



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

A report on

**Pencoed Playgroup LCDP
Welfare Hall
Heol Y Groes
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5PE**

Date of inspection: May 2017

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:

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.wales

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Context

Pencoed Playgroup LCDP is an English medium setting based in Pencoed, in the Bridgend local authority. It meets in a local village hall every day of the week during term time. The setting's registration allows it to care for up to 40 children aged between two and five years. At the time of the inspection, the local authority funds 16 children for education.

A very few children speak English as an additional language and no child comes from a home where Welsh is the first language. The setting identifies a few children as having additional learning needs.

The setting employs five part-time staff to provide education for funded children. This includes the setting leader who took up post April 2017. The committee of the Llanharan Community Development Project (LCDP) has overall responsibility for the setting and a non-teaching finance and operations manager oversees the daily provision. She took up post in March 2017.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in December 2015. Estyn last inspected the setting in November 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Many children make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points and in line with their stage of development
- Many children demonstrate useful speaking and listening skills and are happy to chat with visitors and to each other, asking questions inquisitively
- A majority of children are beginning to use a range of equipment with increasing control, such as chalks and paint brushes
- Many children understand numbers and can count effectively
- A majority of children are beginning to develop effective thinking skills
- Most children behave well and are considerate of others
- Practitioners plan an interesting range of learning activities that engage a majority of children well
- Practitioners have strong working relationships with the children
- Practitioners treat children caringly and emphasise the importance of sharing well

However:

- Very few children recognise words or letters, such as those in their name
- A very few children understand or use Welsh words and phrases well enough
- Too few children use a broad enough range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently
- Practitioners do not have good enough systems in place to ensure that children develop skills systematically and progressively
- Practitioners do not work with the children thoughtfully or effectively enough to move their learning forward consistently

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- In a short time, the setting leader has developed a useful understanding of the setting's priorities
- Leaders have continued the effective work of the previous leader to ensure that the setting is a caring environment that looks after children well
- The leader makes sure that all practitioners are aware of their day-to-day duties and that the setting runs smoothly
- There are well-established appraisal systems in place for all practitioners, which helps them identify their training needs and set suitable targets for improvement

- Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities, and care for children well
- The management committee ensures that the setting has suitable staff and monitors finances carefully
- The setting has a satisfactory development plan that identifies suitably the areas in which leaders consider they need to make improvements
- Practitioners work diligently to involve parents and carers in the life of the setting

However:

- There has not been a strong leadership focus on providing a high enough quality of learning at the setting
- The management committee does not oversee the setting strongly in terms of the standards that children reach or the effectiveness of the learning provision
- Monitoring does not focus well enough on identifying the standards that children reach or on evaluating the quality of practitioners work
- Leaders do not consider whether improvement priorities have any impact on children, the quality of learning or teaching at the setting

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's Welsh and ICT skills

R2 Develop planning and procedures that ensure that children develop skills at an appropriate pace and at a consistently challenging level

R3 Ensure that independent learning activities contribute effectively to the development of children's skills, and particularly their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

R4 Ensure that all practitioners engage with and support children effectively throughout the session

R5 Ensure that all leaders work together effectively to deliver the setting's strategic aims

R6 Develop more effective systems for identifying areas for improvement and act upon findings robustly

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many children at the setting make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points and in line with their stage of development. They recall what they have learned previously during their play activities well, such as recalling the names of shapes when playing with foam blocks.

Many children demonstrate useful speaking and listening skills. They listen to adults carefully and follow instructions appropriately. Most are happy to chat with visitors and to each other readily, asking questions inquisitively and sharing simple information, such as their likes and dislikes.

A minority of children look at books independently and understand that they need to turn the pages to follow a story told in pictures. Many follow suitably when an adult reads a story and understand that the words in the book 'tell' the story. However, only a very few children recognise familiar words or letters, such as those in their name. A majority of children are beginning to demonstrate an increasing control of a range mark-making implements, such as chalks and paint brushes. They show interest in using these for pleasure. A very few are beginning to make marks to imitate the writing of words or a sentence, such as the writing of a list.

Many children demonstrate a solid understanding of numbers, for example when counting the dots on a ladybird. Many recognise a good range of numbers below 10 and can identify these in different contexts, such as on a laptop keyboard. A majority are beginning to recognise a useful range of shapes, and use simple mathematical language accurately. For example, when playing with play-dough they identify longer and shorter sausages correctly.

Many children join in with singing Welsh songs happily. A few are able to repeat a very few simple words, such as saying 'diolch' for thank-you. However, only a very few children understand or use more Welsh words or phrases well enough.

A minority of children use basic ICT equipment satisfactorily, such as a camera or children's play phone. A minority use a simple camera to take a photograph independently. However, too few use a broad enough range of ICT equipment confidently or well enough.

A majority of children are beginning to demonstrate effective thinking skills, for example when deciding which items they need to pack in their rucksack on a summer's day. Many children are developing useful physical skills and greater body control. A majority can bounce on a small trampoline demonstrating appropriate balance skills and most are beginning to be able to squeeze, pinch and roll play-dough suitably.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children settle quickly when they arrive at the setting. They are curious and ask questions with interest. Most children behave well and are considerate of others. They engage with adults and each other confidently. Most children listen and follow practitioners' directions carefully. For example, when playing group ball games they throw where directed appropriately. Nearly all children understand well the need to wash their hands before eating snacks and the importance of brushing their teeth after eating.

Nearly all children are interested in the learning activities; however, a few do not engage purposefully enough or for long enough during tasks. Many are beginning to work with other children sensibly. For example, they share cooking utensils and saucepans in the outdoor mud-kitchen when cooking a pretend meal. Most children can express opinions clearly, such as when identifying which fruits they like at snack time. They are able to accept simple responsibilities well and take care to exercise their duties carefully. For example, as the daily 'helpwr heddiw' at snack time they distribute plates and carry drinks to the tables sensibly.

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

Practitioners plan an interesting range of learning activities that engage a majority of children well. When planning children's learning, they include activities that cover most areas of the Foundation Phase beneficially and provide learning experiences that develop each of these areas suitably. For example, children develop strong number skills when sorting and counting shells and pebbles in the water tray. However, the setting does not have effective systems to allow practitioners to monitor whether they plan well enough and allow children to develop a full range of skills progressively over time. The structure of the setting's day means that for too much time children do not engage in purposeful activity. As a result, a minority of children do not make strong enough progress.

In planned language and mathematical development activities, practitioners ensure that children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In a majority of cases, practitioners help children develop these and other important skills, such thinking skills, in their everyday play activities. For example, children are encouraged to use a camera to take photographs of others at the setting. However, practitioners do not plan carefully enough to allow children to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills when engaging with independent learning activities. As a result, children do not have consistent enough chances to develop and practice these skills.

Many practitioners use the Welsh language suitably and this allows the children to hear and repeat simple words appropriately. For example, they repeat words for the weather, shapes and colours during the morning registration period. Adults use a suitable range of Welsh songs and rhymes to help children repeat a few Welsh words appropriately. They plan a few focused activities to help develop children's Welsh skills and celebrate Welsh festivals, such as Santes Dwynwen. However, overall,

they do not provide enough opportunities for children to use simple Welsh words and phrases independently.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners at the setting work conscientiously as a team. They have strong working relationships with the children and engage with them considerately. Using their key-worker system, practitioners know the children well and are able to care for them effectively. For a majority of the time, a majority of practitioners work alongside children suitably, asking questions and challenging their thinking in order to develop their learning. A few practitioners adapt tasks skilfully as they progress, ensuring that they challenge children well, helping them develop useful literacy and numeracy skills. However, on too many occasions, practitioners do not interact with the children thoughtfully or effectively enough to move the children's learning forward.

Practitioners monitor and record children's progress regularly during focused, adult-led activities. As a result, they are beginning to have a stronger idea of the skills that children are developing. In their daily interactions, a minority of practitioners use this information well to improve the focus of a few learning activities. However, the setting does not use its assessment information to influence its planning well enough. As a result, planned learning activities do not take into account children's different abilities or challenge them sufficiently for them to make the best progress.

The setting holds useful parents consultation sessions and provides detailed end of year reports. As a result, it keeps parents up-to-date with their children's progress efficiently.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting cares for all children well. It has successful arrangements to develop children's understanding of how to stay healthy. For example, children eat fruit at snack time and all brush their teeth afterwards. A few older children understand why brushing their teeth and washing their hands is important, explaining that it helps get rid of 'germs'.

All practitioners promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They encourage children to be courteous, such as through singing the 'please and thank-you' song. They treat children caringly and emphasise the importance of sharing well. As a result, most children show consideration for others. Practitioners ensure that children have a range of worthwhile opportunities to find out about other cultures, such as when learning about Diwali and Chinese New Year.

The setting has appropriate procedures to support children who need extra help. When required, practitioners develop individual play plans that recognise that a few children may need extra assistance. However, in a very few cases these do not always have a strong enough impact on daily activities at the setting. The setting responds to specialist guidance positively. Leaders implement support carefully when required, and as a result individual children are cared for well.

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

Learning environment: Adequate

The setting provides a caring and inclusive environment. All practitioners respect all children and treat them as individuals. They create a supportive ethos where nearly all children feel happy. As a result, they enjoy their time at the setting. All children have equal access to all activities and all areas of the curriculum, regardless of background or ability.

The indoor area is large and well maintained. Although practitioners have to pack resources away each day, they work hard to ensure that they organise the hall into useful learning areas carefully. Within the setting, there is a beneficial range of age appropriate resources that are sufficient for most needs. However, the setting has yet to develop its provision for ICT sufficiently. Practitioners organise the resources carefully to be accessible to children, and this helps to develop the children's independent skills well.

The outdoor area is small and in a poor position. Practitioners make the most of the area by resourcing it thoughtfully, for example with a water tray and mud kitchen. However, it does not provide children with the outside space needed to exercise, develop important physical skills or play independently. Practitioners do their best to address this by allowing children to use equipment, such as a few bikes and a car using the indoor space.

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

There have been recent changes to the setting's leadership and management. Both the setting's leader and the committee's operations and finance manager are new to their posts.

In a short time, the setting leader has developed a useful understanding of the setting's priorities. She has continued the effective work of the previous leader in ensuring that the setting is a caring environment that looks after children well. She makes sure that all practitioners are aware of their day-to-day duties and that the setting runs smoothly. However, there has not been a strong leadership focus on providing a high enough quality of learning at the setting. For example, while the leader has recently introduced new planning procedures, learning experiences remain adequate and do not provide children with effective enough opportunities to develop important literacy and numeracy skills.

There are well-established appraisal systems in place for all practitioners. These help identify training needs and set suitable targets for improvement. Although successive leaders have monitored the quality of teaching, they have not done so regularly. Their monitoring has not identified or addressed well enough the shortcomings in practitioners' interactions with children. Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities well, and care for and support children suitably. They

attend training courses when needed, such as those organised by the local authority. However, leaders have not ensured that these influence the quality of provision at the setting well enough.

The new operation and finance manager is beginning to understand her role appropriately and reports regularly to the management committee. This helps to ensure that the setting has suitable staff and monitors finances carefully. However, the management committee does not oversee the setting strongly in terms of the standards that children reach or the effectiveness of the learning provision.

Improving quality: Adequate

The new setting leader is beginning to understand the setting's strengths and identify a few areas for development usefully. Processes for evaluating the work of the setting involve all practitioners and they accept new ideas readily. Leaders have satisfactory arrangements in place to monitor the setting's provision and children's learning. These include evaluating planning and a few observations to assess how well practitioners' interact with children. However, leaders do not do this regularly. Their monitoring does not focus well enough on identifying the standards that children reach or on evaluating the quality of practitioners' work. As a result, their understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement is not yet fully developed.

The setting has a satisfactory development plan. This identifies suitably the areas in which leaders consider they need to make improvements. For each priority, leaders outline a range of appropriate actions that they need to take and recognise the personnel that are involved clearly. As a result, a few improvement priorities have a positive impact on children. For example, the implementation of strategies to assess and target children's speaking and listening skills led to worthwhile improvement in this area. However, leaders do not measure well enough the effect that improvement priorities have on the quality of learning or teaching at the setting. As a result, a minority of actions have too little impact on raising standards. Too many of the actions from the setting's last inspection remain as areas for improvement.

Partnership working: Adequate

Practitioners work diligently to involve parents and carers in the life of the setting. Useful newsletters, an information board and a regularly updated social media page ensure that parent and carers understand well the activities that their children undertake at the setting. Leaders keep parents up-to-date with information about their children's progress through worthwhile consultation sessions and end of year reports. Parents have appropriate opportunities to comment on the provision through a useful annual comment form.

The setting maintains a suitable partnership with the local authority. Accurate and useful reports from advisory staff are helpful in supporting the setting to identify what it does well and where it needs to improve. However, leaders have not always been quick enough to act on this advice.

The setting has satisfactory links with local schools. Teaching staff attend the setting to see the children prior to their attendance at school and discuss individual children's needs helpfully. The setting links beneficially with local schools to help it hold events, such as an annual sports day. These activities contribute to a smooth transition from the setting to primary school.

The setting has a few links with the local community. For example, visits to the local fire station develop children's understanding of their community and people who help us. A visit from the 'cooking bus' help to develop children's and parents' understanding of healthy eating. However, this is not an area of the setting's provision that leaders have developed strongly.

Resource management: Adequate

Leaders make satisfactory use of practitioners to support children's learning. They ensure that all are qualified and experienced suitably to work with young children. They make appropriate use of the skills of individuals, such as those with an understanding of the Welsh language, to support others. While all practitioners attend training when needed, a minority have received specific training linked to Foundation Phase education.

Leaders maintain appropriate processes to manage practitioners' performance, including annual meetings to discuss progress and training needs. However, they do not monitor the quality of practitioners' interactions with children well enough.

Leaders and the management committee ensure that the setting is suitably resources and staffed. However, they have not improved the poor outdoor provision effectively enough. In view of the quality of provision and standards reached by children, the setting provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Andrew Thorne	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.wales)

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 partnerships 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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.