



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

**Early Learners Day Nursery
13 Dyserth Road
Rhyl
Denbighshire
LL18 4DW**

Date of inspection: February 2012

by

Mr W Williams

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Early Learners playgroup was established in February 2008 and has been meeting in its current premises for the past three years. It provides private nursery education for three year old children, most of who live in Rhyl and the surrounding area. The area from which children are drawn is judged as being neither prosperous nor socially and economically disadvantaged.

Children of all ability and background are admitted to the setting. These include children with additional learning needs or for whom English is an additional language. Children from different ethnic backgrounds also attend the setting.

The setting provides five morning sessions a week for three year old olds, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. Six children currently attend the setting of whom five are funded by the Denbighshire Children and Young People Partnership.

Children's education is supported by the leader, one full time and one part time practitioner. All are appropriately qualified to teach early years children.

The setting meets in a converted house which is located in a residential area. Three rooms on the first floor of the premises have been allocated to nursery children.

When children have completed their time in the setting most continue their education in local primary schools.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2011. This is its first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- learning experiences encourage children to make good progress towards meeting Foundation Phase outcomes;
- provision for literacy is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for all children;
- teaching has many good features;
- care, support and guidance is good and children are happy in the setting; and
- a range of partnership activities make a good contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvements are good because:

- the setting has clear aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that are focused on delivering a good quality provision;
- teaching and learning are well managed;
- the recently established self-evaluation system is likely to bring about further improvements; and
- the setting is developing well as a learning community.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 improve planning for developing children's thinking, investigative and creative skills;
- R2 improve provision for Welsh language development;
- R3 make better use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning; and
- R4 further develop self-evaluation procedures.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and welfare. This is because the number of relevant children present 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

Practitioners collaborate well to plan learning experiences that cater for children's needs and interests. These experiences encourage them to learn effectively and make good progress towards meeting Foundation Phase outcomes. A variety of flexible and responsive learning experiences successfully engage nearly all children and build systematically on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Nearly all activities are suitably challenging and demanding for children of all ages and abilities.

The learning opportunities provided encourage children to form positive relationships with others in the setting including adults. The children show respect and tolerance for people from other cultural backgrounds. Valuable opportunities are provided * indoors, outdoors and in the local community, for children to become independent learners who are able to experiment with new experiences and to become confident explorers of their environment.

Provision for literacy and communication and other key skills is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for all children. Detailed planning for developing children's thinking, investigative and creative skills is in its early stages of development.

Few opportunities are provided for encouraging children to use the Welsh language as much as possible in their learning and this restricts their progress. Good quality experiences are provided for promoting their awareness of the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales.

Children are actively involved in the setting's aim to act sustainably through minimising waste, saving energy and recycling paper. Through a wide range of imaginative activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year, children's understanding of the wider world is promoted effectively.

Teaching: Adequate

Teaching has many good features. Practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase and understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. Learning experiences are

generally adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able and talented. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and they do so sensitively and skilfully. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are managed effectively. A good balance is maintained between child-selected and practitioner directed activities. Imaginative use is made of a variety of resources to appeal to children's interest and improve learning. Adult support is clearly focused and makes a positive contribution to the quality of children's learning. Additional practitioners make a very valuable contribution to children learning and wellbeing.

Although children's progress and learning are assessed and tracked regularly across all areas of learning, little use is made of the information to plan the next steps in learning. The parents receive a folder containing a sample of their child's achievements at the end of each year and this gives them a good indication of progress made. However, few opportunities are provided for parents to actively contribute to their child's assessment.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are appropriate policies and procedures in the setting for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. Children are encouraged to eat healthily during snacks, to care for their personal hygiene and participate in physical activities.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development effectively, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Nature walks to the nearby woods contribute well to developing children's curiosity and their sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live. Values such as honesty, fairness, and respect for truth are strongly promoted and children taught to understand simple rules of behaviour such as sharing toys. Children are happy and secure in the company of adults at the setting and are willing to ask for help and support.

Practitioners know how to respond appropriately if challenges arise in relation to unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Children with additional learning needs have full access to all areas of learning. The leader liaises closely with the local primary school to ensure that the individual needs of children are met whilst they are at the setting. There have been no instances of the setting seeking assistance from specialist agencies

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of the learning experience and to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual.

Resources both indoor and outdoor are used well to enhance the curriculum and support learning in the classroom. The building is mainly of good quality and used effectively by practitioners.

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

Leadership: Good

Under the leader's guidance, the setting has clear aims, strategic objectives, plans and policies that are focused on delivering a good quality provision that meets children's needs. Practitioners undertake their roles and responsibilities conscientiously and collaborate effectively to ensure that the Foundation Phase is implemented successfully. Policies and procedures are implemented diligently. The setting succeeds in creating a positive ethos where children and staff feel appreciated. Common values are shared regarding learning and behaviour. Relationships with children and parents are positive and contribute well to a sense of community.

Teaching and learning are well managed and effective use made of practitioners' time, expertise and strengths. Although there is an appropriate system of practitioners' appraisal, the outcomes do not lead to agreed objectives for improvement. Practitioners have an active role in the processes which they use effectively to identify their training and development needs.

With local authority guidance, the leader ensures expectations are high and that national and local priorities are integrated into the setting programme of work.

Improving quality: Adequate

The recently established self-evaluation system has enabled the setting to identify its strengths and areas for development and to use this information to bring about improvements in children's progress and achievement. This has been substantially augmented by a thorough local authority audit which has allowed the setting to evaluate in great detail the quality of its provision. Regular questionnaires are used effectively to consult with parents about their views on the setting's work.

Information from self-evaluation is used well to prioritise the matters the setting wishes to improve. Planning for improvements includes relevant information about steps to be taken, level of support required, completion date and evaluation of outcomes. Although present procedures are effective, self-evaluation is still in its early stages of development and is yet to impact significantly on standards and provision.

The setting is developing well as a learning community. There is a growing culture of co-operation and practitioners are very open to advice and new ideas. They share information and good practice with each other and are willing to try out different ways of working.

Partnership working: Good

A range of partnership activities make a good contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. There is a productive partnership with a local primary school and arrangements for transferring assessment information are effective. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work. Practitioners work very well together, share information about children and know who to contact and when, if additional support is required for children. Productive links have been formed with a number of organisations in the local community which have a positive effect on children's learning and wellbeing. Regular visits, reports and professional advice by the local authority support teacher have a very constructive impact on the setting's development.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed to teach all aspects of the curriculum and members of staff are deployed effectively. Resources are managed well and regularly updated to meet new developments and the current needs of the children.

The leader has a thorough understanding of the setting's budget and prioritises spending well in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are carefully evaluated to make sure that they have a positive effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholders' satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say that they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Wil Williams	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.