



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Guilfield Pre-School Play group  
Guilfield  
Nr. Welshpool  
Powys  
SY21 9ND**

**Date of inspection: February 2016**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

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

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Guilsfield Playgroup is an English-medium setting near Welshpool in Powys. It is located in the community centre, which is in close proximity to the local primary school. The setting opens for four mornings per week and currently employs three practitioners. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 20 children and admits children from the age of two. At the time of the inspection, 11 children attended, eight of whom are aged three and funded by the local authority.

Nearly all children speak English as their first language and no children are from Welsh speaking homes. The setting has not identified any children as having additional learning needs.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in January 2015 and Estyn in December 2010.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Nearly all children make good progress from their differing starting points
- Nearly all children listen attentively and many talk enthusiastically about their activities to each other and adults
- Most children respond positively to opportunities to develop early writing skills
- Many children are developing their thinking skills appropriately
- Practitioners work together well as a team to provide a successful range of stimulating activities that engage children well
- Practitioners are good language role models for children and use effective questioning to develop their thinking skills
- Clear daily routines ensure that children settle quickly and confidently into the setting and this contributes significantly to children's social development and feeling of wellbeing
- The setting is a warm and inclusive community, where all children have equal access to activities and are valued highly

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The play leader provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing, caring environment where children are happy and eager to learn
- All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities and work together effectively with a clear sense of purpose to fulfil the aims of the setting
- Planning for improvement is a regular part of the setting's working life
- The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives, especially the development of outdoor learning to support children's numeracy and literacy skills.
- The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships, which support children's learning well and impact positively on enriching their learning experiences
- The setting makes effective use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision for the development of children's information and communication technology skills
- R2 Take better account of timescales and costs and develop systems to measure the impact of actions on children's outcomes more fully when planning for improvement

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Nearly all children make good progress from their differing starting points. Most explore their surroundings confidently and try out new experiences enthusiastically. Most children's literacy and communication skills are developing well. Nearly all children listen attentively and many talk in detail about their activities to each other and adults. Nearly all children enjoy listening to stories and recite familiar songs and rhymes with confidence, in both English and in Welsh. Many children show an appropriate interest in books. They handle them as readers and show an increasing awareness that the text and pictures tell the story.

Most children respond positively to opportunities to develop early writing skills, using a variety of mark-making equipment successfully both indoors and outdoors. For example, many demonstrate well-developed fine motor skills when writing orders for Chinese takeaway in the role-play area or making patterns in wet sand outdoors. These activities support their understanding of early letter formation well.

Most children are developing sound early numeracy skills. They are beginning to use appropriate mathematical terms when sorting, comparing objects and exploring shape and capacity, for example when talking about how long a model of a dragon is and how tall a brick tower is. Most children count to ten by rote correctly and a few children who are more able recognise and sequence numbers forwards and backwards accurately.

Most children develop physical skills well. They use large tweezers to pick up objects from the sand and use tongs to pick up noodles in the Chinese takeaway role play area with increasing control. They make effective use of outdoor equipment to develop gross motor skills, such as pedalling bikes and throwing and kicking balls.

A few children use a toy mobile phone purposefully to take orders, a toy laptop to record the orders and a cash register to take payments in the Chinese takeaway role-play area. However, children's competence in using a range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is less well developed.

Children's Welsh language skills are good. Many children respond enthusiastically to the words and phrases used during everyday routines. They recite familiar rhymes and songs eagerly, and are beginning to use Welsh spontaneously in their play. For example, most children understand and use the Welsh words they have learned for greetings, the weather and numbers.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and settle quickly. They are confident in their surroundings and access equipment independently. Nearly all co-operate well and enjoy playing together. Most children are courteous and considerate to others. For example, they share resources happily for the Chinese takeaway.

Most children are enthusiastic about new experiences and are eager to participate in activities. For example, they engage well with a problem solving activity when deciding which size ball to throw or kick through the dragon's mouth. Children know that they will be listened to and their ideas acted upon. For example, many make suggestions about what they would like to do when planning new themes and are confident their ideas will be taken account of.

In the outdoor area, nearly all children co-operate appropriately, taking turns to be the king, princess or knight in the castle playhouse. Nearly all children follow the setting's routines confidently and many show perseverance and determination to complete tasks, for example when completing a creative task involving the making of lucky Chinese letters.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners work together well as a team to provide a successful range of stimulating activities that engage children well. Planning is thorough and covers all areas of the Foundation Phase curriculum appropriately. It is also flexible, which enables practitioners to respond to the changing interests of young children successfully. Recent changes in planning have ensured that there is a strong emphasis on the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills both indoors and outdoors. As a result, most children's have good literacy and numeracy skills. Practitioners provide children with a variety of mark-making activities that develop their writing skills effectively and encourage children to be independent in their learning.

Practitioners encourage children in the use of a few programmable toys. However, a lack in variety of ICT resources means that children do not have the opportunity to development their ICT skills well enough across all areas of learning.

Practitioners use the Welsh language well as part of daily routines and have effective strategies to develop children's use and understanding of Welsh. The setting promotes children's understanding of Welsh culture and heritage successfully, for example through celebrating St. David's Day and the use of a shadow puppet theatre to retell the story of the Welsh dragon.

The setting makes beneficial use of the locality to support children's understanding of the world around them and a variety of visitors develops children's understanding of the world of work appropriately.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and provide interesting learning experiences across all the areas of learning. Practitioners plan a good balance of child-selected and practitioner-led activities, both indoors and outdoors. The appropriate pace of sessions means that children are actively engaged in their learning. Clear daily routines and effective teamwork provide a consistency of approach and enable nearly all children to know what to expect and to feel happy and safe. Practitioners use positive encouragement regularly with children to support their learning.

There are very positive working relationships between all practitioners and children. As a result, children are confident learners and learn by their mistakes. All practitioners intervene appropriately in play situations to move children's learning forward, often through the effective use of questioning and ongoing praise to reinforce children's understanding. All practitioners are good language role models, in English and Welsh. This contributes to the good standards of children's oracy skills seen and enhances children's vocabulary effectively.

Practitioners know the children very well and plan effectively to meet their individual needs. Regular observational assessments of individuals and groups of children enable practitioners to identify children's next steps in learning clearly. These assessments inform future planning successfully. The setting keeps parents and carers well informed about their children's progress.

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

The setting promotes children's awareness of healthy living suitably and has appropriate policies and practices for ensuring their emotional and physical wellbeing. For example, regular use of the outdoors encourages children to develop their physical skills using wheeled toys and by throwing and kicking balls. These activities also effectively promote children's understanding of sharing and working co-operatively.

Clear daily routines ensure that children settle quickly and confidently into the setting and this contributes significantly to children's social development and feeling of wellbeing. Children understand the importance of washing their hands, for example before eating snacks or after playing outside in the mud kitchen. This helps them to become responsible for their personal hygiene.

A suitable range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development effectively. They encourage children to develop a suitable sense of awe and wonder through daily outdoor learning opportunities where children observe wildlife around the setting. Practitioners encourage children to form positive relationships and to develop a sense of respect and tolerance towards others. This is evident in the high standards of good behaviour and turn taking seen. Practitioners help children to manage their feelings and to develop self-awareness and self-respect well.

There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling. For example, the setting recycles food waste into the compost bin and then uses this to plant flowers and vegetables.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. The setting currently has no children with additional learning needs. It has, however, clear procedures to support children with additional learning needs and an effective network of contacts with external agencies in order to provide extra support and advice, should the need arise.



## **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is a warm and inclusive community, where all children have equal access to activities and are valued highly. Children feel confident and enjoy talking to each other, staff and visitors.

There is a sufficient range of appropriate resources across most areas of learning and practitioners ensure that they match children's needs closely. Practitioners make very effective use of the available space and ensure that labelling on displays and storage boxes is bilingual. There are useful and engaging resources to promote children's early word and number recognition.

There are clearly designated learning areas and this enables children to access resources easily and fosters their independence well. Practitioners create a bright and stimulating environment for learning despite the limitations of the available space and the need to set out and put away all equipment daily. The setting's small outdoor area is safe and secure and practitioners use it well to provide a wealth of interesting experiences across the curriculum.

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

The play leader provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing, caring environment where children are happy and eager to learn. All practitioners share this vision, feel valued and have high expectations of themselves and others. This has a positive impact on children's attitudes and behaviour and their willingness to try new things.

All practitioners have clear and up-to-date job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities. They work together effectively with a clear sense of purpose to fulfil the aims of the setting. The play leader challenges practitioners appropriately to ensure good quality learning experiences for children both indoors and outdoors. There are sound processes to manage the performance of staff, which focus appropriately on raising outcomes for children, for example the development of the outdoor area to successfully promote children's early mark making and oracy skills. These targets link with staff development and training needs appropriately.

Practitioners make beneficial use of regular meetings to discuss children's achievements and to develop planning. The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives, especially the development of outdoor learning to support children's numeracy and literacy skills.

## **Improving quality: Good**

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well and all practitioners demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement. They strive hard to find ways to make learning experiences exciting and motivating for children and to make sure that they are happy and eager to learn. As a result, planning for improvement is a regular part of the setting's working life. A

helpful evaluation of last year's improvement plan shows that the process leads to worthwhile improvements. For example, the setting has successfully improved children's Welsh language skills and enjoyment and enthusiasm for using Welsh as part of their everyday routines.

Leaders use information from a range of sources well to write an honest self-evaluation report and to develop an appropriate setting improvement plan. Generally, identified priorities relate well to improving outcomes and provision for children. Practitioners regularly analyse success in improvement planning in terms of improving outcomes for children. However, leaders do not always identify specific costs and timescales clearly enough when planning for improvement.

The setting carefully considers parents' responses to an annual questionnaire. Leaders use this information appropriately to identify areas for improvement, for example creating a social media page to keep parents informed more regularly about the setting's practice and forthcoming events.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond positively to support from the local authority advisory teacher, resulting in improvements to the quality of learning experiences provided, for example the development of a finger gym board to aid children's fine motor skills. Practitioners make effective use of training opportunities. Recently this has been highly beneficial in improving planning for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a beneficial range of partnerships, which support children's learning well and impact positively on enriching their learning experiences. Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. They receive useful and relevant information via the setting's noticeboard, regular newsletters, daily personal contact and the setting's social media page. As a result, parents feel well informed and knowledgeable about the setting's day-to-day work and value the quality of care and concern shown by practitioners towards their children.

A valuable partnership exists with the local primary school. This promotes a smooth transition for children from the setting to the next stage in their education. Practitioners share joint training opportunities and resources with the school. This is beneficial in enriching learning experiences for children.

The setting has a range of effective partnerships with the community. For example, regular visits by parents and other local businesses promote children's understanding of the world of work suitably. Involvement in the 'farm to fork' scheme and visits to a local supermarket support children's understanding about where food comes from well. The setting is very much part of community celebrations and it takes part in decorating a Christmas tree and attending the local carol service. This develops children's sense of belonging and pride in their community.

There is a worthwhile partnership with the local authority advisory teacher and practitioners welcome this advice and support. Practitioners benefit from this in developing and improving the quality of the learning environment and planning for literacy and numeracy skills development across the areas of learning. This improves children's oracy and number skills in particular.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting makes effective use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning successfully. Leaders and managers ensure that there are enough suitably qualified and experienced practitioners and deploy them effectively to make best use of their experience and expertise.

Practitioners access a range of useful training opportunities that enable them to keep up-to-date and build on their skills. For example, recent training about assessment enables practitioners to assess and track children's progress more accurately. This feeds into planning and provision effectively and allows them to cater for individual children's needs effectively.

The setting has suitable processes for keeping spending under review. This means that spending decisions are in line with the targets for development identified in the setting's improvement plan. In view of the positive outcomes achieved by children, the setting provides good 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.	15	11 73%	4 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	15	12 80%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn 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.	15	15 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	15	13 87%	2 13%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	15	8 53%	7 47%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	15	12 80%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	15	14 93%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	15	10 67%	5 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	15	12 80%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	13	9 69%	4 31%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	15	11 73%	4 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	6%	1%		

	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	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	15	13 87%	2 13%	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.	14	8 57%	6 43%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		66%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	15	11 73%	4 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhleentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		74%	25%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	13	9 69%	3 23%	1 8%	0 0%	2	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		64%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	15	12 80%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

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

Mrs Sharon Poloha	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Susan Davies	Team Inspector

### Copies of the report

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

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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 partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.