



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

**Cadwgan Play Group
The Mobile
Ysgol T Gwynn Jones
Llanelian Road
Old Colwyn
Conwy
LL29 9UR**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

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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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Context

Cadwgan Playgroup is an English-medium setting. It meets in The Mobile in the grounds of Ysgol T Gwynn Jones. The families served by the playgroup live nearby in Old Colwyn, which is close to Colwyn Bay, a seaside town in Conwy.

The locality is generally described as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged, but includes pockets of relative poverty. The setting provides care and education for three year olds and is a Flying Start provider for younger children.

The setting offers morning and afternoon sessions on weekdays for Flying Start and Early Entitlement during school terms and is also open for three weeks during the school summer holiday. It is registered for 16 children between the age of two and admission to school. At the time of the inspection there were 32 children on roll including 14 three year olds. The local authority (LA) funds places for three year olds up to 10 hours per week.

All children attending are English speaking and British born. No families speak Welsh at home. No children have additional learning needs (ALN).

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in February 2011 and Estyn in February 2006. The setting moved to its present accommodation in September 2007. It achieved the Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA) Quality Standard in 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- children make good progress and achieve well;
- an excellent range of well planned learning experiences is provided;
- all practitioners contribute to effective teaching;
- high quality care, support and educational guidance assures children's wellbeing; and
- the learning environment is excellent.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- day-to-day management is efficient;
- high quality educational leadership ensures clear direction;
- practitioners are an effective team;
- excellent partnerships impact well on provision; and
- although there is no formalised planning for improvement the setting has a very good track record in developing the Foundation Phase

Recommendations

In order to build on good outcomes and provision the setting should:

R1 formalise procedures for self-evaluation;

R2 prioritise realistic and achievable goals for improvement; and

R3 develop plans of action to help guide and resource initiatives.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children come to the setting with a range of skills. With very few exceptions they make good progress and a few make very good progress in relation to their starting points. Skills in communication are very well developed and progress is at least good across areas of learning.

Nearly all children quickly settle and appear happy, inquisitive, confident learners. They naturally make choices and eagerly engage in play activities. Their personal, social and communication skills are particularly well developed. All try out new experiences and apply their skills purposefully in a range of contexts.

Most children have very good skills in language. They speak clearly, use an increasing vocabulary and readily initiate conversations and ask questions. Many sustain simple extended conversation, for example about their play or life at home. Most readily participate in group discussions, demonstrate good listening skills and follow instructions well. They readily sing songs, chant familiar rhymes and happily engage in role play. They enjoy stories, attentively follow the pictures and text and handle books as readers. Most recognise their name and develop early writing skills well during role play.

Most children make good progress in the acquisition of early mathematical skills. They develop counting skills well, match and order objects and begin to understand one-to-one correspondence. They acquire a good understanding of money; reliably name common shapes and have an appropriate understanding of time based on daily routines. Most gain confidence in using appropriate mathematical language, for example to describe where a controllable toy has moved.

Children's skills in information and communications technology (ICT) develop well. They begin to control simulations on the laptop and confidently use a range of ICT in their play. Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development is good.

Most children respond confidently to Welsh in structured situations. They readily sing songs and use familiar vocabulary to count, describe the weather and participate in games. However, very few use Welsh spontaneously during play.

Wellbeing: Good

The children develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Very good levels of participation are evident and nearly all children enter the setting confidently and readily engage in the activities provided. Almost all the children show very good levels of independence. They are well motivated, have positive attitudes and sustain interest and concentration well. Most readily make choices about how and what they learn within the setting and they are encouraged to help plan and develop activities in the setting.

In line with their age children have positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe. Most know that energetic play helps keep them fit and that running and jumping makes you out of breath. They show good awareness that eating a range of foods helps them remain healthy and understand the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Nearly all develop good social skills, eat a range of healthy foods they help to prepare and enthusiastically participate in energetic activities.

Friendly and supportive relationships and the development of children's collaborative skills through play are distinctive features. The positive role models set by adults helps children to feel safe and secure. They participate enthusiastically in structured activities and their behaviour is very good. Nearly all show courtesy and appropriate consideration for others. They take turns, share equipment, look after resources and develop responsibility, for example as Helpwer Heddiw.

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

The setting successfully engages children in an excellent range of imaginative learning experiences. Planning is securely based on Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework. Practitioners work closely together to plan innovative activities and are flexible in their implementation, so that children learn effectively. Planning ensures a very good balance of activities and builds particularly well on children's prior knowledge and skills. The focus on the development of skills in planning is an exemplar. Strong and consistent emphasis is placed on promoting skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and the promotion of communication skills in English and Welsh is excellent.

Carefully chosen themes are a very good basis for detailed weekly plans that include a strong focus on skills development for individual children. Planning indicates a secure understanding of the Foundation Phase Outcomes and provides well for the progressive development of children's skills. Practitioners show a clear understanding of activities and are guided well in recognising the small steps in learning that promote progress towards an outcome.

Over time, opportunities for children to solve problems, become independent, encounter new experiences and encourage them to think for themselves are well planned. Practitioners know the children very well and often match focused activities well to their needs and abilities. Learning experiences foster positive relationships, nurture respect and tolerance and successfully promote awareness of other cultures. The integration of indoor and outdoor activities promotes well the consolidation of skills in different contexts. The occasional use of visits and visitors encourages wider awareness of the natural and man made world. Furthermore, recycling and composting raises awareness of sustainability and the impact people have on the environment.

Provision to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales is good. Practitioners, who are all learners of Welsh, promote the incidental use of the language well.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is successful in making learning fun and it is very well guided by planning. Practitioners use their initiative well to develop learning in different contexts and all skillfully promote group and individual learning. They have a secure understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a range of strategies well to stimulate play. In particular, they know how to develop learning activities in ways that engage children's interest. Practitioners observe and intervene appropriately, ensure children have enough time to complete tasks and skillfully build on their ideas. They encourage children to make choices and use questioning well to develop thinking skills. Teaching is most effective when the focus is to challenge children to extend their learning and the setting leader often provides an exemplar in this regard. The identification of small steps in learning for different groups of children in the planning is a good feature that helps to focus teaching.

Arrangements for assessment are comprehensive and very well structured. Strategies include day-to-day observations, focused observations and a learning diary. The allocation of a key worker for each child ensures records are systematically updated and that individual learning records exemplify children's attainments clearly across all areas of learning. The outcomes of assessment are used well to plan the next steps in learning.

Practitioners make time, on an informal basis, to be available for parents or carers to discuss their child's progress before and after sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

High quality care, support and educational guidance permeates the setting's life and work. This impacts particularly well on children's personal and social development and on relationships within the setting. Children's health, safety and wellbeing are strongly promoted, with good emphasis on moral social and cultural development. There is less emphasis on spiritual development with opportunities, such as to wonder about the natural world, not always developed.

Children are sensitively encouraged to take responsibility, show initiative and to behave well. They develop a good understanding of living and sharing with others. Positive values, including fairness, honesty and respect for others are strongly promoted. The making and tasting of foods from different countries and the celebration of festivals well promotes awareness of different cultural traditions.

Induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting are effective. Close liaison with parents and the receiving school helps to ensure a smooth transition.

Arrangements to provide children with personal and specialist support when needed are well established. The setting maintains links with relevant LA and health services, such as to assist the integration of children with ALN. The support provided for more able children is also good.

Systematic procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Risk assessments are routinely implemented. All practitioners are trained in first aid and have a valid criminal records bureau disclosure.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting is a vibrant, happy environment with an inclusive ethos. Excellent relationships provide a strong basis for its life and work. Awareness of diversity is well promoted. Good account is taken of children's backgrounds and they are treated as individuals. Practitioners sensitively encourage understanding of different customs and traditions. They consistently promote high standards of behaviour, foster tolerant attitudes and ensure equality. The consistent implementation of established policies ensures children are free from undue anxiety.

There are sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. The setting is well resourced to provide for the Foundation Phase. The building is adequate and the outdoor provision is good. The excellent use of practitioners' in leading activities, their imaginative use of learning resources, both indoors and out, often result in magical moments of learning for groups and individuals. Displays significantly enhance the classroom and the integration of indoor and outdoor activities is secure. Occasional use is made of the local environment to enhance facilities, for example to provide Forest School experiences.

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

The setting is very well led, managed and developed. The impact of high quality educational leadership by the setting leader is very good. This results in a friendly supportive ethos and a clear sense of purpose and direction. Furthermore, the contribution of the voluntary chairperson to administration is invaluable. Detailed policies and procedures are implemented well. The management committee is appropriately involved in strategic planning and in maintaining oversight of the setting's development.

The setting leader has high expectations, skillfully creates clear vision for educational improvement and is successful in ensuring other practitioners have a good understanding of their role. A culture of self-improvement and good teamwork permeates the life and work of the setting. This is a particularly strong feature that assures high professional standards and enables the setting to build on its success.

Arrangements for performance management and appraisal are systematic and well focused. The process sets meaningful targets and is effective. Practitioners respond positively to professional advice, attend appropriate training and readily embrace national and local priorities. The setting is very successful in implementing the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

Some key elements of self-improvement are well established, but procedures are not sufficiently formalised. The setting leader successfully promotes a reflective culture among practitioners and they regularly take account of the views of parents, carers and children. Day-to-day evaluations of practice help to develop provision and practitioner's enthusiastic response to professional training and external advice

results in the successful development of the Foundation Phase. Furthermore, the setting has made good progress since the last inspection in 2006.

Arrangements to compile an annual quality of care review ensure all stakeholders are consulted and provide a good foundation to develop structured self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The self-evaluation and improving the setting documents are not linked to an audit of provision, although they identify relevant areas for improvement. However, the absence of plans of action to prioritise, guide and resource initiatives over the medium term hinders progress.

Networks of professional practice successfully support practitioners' professional development. The setting has beneficial links within the school and networking across a local cluster of settings successfully encourages the sharing of good practice.

Partnership working: Excellent

A number of beneficial partnerships impact well on children's progress and wellbeing. The setting's links with the adjacent school are very good. A shared vision for pre-school education, joint activities and close liaison helps to ensure a smooth transition to school life.

The setting's partnership with parents is a model of good practice; their views are sought and valued and communication between practitioners and parents is friendly and effective. Information is freely exchanged about the children and their achievements. The contribution of the child's key worker is particularly effective.

A range of media, including ICT, newsletters and a notice board, is used well to communicate information about the curriculum and events. Parental involvement is well promoted. Good use is made of some resources within the community to enhance learning.

Joint planning with the LA, including the provision of training and the input of an advisory teacher in providing both support and challenge, is effective. Practitioners value and respond positively to the advice and recommendations of partner agencies, including WPPA and Flying Start. The latter uses the setting as a model of good practice.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are very well deployed and learning resources are used imaginatively both indoors and out. Sufficient good quality learning resources are always easily accessible. Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced in working with young children and effective routines ensure the very best use of their time and expertise. Furthermore, systematic arrangements to review and support their professional development are well implemented.

The use made of available funding is well considered, but there are no formalised arrangements to evaluate the impact of spending on the quality of learning. Financial controls including an annual audit are rigorous, although spending to enhance or renew resources is not based on an audit of needs.

A report on Cadwgan Play Group
Month 2012

The impact of resource management is good. The use made of funding represents value for money because the outcomes are good.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report:

Learners:

The children settle happily on arrival and readily engage in activities. They have very positive, friendly relationships with their peers and with the adults. An inclusive ethos ensures children feel safe and secure. This was clearly evident in their confidence to initiate conversations and state their preferences. All children demonstrate a strong sense of trust and know that practitioners provide them with care and guidance.

Parents:

Eleven parents completed questionnaires. Nearly all respondents indicate they agree/strongly agree with all but one statement in the questionnaire. Both in discussions and through the questionnaire nearly all parents confirm high levels of satisfaction with the provider. They confirm their children like the setting and settle in well; it is a safe environment and the setting is well run. A very few disagree there is a good range of activities including trips and visits. However, in conversations with parents no significant concerns were raised. There were no written comments.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Michael T. Ridout	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.uk)

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

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 partnership's 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>
National Childminding	<p>This is a professional membership association working</p>

Association (NCMA)	with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.