



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

**Bright Beginnings Playgroup Llangennech
off Hendre Road
Llangennech
Llanelli
SA14 8TH**

Date of inspection: September 2011

by

Mr Peter Mathias

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

Bright Beginnings is an English medium, privately owned setting providing nursery education in Llangennech and the surrounding area. It is based in a new community centre in the village and provides care for up to 30 children at a time from two to five years of age. Currently there are 37 children on roll who attend on a part-time basis.

Children attending the nursery come from a wide range of backgrounds. All but four come from homes where English is the main language. None have English as an additional language and the remainder speak Welsh as a first language. Currently no child has been identified with additional learning needs (ALN). Overall, there are six children who are new to the setting.

The setting is open each morning from 9:00am until 1:00pm. It is registered by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accept 30 children. The school was last inspected by CSSIW in December 2009. That report did not make any substantial recommendations. The setting is also recognised by the Wales Pre-School Providers Association. It has not previously been inspected 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 are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase outcomes for children's learning because of the good:

- standards achieved in communication skills in English and Welsh language development;
- quality of wellbeing including children's enjoyment in learning, behaviour and attitudes;
- teaching across the setting and very positive relationships between all adults and children;
- provision for health and wellbeing and the positive ethos in the setting;
- quality of leadership and professionalism of the proprietor and staff;
- management of staff and the advantageous ratio of practitioners to children; and
- opinions held by parents and carers of the way in which the setting is organised.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a strong commitment to and provision for continued professional development;
- of a history of improvement in resources and facilities since the opening of the setting;
- of the accurate assessments of the strengths and areas for development within the setting; and
- there is a very committed and hardworking team of practitioners.

Recommendations

In order to improve further Bright Beginnings Playgroup need to:

- R1 extend opportunities for children to experience a wider range of physical activities including the use of large apparatus and wheeled toys out of doors;
- R2 improve the range of assessment strategies; and
- R3 put in place detailed plans to indicate how and when priorities for improvement will be put into effect, costs involved and the ways in which the impact of these initiatives will be assessed.

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?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across nearly all of the Foundation Phase areas of learning. They work hard and acquire new knowledge and understanding at least in line with their abilities. They enjoy the wide range of stimulating experiences that are provided and are eager to take part and to learn more.

Most children experiment and investigate confidently in a wide range of practical situations. However, progress in children's physical development is limited. They do not use large apparatus and wheeled toys out of doors regularly to improve their balance and co-ordination.

Most children have good communication skills in both English and Welsh. They respond confidently, often using short answers to questions and explain why, for example some foods are better to eat than others.

Nearly all are very inquisitive about their world, investigating the soil avidly for minibeasts when digging up the carrot crop they have grown. All join in songs enthusiastically in English and Welsh and co-operate well together when sharing untuned percussion instruments.

Nearly all use writing tools appropriately to make marks and to practise recording their thoughts. All know that books are read from left to right and follow a story for themselves.

Nearly all count accurately within 10 in English and Welsh. They recognise small numbers in array and when writing as symbols. They know the names of common shapes and organise them by their different properties. They are beginning to use mathematical language such as 'more' and 'less' and 'heavier' and 'lighter' than accurately. Many older children know how to construct a simple pictogram about, for example their favourite foods.

Nearly all children use information and communication technology (ICT) well in a wide range of situations, for example when recording a story for a 'talking book'. They give correct instructions to a programmable toy and navigate through simple mathematical programs using the mouse confidently. They use an electronic microscope to look closely at the consistency of a mango when learning about African foods.

Most children make good progress in their Welsh language and respond to questions asked in Welsh using the same language, for example when describing the weather and when mixing dough. They know an appropriate range of Welsh rhymes, stories and songs and perform them enthusiastically.

Almost all children have high levels of independence for their ages and make choices for themselves when deciding what and for how long they wish to take part in an activity. They share their equipment willingly and show consideration for each other. They have a growing ability to look after themselves and a good understanding of the importance of hygiene when washing hands and cleaning teeth.

All children in the setting have good manipulative skills when creating collages and when using tools for cutting and sticking. They carefully apply thick paint to leaves and then complete a leaf print. They enjoy the process of handling clay to daub a mud hut for Handa's village in Africa. They respond very well to African rhythms and take on roles readily.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enjoy their learning and for their ages have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating both at snack and lunchtimes. They know the names of good and bad foods. As a result of the encouragement they regularly receive, all are confident when talking to adults and are outgoing at all times. They recognise the importance of washing hands and cleaning teeth regularly.

A particular strength is the positive attitude even the youngest children have when playing and investigating together. They show high levels of care and consideration for each other, their equipment and resources. They respond positively to suggestions and guidance given by all practitioners on a regular basis. They all know the basic and important rules of behaviour in the setting and have a growing awareness of good eating habits and manners.

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

The setting is attractively set out, despite the need to put out and put away all equipment at the start and end of each session. The planning is very successful in engaging all children in a wide range of stimulating and carefully constructed experiences which successfully address nearly all of the areas of learning for the Foundation Phase curriculum. All practitioners plan carefully together in longer and shorter term planning to ensure that nearly all aspects of this curriculum are systematically organised so that children build successfully on what they already know and can do.

While the setting plans and provides appropriate activities to develop children's physical development within the building, it does not plan or provide a wide range of outdoor activities using large equipment and wheeled toys to meet all of the elements in that area of learning.

All practitioners carefully plan to develop children's literacy and communication, numeracy and Welsh language skills. Planning sets out in detail what the shorter term objectives are and the next steps to follow. Careful planning consistently emphasises how to develop children's social skills and to encourage all children to respect differences.

The planning makes good provision for all children to become independent learners, to develop their creative skills, their understanding of the world and an awareness of the importance of treating all living things with respect.

There are good opportunities for children to learn about sustainable development, for example through activities involving the garden area and the nearby fields and woodlands. Nearly all have a good understanding of how to make compost and recognise that the finished product helps to enrich their soil for the next crops of carrots and lettuce. They are beginning to understand that life in different parts of the world is not always like theirs. They have a growing awareness of their Welsh identity and of the traditions, special celebrations and famous people of Wales.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a thorough understanding of how to extend children's learning through a wide range of activities and are very aware of what they wish their children to experience during the time available. All hold high expectations of what each child can achieve and carefully and sensitively encourage and guide them to be successful and enthusiastic learners. They are well aware of each child's individual needs and supportively encourage them to be independent and confident learners.

Across the setting all practitioners take up many opportunities well to develop children's language skills in English and Welsh. All practitioners extend and reinforce their children's vocabularies clearly and use both languages well, appropriately changing from one to the other naturally. They encourage their children to do the same. A particular strength is the effective way each practitioner works with others to form a flexible and effective working team who respond very well to the individual needs of all children.

There are well established procedures to assess individual children's progress from soon after they enter the setting and to identify any child who might have specific learning needs. Individual progress is carefully recorded and the next steps for learning are clearly identified. All practitioners base their assessments on informal recordings of what individual children have achieved as they take part in the planned

activities. This information is well used to extend and support learning. However, the information which is collected does not identify systematically if there are particular strengths or general areas of weakness. It does not form a basis on which to provide clear information about the progress children make as a whole from their time in the setting.

There are detailed records of what children know and can do. All practitioners are very mindful of the importance of celebrating children's successes. However, they do not involve children sufficiently in assessing their own learning so that they gradually understand what they need to do to improve.

Reports to parents and carers are detailed and personalised to each individual child.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing. These contribute successfully to children's development. The setting thoughtfully provides many well constructed opportunities to build on children's curiosity to learn more about the lives of other people, for example through their learning about Handa's way of life in Africa and the animals and food of that continent. Experiences in the wider world effectively encourage them to experience awe and wonder when looking at minibeasts in the garden soil and the behaviour of a squirrel in the car park.

The setting regularly provides well for children to learn about what is right and wrong and how to behaviour considerately to others. There are good opportunities for all children to make choices for themselves and to recognise their roles and responsibilities in the setting.

The setting has good arrangements to provide children with personal and specialist support. Children with ALN are quickly identified and individual play plans put in place to give appropriate support. Practitioners work closely with other professionals in this process. Parents are fully informed and involved.

All children feel safe in the setting and all are happy and enjoy being there. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a warm and inviting place for children and their parents. The internal setting is an attractive, well-organised, stimulating environment. All the practitioners consistently and successfully create a family atmosphere where all children are treated in the same way and made to feel equally valued.

There is a very advantageous ratio of practitioners to children. All are appropriately qualified. The majority have a wide and extensive experience of working with

children of this age. Arrangements for their continued professional development are appropriate and effective.

Resources are generally of a good quality and quantity and appropriate to the needs of the children of this age and the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There are good outdoor facilities for children to experience the natural world, but very limited opportunities or resources for children to take part in outdoor play activities using large apparatus and wheeled toys.

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

The leader has very successfully established a setting which provides well for children and has a very positive ethos where the professional development of all practitioners is given a high priority. There is a strong sense of purpose and a very constructive team spirit. All practitioners work closely together as a cohesive team who conscientiously evaluate and reflect upon the provision and how it can be maintained and improved further.

The setting does not have a management committee. The proprietor, who is the setting leader, is very well informed about the professional needs of all practitioners and children and provides a strong and effective lead.

The setting meets local and national priorities well and has been fully involved in training and other developments connected to the introduction of the Foundation Phase. There is a rigorous and well used system for appraisal to support and improve practitioners' performance.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has good procedures for evaluating its strengths and areas for development. It regularly seeks the views of parents and carers both informally and through questionnaires. The views expressed are valued. All practitioners contribute to the self-evaluation process.

The document is sufficiently detailed and accurately identifies the ways forward. However, because the format chosen does not follow the Estyn guidance for the inspection of non-maintained settings, a few areas contained within that guidance are not fully addressed.

While the school self-evaluation document contains relevant and well thought out priorities for improvement, it lacks a detailed plan of how to put these into effect and means to judge the success of any actions taken.

There are good links with other settings including the local infant school and Welsh-medium setting in the village. These are on an informal basis and the setting is only beginning to arrange formal associations.

Partnership working: Good

There is a good range of partnerships with parents, the setting to which children transfer, the local authority (LA) and other organisations which contribute to the development of this phase of education. All of these partnerships help in the success of the setting.

Links with parents are well established and all feel well informed and kept up to date about their children's progress. Links with the local infant school include detailed transition files and arrangements for children to take part in shared activities prior to transfer.

The LA Foundation Phase advisors work effectively with the setting as do visitors from the local community. The setting also benefits from the guidance given by the Wales Pre-School Providers Association.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of up to date resources which contribute well to the progress that all children make. A particular strength is the advantageous practitioner to children ratio and the effective way in which all practitioners are deployed. Funds are well used to maintain and improve existing resources.

The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thirty-four replies were received to the parent questionnaire. All were very supportive. All parents were satisfied with the setting and agreed that their children liked the setting. All children were helped to settle in well and to make good progress.

All parents thought that the behaviour of children and the teaching provided were good. Children were treated fairly and encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They felt the setting was safe and that the children's individual needs were well met.

All believed they were well informed about their children's progress and were happy to approach the setting if necessary. They understood what to do if they had a complaint. All parents felt that their children were well prepared to move on to infant school. They thought that the setting provided a good range of activities and visits. Overall, all felt that the setting was well run.

RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

All children were very confident when talking to adults. They spoke clearly and used simple, short sentences to express their feelings. They all liked coming to the setting and enjoyed taking part in all the activities. They felt that they were happy to play with all their friends. They knew what to do if they needed help or had a problem.

All had a very clear understanding of the important rules of the setting which included behaving sensibly and caring for each other. They knew that they had responsibilities to help their teachers and to make sensible choices for themselves. All felt that their teachers knew them well and treated them with affection.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.