



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

**Penmorfa Playmates
Ysgol Penmorfa
Dawson Drive
Prestatyn
Denbighshire
LL19 8AS**

Date of inspection: March 2012

by

Mr W Williams

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

Penmorfa Playmates is part of the Denbighshire Children and Young People's Partnership provision and provides pre-school education for children in Prestatyn and the surrounding locality. The area from which most of the children are drawn is judged as being neither prosperous nor socially or economically disadvantaged.

Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, no children with additional learning needs or from ethnic groups were registered at the setting.

The setting provides five morning and five afternoon sessions per week for two to four year old children, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. During the inspection, places for three children were funded by the Partnership.

English is the main language spoken at home for nearly all children. There is a very small number of children for whom English is an additional language. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is English.

Children's education is supported by a leader and four practitioners all of whom are appropriately qualified to teach early years children. During the inspection, the setting was led by a new assistant manager.

The setting meets in a building which is located in the grounds of Ysgol Penmorfa. Accommodation includes an extensive main room, toilets, a kitchen and storerooms and has its own designated outdoor area. The premises are also used by the school breakfast and afterschool clubs.

All children continue their education in Ysgol Penmorfa when they have completed their time in the setting

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in February 2012. This is its first Estyn inspection

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:

- interesting and stimulating activities enable children to make good progress in learning;
- planning for the development of literacy and communication skills is good;
- stimulating learning experiences are provided across all areas of learning;
- children's health and wellbeing are promoted effectively; and
- all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a sense of purpose to the setting's work;
- self-evaluation has brought about improvements in provision and standards;
- the setting is developing well as a learning community;
- practitioners are willing to try out different ways of working; and
- partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 improve provision for Welsh language development;
- R2 make better use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning;
- R3 further develop its self-evaluation procedures; and
- R4 continue to forge closer links with the primary school..

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and welfare. 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 collaborate closely to plan flexible and responsive activities that enable children to make good progress towards meeting Foundation Phase outcomes. Interesting and stimulating activities engage the interest of all children enabling them to make good progress according to their age and ability. Through careful planning, practitioners ensure that the curriculum builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills and provides progression and continuity in learning. Children are encouraged to form positive relationships with others in the setting and to become confident explorers of their environment. The setting provides good opportunities both indoors and outdoors, for children to explore their local environment and to become independent learners.

Practitioners plan the development of children's communication, numeracy, information and communications technology and thinking skills well. The setting encourages children to communicate their feelings and ideas as individuals and in groups, to listen attentively to others and to participate in role play and other forms of imaginative play. Practitioners introduce the children to a range of reading and information books and encourage them to share a book with other children or adults. There are good opportunities for children to experiment with mark-making and to understand the different functions of writing.

Although practitioners occasionally encourage children to use the Welsh language in their learning, this provision is not coherent and sufficiently well-planned to ensure progress in children's understanding and learning. There are appropriate opportunities to promote children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales.

The practitioners ensure that children are actively involved in the setting's aim to act sustainably through minimising waste, saving energy and recycling paper. They promote their understanding of the wider world effectively.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have appropriate expectations for every child, including those of lower ability. They provide stimulating learning experiences across all areas of learning and use a good range of teaching strategies which ensure the engagement and interest of children. Practitioners plan carefully to ensure there is an appropriate balance between child-selected and practitioner-led activities. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and they do so sensitively and skilfully to encourage children to challenge themselves as they learn. Adults make imaginative use of a variety of resources to appeal to children's interest and improve learning. Adult support is clearly focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning.

Although children's progress and learning are assessed regularly across most areas of learning, practitioners do not use this information purposefully to plan the next steps in their learning. Parents are generally kept well informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing effectively and has appropriate policies and practices which ensure these aspects are firmly embedded in its daily routines. Practitioners encourage children to eat healthily during snack times and to partake in daily physical exercise. Effective induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. Practitioners help children to manage their feelings, develop self-awareness and self-respect. Visits to the wildlife area help children to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live. The fostering of values such as honesty and respect for truth helps children to distinguish between right and wrong. Practitioners encourage children to show initiative, to understand simple rules of behaviour and to take some responsibility for their own actions.

When the need arises, practitioners know how to access professional support and advice from the adjacent primary school and also from the local authority, the social services and other specialist agencies.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

There are effective arrangements for the early identification of children who may have additional learning needs. Practitioners conduct regular reviews of children's progress and ensure that the setting offers children with additional learning needs full access to all areas of learning.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on

developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of learning experiences and to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual. Resources in the local environment support learning in the classroom well.

The buildings and accommodation are of good quality and are used extensively. The designated area for outdoor learning is used purposefully to enhance the children's educational experiences.

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

In a comparatively short period, the assistant manager has developed a clear sense of purpose to the setting's work and, in collaboration with other practitioners, has succeeded in creating an ethos that promotes and sustains improvements. The setting has clear aims and policies that are focused on children's needs and are understood and implemented by all practitioners. The setting manages learning and teaching well, and expectations for children's achievements and the quality of provision are high. There are shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships which ensure common working practices and consistency in teaching and learning. All practitioners have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities during teaching and learning sessions. Relationships with children, parents and the primary school are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community.

The management committee is well informed about the setting's performance and fulfils its responsibilities diligently. It supports the setting as a critical friend and is influential in maintaining high standards and in setting priorities. However, there are no clear procedures for sharing the outcomes of self-evaluation with committee members.

Procedures for monitoring and appraising staff performance and identifying individual and whole-setting training and developmental needs are thorough and appropriate. They have a very positive impact on the setting's development and on identifying practitioners' training needs.

The assistant manager ensures that the setting delivers the Foundation Phase and other national priorities successfully.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's self-evaluation is continuous and effective and identifies the setting's strengths and areas for development. Leaders set targets and strategies for improvement for each term and the assistant manager ensures that they are implemented diligently. This practice results in positive gains for children. Secure procedures maintain good practice and implement change in areas that require

improvement. Good quality continuous professional development supports practitioners significantly. Self-evaluation takes careful account of the views of parents. Practitioners have benefitted substantially from the professional advice of the local authority support teacher. Recent developments indicate clearly that provision and standards of children's achievement and wellbeing have improved as a result of self-evaluation. However, targets for improvement tend to focus too narrowly on short-term priorities and do not plan sufficiently for the setting's long term needs.

The setting is developing well as a learning community. There is a growing culture of co-operation and practitioners are very open to advice and new ideas. They share information and good practice with each other and are willing to try out different ways of working.

Partnership working: Good

A range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work with the leader taking advantage of every opportunity to include them in their children's learning. There is an increasingly productive partnership with Ysgol Penmorfa, with the setting benefitting from the school's willingness to provide advice and to share good practice. However, these are recent innovations and are presently in their early stages of development.

Good links have been formed with a number of organisations in the local community. Regular visits, reports and professional advice by the local authority support teacher have a very positive impact on the setting's development. Practitioners work very well together, share information about children and know whom to contact and when, if additional support is required for children.

Resource management: Good

The setting is well staffed to teach all aspects of the curriculum and deploys members of staff effectively to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. Resources are also managed well.

The assistant supervisor and the management committee have a thorough understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. They evaluate financial decisions carefully to make sure that they have a positive effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say that they are happy in the setting and are confident that they can turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Wil Williams	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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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.

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.