



*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**

**Rhuddlan Playgroup  
Ysgol – y – Castell  
Hylas Lane  
Rhuddlan  
LL18 5AG**

**Date of inspection: June 2015**

**by**

**Peter Roach  
Reporting Inspector**

**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:

<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

Rhuddlan playgroup operates for five mornings every week during school term time in the nursery classroom of Ysgol y Castell Rhuddlan.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) register the playgroup for a maximum of 30 children. The last inspection from CSSIW was July 2013. The last Estyn inspection was in March 2009. There are 26 three and four year olds, of whom 17 are eligible for funding during this summer term. Five practitioners work in the playgroup, all are suitably qualified. There are a very few children with additional learning needs.

Nearly all pupils who attend the playgroup come from the local area. All pupils come from English speaking homes.

Rhuddlan playgroup is a member of Wales Pre-School Playgroup Association and receives support from Denbighshire Early Education.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Nearly all children make good progress from their starting point
- Most children have good attitudes to learning and behave well
- The inclusive ethos creates a warm and supportive environment
- Children are happy, feel secure and settle quickly when they arrive late morning
- Practitioners work effectively as a team and make a strong contribution to the quality of learning and teaching
- Practitioners make effective use of good quality resources..

### Prospects for improvement

The setting is adequate because:

- Practitioners know the setting well and have high expectations
- Practitioners work well as a team and complement each other in the day-to-day running of the setting
- They respond positively to support and advice
- A good number of partnerships make a strong contribution to children's achievements and welfare
- The local authority teacher oversees the work of the setting effectively.

However:

- Strategic planning and development priorities to secure improvements are not well developed
- The management committee's robustness in monitoring performance is underdeveloped.

## Recommendations

R1. Improve children's skills in Welsh

R2. Plan systematically to develop children's knowledge of the history and culture of Wales

R3. Ensure management committee monitor outcomes rigorously

R4. Develop effective self-evaluation procedures in order to identify and prioritise areas for development successfully.

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

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

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. They make steady progress in their learning and show enjoyment and pleasure in many of the activities provided. Many recall previous learning well and face new learning experiences enthusiastically. They persevere for a reasonable amount of time in activities of their own choice and take full responsibility for tidying away resources at the end of sessions during 'amser tacluso'.

Nearly all children make effective use of their early numeracy skills across most areas of learning. Many join in enthusiastically when singing number rhymes or whilst counting together during group activities. Most pupils can count accurately to five in both English and Welsh. More able pupils are able count to ten and beyond with increasing confidence. They also show a good understanding of what is one more or one less.

Most children sit quietly when listening to stories. They join in enthusiastically and a few are able to answer questions about the book based on the pictures they see. A few more able children recognise what author and illustrator mean. In quiet areas a few children hold books correctly and discuss the content with adults while others make up their own stories and share these with other children.

Early writing skills are developing well. Most children develop their writing skills effectively through mark making and painting. Nearly all hold a pencil or a paintbrush correctly. For example, when colouring in shapes or writing imaginary lists. Many children paint creatively using a range of colours and brushes successfully when painting five frogs on a log.

Children make appropriate use of opportunities to use programmable toys such as the spider, take photographs or use a telephone in their activities. Fine and gross motor skills are developing well.

Many pupils are familiar with basic numbers and colours in Welsh. However, opportunities to fully develop pupils' skills in Welsh are underdeveloped.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Most children enjoy a wide range of activities and make good use of opportunities offered to them. They participate fully and play happily on their own or with one another. A minority are able to concentrate on a chosen task for a good length of time. Nearly all are happy to talk about what they are doing and are confident to ask for help from adults. Most children show sound levels of motivation, engagement and concentration.

Snack times are developing children's independence well. They are encouraged to peel their own bananas and pour their own milk. Children are polite and considerate to each other and to adults. They share resources amicably.

Most children are beginning to understand the importance of eating healthily and why they are encouraged to exercise during outdoor play sessions. Nearly all wash their hands thoroughly before snack times. They do this independently and effectively.

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

Through collaborative planning, practitioners ensure that the setting provides a curriculum, based on themes that are relevant to children's needs and interests. They provide stimulating activities for developing children's skills in all areas of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners make effective use of the key worker system, which focuses successfully on pupils' individual needs.

Provision for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills are good. Practitioners provide ample opportunities for children to develop literacy skills fully through reading and letter recognition focused activities. Children's numeracy skills are developed through number recognition in various activities throughout the setting.

The setting provides worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their skills in information and control technology (ICT). For example, programming a movable 'spider', drawing pictures on the computer and using a digital camera to record activities.

Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions through celebrations such as Chinese new year and effective use of reading material. They are also encouraged to act sustainably by recycling milk cartons.

When practitioners speak Welsh they provide the children with good language role models. For example, when they include Welsh words for colours and numbers in their teaching. However, these good examples are sporadic and not systematically

planned. Opportunities for children to speak and hear Welsh on a regular basis throughout the setting are underdeveloped. Children learn about their Welsh culture through the celebrations around St David's day. However, opportunities to learn about their heritage are limited.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations of all the children. They use a good range of strategies to encourage and motivate the children to learn successfully. They ensure that activities provide stimulating learning experiences, which meets the needs of all children. Practitioners understand the importance of providing a balance between child-led and adult directed activities. They succeed in providing good quality experiences through effective questioning which challenges children's thinking well. Practitioners manage children's behaviour well. This contributes effectively to the setting's warm and positive atmosphere. Relationships are very good with adults and children interacting well. This impacts positively on outcomes.

Children are assessed regularly in several different ways and observations recorded. As a result, staff know children very well and can motivate them to persevere in learning new skills. Practitioner's observations feed directly into the child's portfolio. These comments build an accurate picture of children's' achievement and also provides useful information to support the planning process. Children's personal targets are developing well through the use of sticky notes, caterpillars and butterflies. This is an effective visual target system, which the children can relate to.

There are no formal arrangements to feedback progress reports to parents. However, the informal system at the end of each session is particularly effective in sharing information.

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

The setting makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. There are clear arrangements in place to ensure that all children and adults are free from any physical or emotional harassment. Every child is encouraged to participate fully in the life of the setting and to undertake responsibilities such as putting things away (amser tacluso) at the end of the sessions. Children are happy in the setting they are comfortable in the company of adults and are confident in asking for support and guidance.

Relevant experiences promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Daily activities promote values such as consideration for others and being kind and courteous at all times. Experiences, such as Christmas celebrations and suitable prayers contribute effectively to children's spiritual



development. Collecting money for good causes develops children's awareness to help those less fortunate than themselves. Children have suitable opportunities to develop awe and wonder such as when they saw how the caterpillars had changed into butterflies. Opportunities to develop multi-cultural awareness and learn about sustainability are developing well.

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

The setting has appropriate arrangement for supporting children with additional learning needs. There are well-established arrangements with local professional support services to provide advice for practitioners and support for children when needed.

### **Learning environment: Good**

This a happy setting where children are made to feel welcome and safe. All children are treated fairly, whatever their background and ability and encouraged to treat each other in the same way. Practitioners ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum.

There are ample resources to ensure that children can take part in a wide range of activities. They are of good quality, well maintained and easily accessible by the children.

Practitioners use the premises well both inside and out to support teaching and children's learning. The forest school area is particularly effective in developing children's knowledge and understanding of the current topic on mini beasts. Practitioners make good use of the limited space to prepare colourful displays of children's work to enrich learning.

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

The leader is relatively new in post having been elevated from deputy leader a few weeks back. She is an experienced practitioner who undertakes her responsibilities conscientiously. In a short space of time she has successfully developed an effective team of practitioners who understand their roles and work well together. There is a positive ethos and commitment to provide the best possible experiences for children. All practitioners focus effectively on the care of individual children. Many of the good quality routines and activities, which make up most of the day-to-day activities, are

relatively new. These are beginning to make a positive impact on children's development and wellbeing.

The current management committee has been in place since September 2014. They have a good range of skills and are very supportive of the setting. They are beginning to understand the philosophy of the Foundation Phase and their task in managing the setting. However their role in challenging the setting on standards of achievement and improvements in provision is underdeveloped. There are no formal arrangements to appraise the performance of practitioners.

The setting meets local and national priorities appropriately, such as implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum and encouraging healthy eating and taking appropriate exercise.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Practitioners work closely with one another and have a positive commitment to continuous improvement. They regularly discuss various aspects of the settings work and monitor children's progress. However, systems to formalise these arrangements and feed the results into the self evaluation document are at a formative stage

All practitioners are open to new ideas and willing to experiment with different techniques. For example, the way in which the practitioners have agreed to rotate the planning activities ensuring every team member experiences planning activities in the different areas of learning.

Processes, which inform the self evaluation document are, rather narrow and do not include all stakeholders' views. Areas for development do not always focus strongly enough on positive outcomes. The management committee has identified the need to draw up a setting five-year plan. Systematic planning for improvement is appropriate however, the link with the setting's self evaluation document, where areas for development become priorities for action, is not always clear.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting occupies the nursery classroom with access to all areas of learning including outdoors. Children in the setting are familiar with the school staff, which makes transition to the school's nursery class very smooth. At every opportunity the setting is included in many of the school's celebrations such as concerts or theme days.

Good links are in place with the local authority support teacher. This is an useful source of advice and support. The setting also makes effective use of the specialist support available from the authority to support children with additional learning needs.

The setting has developed over the years helpful partnerships with parents. As a result, children settle quickly when they arrive at the setting. Practitioners deal with parental concerns effectively. Parents appreciate the regular informal feedback they receive at the end of the day about their child's progress.

Links with the local community further enhances children's learning.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting has an effective level of qualified staff to implement all areas of the Foundation Phase successfully. Leaders deploy practitioners effectively to make best use of their expertise and experience.

Resources are readily available and the children know where to access equipment during free play sessions.

Due to the historical staffing issues practitioners have not fully implemented the training opportunities available to them. However, a few practitioners are pursuing externally, an advanced qualification in childcare. Leaders manage practitioner's workload effectively.

Managers review spending prioritise on a regular basis. In most instances they match spending well to the setting's priorities and objectives.

In view of the positive outcomes and effective provision for children, the setting provides good 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 inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate**

Mr Peter Anthony Roach	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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## 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 partnership's 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.