



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

**Margaret Barnard Preschool
Trefeddyg Stables
Athelstan Road
Tywyn
LL36 9AN**

Date of inspection: Mawrth 2015

by

**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

Margaret Barnard Pre-school Playgroup is situated in Trefeddyg Stables, Tywyn, in Gwynedd local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 24 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years. At present, there are 32 children on the roll, ranging in age from two to four years old. Two children currently receive funded early years education at the setting.

Most children have English as their home language and only a very few children come from Welsh speaking homes. There are currently no children with additional learning needs attending the setting.

There are three fulltime and one part time members of staff. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since September 2008.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in December 2014 and by Estyn in October 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- It provides many interesting experiences across all areas of learning
- Children have good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills
- It provides very worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their physical skills
- Provision for Welsh language development is good
- Practitioners have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievement
- Parents are well informed about their children's progress
- It is a warm, welcoming and inclusive community

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader has a very clear vision for the future of the setting
- The leader manages practitioners and the daily running of the setting very well
- Practitioners work together well as a team
- The expertise of individual practitioners is used well to provide beneficial learning experiences for children
- There is a good record of continuous improvement
- Practitioners have developed a meaningful range of partnerships
- They make good use of information from training to improve children's learning experiences

Recommendations

- A1 Use assessment information effectively to identify the specific skills that children need to learn next and to plan appropriately
- A2 Review the condition and use of resources to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all the children
- A3 Formalise meetings to ensure that the setting is managed more effectively
- A4 Develop opportunities to visit other settings and share good practice

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

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 and Welsh language. 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.

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's wellbeing. 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

The setting provides many interesting learning experiences for children based on appropriate themes such as 'Night and Day' and 'Dinosaurs'. As a result, nearly all children are well motivated and engaged in their learning. Practitioners meet the needs of more able children appropriately through providing activities that are more challenging, such as books with extended story lines and richer vocabulary and a challenging role play area. However, occasionally activities and experiences do not meet the needs of less able children.

Practitioners offer many worthwhile experiences to help children develop their literacy skills. For example, they read to the children regularly and provide two book areas, well stocked with attractive factual books and storybooks. Children have many suitable opportunities to practise their early writing skills both indoors and outside. Practitioners promote children's communication skills effectively through encouraging children to talk about what they have been learning at the end of the session. They also help children to listen and follow instructions well during regular dance sessions.

The setting develops children's numeracy skills successfully. There are useful opportunities for children to develop their matching and sorting skills, for example sorting coloured dinosaurs into groups. They encourage children to count regularly while playing and through singing number songs and rhymes such as '5 currant buns'. There are suitable opportunities to develop children's thinking skills.

Children have very worthwhile opportunities to develop their physical skills through regular dance sessions and use of the soft play area in the setting, and movement classes in the nearby leisure centre. The setting also offers valuable opportunities to develop children's creative skills through experimenting with musical instruments and paint during free-play. However, on occasions there is an over-reliance on using templates during adult directed creative activities.

Provision for developing Welsh language skills is good. Children have many worthwhile opportunities to hear and respond to spoken Welsh throughout the session. They have useful opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating St David's Day and learning traditional rhymes such as 'Mi welais Jac y Do'.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. For example, they understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and first hand experiences. The setting has well-established rules and routines that practitioners follow and reinforce instinctively. As a result, children feel safe and secure and behave well in the setting. Practitioners make good use of songs to reinforce their routines and support Welsh language development. They have high expectations of the children across most areas of learning. For example, they introduce interesting and challenging themes to help children learn about the world around them. They plan an appropriate balance between activities chosen by the child and those offered by the practitioners. This gives children useful opportunities to make choices and develop as independent learners.

Practitioners act as effective language role models for the children. They speak clearly and appropriately and make good use of opportunities to introduce Welsh words and phrases. They intervene sensitively in children's play in most instances, such as when helping children to learn how to use the see saw in the outdoor area. While practitioners are generally developing their questioning skills appropriately, they occasionally ask too many questions to test children's knowledge during focussed tasks, limiting children's opportunities to think and learn.

Practitioners observe the children and assess their progress regularly. They discuss observations during weekly team meetings and use the information appropriately to help them plan suitable future activities. They keep helpful informal records of their observations and complete a more formal record of progress each term. These records are useful in tracking children's progress overtime. The setting is beginning to use a new system to identify specific skills that children need to learn next. However, practitioners do not yet make full use of this information in their planning.

The setting keeps parents well informed about their children's progress through regular informal feedback. It also provides a useful written report covering all areas of learning at the end of the year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting supports children's health and wellbeing effectively. For example, all children are encouraged to bring a healthy snack with them to the setting, such as fruit and cheese, and to wash their hands before eating. Practitioners make sure that children get plenty of fresh air each day and that they exercise regularly.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, children learn important social skills such as responding to instructions, sitting at a table and saying

thank you for their food as part of their daily routine. They begin to learn about their own and other cultures effectively through celebrating the Chinese New Year and taking part in regular dance sessions. Practitioners encourage children to treat each other with respect and to share toys and equipment. However, they are not always successful in encouraging children to take responsibility for their use of resources and tidying them up afterwards. The setting gives children valuable opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world, such as when they watched the shadows during the recent eclipse. Suitable arrangements are in place for children to learn about sustainable development. This includes using a computer game to learn how to sort materials for recycling.

The setting has an appropriate range of policies in place to safeguard children and promote their wellbeing. Practitioners have recently received additional advice to ensure that they understand how to follow procedures effectively. As a result, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are suitable systems to support children with additional needs and the setting accesses additional support from specialist agencies as required.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to activities. Practitioners show a consistent level of care and concern towards all the children, encouraging them to develop tolerant attitudes and to learn to co-operate with one another. For example, older children support younger children well while they practise cutting dough with scissors.

The setting provides many interesting and attractive resources to support children's learning both inside and outdoors. For example, children enjoy counting wooden candles to put onto birthday cakes and using good quality books. However, in some areas, there are too many resources and a few are not in good condition. This occasionally limits children's opportunities to extend and sustain their play and make appropriate choices.

Both indoor and outdoor areas are secure. The outdoor area is well set out and maintained, including planters where children grow herbs, bulbs and vegetables. The setting recently purchased a shed to store resources, enabling them to improve the outdoor provision. They make good use of the indoor accommodation and work hard to keep it suitably maintained. They have renewed noticeboards recently, enabling them to make attractive displays of children's work. Practitioners think carefully about how they arrange the areas of learning to make best use of the available space. As a result, they succeed in providing a stimulating learning environment that meets the needs of most children. However, there is no home corner available on a daily basis to nurture children's personal and social development.

The setting makes effective use of the local environment to enhance children's learning. For example, the weekly visits to the nearby leisure centre help children to learn about their local community as well as developing their physical and language and communication skills well.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader provides a strong direction for the setting. She has a very clear vision to secure the future of the group and to achieve the best standard of education and care for the children. She is successful in inspiring others, including local business people, to support her in this. The leader manages practitioners and the daily running of the setting very well, setting high standards for herself and others.

All practitioners understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities successfully. The deputy leader fulfils her duties to a high standard and works well with the leader. The leader works effectively with outside agencies, making good use of their help and advice to ensure that the setting runs smoothly. For example, she has used advice from the local authority's support teacher to improve provision for developing children's numeracy skills.

The leader has a close working relationship with the registered person who is also the chair of the committee. As a result, the chair of the committee has a good knowledge and understanding of the setting's progress and practitioners receive valuable support with issues as they arise. However, although there is a supportive management committee in place, there are few records of formal meetings. As a result, it is not clear how the setting deals with matters such as regularly reviewing policies.

The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives. Practitioners make sure that children have many valuable opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in all areas of learning, and to learn about how to stay healthy.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders and practitioners know the setting well. They identify strengths and areas for development successfully and take appropriate action to maintain good practice and implement change.

Leaders make effective use of a new self-evaluation process to form a useful improvement plan for the coming year. They prioritise spending well to develop children's skills and have bought additional resources for the recently developed maths area, leading to improved provision. The setting has a good record of continuous improvement. For example, it rearranged the learning environment to maintain the standard of the provision and respond to the different needs of the younger children recently admitted to the group.

Leaders work effectively with other agencies such as the local authority's support teacher and CSSIW. They are open to new ideas and are willing to act on recommendations. For example, they followed advice from the local authority support teacher to develop their use of Welsh songs and rhymes, supporting children's Welsh language development. Leaders acted immediately on advice following their recent CSSIW inspection, improving safeguarding procedures appropriately.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has developed a meaningful range of partnerships that contribute effectively to children's achievements and wellbeing.

Practitioners have a strong commitment to sharing information about the daily life of the group with parents. They make careful and effective use of the internet to share valuable information about what children do during the sessions and pass on messages about future events. They display useful information relating to health and wellbeing helpfully on the setting's noticeboards. Parents have both formal and regular informal opportunities to learn about their child's progress. As a result, the setting has a very positive relationship with parents.

Practitioners use community links effectively to support children's learning. For example, visits from a police officer and a lifeboat crew member help children to learn about keeping safe locally. Links with local businesses help with the upkeep of the building. The setting has a useful partnership with the local primary school, sharing valuable information when children move on to the next stage of their education. The constructive partnership with the local authority's advisory teacher, Wales Pre-school Providers Association and CSSIW helps with continuous improvement in the setting.

Resource management: Good

Well-qualified practitioners run the setting effectively and they make good use of their individual expertise to enhance children's learning experiences. Examples include providing weekly dance sessions to support creative and physical development, and reading stories in Welsh to more able children.

Practitioners access a suitable range of useful training to keep up-to-date with recent developments and further develop their skills. They make good use of the training to improve children's learning experiences, such as providing more opportunities for children to practice sorting and matching skills in the outdoor area. However, practitioners do not benefit from opportunities to learn from other settings or share good practice.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of practitioners. These help to ensure that all practitioners feel valued and give of their best.

The management committee keep the budget under very close review. They use funds resourcefully to ensure that the group remains sustainable and to support children's learning. Leaders prioritise spending and identify future spending priorities carefully according to the setting's improvement plan.

In view of the overall quality of provision and leadership, the setting provides good 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 reporting inspector

Sheila Margaret Birkhead	Arolygydd Cofnodol
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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 partnerships 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.