



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

Amlwch Pre-School Playgroup

**Elth Room
Memorial Hall
Amlwch
LL68 9ET**

Date of inspection: December 2010

by

Mr Alan Walters

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

Amlwch Pre-School Playgroup is a bilingual setting serving a wide catchment area as well as Amlwch itself. It meets in a room at the memorial hall.

The setting serves both a rural and urban area that is considered as being economically disadvantaged. The children who attend come from a full range of backgrounds. The majority of children have English as their home language.

The setting is open from 9.00am to 11.30am every morning for 39 weeks of the year. It is registered for 20 children between the ages of 2.5 and 4 years of age. At the time of the inspection 16 were on roll in total and 2 are currently funded by the Early Years Partnership.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in January 2010. It is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- all children are happy to come to the setting, enjoy learning and take full part ;
- it provides a wide range of interesting activities and experiences that motivate children to learn; and
- there are warm, caring relationships between children and staff.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader and staff are positive in their attitude towards improvement;
- the Foundation Phase methodology is having a positive impact on children's development; and
- systems for self-evaluation and planning for the future are being well used and developed in order to bring about improvements.

Recommendations

In order to improve the setting needs to:

- R1** continue the positive strategies to improve provision for Welsh language development;
- R2** continue to develop the self evaluation procedures with a clear focus on the standards achieved by children;
- R3** continue to develop the assessment for learning activities by tracking targets and outcomes.

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	
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There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. 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
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Learning experiences: Good

The setting provides all children with interesting and stimulating learning experiences that cater for children's needs and interests across all areas of learning. Practitioners work well to plan a wide range of activities that encourage children to learn effectively and make progress. The learning opportunities encourage children to experiment with new experiences and become confident explorers of their environment.

Practitioners work together to ensure that provision for skills is planned for across the areas of learning. Both the indoor and outdoor provision allows children to access learning experiences that develop literacy, communication, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills every day.

Practitioners know the children well and respond to their varying needs and abilities spontaneously and appropriately during activities as well as planning for specific needs of individual children.

Practitioners show a very positive attitude towards Welsh language provision and some are themselves learners of the language. They encourage children to use the Welsh language at every opportunity in their learning and are sensitive to the children's starting points. Practitioners effectively develop children's knowledge and understanding of the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales. Children are provided with good opportunities to visit places outside the setting and also to learn from visitors to the setting. The local gardening group is a good example.

Children are provided with opportunities to learn about sustainability and recycling. Paper offcuts are emptied into a recycling bin on a daily basis and the outdoor gardening area is also used effectively.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. A strong feature of the setting is the way that practitioners succeed in planning a good balance between child-selected and practitioner led or directed activities that meet children's needs flexibly. Questioning is often used effectively to challenge children.

Practitioners provide helpful oral feedback to children as they learn. Adult support within the setting is well focused. Practitioners assess children regularly and record observations and assessments in order to plan future activities which meet the needs and interests of the children. Parents and carers are kept well informed about children's achievements, well being and development through daily contact, annual parents evenings and a progress report on leaving the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for health and wellbeing is good. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All staff receive relevant training from the local authority and understand their roles and responsibilities. Children are happy and secure in the company of adults at the setting and are willing to ask for help and support. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and are updated when necessary.

Learning experiences at the setting promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

At present there are no children with additional learning needs (ALN) attending the Cylch, but the leader is aware of identification and monitoring arrangements for ALN and of the support that is available from external agencies.

There are good induction arrangements to ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. Links with the local Cylch Meithrin and primary school are also becoming increasingly effective.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a welcoming environment for the children. There are clearly marked areas of learning. There is a variety of children`s work on display along with photographic evidence of the wide range of activities, visits and visitors that the setting provides and arranges. The setting is fully inclusive with all children having equal access to all areas of provision.

The setting employs sufficient practitioners to meet the needs of all children. Practitioners are appropriately trained and continually undergo a good range of external courses. A strong aspect is the way the leader and practitioners place a clear emphasis on using training well to create a stimulating environment for learning. The setting provides plenty of varied resources that are well matched to the children`s needs and interests.

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

The setting leader creates a positive ethos where staff and children feel valued and respected. Her sense of purpose and clear vision for improvement are having a positive impact on the progress the setting is making and are clearly focused on children`s needs. She is well supported by other experienced staff. There is a developing culture of self-reflection and self-improvement amongst practitioners that helps to develop the good work of the setting.

The management committee is made up of experienced adults who meet to receive information about the performance of the setting and to monitor progress. Relationships with children, parents/carers and the management are positive and contribute well towards a strong sense of community. The setting has an appropriate appraisal system in place to support and improve staff.

Practitioners respond positively to relevant national and local priorities. They are fully involved in training and developments to make sure that the Foundation Phase is successfully delivered.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know their setting well. Self-evaluation is ongoing and practitioners consult parents and children in order to identify issues for improvement and help modify planning, activities and resources.

The self-evaluation report as it stands is a useful document that identifies many of the setting's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation of leadership and management and standards is being targeted following training by the local education authority. The development plan identifies appropriate targets for improvement, but does not always explain how practitioners will measure the success of these improvements in terms of outcomes for children.

The leader and the other experienced staff are open to new ideas and willing to try out different ways of working. They are fully engaged in professional development and share their knowledge within the setting. A good feature of the setting is the way that practitioners reflect on their own practice.

Partnership working: Good

A good range of partnership working contributes to children's progress and wellbeing. Practitioners involve parents/carers in the life and work of the setting and keep them informed about all aspects of the setting's work through daily informal discussions and by displaying dates and information on a notice board. It also offers agreed times for discussion on learner's progress.

The setting has good links with the local primary school and very close positive links with the local authority Foundation Phase advisory teacher who works effectively with the setting. Practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance. Practitioners work well together, share information about children and know who to contact when and if additional support is required for children. Good partnerships exist with the local hall committee and the local gardening club. Feedback from parental questionnaires and discussion is very positive about partnership working.

Resource management: Good

The leader and managers ensure that the setting is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively and the developmental needs of all staff are appropriately met. All practitioners are fully and effectively deployed and they ensure that all resources are used effectively to motivate children to learn, both indoors and outdoors. The setting makes good use of the funding it receives and provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Two parents/carers completed the questionnaire. All expressed positive opinions about the setting and strongly agreed with most of the statements, e.g. that their child likes the setting, has settled well and that the teaching is good. All parents/carers were in agreement that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and that their child is safe in the setting. No parents/carers disagreed with any of the statements in the questionnaire.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Alan Wyndham Walters	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)