



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

**Churchstoke Pre-School Playgroup
Churchstoke Community Hall
Churchstoke
Montgomeryshire
Powys
SY15 8AW**

Date of inspection: November 2012

by

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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

Churchstoke Pre-school Playgroup is an English-medium setting. It is situated in the village of Churchstoke, near Montgomery in Powys and is close to the border with Shropshire. It serves families from the village and a wide rural area. The playgroup meets in the Community Hall next to the primary school in the centre of the village.

The children who attend the setting come from a range of backgrounds. The locality is described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. English is the home language of all families and little Welsh is spoken within the community. There are no children from ethnic minorities. A very few have additional learning needs (ALN).

The setting is open three mornings each week during school terms. It is registered for 24 children between the age of two and admission to school. At the time of the inspection there were nine children on roll, including four three year olds funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in July 2012 and the previous inspection by Estyn was in July 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

Performance is generally good because:

- the setting has an inclusive ethos with a happy learning environment;
- a wide range of stimulating learning experiences is provided;
- the use of focused assessments is developing very well;
- the provision for moral and social development is very good; and
- the setting is well led, managed and organised.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- practitioners have a shared sense of purpose and a strong teamwork ethos;
- self-evaluation and planning for improvement is systematic;
- practitioners are well supported by the management committee; and
- the setting has a good track record in improving provision.

Recommendations

The setting should:

R1 develop planning to identify what and how the three year olds need to learn in order to achieve the learning objectives;

R2 provide structured guidance for teaching and ensure a range of strategies is used to help ensure appropriate challenge for the three year olds;

R3 enhance the use made of resources for indoor and outdoor activities.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

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 at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: N/A

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 at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The setting is generally successful in meeting the needs of children and the community. A good range of imaginative learning experiences successfully engages children's interest. Planning is securely based on Foundation Phase Child Development Profile and Skills Framework. Practitioners work closely together to plan activities and are suitably flexible in their implementation. Planning ensures an appropriate balance of activities and builds well on children's prior knowledge and skills. Sound emphasis is placed on promoting skills in literacy, numeracy and communication and the focus on information and communication technology (ICT) is developing.

Planning indicates a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase Outcomes and provides a secure basis to ensure the progressive development of children's skills. Carefully chosen themes are a good framework for detailed weekly plans and to sharpen the focus on skills development for individual children. Practitioners show appropriate awareness of activities, but too few details of how the learning objectives can be achieved are identified.

Over time practitioners plan opportunities for children to solve problems, become independent, encounter new experiences and strongly encourage them to think for themselves. They know the children very well and often match group activities well to their needs. Learning experiences foster positive relationships, nurture respect and tolerance and appropriately promote awareness of other cultures, such as through celebrating festivals. The consolidation of skills in different practical contexts is steadily developing. Regular use of the school grounds and the contribution of occasional visitors encourage wider awareness of the natural and man-made world.

Provision to raise awareness of sustainability and the impact people have on the

environment is at an early stage of development.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners enthusiastically promote a happy and vibrant learning environment. They have high expectations and do much to encourage children to learn through experience. Personal and social development, including behaviour is skilfully promoted. Although some opportunities to develop learning are taken there is insufficient emphasis on skills development for older children in key areas including literacy and numeracy.

Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. They successfully use a range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning, for example, through staging a bonfire party and making chocolate rice crispy cakes. Such focused activities make learning fun for the whole group and on occasions practitioners stimulate interest well through modelling activities with small groups.

The routines of learning help ensure an appropriate balance between child selected and practitioner led activities. Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately when needed. However, a limited range of teaching approaches is used to extend children's learning and planning does not have a sharp enough focus on how to develop skills relating to the learning objectives for a task. This limits the impact of teaching.

The arrangements for the assessment of and for learning are good. Procedures include, an on-entry assessment completed with parents, day-to-day observations and detailed individual learning records. The latter includes the outcomes of focused assessments, closely linked to key learning objectives in the planning and provide a clear picture of progress overtime. The information from assessments provides a good basis to plan the next steps in learning.

Communication with parents about their child's progress before and after sessions is relaxed and effective.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance. Arrangements to assure children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. The promotion of personal development is good. This encourages a sense of curiosity about the world, fosters the values of honesty and fairness, promotes good behaviour and engages children in a range of community and cultural activities. The provision for moral and social development is very good and provision for spiritual and cultural development is appropriate.

There are established induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. The setting has good procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required. Liaison with supporting agencies is effective. The arrangements to support and integrate children with ALN are well implemented and the provision to support more able children is developing.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff have a valid criminal records bureau disclosure. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. It has a warm, friendly and supportive ethos that values individual qualities. Good relationships within the setting help ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity and positively encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others. They successfully encourage good behaviour and ensure equal access to all activities. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities do not suffer disadvantage.

There are sufficient practitioners with relevant qualifications for the number of children on roll. The setting is well resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum in most areas, but the provision for ICT is limited. The accommodation provides well for indoor and outdoor learning although community use of the facilities imposes some constraints. Equipment is efficiently set up for each session in the hall, but access to existing facilities for outdoor learning is restricted. However, learning opportunities are considerably enhanced by regular use of the grounds.

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

The setting is well led and managed so that practitioners have a good understanding of their role. Effective policies and procedures are implemented consistently. Strategic planning is evident and practitioners demonstrate a strong sense of purpose and direction. The play leader successfully promotes a teamwork ethos based on shared values and high expectations. The setting has a clear statement of purpose and provides parents with a summary of the provision offered. A strong culture of self-reflection is promoted; this helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. Practitioners effectively contribute to planning and help to shape the provision. However, planning to manage the work of achieving the setting's goals is not always sufficiently rigorous.

The management committee is effective, very supportive and well informed. It maintains appropriate oversight of the setting and reports clearly to parents. Systematic arrangements for appraisal and to promote practitioners' professional development are implemented and they regard these as effective.

The provision incorporates the Foundation Phase principles well and practitioners reflect on professional advice and readily embrace national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has a strong focus on improving quality. Its track record in addressing targets set in annual setting improvement plans (SIP) is good. A culture of self-

improvement is well established. This results in steady improvement in the quality of provision and improvement since the last inspection is evident, for example in procedures for assessment. Practitioners take account of the views of parents, carers and children as much as possible.

There are effective procedures to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the setting. The self-evaluation report is thorough and links closely with the targets identified in the SIP. Good account is taken of an annual audit of provision. However, current planning does not include sufficiently precise plans of action to clearly identify how further improvements will be secured and resourced.

Networks of professional practice support practitioners' professional development well. In particular, networking within the local cluster successfully encourages the sharing of good practice.

Partnership working: Good

The setting maintains beneficial and effective partnerships with parents, the local authority (LA) and the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association (WPPA). These links impact well on the quality of service provided.

The partnership with parents and carers develops very positive relationships, encourages their involvement and thereby helps to ensure children's wellbeing and progress. Parents receive an induction pack, newsletters and relevant information is displayed at the setting. Furthermore, informal day-to-day communication is friendly and effective in keeping parents informed about their child's progress, the curriculum and planned activities.

Partnership working among practitioners is effective in developing the provision. Links with the adjacent primary school appropriately support transition to school, but the partnership is underdeveloped in other areas.

The setting makes increasing use of resources within the community to enhance provision.

Partnerships with the LA and the WPPA provide effective professional support and training. Practitioners value and respond positively to the support and advice received from a range of external agencies. In particular they benefit from attending training provided by the LA.

Resource management: Good

The overall management of staff and resources is good. This has a positive impact on provision so that most children are well motivated to learn. Practitioners are suitably deployed; resources well organised and daily routines ensure a wide range of activities is provided. The integration of indoor and outdoor 'continuous' activities is developing, but the use made of resources to extend learning, particularly for older children, is sometimes limited.

The management committee exercises effective oversight of the setting's finances and has successfully managed the financial impact of reduced numbers attending the

playgroup. Its prudent approach, together with the voluntary support of practitioners, has ensured expenditure remains in line with income. However, the costs of meeting important targets in the SIP are not clearly identified and forward planning to update resources is not sufficiently formalised. This limits the effectiveness of the SIP.

The setting uses the available resources to good effect. The provision provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Response to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. Discussion with parents confirm they greatly appreciate the good work of the setting and that their children enjoy the sessions.

Responses to discussions with children

During the sessions observed children quickly settled and happily engaged in activities. They have positive relationships with practitioners and a warm, friendly ethos ensures children feel safe and secure. This was clearly evident in their confidence to initiate conversations with adults. They know practitioners help them and that they must try to be kind to others and to behave well.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Michael T. Ridout	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.

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

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.