



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

**St Brides Major Playgroup
Church Hall
St Brides Major
Vale of Glamorgan
CF32 0SH**

Date of inspection: October 2013

by

**Mary Dyas
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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About the setting

St Brides Major Playgroup is an English medium playgroup which operates from the church hall on the outskirts of the village of St Brides Major in the Vale of Glamorgan. The playgroup is open for two sessions a day from Monday to Thursday and is registered to provide full day care for up to 30 children aged from two to four years.

At the time of the inspection there were 17 children on roll of which ten were three year olds all of whom were in receipt of funded educational provision. The children come to the playgroup from a wide area and all speak English as their first language. The area around St Brides Major is rural and relatively prosperous. A minority of children have additional learning needs and the setting supports them well.

The playgroup has the use of a large hall with an adjoining smaller room and a well-developed outdoor area accessed directly from the hall. The hall is used by several other groups in the community and equipment has to be set up and put away almost daily.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in December 2012 and Estyn in November 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is judged to be good because:

- All children are happy in the setting;
- All children enjoy their learning and make good progress from their starting points;
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and caring and support children in developing confidence and self-esteem;
- The setting provides a good range of activities which interest and engage the children; and
- Teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The current self-evaluation document shows a good understanding of what the setting needs to do to improve;
- Current targets are realistic and there is good evidence that the setting is working towards achieving them; and
- Staff are conscientious and hardworking and are committed to providing the best possible learning environment for the children in their care.

Recommendations

R1. Improve the provision for the teaching of Welsh – this has been identified in the setting's development plan.

R2. Build on the work already being undertaken to improve the provision for Information and Control Technology (ICT) – this has been identified in the setting's development plan.

R3. Establish a system to evaluate the impact of staff professional training on children's learning and wellbeing.

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?

Good

Standards: Good

All children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their age and stage of development. They demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning and are eager to try new and varied activities. Almost all are articulate and able to express themselves clearly and make themselves understood. Older and more able children show their understanding of the purpose of writing when they write their names correctly on their work. All children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. They handle books correctly and know that words and pictures carry meaning and all enjoy listening to stories that are read to them. Many show their understanding by joining in with familiar passages and asking appropriate questions.

All children are making good progress in numeracy. They refer to numbers and use mathematical language descriptively during the course of their play; for example, when cutting fruit for snack time they talk about having to cut the pieces small and not too big for the other children to eat. Most are beginning to recognise written numbers and count objects accurately to at least five. All children are developing their understanding and use of ICT as they play confidently with a range of electronic toys, use a mouse to move objects around on the computer screen and use a camera to record interesting moments in their day.

All children show increasing understanding of familiar Welsh words and phrases, count to ten and are beginning to name basic colours. They understand simple instructions and use of individual words in Welsh but most do not yet use them spontaneously themselves.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy and confident in the setting. They come into the playgroup happily and settle immediately to an activity. All join in with activities and are interested to try out new experiences such as exploring the use of metal detectors to find objects hidden in the sand. All are developing responsibility and independence through taking their turn at helping to prepare for the morning snack by cutting up fruit and buttering crackers.

Children all have good relationships with the adults in the setting. They show that they trust and care for them and freely ask for help. Behaviour in the setting is good. Children understand the need to share and to take turns and know that it is important to treat each other nicely.

Most children make clear decisions about what they would like to do during a session including whether they play indoors or outside. They become engaged in the activities they choose and often spend appreciable lengths of time concentrating on what they are doing. All children interact well with one another and play happily together in pairs and small groups. Children contribute to planning for a new topic by making suggestions of activities they would like to try and know that if they ask for a particular activity the practitioners will try to organise this for them.

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

Practitioners plan together a wide range of exciting and interesting activities for the children. Planning is based on the Foundation Phase principles and addresses all areas of learning. Planned adult-led activities include provision for extension activities for the older and more able. The setting makes very good use of the outside area to extend the planned activities indoors. The Welsh language is promoted during circle time and focused sessions. However, there are many missed opportunities for using songs, rhymes and simple words and phrases throughout the session. Good use is made of St David's day to introduce the children to Welsh traditions and customs such as costumes, food and songs.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good and the setting provides a range of imaginative and stimulating activities. All practitioners are well qualified and experienced and demonstrate a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They ensure that all children are purposefully engaged and act as good models for role play and when introducing new equipment. Children are encouraged to be independent and practitioners consider their comments and ideas when planning future activities. Staff work well together and interact positively with the children. They intervene appropriately and know when to stand back and allow children to investigate and explore for themselves. Children behave well and staff respond kindly yet firmly to deal with any inappropriate behaviour.

All staff are involved in making observations of children's progress. These are useful and clearly linked to both learning intentions and children's individual targets. Practitioners identify individual learning targets for the children in their keyworker group. Information from observations and assessments is used to inform the completion of each child's learning profile and also to prepare the report given to parents and carers when their child moves on from the setting. This report gives good information about children's progress under the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are good arrangements in place to ensure children's health and wellbeing and these contribute positively to children's general development. Induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly into the setting. Practitioners are kind and caring and provide children with positive praise. Policies and procedures are in place to promote healthy living and well-being. Arrangements to ensure children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are good. They promote a sense of curiosity about the world and foster values such as honesty and fairness. Good experiences are provided for children to learn about the wider world; for example when they discuss celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Divali. Children are encouraged to share and to co-operate with one another.

Provision for children with additional learning needs is very good. Staff liaise with outside agencies and work hard to support integration and full access to all activities. Meticulous play plans are regularly reviewed with parents.

Procedures to ensure the setting is safe and secure are good. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners are aware of their responsibilities. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff are robust and adhered to and there are good procedures for managing children's arrival at and leaving the setting.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup fosters a caring and inclusive ethos where all children are valued and encouraged to treat one another fairly. All children have access to the full range of activities regardless of age or ability. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. Staff have worked hard on the outdoor provision to provide a learning environment which enables children to explore a wide range of interesting experiences. Children have free access to this area easily from the main hall.

The setting employs sufficient well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. There are ample good quality resources to support the planned activities.

The setting makes use of the local area and provides a range of opportunities for children to expand their experiences through learning from visitors.

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

Leadership is good. All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and have a shared vision for providing good quality experiences for the children. There is a well-established culture of self-improvement amongst practitioners which helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. The leader responds well to advice and support and ensures that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

Documentation provided for parents clearly lists the main objectives of the setting and the provision available. Procedures for performance management are robust and individual targets are set for the staff which are reviewed regularly. Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities, for example the Design to Smile initiative to encourage children to brush their teeth and recent training in strategies to develop Forest School experiences for the children.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is very much part of the work of the setting and clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. Targets for improvement clearly identify necessary resources and timescales and practitioners work together to review progress towards targets. The setting has a good understanding of the need to assess improvement against the impact on teaching and learning.

An annual quality of care review ensures all stakeholders are consulted and provides a good foundation to develop structured self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents and carers. Newsletters and daily comments keep them well informed. Almost all parents speak highly of the work of the setting and all say their children enjoy attending. The playgroup has good relationships with the local school and almost all children move on to the reception class. The school invites the setting to join in with events such as their Christmas concert and summer Teddy Bears Picnic and the playgroup invites children in the reception class to return to the setting for their Christmas concert.

The local authority support teacher works effectively with the setting and practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are well deployed during the sessions and learning resources are used imaginatively both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners are appropriately qualified and experienced in working with young children and the setting makes good use of Foundation Phase training provided by the local authority to support the continuous professional development of staff to improve the provision for the children.

Good quality learning resources support the children's activities and the available accommodation both indoors and outdoors is used effectively.

The setting's finances are carefully managed and spending is considered carefully to ensure it is cost effective. The setting gives 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

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas	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	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.