



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

**Greenfield Playgroup
Community Centre
School Lane
Greenfield
Flintshire
CH8 7HR**

Date of inspection: February 2012

by

**Michael T. Ridout
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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Context

Greenfield Playgroup is an English-medium setting. It is situated in the semi rural village of Greenfield, near the town of Holywell in Flintshire. The setting meets in the Youth and Community Centre. The families it serves live in the village.

The locality is described as socially and economically disadvantaged. It is a Communities First Area. The setting provides care and education for three year olds and is a Flying Start provider for younger children.

The setting is open each weekday morning for Flying Start and four afternoons for Early Entitlement during school terms. It is registered for 25 children between the age of three and admission to school. At the time of the inspection there were five children on roll. The local authority (LA) funds places up to 10 hours per week.

All children attending are English speaking and British born. No families speak Welsh at home. No children have additional learning needs (ALN).

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in June 2010 and Estyn in February 2006. There have been few changes in provision and organisation since.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's performance is adequate because:

- it has a warm, inclusive ethos so that children feel safe;
- day-to-day routines and a range of play activities are well organised;
- good care and support fosters children's personal and social development;
- there are important areas for improvement in learning experiences; and
- the setting is too slow to embrace guidance for improving quality.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- leadership provides clear direction in pastoral aspects;
- practitioners work well as a team to assure children's wellbeing;
- self-evaluation identifies relevant goals for improvement;
- a vision for improvement is developing; but
- the impact of improvement strategies is limited since the last inspection.

Recommendations

In order to improve the setting should:

R1 formalise planning and assessment procedures;

R2 guide and focus teaching;

R3 provide effective educational leadership; and

R4 secure the effective implementation of action plans and evaluate their impact.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting'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?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Unsatisfactory

A suitable range of play activities engages children's interest well, but the learning experiences do not fully meet the needs of children or the wider community. The provision only partially reflects the Foundation Phase ethos.

The planning of learning activities is not sufficiently developed. There is no reference to focused and continuous activities and no assurance that activities are implemented flexibly with an appropriate balance between adult led and child selected tasks. Weekly planning sheets provide a basic framework, but only activities and resources are identified. Appropriate themes are seldom planned to provide imaginative contexts for learning. No details of the steps in learning to achieve a skill are identified and progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes is not assured. There is little evidence that the curriculum builds systematically on children's prior knowledge, understanding and skills and continuity and progression in learning is not assured.

The provision to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) lacks structure and is not securely linked to the skills framework. Furthermore, planning is not tailored to children's differing needs and abilities.

Play activities successfully encourage children to form relationships and show respect and tolerance towards others. They benefit from suitable creative and physical activities and develop a better understanding of the world they live in. The occasional use of visitors is helpful in this regard, and activities such as recycling are a good basis to raise awareness of sustainability and the impact we have on the environment.

Welsh language provision and to raise awareness of Welsh heritage and culture is at an early stage of development. The reading of stories in Welsh and the regular

introduction of new words or phrases encourage adults and children as learners of the language. However, the incidental use of everyday vocabulary, such as greetings and commands, is not established.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners provide good role models for relationships and positively encourage children to engage in play activities. They understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play in a stimulating environment. Teaching is most effective when practitioners promote dialogue and use both questions and explanations to develop children's vocabulary. Good practice, which is often intuitive, was observed during play with construction materials and when practitioners share books with children. The supervisor often provides good language models. In general, practitioners have high expectations of children's responses and successfully manage their behaviour.

Although practitioners have attended training and have guidance materials available, their understanding of the Foundation Phase is limited. Furthermore, the absence of detailed planning to guide the development of children's skills reduces the impact of teaching.

The supervisor uses a comprehensive framework for assessment to compile individual learning records. The assessment criteria are linked to key areas of child development and information has been recorded this term. In addition day-to-day assessments are sometimes noted, but these lack sufficient focus. Procedures for assessment are seldom implemented consistently and the information is rarely used to plan the next steps in learning.

Practitioners make time, on an informal basis, to be available to parents and carers to discuss their children's progress before and after sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides effective care, support and pastoral guidance to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing. The provision positively promotes spiritual, moral and social development, but too little emphasis is given to cultural development.

Warm relationships within the setting have a positive impact on children's personal and social development. Practitioners foster the values of honesty and fairness, promote good behaviour and sensitively encourage both courtesy and consideration towards others.

There are appropriate induction and transition arrangements for children entering or leaving the setting. Liaison procedures with the primary school are effective. The setting has appropriate procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required. It is aware of the services provided by agencies including the LA, health and social services. An appropriate policy to support and integrate children with ALN is in place, but the effectiveness of educational guidance for children of all abilities is limited.

Everyday procedures ensure the setting is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are implemented for outside activities. Practitioners are trained in first aid and all have a valid criminal records bureau disclosure.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

A warm, caring and inclusive ethos successfully creates a positive climate for learning through play. Good relationships help children feel safe, secure and free from undue anxiety. Practitioners take account of children's backgrounds and know well their individual needs, but little emphasis is placed on raising their awareness of diversity.

Practitioners foster tolerant attitudes, encourage understanding of the needs of others and ensure equal access to activities. They positively promote good behaviour and an appropriate policy is in place to ensure that any child with disabilities is not disadvantaged.

There are sufficient practitioners for the number of children. The adult to child ratio is very good. Practitioners have relevant qualifications and experience of working with young children. The setting has suitable and sufficient resources to provide for the Foundation Phase curriculum in most areas of learning, but provision for ICT is limited. The accommodation is suitable and used well. The room is well organised, and resources for play are easily accessible. The outdoor area is not currently available as it is being redeveloped. This project ensures opportunity to increase the range of learning experiences.

Occasional use is made of resources in the community to extend and enrich children's experiences.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
--	-----------------

Leadership: Adequate

The work of the setting is guided by appropriate aims. The required policies are in place and the supervisor is successful in creating a friendly and supportive ethos. A clear sense of purpose and shared values are evident in pastoral aspects, but strategic direction to improve educational provision is not established.

Practitioners work well as a team and have a sound understanding of their basic roles and responsibilities. Day-to-day routines are well established and the organisation of playgroup activities is good.

Although managerial procedures are not always implemented the supervisor has accurately identified relevant goals to improve provision. This work provides a good basis to establish clear vision for improvement, but communication of this vision to practitioners is at a very early stage.

A management committee has responsibility to oversee the work of the setting, but there is no evidence of its involvement in strategic planning or monitoring the setting's work. Furthermore, arrangements to promote staff development, including appraisal, are not implemented to support the work of practitioners.

The setting has been slow to embrace national and local priorities, especially the Foundation Phase philosophy and approach. In contrast, there is good emphasis on combating disadvantage through an inclusive approach.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

There is very little evidence of sustained improvement relating to the key issues raised in the last inspection. Procedures for self-evaluation are not consistently implemented and where improvement goals have been identified, there is little evidence of actions to secure improvement. However, in July 2011 the supervisor accurately identified important areas for improvement using a framework for self-evaluation provided by the LA. The results clearly recognise the setting's strengths and weaknesses and an appropriate action plan sets relevant goals for improvement. However, the means of their achievement is not clear.

There are no formalised arrangements to seek and take account of the views of stakeholders.

Members of staff participate in a network of professional practice within a local cluster of settings. This provides opportunities for training and the sharing of good practice, but the impact on the setting's practice is limited.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners successfully maintain strong links with parents and carers that have a positive impact on the provision for children. This is achieved through an informative welcome pack provided when children join the setting, effective day-to-day contacts, occasional newsletters and a notice board. Friendly, informal relationships with parents and carers help to promote communication. Parents are encouraged to voice their views, but formalised arrangements, such as a questionnaire are not implemented.

Established links with the receiving primary school help to ensure a smooth transition to school. Appropriate information is exchanged and members of staff from the school visit the setting both formally and informally.

The setting has links with some community organisations and benefits from managerial resources provided by the Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA). It has undertaken the first stage of the WPPA quality standard.

There is a strong partnership with the LA. An advisory teacher has a positive impact as a critical and supportive partner and encourages a stronger focus on developing educational provision.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting has enough learning resources except for ICT. Practitioners are well deployed to promote playgroup activities. In particular, the previous experience of an additional adult is deployed to good effect.

Although practitioners attend some training opportunities the management committee does not identify or plan to meet the development needs of individual staff, including support for the supervisor's managerial role.

The accommodation provides well for the playgroup and funding provided by Flying Start enables the development of an outdoor area. The setting is using its own resources wisely to purchase additional resources for this project.

There are appropriate budgetary arrangements to claim income for funded places, ensure the payment of staff and control expenditure. It was confirmed that the management committee implements an annual audit of accounts, but details were not available at the time of the inspection. There is no formalised planning to match spending to the setting's goals, to evaluate the impact of expenditure or to address any over or under spend.

Improvements in the organisation of resources provide a good basis to develop learning experiences and improve outcomes for children. In general, the setting uses the funding it receives appropriately. The impact on the quality of care and wellbeing is good, but value for money in educational aspects is limited.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report:

Learners:

Children settle happily in the setting. They have positive relationships with their friends and with the adults. A friendly and caring ethos encourages their involvement in play and they clearly feel safe and free from anxiety. This was evident in their confidence to choose activities and talk with adults. They demonstrate a strong sense of trust and know that practitioners will help and guide them.

Parents:

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

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Michael T. Ridout	Reporting Inspector
-------------------	---------------------

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	<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>
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>
National (NDNA)	<p>This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing</p>

	support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.