



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

A report on

**Village Playgroup
Welfare Hall
Hope Avenue
Aberkenfig
Bridgend
CF32 9PR**

Date of inspection: October 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

Village Playgroup is situated in the village of Aberkenfig in Bridgend local authority. It provides early education funded by the local authority from 9.15am to 11.45am and from 12.15pm to 2.45pm daily for 39 weeks of the year.

The setting meets in a community hall and is registered to admit up to 19 children between the ages of two and four-years- old. It serves a semi-rural area. A very few children are funded currently by the local authority and the setting has identified very few children as having additional learning needs. All children speak English as their home language.

The setting proprietor has been in post since 1996. There are seven part-time practitioners employed at the setting including the setting leader. All have appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in May 2011 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in June 2017.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Learning experiences support children to develop a wide range of skills successfully
- Daily sessions include a good balance of opportunities for children to follow their own interests and join activities led by adults
- There are plenty of good quality resources, which children find interesting and engaging
- Practitioners have a good understanding of child development
- Practitioners work together effectively to create a caring and nurturing environment
- The setting's ethos promotes mutual respect between adults and children
- The learning environment is stimulating, and offers an interesting variety of learning opportunities for all children
- Practitioners understand children's individual needs well, particularly any additional learning needs

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The proprietor and setting leader have a clear sense of purpose and adapt the provision skilfully to meet the needs of all the children
- The proprietor and leader have high expectations of all staff
- Practitioners work collaboratively to bring about worthwhile improvements
- The setting has strong and supportive partnerships that benefit the children
- Practitioners are committed to providing a caring and inclusive learning environment
- The setting leader and practitioners make good use of opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills through training opportunities

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the provision for mark making across the areas of learning
- R2 Make sure that processes for safe recruitment are robust
- R3 Make sure that all staff have accurate job descriptions that reflect their roles and responsibilities

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards:

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 inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing:

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 inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners plan engaging learning experiences that meet children's needs successfully. Activities are appropriate for children's stage of development and encourage children's progress towards foundation phase outcomes. These include interesting activities that help children develop their communication skills, such as when they enjoy using a stethoscope to listen to a heart beat in the doctor's surgery role-play area.

Daily sessions include a good balance of opportunities for children to follow their own interests and join activities led by adults. There are regular opportunities for children to access the indoor and outdoor provision independently.

The setting supports children to develop their speaking and listening skills well through daily circle time, group activities and singing time. Practitioners use a range of open questions to support children's thinking skills and conversational language effectively. There are useful opportunities for children to develop their early reading skills in the well-stocked book area. The setting provides suitable opportunities for children to practise mark-making in the writing area. However, there are too few opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills across all areas of learning.

There are worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Practitioners encourage children to count and use their fingers to show a given amount when they meet for circle time and to join in with songs and rhymes with a mathematical theme in English and in Welsh. Whilst making playdough, practitioners help children learn correct mathematical language such as half, full, light, heavy, more and less. They encourage children to match and create patterns in the mathematics area.

Practitioners provide helpful opportunities for children to explore and experiment with a range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources. For example, they teach children to use digital cameras successfully by helping them take photographs of each step as they make dough together.

Children have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills in the designated indoor physical development space where they climb, jump, balance and move large soft play shapes. There are good opportunities for children to learn how to handle small tools skilfully such as when taking turns to pour, stir and mix ingredients together during a group task.

Provision for promoting children's use of Welsh language is good. Practitioners actively encourage children to name colours, describe the weather and sing Welsh songs during circle time. Children have regular opportunities to hear and respond to Welsh phrases throughout the session. They learn about their Welsh heritage effectively, for example when they dress up to celebrate St David's Day, share stories based on a Welsh theme and go on visits to significant Welsh places of interest.

Practitioners organise regular visits to help children become familiar with places in their community such as the library, nearby shops and the local park. These engage children's interests well. The setting keeps interesting records of their visits to encourage children to remember and talk about their experiences back in the setting.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and the impact of additional learning needs. They engage children successfully in group tasks capturing their interest by talking to them and using interesting resources. They provide meaningful opportunities for children to make choices about what activities they are going to get involved in.

Practitioners are good language role models. They choose words carefully to help children learn new vocabulary, such as when they encourage children to use mathematical language appropriately. They use open questions well to develop children's thinking skills, for example when they ask children what they have found or what different objects feel like.

Practitioners know the children well and have high expectations for their learning and behaviour. They encourage children to respect one another when learning together in a group. As a result, children behave appropriately in the setting and they are beginning to form respectful and caring relationships with one another.

There are robust systems in place for assessing children's progress in the setting. Practitioners observe children regularly during the sessions and use the information well to help them plan their next steps. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through regular informal discussions and scheduled meetings.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting has thorough provision for children's health and wellbeing. Practitioners promote healthy eating through a healthy snack display in the setting foyer and

schedule daily snack time for children to eat fruit. They encourage children to put their food waste into a tub regularly and discuss the recycling process with them, helping them learn about sustainability. Tooth brushing is a part of the daily routine and children participate willingly.

Practitioners welcome each child into the setting and show that they value them by discussing their interests, such as recent experiences at home. They encourage and praise the children regularly during play and are on hand to help them should they encounter any difficulties. This helps children to settle happily and to explore the activities in the indoor and outdoor areas confidently. Practitioners promote positive behaviour effectively. They encourage the children by praising their efforts consistently. As a result, most children follow instructions willingly, such as finding a seat for circle time and washing their hands at snack time.

The setting supports children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development well. For example, practitioners help children develop useful social skills by teaching them to respect each other, take turns and look after playgroup resources carefully. Practitioners promote children's independence skills successfully. For example, they encourage children to cut their own fruit during snack time. They lead daily opportunities for children to engage in singing sessions, whole group dancing and trips to the pantomime. This helps nurture children's cultural development well.

Practitioners make sure that the indoor and outdoor learning areas in the setting are safe for the children. However, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet all requirements and give cause for concern. This is because the setting does not follow safe recruitment procedures well enough.

The setting caters for children with additional learning needs effectively. Practitioners work closely with outside agencies and parents to provide valuable experiences that help individual children progress appropriately. They assess, track and review progress effectively and regularly in order to make sure that they meet individual children's needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is inclusive. Practitioners respect children as individuals and make sure that all children have equal access to all the activities. They build warm and meaningful relationships with the children and respond well to each child's personality and individual needs. Practitioners show that they respect diversity and value each child's family background. For example, they encourage parents to share information about what children like to do at home in order to help them settle into the setting.

The indoor and outdoor environments are calm, spacious and stimulating for children. The space is organised well to encourage children to move around freely, explore all areas of provision and make choices about what they want to learn.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills outdoors, such as when they pedal trikes and play in the new mud kitchen. The setting provides a range of resources that support children's learning well. Practitioners add to these regularly, choosing additional resources carefully to help

children develop specific skills. For example, the setting recently bought digital cameras to help develop children's ICT skills.

Practitioners use the local environment well to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, they visit the nearby shops and park regularly and go on an interesting trip each term.

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

The proprietor and setting leader work closely together and create a strong team ethos within the setting where staff and children feel valued. They have a clear sense of purpose and adapt the provision skilfully to meet the needs of all the children. All staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. However, they do not all have up-to-date job descriptions that reflect their roles and enable leaders to hold them to account.

Leaders have high expectations of all staff and effective systems to manage any underperformance. There are appropriate processes for the appraisal of practitioners, and these identify individual and group needs that link well to the setting's action plan.

The setting has made suitable progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. Practitioners make every effort to use Welsh regularly with the children and there is thorough planning for and assessment of adult-directed tasks. Leaders focus well on national priorities, such as promoting a healthy lifestyle and developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

The setting uses a range of effective processes to evaluate its performance. Practitioners identify what they do well and aspects of provision that they need to improve. For example, they recognise that they need to use more Welsh when talking to the children and attend training to improve this aspect. The self-evaluation document is generally an accurate reflection of the work of the setting, but it does not always focus well enough on the standards that children achieve. Parents have useful opportunities to contribute to the self-evaluation process through questionnaires and the setting takes good account of their views when planning for improvements. For example, practitioners now meet with parents to discuss progress in addition to providing a written report.

Practitioners are open to new ways of working and respond well to advice from external partners, such as the advisory teacher and the local authority's child care team. They use this information appropriately to improve the setting's provision.

The setting's action plan is a clear document that links well to the areas identified for improvement through the self-evaluation process. It has a manageable number of areas for development and outlines actions, personnel responsible, timescales and success criteria. Leaders allocate appropriate funds or resources to specific actions.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has strong and supportive partnerships with parents. Practitioners keep parents well informed about the work of the setting through the setting's noticeboard, newsletter, daily informal contact and the use of social media. Parents value this information and it helps them to prepare their children for the next steps in learning.

The setting has beneficial links with the local community to enhance learning experiences for children. It makes appropriate use of a local park for outdoor activities and exchanges books with the local library. The setting is based in the Aberkenfig Welfare Association and, although the setting has to pack away each day, the committee is supportive in allowing practitioners to continuously display children's work and to create a stimulating outdoor area.

The local authority advisory teacher and the access and inclusion service provide the setting with support and advice. Practitioners act on this advice to improve their practice and to provide support that is more effective for the children in the setting. Practitioners regularly attend training courses on offer from the local authority and this helps them to keep up-to-date with new initiatives to improve teaching and learning.

The setting has appropriate links with local schools and the specialist provision that it feeds. Staff arrange visits prior to transfer for children with specific needs and this helps them to become familiar with new surroundings and to settle in quickly to a new environment.

Resource management: Good

The proprietor makes sure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all the children, particularly those with additional learning needs. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and used well to support children's learning.

Staff access appropriate training based on needs identified through the appraisal and self-evaluation processes. Practitioners benefit from training and bring back ideas to the setting to share with others. For example, they create more opportunities for children to experiment with constructing dens after attending a den-building course.

The proprietor is responsible for managing the setting's budget. She keeps spending under review and applies for additional grant funding to support the setting when necessary. Through self-evaluation, practitioners identify any additional resources they need to improve the provision and the proprietor and leader set priorities for purchasing new resources.

Overall, the setting provides good quality care and effective teaching and leadership. As a result, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

The inspection team

Jen Pugsley	Reporting Inspector
Jane Rees	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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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.