



*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**

**Carmel Pre School Playgroup  
Ysgol Bro Carmel  
Carmel  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 8NU**

**Date of inspection: May 2012**

**by**

**Mr Peter Mathias  
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

Carmel Pre-School Playgroup is an English medium setting in the village of Carmel. The local authority is Flintshire. It provides nursery education for children between the ages of two years four months and four years. It gives pre-school provision for up to 25 of these children in session of five mornings and afternoons per week for two and a half hours per session.

The setting is situated on the site of Ysgol Bro Carmel to which most children transfer. Many children also attend sessions at Ysgol Bro Carmel Nursery,

Currently there are 35 children on roll of whom 23 attend in the morning sessions and 19 in the afternoon sessions.

Children attending the session come from a wide range of backgrounds and economic circumstances. Generally they are neither socially or economically advantaged nor disadvantaged.

The setting serves the local area. All but one child has English as their first language. No child has Welsh as the language of the home. Nearly all are from white British backgrounds. One child is identified as having some degree of additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in the autumn term 2011. The report did not make any significant recommendations. It was last inspected by Estyn in the summer term 2006.

## 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 current performance is good because of the:

- good standards in early literacy, particularly in speaking and listening;
- advantageous adult to child ratios which are used effectively;
- good behaviour and positive attitudes of children to each other and to adults;
- well balanced curriculum which is carefully planned;
- very good relationships between all practitioners and children;
- consistently good teaching; and
- purposeful and effective leadership.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the strong professional links with the nearby primary school and local authority;
- the commitment of all practitioners to continued improvement;
- the high expectations held of what children can achieve;
- a very positive and constructive team approach; and
- the progress since the last inspection.

## Recommendations

The inspector has agreed with the setting the following recommendations:

- R1 increase opportunities provided for children to develop their communication skills in Welsh and their knowledge and understanding of the traditions and culture of Wales;
- R2 increase provision for children to use information communication technology in their everyday play;
- R3 record in more detail the progress children make and take steps to encourage children to begin to make assessments for themselves of where they could improve; and
- R4 strengthen the role of the management committee so that it works more closely with the professional staff in judging the effectiveness of provision and in agreeing the setting's long-term objectives.

### 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**

#### Standards: **Good**

All children make good progress from their different starting points and achieve well in nearly all aspects of the areas of learning for the Foundation Phase. All are interested and enthusiastic learners and work at their tasks and investigations willingly. They investigate for themselves and make their own decisions about which activity they will follow and the time they will spend on each.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their communication skills in English. They show significant progress in their abilities to speak and listen. They talk to adults confidently. They know that books convey meaning and should be looked at from left to right. Older children are beginning to recognise how to form letters, holding a pencil correctly. They know the letters they are forming also have sounds which they make as they write.

In Welsh most children know how to answer the register and use simple words and phrases accurately, for example to greet each other and to make simple responses. However, they have very little understanding of how to describe the weather or for example how they feel. They recognise the story about 'TICW' the bear and listen attentively to it as it is read in Welsh. However, they rarely use Welsh and English together in their play.

Children across the setting make good progress in developing their basic skills in numeracy. In information and communication technology nearly all children make sound progress in utilising electric toys, for example when using a pretend till they appreciate that payments can be made electronically and you need a card and a number to complete a payment. They carefully program battery operated toys to follow prescribed routes, turning in specific directions. However, they have very limited skills in using a computer, for example to create pictures or to follow simple programs.

#### Wellbeing: **Good**

All children understand the importance of washing hands thoroughly and do so before eating or after a visit to the toilet. They have a developing understanding of which foods are better to eat than others and of the benefits of exercise. They make choices for themselves confidently and nearly always sensibly. They talk to adults willingly and share their ideas with them and with each other, knowing that their views are valued. They are beginning to look after their personal needs and do so, often with some help from adults.

All children look forward to coming to the setting and quickly learn to share and to enjoy completing activities with other children. They are thoughtful and are aware of the feelings of others. They eat sensibly at snack time in a happy and relaxed family atmosphere.

All know and follow the rules for good behaviour and respond positively when asked to carry out a task. They are anxious to please.

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

The setting is attractive and provides well for children. It is well-organised so that the learning experiences are carefully planned to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the different needs of children. The planning ensures that children are able to make a wide range of choices so that over time they develop nearly all the skills appropriate for their age. Currently planning for the wider use of information communication technology is under developed.

All practitioners work effectively as a team to plan activities and to exchange ideas when preparing for the work ahead. They respond quickly and modify their plans to meet changes which may be needed. They systematically organise for children to develop thinking skills and to become independent learners. They ensure that their indoor and outdoor play is purposeful and that all children build systematically on what they already know and can do.

Planning ensures that all children are beginning to learn more about different ways of life and the cultures of other people. For example, recent initiatives have led to planning for children to understand something of Chinese and Muslim traditions as well as their own. However, while there are good examples of planning to develop children's Welsh language and identity, these are not consistently put into practice. Planning with the primary school has enabled children to build up a better understanding of the work of some local people including policemen, fire fighters and farmers.

**Teaching: Good**

Across the setting all practitioners have high expectations of what all children should achieve and work diligently to help children become successful learners. They have a good understanding of how to plan meaningful activities and investigations and how then to encourage children to investigate confidently and independently. They rarely give instructions and regularly prompt children to think things out for themselves through a series of well chosen questions. They have very positive relationships with each child and all practitioners take a close interest in how all children are enjoying and benefitting from the activities.

In the best examples, practitioners encourage children to use simple Welsh phrases to make responses in English and Welsh. However, this practice is inconsistent.

There are well established procedures to make detailed, informal assessments of individual children's progress and to discuss these observations on a weekly basis. Practitioners also record progress by the end of the children's stay in the setting through a local authority overview. This is well used to inform parents and the nursery setting to which nearly all children transfer. The setting currently does not have sufficient arrangements to assess on a more regular and formal basis and to record these observations and assessments in greater detail.



Working closely with the nursery in the primary school, the setting has begun to encourage children to be aware of what they have achieved and the progress they are making as individuals. They are at an early stage of enabling children to think about how they might improve their work.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

There are well established and effective arrangements to promote children's health and wellbeing which contributes successfully to children's development. The setting provides appropriate opportunities for the children to explore in the outdoors, for example when growing vegetables in the primary school garden.

The setting positively encourages all children to co-operate well together and to have positive attitudes. They know the settings' expectations because they are regularly reminded of what is expected of them. All know what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is and are aware of the need to treat each other fairly.

There are good arrangements to provide children with specialist support when the need arises. Parents are given good advice and practical suggestions in these circumstances about how they can contribute to assisting their children. There are good arrangements for children who have some degree of additional learning needs. The setting makes every effort to ensure that those children are well supported and play a full part in all activities. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

**Learning environment: Good**

The environment for learning is well-organised and carefully arranged. Despite the need to put out and put away at the end of each session, learning experiences are thoughtfully arranged. All practitioners successfully promote a positive, friendly atmosphere. This is strengthened significantly by the often close working relationship between practitioners and individual children.

The accommodation is shared with groups who use the same facilities before and at the end of each session. This leads to considerable reorganisation of the furniture each session. While this places some restrictions on the range of quality of some areas of learning, the environment is bright and attractive and meets the needs of all children. The outdoor play facilities provide appropriate space and resources for children to play regularly and to build their physical strengths and skills.

Resources are generally of a good quality and quantity for children of this age. The setting has identified the need to improve its information and communication technology resources and has begun a process to address this.

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

The supervisor provides a strong lead and successfully ensures that all practitioners work together as a conscientious team. They are all committed to continued improvement and to provide well for all children in their care. All work closely

together sharing ideas and holding high expectations of themselves and of their colleagues.

There are well established procedures to identify the training needs of all practitioners and to provide appropriate support both within the setting and further afield. The supervisor and all staff have effective, informal links with parents who value the easy access they have to practitioners and the report they receive.

The chair of the management committee has only recently assumed this responsibility. She has correctly identified the need to strengthen the role of the committee as a critical and supportive friend of the professional staff. Currently this process is in an early stage of development. The committee does not as yet play a full part in judging the success of the setting and in agreeing its long-term objectives.

The setting has made good progress in meeting national and local priorities, particularly in adopting the Foundation Phase curriculum and philosophy. It is working closely with other partners, particularly with the nearby primary school. The setting gives considerable emphasis to developing healthy lifestyles.

#### **Improving quality: Good**

All practitioners have been informally involved in the process of self-evaluation and have a clear understanding of where the strengths of the setting lie and where there are areas for improvement. The views of practitioners have also been considered through a questionnaire and by general discussion. The subsequent self-evaluation document is an honest reflection of the setting and currently identifies priorities for the future. The related action plan to address areas for development lacks sufficient detail in order to make it a useful working document.

#### **Partnership working: Good**

There are strong links with the local authority in identifying priorities and in continuing to build on the setting's strengths. The setting has a well established and mutually beneficial partnership with the Ysgol Bro Carmel Primary School. As a result the setting takes up every opportunity to improve children's learning by attending relevant in-service training sessions there, by sharing resources and by learning from specialist visitors. Transition arrangements are a particular strength. The nursery teacher is a regular visitor to the setting and works closely with the supervisor and all other practitioners.

Parents are appropriately involved in discussing their children's progress and in making decisions about their individual needs. The setting works closely with other agencies including Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and the Welsh Playgroup Association.

#### **Resource management: Good**

The professional staff are well deployed and provide high levels of individual support to all children. There is a good range of good quality resources and equipment in nearly all areas. Despite the inconvenience of packing away twice a day, the learning areas are well defined and all resources are readily available to children.

Funds are carefully managed and well used. The setting gives good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Parents

Twelve parents responded to the questionnaire. With very few exceptions all held positive views of the setting.

Overall, all parents were satisfied with the setting. They felt that children liked to attend, settled in well, were making good progress and were well treated.

All believed that children behaved well and were well taught. They thought that practitioners treated their children appropriately and encouraged them to be healthy and to take regular exercise.

Parents were confident that their children were safe in the setting and received all the support they needed. They were comfortable about approaching the setting with a question, suggestion or a problem. They believed their children were well prepared for moving on and that there was a good range of activities available including visits. All felt that the setting was well run.

Where there were a very small number of less than positive responses, these related to the information parents received about the progress and the setting's procedures for dealing with complaints.

### Learners

All children liked coming to the setting and making new friends. They were confident when working with each other and with all practitioners. They knew what was expected of them and how they should treat each other. They enjoyed opportunities to help each other. All looked forward to returning for the next session and carrying on with their activities.

## 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

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

## 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>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.