



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

**Garden Village Playgroup
Garden Village
Wrexham
LL11 2TE**

Date of inspection: March 2014

by

Anne Manning

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Garden Village Playgroup is located in Wrexham next to the primary school. The premises are shared and as a result the practitioners have to set out and clear away the equipment nearly every session. This English-medium playgroup is managed by a committee and the general day to day running is carried out by a team of practitioners.

There were 10 funded 3-year-old children present during the inspection. Most of the children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of backgrounds, however a few children attend from within a 12 mile radius. Nearly all children are from a white British background and a few children have additional help for their learning. Nearly all children speak English as their first language.

Garden Village Playgroup receives support from the local authority Early Education Team and is a member of Wales Pre-school Providers Association. The setting is used by the local authority to provide examples of good practice.

The setting is open during term time every morning and three afternoons each week and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 30 children who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in November 2013 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is excellent because:

- children make exceptional progress from their starting points;
- teaching is excellent;
- care, support and guidance are excellent;
- learning experiences are highly challenging, varied and interesting; and
- the playgroup makes excellent use of the community to extend the learning of the children.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- there is highly effective leadership, making this an exemplar setting;
- self-reflection is outstanding;
- partnership working and transition with the school is excellent and sector leading;
- practitioners work superbly well as a team anticipating the needs of each other; and
- the setting has made outstanding progress since the last inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Further extend planning to enable the children to initiate topics of interest.

R2. Utilise planned learning outcomes more effectively by recording these when observing the children.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to 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?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

All children attain excellent standards and make exceptional progress from their starting points towards the Foundation Phase outcomes in all areas of learning. All children make choices about their learning and as a result stay on task superbly well. Without exception children are highly successful in concentrating and persevering with activities such as their bird watch and all are constantly engaged and always working at full capacity.

Nearly all children develop excellent skills in communication, numeracy and information communication technology needed to access the wider curriculum. Nearly all children express their feelings and are highly confident when speaking to adults in the setting. They share their exciting ideas and talk about what they are doing. Nearly all can understand and carry out complex instructions highly effectively, for example when following daily cryptic clues to find a teddy bear hidden in the room. All children show great interest in books and stories both fiction and non fiction and follow the content very enthusiastically. All mark make highly successfully and understand the functions of writing with a few starting to form letters.

Without exception children are highly efficient learners who use a range of materials to solve problems and use mathematical language in an appropriate and relevant context. They count their friends and can recognise and re-create patterns highly effectively in their play. Nearly all understand the basic principles of adding one more and taking one away through action rhymes and songs. Without exception they understand the passage of time by using an egg timer as they brush their teeth.

Nearly all are extremely successful, independent children who use a variety of technology well as part of their play. They control battery operated toys effectively and they use a microphone, cameras and recorders with great confidence, using buttons and switches highly effectively to activate equipment and successfully develop skills in information communication technology.

Nearly all children use simple Welsh words and phrases highly effectively, for example they take turns to talk about the weather using a microphone. Nearly all understand instructions and know an impressive range of words. All join in very enthusiastically with songs and stories that effectively develop their Welsh vocabulary. The setting promotes the Welsh language exceptionally well and as a result nearly all make excellent progress.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Without exception children are happy and feel safe in the setting. Children are highly confident in their play and are involved in making decisions about their learning and choices in the playgroup. All children settle well and quickly to the activities and are

highly keen to engage in and finish tasks and without exception children have positive attitudes to learning and show a good interest in their work.

Nearly all show high levels of self-esteem and are highly motivated and engaged in their activities. All concentrate well and take part enthusiastically in different learning experiences such as the weekly, world food day and growing rhubarb to sell.

Without exception children demonstrate outstanding behaviour and have highly successful relationships with each other and adults around them. They help their friends, for example when tidying away equipment or working in the garden. Nearly all are kind and considerate and all are courteous towards each other and readily share and take turns with equipment and resources. They all enjoy learning through play and are extremely interested in the activities. They sustain high levels of concentration and perseverance and their time spent in the playgroup results in highly competent and independent learners.

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

Practitioners plan together an outstanding range of interesting learning experiences that interest and provide a challenge for the children and successfully take into account their differing learning needs and ideas, however there are insufficient opportunities to enable the children to initiate topics of interest. Indoors and outdoors are used to develop skills highly effectively and without exception children make excellent progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. The curriculum builds highly effectively on children's existing knowledge and understanding.

Excellent organisation ensures children learn successfully. The superb range of activities develops respect and tolerance for people from all cultural backgrounds including a weekly world food day where children have opportunities to try different foods at snack time. Activities are focussed well and the children have excellent opportunities to try things for themselves and problem solve, for example placing a plank across the raised beds to transport soil in a wheelbarrow. As a result children acquire very good thinking skills across all areas of learning. Children learn highly successfully about caring for living things through a range of different activities, for example bird watching, hunting for and observing mini beasts in their log circle, the Grow with Me project and they also watch tadpoles grow and change into frogs in their pond.

Skills in literacy and numeracy are embedded highly successfully into the outstanding experiences of the children and develop effectively through a consistently good range of activities.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills by sharing books including those written in Welsh and by story telling. There are excellent opportunities for the children to mark make and to recognise their names, for example when they self-register with

their parents. An exceptionally high value is placed on children's mark making with different materials in most of the areas of learning.

All practitioners use an exceptionally good level and frequency of Welsh and they encourage the children highly effectively both during circle time and throughout the session. As a result the children are extremely confident and very keen to respond. They celebrate traditions and festivals such as the St David's Day Parade in the town centre organised by the local authority and those of other cultures including Chinese New Year.

Teaching: Excellent

There are very high expectations of the children and without exception practitioners are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to let them discover independently. They introduce new ideas or problems to solve and they are aware of what to do to encourage them to improve. All are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the children's achievements no matter how small.

Practitioners have exceptional knowledge of child development and of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. An outstanding range of activities and learning experiences both indoor and outdoor provides highly effective challenge and through good relationships and humour, practitioners enable the children to learn very quickly. Practitioners make superb creative and imaginative use of resources to keep the children's interest and focus on task, for example turning a tent into a bird watching hide.

All practitioners know the children well and as a result there are high expectations. Without exception practitioners including volunteers are outstandingly well briefed and deployed to extend children's play successfully using an effective range of teaching strategies that promote independent learning and provide challenge. Adult support is well focused and makes a highly significant contribution to the quality of the children's learning.

All practitioners use an excellent level of Welsh with the children and successfully encourage the children to listen and respond. Circle times are used highly effectively to share stories, re-cap on the session and listen to the views of others. All practitioners understand how children learn and are very clear about the development opportunities and expected outcomes from each activity although these are not always recorded during observations of the children. Questioning techniques are outstanding in extending the learning and achievements of the children and as a result they develop skills well above expectation.

The organisation of the children during the session is outstanding because they are part of a colour group with a key member of staff. This means, for example at snack time children are allocated to a particular table and as a result they settle very quickly and practitioners sitting with them use this time highly effectively for learning with a small group. Wellington boots are stored in coloured tubs enabling children to find and replace their boots very efficiently.

All practitioners constantly review and evaluate their practice and the progress of the children during the session. This is highly effective and as a result they are able to continually adapt an activity to extend individual achievement or provide a different level of skill or way of working to successfully meet the developing needs of the children. Parents are involved extensively in the achievements of their children and they are superbly aware of their progress by taking a turn on rota duty, speaking to one of the practitioners or looking at their child's assessment records and as a result know what to do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The playgroup provides an excellent level of care, support and guidance for the children, because practitioners know the children well they respond highly effectively to all their needs and as a result children feel secure and learn superbly well. Challenging and outstanding learning experiences ensure that all children actively learn about sharing and taking turns, for example when using the binoculars to watch the birds from their hide. The children know how to distinguish right from wrong very successfully and the playgroup fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect and develops a highly effective understanding of living with others.

They all have an awareness of how they can stay healthy by eating a nutritious snack, sometimes of the fruit and vegetables they have grown in their garden and by wearing coats to keep warm and their waterproof clothes and wellingtons to stay dry. They all understand they need to brush their teeth to keep them clean.

There are excellent transition arrangements to move on to school and the playgroup has a range of policies and procedures that highly effectively support the children and promote successfully their health and wellbeing including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and the practitioners have undertaken training and as a result the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Children have good opportunities to contribute to their learning with ideas and decisions. They are highly confident learners who show high levels of initiative and help each other by working effectively together, for example when tidying up or when being Helpwr Heddiw.

The children are involved in caring for their environment and have a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by tasting and celebrating foods of the world, by visitors to the playgroup, growing fruit, flowers and vegetables in their garden and observing bird life and also by watching their tadpoles change into frogs. They are extensively involved in re-cycling including through their model making, for example the turtle made from crushed cans, winning first prize at the Llangollen Garden Show and a life-sized igloo constructed from milk cartons.

The playgroup draws upon external professional expertise effectively and practitioners employ highly positive behaviour strategies providing excellent explanations and high levels of praise that encourage the children. Without

exception practitioners provide consistency and an excellent level of individual support to assist children with additional learning needs and work superbly well with parents. As a result all children achieve beyond expectation and their families are well guided, supported and there are highly effective links with their homes.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup has effectively developed a well established ethos that is inclusive and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. The setting actively develops tolerant attitudes through an excellent range of different learning experiences and good day-to-day practice. Equal access to the curriculum is offered and there is an effective range of policies and procedures that actively supports the children, and promotes their health and wellbeing.

The practitioners have exceptional knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase requirements. They create a rich, stimulating learning environment indoors and out making effective use of space and know what they need to do to help the children to succeed. They have relevant qualifications and experience of working with children.

Resources are extensive, of high quality, used exceptionally creatively and well matched to the needs of all the children. They are easily accessible for children to become highly independent learners, appropriate and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and successfully support the learning of all the children.

All children are kept safe and the accommodation is used effectively, secure and well maintained to support the learning of the children. Indoors and outdoors are used highly effectively to develop play and learning and the community and playgroup garden are used superbly well to enhance the facilities at the setting and enrich the learning experiences of the children.

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

High quality leadership contributes very significantly to the wellbeing and outstanding levels of progress and achievements of the children.

Leaders are kept well informed and as a result the children have continuity of care and settle quickly and learn superbly well in the playgroup. Learning and teaching are to a high standard and exceptionally well managed and as a result the playgroup is used as an exemplar for other groups because local authority highly values the experience and quality of provision.

The committee supports the playgroup very effectively and leaders respond exceptionally quickly to any advice and guidance and ensure that any changes impact positively on the provision. As a result practitioners and children are highly valued enthusiastic and well motivated. An exceptionally strong culture of self-

reflection develops the setting and leads to very successful improvements in practice. Leaders set challenging targets and relevant legislation, guidance and national and local priorities are taken into account and used to effectively improve the wellbeing of the children, for example healthy eating, Designed to Smile and Grow with Me.

There are well established and highly successful links with parents that support consistently the learning of the children, for example the book lending scheme and self-registration.

Practitioners are exceptionally well deployed and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There is a positive ethos with high expectations for all the children and as a result they achieve and make good progress in the Foundation Phase. There are highly effective relationships with children and their families. The playgroup is managed to an excellent standard and values, aims and objectives are effectively shared through day-to-day working practice and there is a positive ethos, clear direction and sense of purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement.

Improving quality: Excellent

The setting has made outstanding progress since their previous Estyn inspection as a result of highly effective planning. All practitioners are involved in self-evaluation that effectively identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Information is used highly successfully to prioritise and practitioners are able to show successful changes in their work practice, improvements in standards and progress of the children. Practitioners, parents, the registered persons and local authority teacher are able to evidence how the provision and achievement have been improved by the use of the community and the exceptional opportunities created by the outdoor space to improve learning outcomes and the wellbeing of the children.

All changes and developments in the group have the children highly effectively at the centre of the provision and without exception practitioners constantly review their practice and support each other, often anticipating need. They make highly successful adaptations to the activities and resources and as a result this ensures flexibility and any improvements are used highly effectively to develop the provision.

There is a positive culture of self-reflection and practitioners are open to new ideas and try different ways of working. All practitioners are engaged in professional development, however they not only actively share their expertise and knowledge to benefit each other but also practitioners in other groups and they contribute highly effectively to local authority training. As a result they effectively raise standards and highly successfully support the learning of the children not only in their setting but also in others.

Partnership working: Excellent

The playgroup works highly effectively with partners for the benefit of the children and an exceptional range of partnerships within the local community and the school makes an outstandingly strong contribution to the progress of the children and their wellbeing and successfully enhances and supports their learning.

There is clear communication between parents and the playgroup through news letters and fundraising together and feedback is encouraged to ensure consistently good links between home and playgroup are maintained. There is a high level of information about the setting displayed outside the main playgroup room and by coming in to the group and being involved in their child's self-registration they successfully support learning. Parents are also very well informed of their child's progress by taking a turn on the rota, by speaking to the practitioners and by an on going assessment record. Photographs provide excellent evidence to show the children's learning in the playgroup.

There is a highly successful relationship with the local community that ensures highly effective learning opportunities for the children. There is a superb partnership with the local authority advisory teacher who visits the setting, providing guidance, which impacts positively on the achievements of the children and enhances the work of the setting. Any suggestions are very quickly acted upon and impact positively on the progress and achievements of the children.

There is an outstanding partnership with the local school with excellent transition arrangements including a transition strategy, one of which involves practitioners from the playgroup being in school with the children during their first week. Activities such as the St David's Day Parade with school organised by the local authority further strengthen their relationship. Partnerships within the local community such as the visits from the vicar to tell stories and the opportunity to try drinking from a chalice effectively add another dimension to the children's learning and deliver outstanding learning experiences.

The setting has an effective partnership with other professionals to ensure an excellent level of support for any children with additional learning needs. Practitioners work highly successfully together as a team and effectively share information for the benefit of all the children. The playgroup is an active member of the Wales Pre-school Providers Association and partnership working ensures support for children.

As an exemplar setting the practitioners share their excellent practice with colleagues and as a result, improvements have been made in other settings and standards raised.

Resource management: Good

The playgroup has the sole use of a large room and a smaller room used for story, focussed tasks and snack and where parents have a substantial amount of information about the group. Practitioners set out the areas consistently well every

day for the children's play and learning. All children are very confident learners who are keen to develop their play by accessing resources independently.

The playgroup is exceptionally well resourced and managed to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum highly successfully. Creative resourcing encourages all the children to learn effectively. The setting makes exceptional use of their garden, the community and visitors to support the children and enable them to learn successfully and to develop different skills.

All practitioners are well prepared before the start of the session and then well deployed. They move effectively round the areas of learning to successfully develop ideas and encourage the children and create a happy, safe and stimulating environment both indoors and out.

Self-evaluation links effectively to resource needs and equipment purchases are prioritised well and successfully take into account the developing needs of the children. Leaders have a good understanding of budget matters and this means that future resource needs are well planned for and any extra resources and equipment benefit the children and improve standards.

The funding that is received is used highly effectively, links successfully to improvements and this means that the setting provides excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	16	13 81%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	17%	1%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	16	11 69%	5 31%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		70%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	17%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	16	14 88%	2 12%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	14%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	15	12 80%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed	16	12	4	0	0	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
about my child's progress.		75%	25%	0%	0%		gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	16	14 88%	2 12%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	16	13 81%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	0%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	16	12 75%	4 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	16	13 81%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	16%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Anne Elizabeth Manning	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)

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>

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 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.