is limited

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The leader has a clear vision for the setting that she shares with practitioners effectively
- There is an ethos of teamwork and co-operation among staff and they work well together to provide care and support to the children
- Leaders use the information deriving from self-evaluation activities appropriately to develop a sound understanding of strengths and the areas the setting needs to improve
- The setting has effective partnerships with parents and the local primary school
- Leaders use resources effectively to provide a stimulating learning environment

However:

- Staff do not always contribute effectively enough to the setting's daily routines or self-evaluation and planning for improvement activities
- The setting does not have consistent processes for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching
- Self-evaluation is not robust in evaluating the quality of teaching and its effect on children's skills
- Leaders do not review day to day procedures systematically to ensure progress over time

## Recommendations

- R1 Plan systematically to ensure progression in children's literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Model and share effective teaching strategies to ensure that children are suitably challenged
- R3 Involve all practitioners in assessing and monitoring children's progress to improve planning for next steps
- R4 Develop links with the local community to enrich children's learning
- R5 Improve self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes to ensure that they focus robustly on the quality of teaching and development of children's skills

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

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

n/a

#### Standards: n/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspections was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

#### Wellbeing: n/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspections was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

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

Adequate

#### Learning experiences: Adequate

The setting provides a worthwhile range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences both indoors and outdoors that engage and interest nearly all children well. For example, practitioners provide purposeful opportunities for children to study mini beasts and to make edible sparklers as part of their theme. Generally, practitioners plan suitably to develop children's skills across all areas of the foundation phase with appropriate opportunities for children to make useful choices about their play.

Practitioners plan a broad curriculum that focuses suitably on learning through active engagement and play. For example, children develop numeracy skills by counting caterpillars amongst natural resources, and develop an appropriate understanding of counting when threading with large beads. Where planning is effective, it ensures that activities challenge children appropriately in line with their abilities. However this practice is not consistent to allow practitioners to develop children's skills systematically across all areas of learning. Practitioners include children in discussions about their learning effectively and use children's ideas well when planning activities. However, there is limited use of visits to the community and visitors to the setting to enrich children's learning experiences.

The planning for developing children's basic language, literacy and communication skills and numeracy skills is inconsistent and does not always support children's learning well enough. When planning is effective, it provides suitable learning opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, practitioners use songs effectively to develop pupils' communication skills and

provide beneficial opportunities for children to practice and develop their early writing skills in the outdoor environment. Planning for the development of children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills is appropriate. For example, practitioners plan appropriate opportunities for children to use a tablet computer to record each other and to control electronic caterpillars. However, planning does not indicate the next steps in individuals' learning clearly and consistently enough.

Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about Welsh language and culture. Opportunities to sing Welsh songs, particularly action songs, are appreciated by the children and have a positive effect on their Welsh language skills. Practitioners use displays throughout the setting to celebrate the Welsh language successfully.

Practitioners plan valuable daily opportunities for to develop children's physical skills, with activities outdoors allowing children to have regular opportunities to take part in energetic play and pedal bikes.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners greet the children with enthusiasm at the start of each session and manage children's behaviour effectively. This encourages the children's participation and enjoyment in many of the activities. Practitioners have suitable knowledge of the requirements of the foundation phase and are good language models. Most practitioners intervene appropriately in children's play and model learning appropriately to develop children's skills, for example when demonstrating how to thread beads and count simultaneously. They initiate play effectively and work alongside children appropriately, for example in the role play café. However, this practice is inconsistent and practitioners do not always challenge and engage children well enough. As a result, a few children become disengaged and do not make enough progress in their learning.

Generally, practitioners plan activities that interest children successfully, such as making model caterpillars out of a range of accessible materials, and sorting bugs to put into matching jars. Practitioners question children suitably during their focus tasks. However, they do not always make the most of learning opportunities such as providing more challenging mathematical problems for more able children.

The lead practitioner manages the assessment process appropriately. She records formal useful assessments about learning, as well as incidental and daily observations that inform the planning of activities suitably. However, not all practitioners play an active part in the assessment process and information from assessment does not inform planning effectively enough to target individual children's needs and the next steps in their learning. Practitioners inform parents and carers informally about their children's achievements.

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

Practitioners promote good behaviour skilfully and positively, using praise effectively. They establish strong routines and children respond to these well. For example, children share and take turns when playing on large toys in the outdoor area. The setting is a welcoming and inclusive community, and daily routines, both indoors and outdoors, help children to feel comfortable and safe. Staff and children respect each other and enjoy working together at the setting.

The setting has effective arrangements to promote children's health and wellbeing. For example, when they have their snack, children are offered a range of healthy foods and they are encouraged to drink milk or water.

The setting plans effectively to promote children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Practitioners encourage the children to hunt for mini beasts in the bug hotel and express awe and wonder at observations in the outdoor area. They encourage children to develop a sense of fairness successfully. For example, nearly all children know how to share and know to apologise when they knock into a friend. Practitioners encourage children to have respect for themselves, others and the environment skilfully.

Practitioners have identified children with additional learning needs at an early stage. They consult with external agencies appropriately and respond well to advice and guidance in order to respond to children's needs.

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

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides a calm, nurturing and caring environment where practitioners encourage children to take part in most activities successfully. Practitioners make children feel welcome and valued as soon as they arrive and they treat all children fairly, equally and with respect. Practitioners ensure that all children have equal access to the indoor and outdoor environments.

The accommodation is clean, safe and secure. The indoor space is exciting and offers a stimulating learning environment for children. Practitioners use the limited display boards well to celebrate children's work. The setting provides a range of resources that support children's learning successfully. Practitioners encourage children to use resources appropriately to help develop specific skills. For example, the setting recently bought tablet computers and cameras to help develop children's ICT skills.

The outdoor space has a good range of appropriate and exciting opportunities, such as a bug hotel, log circle and mud kitchen. Practitioners use this area effectively to

promote children's learning. They arrange resources well, enabling children to use them with increasing independence. For example, children know where to find materials they need to create a model of a caterpillar or butterfly, and go and choose these independently.

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

The leader has a clear vision for the setting that she shares with practitioners effectively. There is an ethos of teamwork and co-operation among staff and they work well together to provide care and support to the children. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. However, the leader takes on most responsibilities and staff do not always contribute effectively enough to the setting's daily routines or self-evaluation and planning for improvement activities. Leaders provide useful training opportunities for staff which is effective in addressing the needs of the learners. For example, effective training in the use of outdoor learning has improved practitioners' understanding of how to develop children's learning in the outdoors. The setting has appropriate procedures in place to evaluate the performance of staff. However, the leader does not use these procedures robustly enough to set targets for improvement or to challenge underperformance.

The setting places appropriate focus on national priorities, such as promoting healthy lifestyles and developing children's ICT and Welsh language skills. Formal and informal staff meetings ensure that practitioners contribute appropriate ideas when planning learning activities. However, planning does not always ensure enough opportunities for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills systematically when working in learning areas.

The setting has made good progress in responding to most of the recommendations from the previous inspection, but it has been slow to develop the development of children's literacy skills in English.

The management committee are supporting of the setting. There are appropriate procedures in place for the management committee to support and guide the setting.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The leader, with beneficial support from the advisory teacher, has developed a useful range of self-evaluation activities. Leaders use the information deriving from these activities appropriately to develop a sound understanding of strengths and the areas the setting needs to improve. Practitioners discuss the quality of learning experiences regularly, and monitor the activities offered to the children suitably. However, these processes are not sharp enough and do not have a clear enough focus on evaluating the effect of teaching and learning activities on children's skills. The setting's improvement plan prioritises relevant targets that link well to the areas

identified. However, planning for improvement does not indicate how these plans will be monitored clearly enough.

With the advisory teacher's support, the setting focuses suitably on areas for development. This has led to useful improvements in how well practitioners organise sessions and use their resources. However, leaders do not review day to day procedures systematically to ensure progress over time, for example suitable provision for all learners and consistently good practice in teaching to promote progression in skills.

The setting makes good use of external advice. For example, following the award of a grant, the setting has prioritised the improvement in the setting's use of ICT. This is starting to have a positive effect on children's ICT skills.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has effective partnerships with parents. Practitioners keep parents well informed about what is happening at the setting through displays, noticeboards, the school's newsletter and social media. Parents respond positively to the open communication links and to requests for help in the provision of resources. For example, parents provided the mud kitchen in the outdoor area.

The setting is based on the school premises and there is a strong partnership with the school. Older children from the school visit the setting regularly to play alongside the children and engage in their learning activities. They share stories and familiar books with the children, practice their writing skills and complete jigsaws together. This enables the children to learn from each other and strengthens transitional arrangements successfully.

The setting has an effective partnership with the local authority teacher who makes regular visits to the setting. She provides support and advice to the playgroup, and practitioners benefit from the training and resources provided, for example the training on additional learning needs. The setting works purposefully with outside agencies such as the All Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association and the Conwy Referral scheme. The setting uses Welsh training resources effectively, which has enabled practitioners to use purposeful ideas to promote Welsh speaking skills.

The setting has effective transition arrangements before children start in the setting. It arranges worthwhile sessions for children to attend the setting with their parents to enable them to settle quickly into the daily routines.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The playgroup has an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff in order to provide a stimulating foundation phase curriculum for children. The leader has observed good practice in other settings and used this information thoughtfully to

improve provision in the setting. However, other practitioners have not had this opportunity. The setting provides purposeful opportunities for all staff to attend training, such as first aid and food hygiene. This ensures that they are able to fulfil their roles within the setting suitably. Leaders deploy staff effectively to make the best of their experience and expertise. For example, leaders ensure that the few practitioners with expertise in promoting outdoor learning use these skills to develop children's learning in the outdoor areas.

The management committee and leader manage finances efficiently to ensure good quality resources that meet the needs of the children effectively. Together with the practitioners, the leader monitors and evaluates how well resources meet children's learning needs appropriately. The setting makes effective use of the early years development grant, for example to improve children's ICT skills across all areas.

As a result of the quality of provision and effectiveness of the leadership, the setting offers adequate value for money.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CIW</b>	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation 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