



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

**Llanfyllin Playgroup
Youth and Community Centre
High Street
Llanfyllin
Powys
SY22 5AA**

Date of inspection: April 2013

by

Mary Dyas

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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About the setting

Llanfyllin Playgroup is situated in Llanfyllin, Powys and was first opened over thirty five years ago. The playgroup is a registered charity run by a committee of parents of past and present playgroup children and organised co-operatively by three playleaders who are also the registered persons. The playgroup is open for three morning sessions a week and for thirty-eight weeks a year and takes children from the age of two until they move into the school nursery class, which they are eligible to do from the term before their fourth birthday. Ten three-year-olds and one four-year-old are registered at the playgroup and all are in receipt of funded educational provision. A minority of children also attend the Cylch Meithrin which meets in the same hall on different days.

Llanfyllin Pre-school Playgroup is based on the ground floor Club Room of the Youth and Community Centre, which is in close proximity to the local primary and high schools. The indoor accommodation consists of one large and comfortable room. The playgroup has direct access to an outdoor area is at the rear of the building which is well used as an extension of the indoor room. The setting also has access to an area of land which they are developing for Forest School and environmental activities. The playgroup shares all its accommodation with other organisations which means that equipment has to be put out and packed away for every session. Although the majority of three-year-old children who attend the playgroup speak English as their first language, a minority have Polish as their main home language. The majority of children who attend the playgroup live in Llanfyllin and come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. There is no social deprivation in the area served by the Playgroup.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2012 and by Estyn in June 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- The setting provides an extensive range of interesting and exciting activities that stimulate and engage the children's interest;
- All children make good progress in relation to their starting points;
- The setting provides a warm and caring environment where all children feel safe and valued; and
- Relationships between adults and children are very positive and support children well in their learning.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting leaders are highly committed to providing the best they can for the children in their care;
- There is a history of informal self-evaluation leading to improvements in provision of children's learning; and
- Self-evaluation processes have been put in place and good progress is being made towards meeting the current targets for improvement.

Recommendations

R1. Further develop the good provision of the Welsh language to support children in using independently the words and phrases they have learned

R2. Provide opportunities to inform parents and carers of how they can help their children to improve

R3. Build on the self-evaluation and targeting of areas for improvement to establish a cycle of review and evaluation

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?

Good

Standards: Good

All children achieve well in relation to their starting point and make good progress in all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. Many speak in full sentences. Most understand and follow instructions accurately, answer questions appropriately and speak to one another while at play. Most children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes and listen attentively to stories, showing their interest and understanding through relevant comments and questions. After shaking a treasure box most successfully make a sensible suggestion as to what object related to their story might be inside.

All children make good progress with mark making and they experiment confidently with a range of instruments when doing this. Most children use mathematical language correctly when comparing length, height or the size of things and most count objects accurately to at least five. All children develop good physical skills and many concentrate for extended periods. They are developing good ICT skills through regular use of the setting's camera and many show good skills in directing a programmable toy through a map.

All children answer the register in Welsh and understand more than they speak. Nearly all achieve good standards for their stage of development.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are very happy in the playgroup and enjoy their experiences. The warm relationships they have with their practitioners enable them to feel safe, happy and confident and they return the affection and respect they receive from them. Many have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and know that good food and exercise are important to make them healthy. They know that their heart beats faster after they have taken exercise.

All children develop a positive attitude towards learning which they demonstrate by taking an active and enthusiastic part in their learning experiences. They are all growing in independence and self confidence and most are able to put on and take off their coats when going outside. At snack time they successfully spread butter or cheese on their toast or crackers and pour their own drinks. All children behave well during the sessions. They know the routines well and anticipate what is going to happen next. Nearly all are aware of the needs and feelings of other children and adults and show concern for them. They make friendships in the setting and they are clearly very fond of one another. Many children contribute towards planning their activities when they make suggestions about activities they would like to try. For example when planning the current topic they suggested their favourite nursery rhymes.

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

The playleaders work closely together to plan the topics and activities for each half term. Planning is firmly based on the Foundation Phase learning outcomes and regularly responds to the immediate interests of the children. A good range of learning experiences is planned and overall there is good provision for the development of children's literacy, mathematical knowledge and skills in ICT. The playleaders make good use of the local community to enhance the children's learning and, amongst others, the children have welcomed the fire service, road safety officers and a pony which they were able to pat and groom. Visits are made out into the community to post letters, to visit a cafe and to the local library which shares the building.

Through their daily play together, all children develop strong relationships with one another and with the adults who care for them and demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other.

Children celebrate the Welsh culture in a range of ways when they celebrate St David's Day and are increasing their understanding of other peoples when they enjoy celebrating other festivals such as Divali and Chinese New Year. Provision for Welsh is good. It is well used by adults throughout the session and children are consistently encouraged to use the words and phrases they have learned. There are not enough opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and are very experienced in working with young children. They have a good understanding of children's development and provide a good range of activities for the level of development of individual children. There is a good mix of planned activities and opportunities for children to choose their own activities.

Extension activities are suggested in the planning for more able children and all practitioners also make use of their knowledge of individual children to adapt their questioning to their level of knowledge and understanding. They make good use of questioning to enable and encourage children to think and to make decisions for themselves.

Informal links with parents and carers are strong and there are good opportunities for the exchange of information when they bring and collect their children. Practitioners make both incidental and planned observations of children's progress which inform individual learning records. At the end of the year parents receive a summary report taken from this information.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The care, support and guidance of the children in the playgroup is a strength. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children and staff provide good role models which encourage children to treat one another with kindness and respect. Transition into the group is sensitively managed according to the needs of each child. The provision made for children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good

Although no children have currently been identified with additional learning needs, policies and procedures ensure that all will have full access to all activities. The playleader with responsibility for children with additional needs liaises with outside agencies and the Local Authority to plan for children's individual needs whenever necessary. Practitioners are aware of the need to support more able children.

Procedures to ensure the setting is safe and secure are good. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. The chair of the management committee is listed as the designated person and all practitioners have received recent training and are aware of their responsibilities. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff are robust and adhered to and there are good procedures for managing children's arrival at and leaving the setting. Good use is made of the local community and visitors to the setting to enhance the children's experiences of the world around them.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup presents an attractive and welcoming environment. The large room has displays of children's work which are relevant to the current topic and all children have access to all areas of provision. The setting is well resourced and children have access to a range of purchased and natural resources to explore and investigate. Use of the securely fenced outdoor area is good and children are able to access a full range of provision both indoors and outdoors.

The playgroup has developed a friendly ethos where all children are warmly welcomed and are free to play in a safe and supportive environment. The setting would be accessible to children with physical disabilities and good support is provided for children whose first language is not English.

There are sufficient trained practitioners with an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase to ensure all children's needs are met. All practitioners are keen to improve their own knowledge and attend regular training. Good resources are available and these are used imaginatively to develop the children's skills and understanding.

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

Leadership: Good

The playleaders have created a setting with a very positive ethos where children are welcomed and are very much at the centre of planning and organisation. The playgroup has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented well by all practitioners. Supervisors respond well to advice and support, ensuring that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

A management committee comprising parents of children attending the setting provides support including fund raising and policy review. Procedures for performance management and staff appraisal are in place and provide good opportunities for individual staff members to identify their training needs.

The three playleaders have a good understanding of their roles and work together effectively to successfully deliver the Foundation Phase. They respond well to local and national priorities and are involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation in the setting is developing and practitioners know their setting well. The setting has a history of informal self-evaluation seeking to improve provision and is now developing a more formal system of self review. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a realistic one which identifies many of the setting's strengths and a start has been made on meeting the targets in the action plan. The views of parents have been sought as part of the annual review of provision and leaders are looking to develop this to provide more effective information to support their self-evaluation process.

Practitioners know their strengths and have established routines which take advantage of personal strengths, interests and abilities. One of the playleaders has good links with another registered provider in the area and both settings have benefitted from sharing resources and ideas.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners have very good relationships with parents and carers. Weekly planning is displayed on the notice board to keep them informed of the activities that are planned for their children. Parents who come to help in the setting on a rota have the opportunity to see their child 's progress at first hand and to speak to the staff about their child. Parents speak highly of the work of the setting.

Almost all children move on to the local primary school and the playgroup has developed good links. Children in the playgroup visit the nursery class termly and parents of children who are due to move on to the nursery usually attend this to meet the teacher and see the classroom. The local authority link teacher works effectively in the setting and practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance.

Resource management: Good

The playgroup has sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners and ensures that they are deployed appropriately to make the best use of their experience and expertise. The available space indoors and outdoors is well used to provide a wide range of interesting activities to encourage children to investigate and develop their skills. Resources are well used to support planned activities and a recently awarded grant has enabled practitioners to consider replacing some older items in addition to acquiring new equipment.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to manage and audit the budget and playleaders are able to buy day to day items with any larger spending considered by the committee. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received (fewer than 10).

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they enjoy coming to the playgroup. They particularly enjoy the stories that are read to them and guessing what item related to the day's story is in the treasure box. Children are happy and relaxed in the setting, many have made friends and all play together happily.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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 Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working 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.