



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Playdays Playgroup  
Emmanuel School  
Victoria Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EG**

**Date of inspection: May 2011**

**by**

**Peter Roach**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.**

## Context

Playdays is an English medium playgroup providing nursery education in the town of Rhyl in the county of Denbighshire, North Wales. Nearly all the children who attend the playgroup come from the local area which is judged to be socially and economically deprived with high levels of unemployment and considerable seasonable employment and as a result is designated a Communities First Area. The local area is also included in the Wales index of multiple deprivations (2008) as one of the most deprived areas in Wales.

The playgroup is based in a classroom in Ysgol Emmanuel and provides care from two years of age until they move on to the next stage of their education. It welcomes children of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with additional needs (ALN) or from ethnic communities. Nearly all children, who attend the playgroup, come from homes where English is the principal language.

The playgroup moved to its present site in 2006 and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to provide care for 18 children per session. CSSIW inspect the playgroup on an annual basis and the latest inspection report was published in January 2011. This is the first Estyn Inspection.

The playgroup is staffed by an experienced leader who is supported by five other assistants. All are appropriately qualified with NNEB or equivalent qualifications. There are currently five pupils on roll with / being present during the inspection.

Playdays is a member of the Denbighshire Early Years and Child Care Partnership and receive regular support in the form of specialist advice from an early years teacher.

At present the playgroup is run by a parent committee who hold meetings on a regular basis to discuss staffing, planning, supervision and fees.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Children are happy to come to the setting, enjoy learning and are generally well behaved;
- Practitioners are good role models for the children;
- Of the Wide range of experiences provided;
- Of the warm caring relationships between children and practitioners; and
- The strong emphasis on wellbeing.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- New management arrangements will focus more on improvement with a particular emphasis on outcomes;
- Practitioners know their children well;
- The leader and other practitioners have positive attitudes towards improvement; and
- The ongoing professional development of staff is well established and effective.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve the provision for Welsh language teaching;
- R2 Improve planning to allow for more time to fully develop the skills curriculum;
- R3 Further develop the management arrangements; and
- R4 Ensure more efficient use of staff in order to fully utilise the outdoor area in a more effective way.

### What happens next?

*The provider will draw up an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.*

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
---	------------

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language development 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.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The setting provides all children with a wide range of opportunities to experience all areas of learning. Planning is a collaborative exercise involving all practitioners and is successful in engaging nearly all children because their needs are met. These planned activities enable the children to make good progress, from a low base, in communication, numeracy, information control technology (ICT) and the wider creative skills. Provision for Welsh language teaching is underdeveloped. Welsh is not used consistently throughout the session although it is used effectively during the morning group time. Good examples exist, through photographic evidence, of the children taking part in St. David's day celebrations.

In delivering certain activities there is an over emphasis on the same or similar skills being developed and not enough notice given to the generic skills ladders provided in each learning area.

Circle time at the end of the sessions is a nice calming activity which gives the children good opportunities to reflect on what they have done throughout the morning.

There are good opportunities to further develop the children's knowledge and understanding of global citizenship through the use of specially designed activities which celebrate the major festivals such as Chinese new year and Divali. Children's understanding of sustainability is developing well.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum and use a wide range of different techniques to ensure children's learning is developed fully. Questioning is used effectively to stimulate thinking and understanding. Practitioners know when to intervene and consequently there is a good balance between child selected and adult led activities.

Behaviour is managed well as children react positively to praise. There were no occasions when staff had to intervene because of antisocial behaviour during the inspection. Good relationships exist between staff and children which ensure all children are happy to come to the setting and are eager to learn.

All practitioners make regular evaluative assessments of what the children have achieved. These worthwhile comments are added to the children's profile books and follow the children to their nursery class before being handed to the parents. These are meaningful records of achievements which ensure that continuity is maintained between the setting and the transferring school.

All children have appropriate individual targets which are evaluated and revised on a regular basis.

Informal chats with parents before and after each session ensure good understanding of what their children can or can't do.

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

There are appropriate policies and procedures in place in respect to safeguarding children. These procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008). The head teacher is the named person and all staff have received the relevant training and are aware of their roles.

There are good arrangements in place for ensuring the children's health and wellbeing. As a result of encouragement from the local health board the setting ensure that the children's teeth are cleaned properly as part of the Design to Smile Scheme.

Each child is afforded respect by the practitioners which in turn develops the children's self confidence. The setting fosters, in a positive way, everyday values such as honesty, fairness and the difference between right and wrong. All children are happy to play together and to share equipment and resources.

Arrangements for dealing with children with additional learning needs (ALN) are particularly effective. The setting has good relationships with outside agencies and call upon their specialist services as and when needed. When necessary quality support is provided for ALN children whatever their background or ability.

As the setting rents a room in the school the transition arrangements are particularly effective and ensure a smooth transition from one phase to the next. There are good arrangements for developing the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Learning environment: Good**

There is a strong inclusive ethos permeating throughout the setting which provides the children with a warm, caring and friendly working environment. Whatever their background or beliefs, children are encouraged to be fully included in all activities.

The setting is generously staffed with highly committed, experienced and well qualified practitioners. They are keen to improve their skills and as a result have attended many professional development courses organised by the local authority (LA).

Resources are well matched to the Foundation Phase curriculum and support fully the children's needs. Imaginative use is made of the classroom allowing the children to move effectively from one activity to another. The newly commissioned outdoor area is an excellent resource which is used far too infrequently. Even though there are appropriate clothing for the children to wear during inclement weather, opportunities for using the area to develop a particular skill or a range of skills are underdeveloped.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
--	-------------

### **Leadership: Adequate**

The setting has clear policies and aims in place which are understood and implemented by all practitioners. There are shared values based on providing the best provision for the children. Over the years the practitioners have taken advantage of the numerous training courses organised by the LA which have added to the professionalism resulting in better outcomes for the children.

The leader tries to fulfil her role by giving clear direction to other practitioners which develops a sense of purpose ensuring that every child has ample opportunities to develop themselves fully.

Currently the setting is managed by a parent committee who meet on a regular basis. Unfortunately the current arrangement does not allow the setting to move forward as there are difficulties in recruiting parents to take on board the role of officers. As a result the current management committee does not provide sufficient rigour in challenging and supporting the work of the setting in order to bring about improvements.

As a result of these difficulties there are plans for the school to oversee the day to day running of the setting by developing a management committee made up of the school's senior management team together with representatives from the setting. This will ensure an improved provision for the children.

There is a well established staff appraisal system in place.



### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting has good systems in place to evaluate its strengths and areas for improvement. Questionnaires are sent out to parents on a yearly basis and the analysis of the results is used effectively as part of the setting's self evaluation process. There is a clear commitment to valuing the views of parents about the working practices, initiatives and the standards achieved within the setting.

The setting's self evaluation results are then included in a generic development plan which include areas for development within realistic and achievable timescales.

The inclusion of twelve areas for improvement may be better considered over a two year cycle thus taking a lot of the pressure off the leader to complete the tasks within the published timescale

Monthly staff meetings are effective in improving quality as all the staff are able to share their views and talk about effective practices.

The setting welcomes the help they receive from the Playgroup Association and other playgroups in the area. As a result practitioners are able to reflect on best practice and share ideas.

### **Partnership working: Good**

A good range of local partnerships enhances the children's learning and promotes their wellbeing. There are strong links with the health visitor, associated agencies and local flying start unit. The setting is supported well on a regular basis by a teacher from the LA's early entitlement team.

Good partnership arrangements exist between the setting and the school's early year's department down the corridor. However this link could have been developed further with even closer links ensuring a common approach to teaching the Foundation Phase principles.

Unfortunately due to supervision problems the setting is not able to make regular and effective use of the neighbourhood and local area. They do however look forward to their annual educational outing which is very well attended by children and parents.

The setting has developed good working relationships with other playgroups and settings in the area.

**Resource management: Good**

The suitably qualified practitioners work well as a team which makes a significant impact on children's progress. Generally good quality resources are managed effectively and suitably deployed to meet the needs of the children. The majority of the time practitioners are deployed effectively to support learning. However for a minority of the time, especially when it involves the outdoor area, staff are not given sufficient opportunities to encourage the children to practice, enhance and refine certain skills. Finances appear to be managed well as the leader endeavours to link spending to the priorities identified in the self evaluation process.

Taking account of the effective deployment of resources and the progress the children make the setting provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Only one response was received from parents. Parent / carer reported that he / she was very happy with the standard of care received by the children.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children enjoy coming to the setting as learning is fun. They enjoy the activities and welcome the supportive ethos provided by the staff.

## Appendix 2

**The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate**

Peter Roach	Reporting Inspector
-------------	---------------------

### **Copies of the report**

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.