



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

**A report on**

**Hope Playgroup  
Ysgol Estyn  
Hawarden Road  
Hope  
LL12 9NL**

**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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**Publication date: 28/04/2016**

## Context

Hope Playgroup is situated within the grounds of Ysgol Estyn in the village of Hope, in Flintshire local authority. The playgroup serves the village and the surrounding areas. The setting is registered to provide care and early education for up to 25 children and is managed by a voluntary management committee.

The setting opens every Monday to Thursday from 12.25 p.m. until 2.55 p.m. during school term-time only. There are currently 21 children on roll. At the time of the inspection, nine three-year-old children attended, six of whom are funded by the local authority.

The setting has not identified any children as having additional learning needs. No children from an ethnic minority background attend the setting and all children have English as their home language. There are no children from Welsh speaking homes. Three members of staff are employed at the setting. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since 2011.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in June 2015 and Estyn last inspected it in February 2013.

## 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:

- Most children make good progress across all areas of learning
- Most children are developing good communication skills
- Nearly all children display high levels of engagement and concentration
- Nearly all children are confident and show very good attitudes to new and familiar learning experiences
- Practitioners are good language role models and use questioning effectively
- Practitioners work well together as a team
- Practitioners know the children well and support them effectively in developing their skills
- Practitioners use the assessment information well to plan future activities
- The setting provides a good range of interesting learning experiences

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders work together well, forming a strong team, and share their vision effectively
- There is a strong track record for taking forward local and national initiatives successfully
- The setting prepares a formal self-evaluation report that helps identify relevant priorities for improvement
- Leaders make good use of advice and support from external agencies
- The setting works well in partnership with the school
- Relationships with children and parents are strong and contribute well to the setting's happy and purposeful working atmosphere

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's use of everyday Welsh
- R2 Establish effective systems to ensure that all policies are in place and understood by all stakeholders
- R3 Ensure that setting improvement targets link closely to improving children's outcomes and are evaluated effectively

### **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

Most children make good progress in their learning from their differing starting points during their time in the setting. In particular, nearly all children display high levels of engagement and concentration when involved in independent learning activities.

Most children are developing good communication skills. For example, most children listen well to instructions during routines and at story time. Almost all children make themselves understood and enjoy talking about likes and dislikes at snack time or on the pretend telephone. A majority of children are developing their early reading skills well and show a suitable interest in books. For example, they enjoy listening to stories about Ticw the teddy bear. Many children show an awareness of print and recognise their names on their coat pegs. A few recognise the words 'dwr' and 'llaeth' on the drink jugs at snack time. Around half the children are making good progress in their early writing skills, for example when writing a shopping list in the role-play area and experimenting with chalks in the outdoors.

Nearly all children use mathematical language correctly in their play, for example when using 'tiny' to describe a pine cone and 'long' to describe a number line. Almost all children are able to count up to five confidently and a few beyond five with support. A few more able children can accurately sequence objects according to size and match shapes accurately.

All of the children are confident in using information and communication technology (ICT) in their play. Many control battery operated toys well and understand that something happens when they press buttons on the play cooker in the dough area. Many children use their ICT skills effectively in developing their creative skills, for example when using a simple paint programme on a computer tablet. Most children demonstrate good thinking skills when choosing which materials to use to create a picture of daffodils.

A majority of children make worthwhile progress in their Welsh language skills. All children use simple Welsh words such as 'llaeth', 'dwr' and 'diolch' at snack time when prompted by an adult. However, no children were heard using Welsh words spontaneously during free play. A majority of children's physical skills are developing well, for example when jumping in hoops and using small tools.

### Wellbeing: Good

Most children come into the setting happily and settle quickly. All children make choices confidently about which area to play in and which resources to use. Nearly all children are independent in putting on their coats or painting aprons.

Most children behave well. For example, they know to walk to the carpet area after snack time. Most children are considerate to others and are courteous to peers and adults during familiar routines and activities, for example when taking turns to touch the daffodil and showing concern for others who are not at the setting.

Nearly all children are confident and show very good attitudes to new and familiar learning experiences. All children are busy and on task and many engage in learning for lengthy periods of time. Many children concentrate well across a range of activities, for example when persevering to complete a jigsaw.

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

Practitioners plan regularly to deliver a broad range of interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors, that engage children's interests meaningfully. For example, practitioners use recent personal events in the children's lives to inform the focus of story time. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is based firmly on the Foundation Phase skills and principles. Practitioners plan together well as a team, share ideas and make beneficial use of information from assessments. This ensures that future planning is flexible and takes account of children's needs and interests.

There are beneficial activities that develop children's knowledge about the world they live in. For example, the setting provides binoculars and magnifying glasses for children to find flowers and examine butterflies. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills, such as when recalling a visit to the Forest School. Practitioners provide daily learning experiences outdoors, although on occasions time spent in the outside is limited.

Practitioners organise an interesting range of visits to the setting. For example, reptiles and pets are brought in. This helps children to understand that all living things should be cared for and is beneficial in developing their personal and social skills in particular. Practitioners plan valuable opportunities to develop children's problem solving skills, for example when encouraging them to find the correct piece to complete the train track.

Practitioners provide useful opportunities to develop children's literacy skills. For example, there is an interesting range of reading materials available, including travel brochures and leaflets. Practitioners promote children's speaking and listening skills successfully through daily 'together time' and provide them with a variety of mark making opportunities that develop children's early writing skills effectively.

Practitioners provide opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. For example, they are encouraged to count and record the number of children outside. Practitioners promote the use of mathematical language well through offering different sized resources to promote children's awareness of shape and position.

The setting provides beneficial opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills, such as when using a camera to take photographs and by pressing buttons on telephones and cash registers in the role-play area. However, practitioners do not plan to use ICT resources regularly enough.

Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about living in Wales and the Welsh culture. For example, they display a Welsh flag in the role-play shop. There are suitable opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills during adult

directed activities. For example, practitioners use simple words and phrases well to talk and sing about Ticw teddy bear. However, opportunities for children to use Welsh spontaneously throughout the session are less well developed.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have a good knowledge of the Foundation Phase and provide effective learning experiences across most areas of learning. All practitioners manage children's behaviour well, calmly reminding them of the rules and expectations of the setting. They provide ongoing encouragement and regular praise. This ensures a consistent approach and results in most of the children behaving well, demonstrating high levels of social skills. All practitioners intervene skilfully in children's play and use effective questioning to allow children to develop their skills successfully. All practitioners are good language role models in English; however, they are not as confident to use every-day Welsh throughout the session. All the practitioners know the children well and how best to support them, for example when offering different tools and appropriate levels of support when children have difficulty in using scissors.

All practitioners contribute to the assessment process and evaluate children's progress well. This ensures that all are fully aware of the 'next steps' in children's learning and plan future activities accordingly.

Practitioners share information with parents about their child's progress regularly through a range of effective procedures, for example informal feedback at the end of the session and via informative parent meetings. This ensures that parents know how well their child is progressing and how they can best support them.

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

The setting promotes children's understanding of healthy living well. For example, practitioners ensure a suitable range of healthy foods and drinks are available at snack time. Children are consistently encouraged to wash their hands after messy play and after using the toilet. This helps them to become responsible for their personal hygiene more independently. Children are encouraged to take part in a broad range of activities that support their physical development skills effectively, for example when practitioners organise physical movement sessions.

Children have beneficial opportunities to learn about caring for their environment by growing bulbs and feeding the birds. Practitioners encourage children to learn about sustainability through putting paper in the recycling bin and using water sparingly.

Practitioners plan meaningful opportunities for children to learn about other cultures, countries and the wider world. For example, they provide a range of interesting artefacts when celebrating Chinese New Year.

Practitioners provide useful opportunities to learn about turn taking and respecting others. For example, during circle time activities when passing round a 'treasure bag', which children discuss enthusiastically.

The setting currently has no children with additional learning needs. However, there are suitable systems in place to support them and access to appropriate support from specialist agencies should the need arise.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern

**Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to the curriculum and resources, and feel happy and settled. There is appropriate provision to support children's awareness of diversity and other cultures, such as jigsaws including images of people from different ethnic backgrounds and the use of stories such as 'Handa's Surprise'.

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced in working with young children. The indoor and outdoor environments are safe, secure and well maintained. The setting shares the premises and some resources with the school's nursery class successfully. There are clearly designated, attractive indoors areas where children can access resources independently. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and age appropriate.

The setting uses the immediate outdoor area, eco-area and Forest School areas regularly throughout the year. This ensures that all areas of learning are successfully addressed. The outdoor area is enclosed and a good size, and includes tarmac and grassed surfaces. This allows children to develop physical skills safely such as running and jumping. There is a shed for storing resources, a wooden gazebo for quiet activities and growing areas. This enables children to be reflective and learn about plants and mini beasts in a meaningful way. Practitioners use the local environment well to enrich children's learning. For example, visits to the library, bakery and post box allow children to be familiar with their locality.

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

Leaders work together well, forming a strong team. They share out roles and responsibilities effectively ensuring that the setting runs smoothly. Leaders have successfully created a positive ethos where staff and children feel valued and there is a calm and caring learning environment. Leaders communicate high expectations, ensuring that each practitioner supports children sensitively and productively throughout the session. There is a strong sense of shared values in the setting, resulting in a consistent approach, as seen in the positive management of children's behaviour. Relationships with children and parents are strong and contribute well to the setting's happy and purposeful working atmosphere.

In general, leaders have good procedures in place to ensure that the setting runs well. They recently undertook a thorough review of many policies such as the Child Protection Policy, ensuring that they are up to date and fit for purpose. They keep these in the setting's porch, making the information accessible to all parents and

practitioners. However, a very few important policies are missing from the updated file. Leaders keep the management committee well informed about the setting's progress during regular meetings. They ensure that all practitioners receive annual appraisals, making valuable use of Wales Pre-school Providers Association's (WPPA) services to support with this.

Leaders negotiate and co-operate well with school staff, managing the shared accommodation, storage and resources effectively to benefit the children. They have a strong track record for taking forward local and national initiatives successfully, such as teaching children about healthy living and developing outdoor learning.

### **Improving quality: Good**

In general, practitioners know their setting well. They constantly evaluate the quality of the provision and reflect on children's progress during informal discussions, regularly making worthwhile improvements as they go along, for example moving the outdoor music area to free up a quieter space where children can look at books.

The setting prepares a formal self-evaluation report that helps identify relevant priorities for improvement. There is a suitable plan in place, identifying helpful small steps and timescales for achieving targets and outlining potential costs in general terms. Their evaluations of last year's plans show that the setting brought about useful improvements, including improving provision for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills outdoors. However, the review does not always focus well enough on the standards that children achieve. As a result, on a very few occasions leaders do not follow through improvements to embed them in everyday practice, such as children's use of everyday Welsh.

The setting consults parents effectively through an annual questionnaire and acts appropriately on suggestions made, such as sharing information about daily activities on a whiteboard. Leaders make good use of advice and support from external agencies such as their local authority link teacher and the WPPA development officer.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has established useful partnerships that benefit the children well.

Leaders have built up a strong partnership with parents. They work hard to share information about activities and children's progress regularly and helpfully. They do this in a variety of ways, making good use of social media as well as notice boards and newsletters. Parents appreciate the work done in the setting and approach practitioners confidently with questions and concerns. This enables practitioners to support children's individual needs sensitively contributing effectively to their wellbeing.

The setting works well in partnership with the school enabling the setting to join in worthwhile activities such as family learning sessions. They share the accommodation, outside area and resources successfully, benefiting both parties. Parents and children become familiar with the school environment and begin to recognise staff, preparing them helpfully for the next step in their education.

Practitioners make the most of the partnership with the local authority. They attend training regularly and benefit from the valuable advice and support of the advisory teacher. Leaders make good use of the services offered by the WPPA to manage the setting effectively, such as carrying out appraisals for setting leaders. They use links with the local community well to support children's learning including joining in the local carnival.

### **Resource management: Good**

All practitioners are well qualified and experienced in working with young children. Leaders manage the setting well ensuring that it is appropriately staffed and that practitioners make good use of their time and expertise. The setting makes the most of training opportunities offered by the local authority, regularly implementing new strategies and ideas to benefit the children. Visits to the local authority's Forest School site developed practitioners' understanding of the benefits of outdoor learning effectively, enabling them to provide richer learning experiences back in the setting. Leaders share their good practice in areas such as planning, use of language and resources with other settings through visits organised by the local authority link teacher. They take advantage of networking opportunities at training events to develop useful working relationships with other practitioners.

Leaders provide highly appropriate, good quality resources suiting children's age and stage of development well. For example, stacking beakers, shape sorters and appropriately challenging jigsaw puzzles support children's problem solving and mathematical development very effectively while promoting high levels of engagement and concentration.

Leaders employ a treasurer to ensure that the setting manages its finances effectively. They use their funding appropriately and fundraise purposefully to sustain the provision. In view of the positive outcomes for children and the overall quality of provision and leadership, 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.	14	13 93%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	14	13 93%	1 7%	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.	14	12 86%	2 14%	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.	14	12 86%	2 14%	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.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	14	12 86%	2 14%	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.	13	10 77%	3 23%	0 0%	0 0%	1	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.	14	12 86%	2 14%	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.	12	10 83%	2 17%	0 0%	0 0%	2	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.	14	10 71%	4 29%	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.	14	13 93%	1 7%	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	10 71%	4 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	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.	14	9 64%	5 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn 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.	12	10 83%	2 17%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Sharon Hughes	Reporting Inspector
Sheila Margaret Birkhead	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.