



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 Padarn's Playgroup and Nursery
Llandadarn Road
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 1EX**

Date of inspection: March 2013

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

St Padarn's Playgroup and Nursery is an English-medium setting situated next to St Padarn's RC Primary School in Aberystwyth. The locality served by the setting is described as neither prosperous nor disadvantaged.

The setting provides sessional day care and education for children aged between two and four years old. It offers morning and afternoon sessions, plus a lunch club, on weekdays during school terms. It is registered for 19 children. At the time of the inspection there were 36 children on roll, including 21 three-year-olds, 18 of which are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Most children attending are English speaking and British born. No families speak Welsh at home. A very few of the children need extra support for their learning. A few speak English as an additional language.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in July 2012 and Estyn in January 2007. A new management committee structure was established in Autumn 2012

The setting achieved the Wales Pre-school Providers Association Quality Assured standard (2010), Healthy Preschool accreditation (2012) and the Designed to Smile bronze award (2012).

Summary

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

Current performance

The overall judgement on the current performance of the setting is good because:

- many children make steady progress and achieve good standards overall;
- a wide range of learning experiences successfully engage children's interest;
- the staff promote children's personal development and wellbeing particularly effectively; and
- the staff and children have very good relationships.

Prospects for improvement

The overall judgement on prospects for improvement of the provider is adequate because:

- the management committee provides clear strategic direction;
- the provision is well managed and organised; and
- self-evaluation and planning for further improvement is developing well.

However:

- the setting has made little progress since the last inspection; and
- it is too soon to judge the impact of current initiatives.

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards of literacy and numeracy for more able children

R2 Plan learning activities that challenge all children effectively

R3 Use evidence from assessments to plan children's next steps in learning effectively

R4 Improve the quality of improvement plans to help guide and monitor their implementation

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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?	Good
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Standards: Good

Many children make good progress in relation to their starting points and achieve good overall standards. They steadily acquire new knowledge and skills as they enthusiastically explore their surroundings and try out new experiences.

Most children have appropriate speaking and listening skills. Many spontaneously begin simple conversations, for example during role play or when making bread. They make their needs known, ask sensible questions and express themselves clearly. A few use an extended vocabulary. With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and they enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. A majority handle books appropriately as readers. A few show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story. Most recognise their name and are beginning to link text to meaning. Mark making skills steadily develop, and a few experiment with 'writing' in play. Progress in early mathematical skills is 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 to at least 10. They name common shapes such as square and triangle and match and count objects, for example when completing puzzles. They have an appropriate awareness of time in the context of the setting's routines. Competence in using a narrow range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is developing well. A few confidently use the computer mouse to 'click on' pictures and control images on the screen.

Competence in Welsh is steadily 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.

Children learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress. However, more able children do not always achieve well.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children are keen to learn. They understand the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. They are aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet. Nearly all develop good social skills, eat a range of healthy foods and participate with enthusiasm in energetic outdoor activities.

With few exceptions children enter the setting confidently and happily engage in the activities provided. Many show a good level of independence. They are well motivated, sustain interest and concentration for appropriate periods and readily choose activities. However, the extent of their involvement in making decisions about learning and in the life of the setting is at an early stage of development.

Nearly all children have appropriate levels of self-confidence and have high self-esteem. They readily make their needs known and express their preferences clearly. Relationships within the setting are very good. Behaviour is good and most show appropriate courtesy and consideration for others. They take turns, share equipment and undertake simple day-to-day jobs well.

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

The setting provides a wide range of imaginative learning experiences. The staff know children's needs well. Planning to encourage children's choice and free movement between activities is appropriate. Daily use of the outdoor area to promote a range of activities is well established. The setting's provision promotes children's progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes appropriately.

The staff plan the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills successfully. However, there are too few opportunities for children to use ICT. Planning is well structured and interesting topics provide a good framework to ensure progression in learning. The staff promote opportunities for children to solve problems, be independent and experiment with the world around them well. However, plans do not contain enough detail of what children need to do or what they need to do to achieve. This means that children are not always challenged well enough. In particular, this slows the progress of more able children.

Provision for children's Welsh language skills is good. However, the incidental use of everyday vocabulary, such as greetings and commands, is less well established.

The setting's provision to promote awareness of the culture and traditions of Wales is appropriate. The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to learn about sustainability, recycling and the impact they have on the global community.

Teaching: Adequate

Members of staff promote successfully a happy and purposeful learning environment. They generally have high expectations of children and skilfully promote their personal and social development.

Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and of the Foundation Phase. They increasingly use a range of teaching approaches well to gain children's interest, for example in recently introduced mathematics activities. These make learning fun for the whole group and successfully promote good achievement. However, staff are sometimes slow to adapt teaching to meet the differing needs of children. The staff generally ensure an appropriate balance between child selected and adult led activities. However, on occasions adult led activities are over structured. Children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately when needed.

The setting has appropriate procedures for assessment, but the staff make limited use of the information to help shape the next steps in children's learning. Day-to-day

observations of children's achievements and focused assessments are used appropriately to compile individual learning records. The setting is developing learning diaries that clearly note key achievements, such as matching and naming shapes, for each child. Parents value informal communication with practitioners about their child's progress before and after sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides high quality care, support and guidance. Arrangements to assure children's health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. The promotion of children's personal development is good. This encourages a sense of curiosity about the world, fosters the values of honesty and fairness, successfully promotes good behaviour and engages children in a range of community and cultural activities. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good, but the provision for spiritual development is less evident.

There are well-established arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting. The setting has appropriate procedures to provide children with personal and specialist support when required and liaises well with support agencies. There are effective arrangements to support and integrate children who need extra help with their learning, but the provision to support more able children is at an early stage of development. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. It has a warm, friendly and supportive ethos that values individual qualities. Very good relationships help children feel safe and free from undue anxiety. Practitioners promote awareness of diversity appropriately and positively encourage sensitivity and understanding towards others. They encourage good behaviour successfully and ensure equal access to all activities. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that any children with disabilities do not suffer disadvantage.

There are sufficient practitioners with relevant qualifications for the number of children on roll. In most areas the setting is well resourced to meet the needs of children and the Foundation Phase. The provision for ICT is limited. In general, the staff makes good use of learning resources. There is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the children. Staff make suitable use of indoor and outdoor areas other than the small fenced outdoor area alongside the main room.

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

The setting is well led and managed. The management committee supports the staff very effectively. The impact of leadership is good overall. This results in clear strategic direction and a shared sense of purpose. Members of staff have a sound understanding of their role and responsibilities. They work well as a team.

The required policies and procedures are in place. The setting has a clear statement of purpose and strategic planning is well focused and clear. The setting leader promotes shared values and a positive teamwork ethos. There is appropriate emphasis on developing the work of staff and raising expectations. Members of staff meet regularly to discuss and plan activities. However, initiatives to help achieve the setting's goals are not always fully developed.

The management committee is effective and well informed. It maintains close oversight of the setting and communicates clearly with parents. Systematic arrangements for appraisal and to promote practitioners' professional development are implemented. The setting leader reflects on professional advice and readily embraces national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Adequate

There is limited evidence of improvements since the last inspection. The newly introduced procedures for self-evaluation are rigorous and planning for improvement is very well focused. Appropriate account is taken of the views of parents, and carers. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of current initiatives.

Procedures to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the setting are effective. The self-evaluation report is accurate and links closely with the targets identified in the setting's plans for improvement. However, this planning does not clearly identify how further improvements will be secured and resourced.

Networks of professional practice support practitioners' professional development well. In particular, networking within the local cluster successfully encourages the sharing of good practice. This impacts well on the organisation of learning resources within the setting.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has beneficial partnerships with parents, the adjoining primary school, a local college and the local authority. It is also a member of the Wales Pre-school Playgroups Association. These links impact well on the quality of service provided.

The partnership with parents and carers is successful. It develops positive relationships, encourages their involvement and thereby helps develop children's wellbeing and progress. Parents receive an informative prospectus and occasional newsletters. Informal day-to-day communication is friendly and effective in keeping parents informed about their child's work and planned activities. Partnership working among practitioners steadily enhances provision.

Links with the local primary school help support children's smooth transfer there. The recent co-option of the headteacher to the management committee helps foster both the sharing of resources and expertise. The setting uses the community to enhance provision well, such as the interesting activities provided by the Forestry Commission.

Partnership with the local authority is well established and results in beneficial professional support and training. Members of staff respond positively to the support and advice received from a range of external agencies. In particular the setting leader benefits from attending training provided by the local authority. This impacts well on the quality of learning.

Resource management: Good

The overall management of staff and resources is good. This has a positive impact on provision so that most children are well motivated to learn. In general, members of staff are suitably deployed, but opportunities to share expertise and model best practice are seldom developed. Learning resources are well organised and daily routines ensure that a wide range of activities is provided.

The management committee oversees the setting's finances effectively. Through subtle changes to the service provided it has returned the setting to a stable financial position. Grants have been secured for some key improvements, but the costs of meeting important targets in the setting improvement plan are not sufficiently clear. Planning to update resources is at an early stage of development.

The setting uses the available resources to good effect. Due to the progress children make and the care they receive, the provision provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. Brief conversations with parents confirm they appreciate the work of the setting and say that their children enjoy the sessions.

Responses to discussions with children

During the sessions observed children quickly settled and happily engaged in activities. They have very good relationships with practitioners and a warm, friendly ethos ensure that children feel safe and secure. This was clearly evident in their confidence to initiate conversations with adults. They know that practitioners help them and that they must try to be kind to others and to behave well.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Michael Thomas 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 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>

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.