



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

**Daisy Chains
Ysgol Bodnant
Marine Road
Prestatyn
LL19 7HA**

Date of inspection: March 2014

by

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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:

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

Daisy Chains is an English-medium playgroup setting. It is based in a purpose built building within the grounds of Bodnant Community School, in the town of Prestatyn, in Denbighshire. The provision is privately owned, operates on two sites and offers sessional day care for pre-school children from 07.30am to 06.00pm on weekdays.

Most children attending the playgroup live in Prestatyn and a few in surrounding areas. The children have a range of backgrounds and family structures. During school terms morning and afternoon playgroup sessions provide education for children aged between two and four years old. The setting is registered for 37 children. At the time of the inspection there were 60 children on roll, including 16 three-year-olds that are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Nearly all children attending are English speaking and British born. A very few are from ethnic minorities and receive support in learning English. No families speak Welsh at home. A very few children receive extra support for learning.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in July 2013 and Estyn in March 2008. Daisy Chains took over from Bodnant Playgroup Plus in September 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- many children progress well and achieve good standards;
- most children have positive attitudes and are keen to learn;
- a wide range of imaginative learning experiences is well planned;
- teaching is enthusiastic and promotes good opportunities for learning;
- high quality care, support and guidance ensures children's wellbeing; and
- the learning environment has a happy, vibrant and inclusive ethos.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the proprietor provides dynamic and forward thinking leadership;
- managers have high expectations and promote a shared sense of purpose;
- clear direction skilfully promotes strategies for development;
- practitioners are effectively involved in self-evaluation;
- partnership working is effective and impacts well on children's learning; and
- the strong focus on developing educational practice indicates the setting is well placed to secure further improvement.

Recommendations

R1. Further raise standards in information and communications technology (ICT) and Welsh;

R2. Refine planning to include detailed learning objectives and assure progression;

R3. Build on assessment procedures to plan next steps in learning and maintain appropriate challenge;

R4. Formalise strategies to implement key educational priorities in the setting improvement plan.

What happens next?

The setting 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

Many children make good progress from their starting points and achieve good overall standards. They enthusiastically explore their surroundings, try out new experiences and steadily acquire new knowledge and skills. A very few children make good progress in learning English as an additional language. Children receiving extra help with learning achieve well in relation to their targets, but more able children do not always achieve in line with their capabilities.

Most children have good speaking and listening skills and enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. A majority spontaneously begin simple conversations, for example during role-play in the home area. They make their needs known, ask sensible questions and express themselves clearly. A few use a wide vocabulary and confidently talk about their family and what they are doing. Most listen well, such as in group activities, but a few find it hard to listen when activities are explained. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories. In particular, they enjoy handling books with an adult in the 'quiet' room. A few able children begin to handle books appropriately as readers and show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story. Many steadily develop mark-making skills as they experiment using chalks and paintbrushes in outdoor play. A few experiment with 'writing' during role-play, such as when checking in to board an aeroplane.

Progress in early mathematical skills is often good. Numeracy skills develop well as children count as part of daily routines, sing rhymes and play number games. Many have a good grasp of counting objects to at least five and show increasing awareness of one to one correspondence. For example, they count shapes cut from play dough. A few able children count objects to ten and order numbers with increasing accuracy. Many children begin to use appropriate mathematical terms such as when filling and emptying containers. A few names shapes, such as square and triangle and count the number of sides and corners when playing with toy shapes. However, able children seldom use a sufficient range of mathematical terms such as when sorting and comparing objects and exploring shape and capacity.

Competence in using a range of skills in ICT is developing. For example, children discover the function of the buttons to operate controllable toys and they use applications including the 'mobile phone' and the 'checkout' in role-play.

Competence in Welsh is developing. Many children respond appropriately to the words and phrases used within everyday routines. They readily recite familiar rhymes and songs, but the spontaneous use of Welsh is not established.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children have positive attitudes and are keen to learn. They generally engage in activities with enthusiasm and confidently make choices as they move between tasks. Levels of engagement are high and with few exceptions children remain busy with tasks for appropriate periods of time. Most are well motivated, but a few sometimes find it difficult to sustain concentration, for example when an activity lasts too long.

Children have good relationships with adults and with each other. Many increasingly show consideration and courtesy, such as when sharing resources, taking turns and during snack time. Standards of behaviour are good overall. Most relate well to their peers, but on occasions a few are over boisterous.

Many children confidently state their likes and dislikes and practitioners encourage them to choose which activities to keep or change in the setting. Many develop high self-esteem and increased self-confidence as they undertake simple day-to-day jobs, for example as Helpwr Heddiw.

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

A wide range of imaginative learning experiences is planned. This provision meets most children's needs well and successfully promotes the Foundation Phase outcomes. Well-resourced activities are carefully planned in all areas of learning. Planning across the areas of play clearly identifies broad learning objectives. Adult led tasks are well defined, but too few details of how and what the children might learn is provided.

Planning provides a good framework for long and short-term provision. A skills based approach is used with themes introduced to add context for the activities. Weekly planning is detailed and guides provision well. All practitioners contribute ideas for future planning and show flexibility in response to children's interests when implementing planned activities. There is a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and these build well on children's prior knowledge and skills.

Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills. For example, the book corner and a variety of role-play activities are used well to promote speaking and listening skills. Similarly, children's counting skills are developed well within daily routines. However, the focus on ICT skills is less well established. Good opportunities to role-play with everyday applications, such as a mobile phone, are provided, but opportunities to use ICT independently are insufficiently developed. Records indicate the skills framework is used to check that relevant skills are promoted in the activities planned and that all areas of learning are covered. This helps ensure appropriate progression in learning.

Practitioners know the learning needs of individual children well. Learning experiences foster positive relationships, nurture respect and promote greater

independence. Good use is made of the local environment and the community to enhance learning. This appropriately promotes awareness of the wider world. Opportunities to raise children's awareness of sustainability, such as through recycling are well established.

The provision for Welsh language development and to promote awareness of Welsh history and culture is appropriate. Some Welsh is spoken within daily routines and activities are planned, such as to celebrate St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is enthusiastic and promotes well opportunities for incidental learning. Practitioners have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievement. They provide good models of language; interact well with children and respond effectively to their interests and needs.

Practitioners have good knowledge and understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. Daily routines are well structured and there is a good balance between adult led and child-selected activities. Practitioners know well the tasks they are to lead or support and successfully promote children's engagement in a wide range of activities. However, their understanding of how to develop the learning objectives for tasks is variable. Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately when needed. They often use questioning and praise well to promote learning. Learning through role-play is effectively encouraged and strong emphasis is placed on developing communication and social skills. Practitioners promote opportunities for choice and independence well.

Procedures for assessment are comprehensive and implemented consistently. Practitioners record children's achievements on a daily basis and involve them through the 'Wow' tree display. The observations recorded are linked to planning and increasingly identify the skills developed. This information provides a good basis to plan next steps in learning and ensure appropriate levels of challenge. Individual assessment records and booklets are regularly updated and provide an informative profile of progress in relation to children's starting points.

Parents and carers are kept informed about their children's progress before and after sessions. Individual learning records are discussed with parents before children transfer to school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance. This impacts well on children's personal and social development. The setting strongly promotes positive values such as fairness, honesty and respect for others and its provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Arrangements to assure children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. Healthy eating is strongly encouraged through the choice of foods offered at snack time and children enjoy regular opportunities for energetic play. Strong emphasis on personal development positively encourages good behaviour. Children are sensitively encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong. Visits

and events help engage children with the local community and promote curiosity about the wider world. Opportunities, such as growing plants and observing pets encourage reflection on the wonders of the natural world. Cultural awareness is well promoted, for example through celebrating festivals and tasting foods from other countries.

The setting has good procedures to provide children with specialist support when required and liaises well with agencies in the community. This includes well implemented arrangements to support and integrate children who need extra help with their learning.

Established procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented and members of staff have a valid criminal records disclosure. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. These arrangements give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a happy, vibrant learning environment with a welcoming and inclusive ethos. Practitioners treat all children equally and with respect. They are supportive, foster good relationships and take good account of children's differing backgrounds and needs. This helps to ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners strongly encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others and they manage occasional incidents of challenging behaviour well. Equal opportunities are well promoted, but arrangements to ensure any child with disabilities does not suffer disadvantage are not sufficiently formalised.

There are enough well-qualified and experienced practitioners for the number of children. There are sufficient learning resources to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum, although provision for ICT is at an early stage. The provision for outdoor learning is well resourced and its use is well integrated with indoor activities. Imaginative use is made of all available resources, including the local environment, to enrich learning. The purpose built accommodation is fit for purpose and provides a secure environment to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum.

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

The proprietor provides dynamic and forward thinking leadership. She sets high expectations and is well supported by key managers and a committed team of practitioners. Leadership provides clear direction and skilfully promotes strategies for development. Practitioners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A purposeful and enthusiastic teamwork ethos, together with a strong sense of purpose and shared values are evident in the work of the setting. An appropriate range of policies and procedures are in place.

Leadership successfully provides strategic direction and is particularly successful in focussing on children's needs, for example in the reorganisation of educational provision and managerial procedures. Day-to-day routines are well structured and the organisation of the playgroup is effective. Practitioners contribute to an annual appraisal. This process is suitably rigorous. It is both supportive and developmental and appropriate targets are agreed.

The proprietor and key managers closely monitor developments and ensure accountability. The setting takes forward national and local priorities well. The Foundation Phase philosophy and approach is well implemented and there is strong emphasis on promoting equality, healthy lifestyles and tackling disadvantage.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has a systematic approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. In the short time since the present proprietor took over the setting a strong reflective culture has become established. Good account is taken of the views of parents, carers and stakeholders, such as through questionnaires. All practitioners are effectively involved in self-evaluation and helping to improve provision. Strengths and areas for development are identified and appropriate priorities for improvement are identified in a setting improvement plan. It is too soon to judge the impact of the current plan, but there is evidence of significant improvements since the setting was reorganised.

The impact of improvement strategies in response to the recommendations made in the last inspection is uneven. Since 2012 there is strong evidence of improvements in the provision for Welsh and the quality of planning and assessment. This work is on going and results in positive gains for children. Much has been achieved in reorganising provision and the strong focus on improving educational practice and outcomes indicates the setting is well placed to secure further improvement.

Managers monitor the implementation of initiatives closely and know well their impact. However, key elements of improvement planning, including prioritising key educational goals, action planning and focussed monitoring, are not fully established.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership working is effective and has a positive impact on children's learning. The setting's partnership with parents and carers is successful. Friendly day-to-day contacts positively encourage the informal exchange of information. When children join the setting, parents are provided with an informative induction pack and a website also provides them with useful information.

The partnership with Bodnant Community School is well developed. This benefits the children's transfer to school when they move on to the next stage of their education. The headteacher takes a close interest in the setting's development. A recently introduced initiative involves a teacher in the nursery providing advice and support for learning and teaching in the setting. This provision is developing well.

Links with the community are used well to enhance children's learning experiences.

The playgroup has links with schools and colleges and provides placements for students undertaking a range of courses.

The partnership with the local authority and other agencies is beneficial. The impact of support and quality assurance provided by the local authority is appropriate.

Resource management: Good

Careful consideration is given to the deployment of practitioners and playgroup sessions are well structured. Learning resources are efficiently organised and the provision is successful in motivating children to learn. The strong emphasis placed on practitioners' deployment and their professional development is a particular feature. Opportunities are planned for them to attend appropriate training, improve their qualifications and visit other settings to share good practice.

The proprietor plans carefully for future resource needs. Managers are pro-active in reviewing the provision of resources. Since taking over the setting in 2012 there has been strong emphasis on improving all aspects of provision, but it is too soon to judge the impact of recently introduced resources on learning and teaching. Procedures to monitor the setting's income and expenditure are secure. Annual accounts are independently audited.

The well considered use made of the funding available results in positive gains for children. This represents 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 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)

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 partnership's 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.