



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Meifod Minibeasts Playgroup  
The Hut  
c/o Ysgol Meiford  
Meifod  
Powys  
SY22 6DF**

**Date of inspection: November 2019**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

## About Meifod Minibeasts Playgroup

Name of setting	Meifod Minibeasts Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full day care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Charlotte Whitehall
Person in charge	Charlotte Whitehall
Number of places	16
Age range of children	2 – 9 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	3
Number of children funded for up to five terms	5
Opening days / times	9.00 – 5.30 Tuesday - Friday
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and intends to become a bilingual service or demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
Date of previous CIW inspection	21/11/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection	30/09/2013
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	12/11/2019

Additional information

There are currently no children with additional needs attending the setting and a very few children have English as an additional language.

## Summary

Theme	Judgement
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Learning</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care and development</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and assessment</b> (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	<b>Good</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Non-compliance**

**No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.**

## **Recommendations**

R1 Ensure that accidents and incidents are recorded accurately and consistently

R2 Improve the outdoor provision to ensure that children experience a greater range of learning experiences

R3 Ensure that leaders prioritise areas for improvement and monitor progress more effectively

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children make choices and decisions about how they play and learn. They regularly contribute ideas for topics, for example when discussing which activities they would like to take part in the following week in the out of school club. They sell reindeer food to raise money, which is used to buy new resources. Children express themselves clearly and know they will be listened to. For example, they ask for help to fasten their coats confidently and suggest new resources to be purchased such as larger bikes.

Nearly all children are content and settled. They happily separate from their care giver on arrival, before writing their name on white boards and settling straight to activities. Well-established routines provide children with a sense of security. This results in children feeling relaxed because they are emotionally prepared for the next task and they understand what is expected of them. Nearly all children have positive bonds of affection with practitioners, which enable them to feel comfortable and happy. For example, children chat to practitioners about their weekend excitedly and enjoy receiving cuddles.

Nearly all children co-operate and interact well with each other. For example, children follow instructions with varying levels of support and successfully share resources such as the tools in the dough making corner. Children in the after-school club resolve conflicts between themselves well and are sensitive to the needs of others. They support the younger children well by including them in games and offering them help when needed. A few children are becoming resilient. They get straight back up when they fall over and are kind towards one another.

Many children are engaged, interested in their play and learning and like coming to the setting. They enjoy making up their own games, for example when playing with the dinosaurs, making homes for them. They enjoy music activities and sensory experiences with foam. Many children sustain interest in their learning and show good concentration and perseverance skills such as rolling the dough flat enough for the cutters to be used. However, a few children are not positively stimulated during outdoor learning and do not engage in these experiences well enough.

Nearly all children are developing well. The good variety of learning and play experiences provided by practitioners enables them to develop a range of skills and promotes their all-round development. For example, most children are making good progress with their self-help skills because, at snack time, all children, including the youngest, have a go at serving themselves and cleaning up spillages. They scoop porridge in to their own bowls, spread butter, pour their own drinks and take their cups and plates to the kitchen when finished. This promotes their all-round development effectively.

**Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good**

Nearly all children achieve well and make good progress from their individual starting points. They acquire new skills and knowledge readily and explore their environment and learning experiences enthusiastically.

Most children speak confidently and listen attentively to practitioners and each other. They convey their views very well and listen to those of others carefully, for example when they discuss the most suitable clothes to wear on snowy days. Most children respond to simple questions eagerly and follow instructions competently, for example when tidying up dishes at snack time. Nearly all children enjoy singing songs enthusiastically and most listen well to stories and join in with familiar phrases confidently. Most recognise their name when they self-register and a few find the names of their friends. Many children enjoy sharing stories with adults and handle books carefully, turning pages and chatting about the illustrations. Most children develop their mark making skills well. They copy their name and use chalk and pens to draw pictures. A very few are developing their understanding of early writing, for example when they write a letter to the tooth fairy.

Most children develop their numeracy skills well. They count to eight reliably during registration and clap to the corresponding number enthusiastically. They copy the number onto white boards confidently. Most children join in with counting songs eagerly and many identify numbers to ten in their play, for example when recognising numbers on pebbles when playing with dinosaurs. In addition, many children use mathematical language during their play well and develop appropriate problem-solving skills. For example, they work collaboratively to find out how to make a campfire using mud and leaves and how to create a ramp for a pre-programmable toy.

Most children develop their physical skills effectively. They use a range of tools with good control and accuracy, such as when they butter their own pancakes and thread beads. They ride bikes with good co-ordination and move to music enthusiastically.

Many children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment confidently. They use a tablet computer to take photographs of their friends and the things that interest them outside. They use replica equipment, such as mobile phones and computers, in role play areas purposefully. Many children are beginning to use pre-programmable toys skilfully, setting them to move along a road.

Most children develop their Welsh language skills effectively. They respond to a range of familiar phrases and words positively, for example when greeting others and asking for drinks at snack time. They join in with songs and rhymes well and identify the weather and days of the week with encouragement.

Many children develop their creative skills effectively through activities such as painting and modelling using dough. They use their imaginations well during role play, for example when pretending to be shopkeepers and by acting as dinosaurs in a den. They participate in music and movement sessions enthusiastically and use accompanying props successfully.

Nearly all children behave very well, share resources willingly and play collaboratively with one another. A few children are beginning to consider the needs of their friends by asking an adult to peel a banana for a friend and collecting feathers to share with them.

### **Care and development: Good**

Nearly all practitioners follow effective procedures, which keep children safe and healthy appropriately. All practitioners have up-to-date training certificates in paediatric first aid, child protection and food safety and the setting's policies and procedures are mostly followed successfully. However, a few practitioners do not record information on children's accident forms consistently enough. Practitioners fully understand the child protection policy, and the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. They follow good hygiene practices and leaders demonstrate a commitment to promoting healthy living by providing healthy food and drink for the children. In addition, practitioners provide daily physical play opportunities both indoors and outdoors, which benefit children positively.

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of child development and, as a result, they manage children's interactions and behaviour well. They have high expectations and listen to and respect children's views. For example, children who do not want to sit down at circle time are spoken to sensitively, which results in a calm and reassuring atmosphere. Nearly all practitioners are consistent in their approach and celebrate positive behaviour well, for example when praising children for sharing the electronic toys or being kind to their friends. They speak to children in an engaging tone, which provides a sense of fun and enjoyment that has a positive impact on children's learning and play.

Nearly all practitioners show warmth and kindness towards children and successfully meet their individual needs. For example, they provide children with stability and security by reassuring them when they are upset and acknowledge their feelings. They know who the quieter ones are and make sure they also contribute during circle time. Nearly all practitioners build children's confidence by letting them solve problems by themselves and allowing them to make mistakes. For example, they allow children to build building block towers and to work out why they keep on collapsing. The setting promotes equality well, ensuring that all children have access to all areas of learning. Leaders have appropriate arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs. For example, they provide care plans for individual children, involve specialist agencies when needed and work in close partnership with parents. This helps practitioners to meet the needs of the children.

### **Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good**

Nearly all practitioners work together effectively to plan a broad range of learning experiences that reflect the philosophy of the foundation phase successfully. They plan interesting and stimulating activities that respond to children's interests well. For example, they plan nature hunts and provide worthwhile role play areas for children to develop their imagination and vocabulary. Practitioners provide children with valuable opportunities to contribute their own ideas to plans, such as using mind



maps to capture their views. They are all good language role models. They use questions skilfully to develop children's thinking skills, such as asking them to predict what might happen next in stories.

Nearly all practitioners use a beneficial range of teaching strategies to encourage and motivate children to learn, particularly indoors. They use a wide range of resources imaginatively to ignite children's curiosity, such as using cuddly toys to promote Welsh language skills. They provide a good balance between child selected and practitioner led activities. Nearly all know when to engage with children to develop their learning appropriately and when to allow children to explore for themselves.

The setting's provision to promote children's literacy skills is effective. Practitioners encourage children to share their ideas and opinions well, such as discussing where bananas come from. They encourage children to look at books in a designated area, as well as during their play. Nearly all practitioners share books with individual children, which promotes good book handling skills. There are many opportunities for children to recognise their names, such as when they get ready for snack. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their mark making skills using a range of media such as chalk and a tablet computer.

There are beneficial activities to develop children's numeracy skills. Children have regular opportunities to count, for example shovelfuls of compost and how many marshmallows they have for a campfire. Nearly all practitioners promote mathematical language effectively. For example, they encourage children to identify shapes and colours in their play.

Nearly all practitioners use every day Welsh appropriately during whole group sessions to greet, praise children and discuss the weather. They use Welsh consistently well during children's learning and play, such as encouraging them to respond to instructions. They also encourage children to sing familiar Welsh songs and listen to simple stories. Practitioners promote children's awareness of Welsh heritage appropriately. They celebrate St David's Day and 'Diwrnod Santes Dwynwen' and provide costumes for dressing up.

The setting promotes children's cultural awareness effectively through sharing books and stories, and by providing a suitable range of dressing up clothes. They celebrate other cultural events and important religious festivals including Diwali and Chinese New Year by listening to stories and tasting new foods. The leader has forged a successful link with a school in Vietnam, which helps children to learn about different cultures.

The setting invites worthwhile visitors to the setting to enrich children's learning experiences. Recent visitors include a parent with an exotic pet and a talk from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to use ICT equipment to enhance their learning and to develop their communication skills purposefully, for example by using replica phones, pre-programmable toys and a tablet computer to take photographs when on a walk outside.

The setting has effective arrangements to assess and track children's progress and development. Practitioners carry out regular observations of the children to inform assessment records and identify next steps in learning successfully. They provide parents with valuable updates about what their child has been learning, including a useful end of year report.

### **Environment: Good**

The leader provides a safe and secure environment for all children and practitioners. Nearly all practitioners are fully aware of the setting's health and safety procedures and implement them effectively. The setting has comprehensive written risk assessments that ensure that potential hazards in the environment are identified and reduced or eliminated. For example, practitioners control access to the setting well and ensure that all doors and gates are locked appropriately. All visitors are recorded on arrival and the attendance of children and practitioners is logged accurately. This ensures that all people in the building are accounted for and demonstrates adult to child ratios meet requirements.

The leader provides children with a welcoming and well-decorated indoor environment, which reflects the foundation phase principles well. The design and layout of the room promote children's independence effectively and provide a suitable space where children can play, explore and learn. Practitioners have created zones, including a writing table, role play and construction areas. These provide a wide range of play opportunities such as imaginative play and, through creativity, children begin to make sense of the world around them. Practitioners create a sense of belonging by providing children with individual coat pegs and displaying children's work that celebrates their achievements successfully. Practitioners plan appropriately to ensure that children use the outdoor learning area regularly. However, outdoor resources do not stimulate children's interests well enough and outside learning opportunities are limited.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure that toys and resources are clean, in an appropriate condition and well matched to children's ages and stages of development. For example, out of school club children are provided with more complex board games, a computer console and larger chairs to ensure that their interests are met and they can sit and play comfortably. Children can access toys easily, enabling them to follow their own interests. For example, children drape material over themselves and use torches to pretend that they are in 'outer space'. Practitioners promote children's curiosity effectively by providing them with real items in their play such as binoculars, torches and magnifying glasses. This supports children well, as they explore the world through first-hand experiences.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The leader has a clear vision for the setting. She works with all practitioners effectively and has a strong focus on creating a positive ethos and caring environment where everyone feels valued. The leader communicates this vision to parents and practitioners effectively. The management committee receives up-to-date information about the setting's work from the leader. They meet regularly to monitor practices and to provide financial support. This allows them to develop their role more effectively in order to support and improve the work of the setting.

There is a strong commitment to teamwork and the leader works collaboratively with practitioners to develop children's wellbeing and learning successfully. Practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities within the setting and are skilled at reflecting on the effectiveness of the provision. For example, they have set up individual reading sessions for children, in order to encourage them to handle books with greater care and interest.

The leader follows robust recruitment procedures, ensures that the setting has enough suitably qualified practitioners and deploys them to support children's wellbeing, play and learning effectively. She has high expectations of herself and practitioners. The leader monitors the effectiveness of practitioners' skills regularly, through annual appraisals, regular supervisions and informal observations of them at work. Practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and strive to improve their performance. For example, implementing recent training on 'Ready, Steady, Music' has had a positive impact on children's creative and physical development. This ensures that practitioners improve their performance and practice successfully.

The setting has effective systems for identifying its strengths and areas for development. The leader consults with practitioners, parents and children appropriately as part of the process. She uses the information well and acts on any ideas thoughtfully. For example, following feedback, children now have regular opportunities to visit places in the community to develop their learning about the world around them. However, the setting's improvement plan does not include realistic costs or timescales, nor are they regularly reviewed by leaders to measure progress. As a result, the setting's ability to improve important aspects of the provision has been limited.

The setting has developed a worthwhile range of partnerships. It communicates effectively with parents through regular newsletters, social media and daily face to face contact. This ensures that they are kept well informed of their children's progress and involves them in the work of the setting effectively. The setting has worthwhile links with the local authority advisory teacher and acts on her advice and guidance successfully. Recently, she has supported them to make the reading area more accessible to children.

The setting has established beneficial links with the local school. Children use the school grounds to experience the natural world and they attend school concerts. The leader liaises with the foundation phase teacher to support planning and to ensure that appropriate information is passed on at points of transition. The headteacher attends meetings of the management committee. Practitioners use the local community well to enhance children's learning experiences. Activities include taking them to decorate the Christmas tree in the church, visiting the local shops and using the village hall to facilitate cooking activities.

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
<b>Poor</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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Publication date: 17/01/2020