



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

**A report on**

**Sŵn y Don Playgroup**

**Ysgol Swn y Don  
Penmaenrhos Old Colwyn  
Old Colwyn  
Conwy  
LL29 9LL**

**Date of inspection: May 2022**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

**This report is also available in Welsh.**

## About Swn y Don Playgroup

Name of setting	Swn Y Don Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full day Care to include after school care
Registered person(s)	N/A
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Bernadette Thomas
Person in charge	Suzanne Pearce
Number of places	15 places per session
Age range of children	From 2 to 11 years
Number of 3 and 4 year old children	18
Number of children who receive funding for early education	7
Opening days / times	Monday to Friday 9.00am to 2.45pm and 2.45pm to 5.30pm - After School Club
Flying start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of people/children who use, or intend to use their service. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care'.
Date of previous CIW inspection	This is the first inspection following registration 01.07.2019

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Date of previous Estyn inspection	This is the first inspection
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	24/05/2022

## **Non-compliance**

We identified non-compliance in relation to Care and Development, Environment and Leadership and Management and we have issued Priority Action Notices to the provider.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice(s). The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Information on all non-compliance is included in the Action and Improvement Summary report, which will be sent separately to the report by CIW.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Ensure that practitioners use effective strategies to develop all children's communication and language skills
- R2 Use observations of children's play and exploration to support their learning and development
- R3 Further develop the environment to promote learning through play across the curriculum
- R4 Strengthen processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure a clear impact on learning and development
- R5 Ensure that the setting has effective policies and procedures that are followed consistently
- R6 Address the areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection

## **What happens next**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Estyn and the Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales are of the opinion that focused improvement is required in relation to this setting. The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn and CIW will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

### Well-being:

All children have a good sense of belonging. They feel settled, happy and confident, for example making the sound of the windscreen wipers as they drive a pretend bus. Children in after school club play outside together well, such as when enjoying imaginary games like hide and seek.

Most children arrive eagerly and cope very well as they separate from their parents and carers. They form close bonds with the practitioners, which has a positive impact on their well-being and motivation. The majority of children settle without any difficulty. Those that struggle receive gentle comfort and reassurance from practitioners. Children are aware that practitioners will listen to their choices and strive to respond to their needs. They approach practitioners when they are hurt and receive comfort from them.

Around half of the children make purposeful choices. These children speak with confidence during group activities such as circle time and snack time. For example, children ask for more milk during snack time. They move between different activities confidently with some choosing to use the role-play resources in the home corner whilst others go outdoors to play in the sand tray. The children in the after-school club make appropriate choices about their play, for example playing outdoors or watching the television. Around half of children express their views clearly and communicate their needs and preferences using non-verbal clues such as pointing. Children who are not ready to sit at circle time, have the freedom and choice to happily explore their learning environment.

Most children are enthusiastic and interested in their play for some of the time. However, they do not always gain a sense of achievement as access to age-appropriate resources is limited. A few children concentrate for an appropriate amount of time, for example when showing excitement when using a sieve in the sand tray, enjoying the sensation of the sand on their skin. Children respond well to encouragement and instructions from practitioners and join in enthusiastically with the song session at circle time. A few of the younger children feel a sense of pride, as they roll playdough successfully. A minority of the older children do not always show respect for resources. For example, a handheld computer was dropped to the floor and others stood on it.

A few children complete self-care tasks independently, or with staff encouragement if needed. For example, they wash their hands at appropriate times. However, there are missed opportunities for younger children to develop independence at snack time as they do not arrange their plates and cups, help themselves to food or pour their own drink. The older children in the after-school club have more opportunities to be independent, for example, cutting up their own fruit.

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

Overall, most children make appropriate progress with their learning and development across the curriculum. They access resources confidently with growing independence. Most children make effective progress in the development of their personal and social skills. For example, they play alongside each other happily and share resources with a little support. A few children collaborate successfully as they pretend to drive a bus or paint with water. A few children show kindness spontaneously such as when they greet a friend with a hug.

Most children show enjoyment and pleasure as they develop their physical skills effectively. They develop their strength and co-ordination as they ride trikes and scooters, successfully negotiating obstacles. The majority of children balance well as they challenge themselves to walk along a narrow plank. Most children use a range of tools such as scoops and rolling pins effectively in their play.

Most children develop their communication and literacy skills appropriately. The majority understand and follow simple instructions and join in with familiar songs and rhymes. They speak using words and phrases and a few use short sentences. However, a minority of children do not always make effective progress in the development of their communication and language skills. A minority of children listen attentively to stories during story time and answer simple questions about the text. A minority of children develop their Welsh language skills appropriately. They respond to a range of Welsh words and phrases positively and join in with songs and rhymes suitably. A few children select favourite books independently and enjoy looking at the pictures. Many children develop their mark making skills suitably and enjoy using marker pens at an easel. A few children enjoy using an interactive white board to mark make on a large scale. However, children's digital skills are generally underdeveloped.

Most children develop their numeracy skills appropriately. They say numbers in order to at least five, for example when they are encouraged to count their steps or the number of children playing in a group. A very few recognise larger numbers such as the number 12 on a photograph of a bus. A few children make comparisons and use mathematical vocabulary effectively. For example, they explain that a friend has 'more' playdough.

A majority of children develop their imagination suitably, such as when they pretend to play with a toy aeroplane. A few children explore and show curiosity. For example, they add water to tissue paper and observe the colours run down the paper. However, overall, children's confidence in expressing themselves creatively is underdeveloped.

**Care and development:**

Practitioners arrange the premises well to promote children's learning, independence, curiosity and developmental skills. Although the room is small, they arrange internal areas to provide children with a suitable range of play opportunities which encourages them to move from one activity to another. Activity planning and tracking children's progress is underdeveloped. The lack of observations results in

missed opportunities to develop children further. There are limited opportunities for children to learn about the world around them, although practitioners plan a few activities around cultural celebrations.

Practitioners have a friendly, caring approach and manage interactions with children positively. They praise children consistently for their efforts and celebrate their achievements. Practitioners are responsive to children; they listen and respect their choices and requests. The setting's arrangements to safeguard children do not meet requirements and give cause for concern. Not all practitioners fully understand the process and procedure linked to the policy in relation to recording safeguarding issues. They do not always maintain confidentiality in records and do not always include sufficient detail about action taken. Accident records are completed and signed by parents and carers. However, the current system of recording accidents lacks detail, for example, injury location and some signatures are illegible. Practitioners have a suitable awareness of fires safety procedures. However, practice fire drills take place with the school, which does not include the children attending the after-school club.

Practitioners understand but do not always implement the setting's health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures effectively. Practitioners promote healthy lifestyles and encourage children to eat healthily. However, they are unaware of where to locate information about individual children's dietary requirements. Practitioners wash their hands regularly and deal with intimate care appropriately. Toileting facilities are suitable respecting children's privacy and dignity. However, unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children are not always identified and practitioners do not respond effectively to potential cross infection. Practitioners do not always supervise children well. For example, two children sustained minor cuts when chopping fruit

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

Practitioners provide a range of play experiences indoors and outdoors that support children's learning and development appropriately. Practitioners provide children with extended periods to lead their own play successfully. This ensures that children have time to follow their own interests suitably. Practitioners provide an effective balance between child led and adult directed learning experiences with ample time for children to follow their interests. However, many learning experiences are not planned well enough to maintain children's interest or support their learning.

Overall, the setting promotes children's personal and social development effectively. For example, practitioners encourage children to take turns and share resources. The setting provides opportunities for children to develop their physical skills effectively through activities such as riding trikes and scooters. Practitioners provide ample opportunities for children to develop their coordination as they use tools such as spades and brushes. Practitioners provide a few interesting opportunities for children to take part in creative activities such as helping children explore sounds and access percussion instruments such as a rain maker. Children do not have free access to painting and collage material and this limit opportunities for children to explore and express themselves freely.

Overall, the setting supports the development of children's literacy skills appropriately. Practitioners build on children's language and communication skills suitably through singing songs and reading stories. However, these experiences are not always successful in gaining the interest of a majority of children. A few practitioners support children's Welsh language skills suitably through singing rhymes and songs. However, very few practitioners model the use of Welsh language during the session. Practitioners encourage children's mark making skills through beneficial experiences such as using coloured chalks to express themselves.

The setting builds on children's mathematical understanding appropriately. For example, a few practitioners model language such as 'big' and 'long' as children roll out playdough. Very few practitioners support children to build on their number skills suitably through, for example counting children's steps. Provision for developing children's mathematical concepts and language is generally underdeveloped. The setting provides a few opportunities for children to develop their digital skills through using battery operated toys such as a toy till. However, provision to develop children's ICT skills is limited overall.

Practitioners provide learning experiences that promote children's moral, spiritual and cultural development suitably. They foster a sense of awe and wonder and encourage children to care for living things appropriately. For example, they remind children to be careful as they observe a spider they find in the outdoor area. However, overall, the setting does not provide children with sufficient opportunities to learn about living things.

Practitioners interactions with children are encouraging and positive. They join children in play and engage them in conversation appropriately. A few practitioners extend children's thinking appropriately through the use of questioning. For example, they prompt children to imagine what they might see at the park as they pretend to go on a journey. However, most interactions do not focus well enough on moving individual children's learning forward progressively.

Practitioners record observations of children's achievements in a minority of areas of learning over time. However, the setting's procedures to observe children and assess their progress across the curriculum are underdeveloped. As a result, practitioners do not have enough knowledge about individual children's development to ensure that provision meets their needs and supports them to make the best possible progress across the curriculum.

### **Environment:**

Leaders provide a safe and clean environment where children can play and learn. The environment is secure and well maintained both indoors and outdoors. Leaders do not always ensure that the learning and play spaces are well planned to meet all the children's needs. For example, the main base room is small and the home corner is cramped resulting in children climbing over the furniture such as the small chairs.

Leaders do not ensure that all risk assessments are comprehensively written. This is because many of the risk assessments are specific to the school rather than the setting. There are no risk assessments for the after-school club's outings to the park, which is not in line with the setting's Outings Policy. Since the onset of COVID -19,



leaders have increased cleaning routines and ensure that practitioners follow relevant and current guidance.

The layout of the play area promotes independence successfully. Indoor storage of toys and equipment is suitable and accessible for children. Resources are limited. For example, there are not many natural resources for the younger children and limited games for children attending the after-school club. Leaders do not always provide sufficient resources all for age ranges attending the setting in order to raise children's awareness about the world around them. Leaders have purchased new resources in order to develop the outdoor play area; this includes larger sand and water trays and a water wall. This area is accessible to the children throughout the day. The outdoor play area is organised adequately and provides a range of equipment for children to choose from to develop their physical and fine motor skills.

### **Leadership and management:**

The setting has experienced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to staffing. Recently, there has been a period of significant instability due to repeated changes in leadership. The current leader and deputy are new to their roles. Despite the challenges, they provide warm and welcoming provision for children.

The responsible individual and leaders strive to provide an environment where children are happy and make good progress. However, leaders have not yet established a shared vision that ensures a consistent approach to supporting children's learning. As a result, most practitioners, despite their commitment to the provision and the children's welfare, remain unsure of how to develop and improve their practice.

The setting has produced a statement of purpose that ensures parents are provided with relevant information about the setting. Leaders provide a suitable range of policies and share these appropriately with parents. However, they do not ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place. For example, aspects of the setting's safeguarding procedures do not meet requirements. This results in a majority of practitioners being unclear about important procedures designed to keep children safe.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for identifying strengths and areas for improvement and all practitioners are committed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Leaders make beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process. For example, they work with the local authority to reflect upon the learning environment and organise resources into suitable learning areas. This has a positive impact on children's independence and engagement in their play. However, monitoring and evaluation processes to support continuous improvement are limited.

Most leaders and practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continued professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact, such as developing practitioners' understanding of the importance of child led play. However, leaders have not ensured that all practitioners have attended required training. For example, not all new staff have attended safeguarding training.

Leaders communicate appropriately with practitioners to improve their practice. However, recruitment at present does not meet regulations and systems for supervision and appraisal are not in place. As a result, practitioners do not have effective opportunities to reflect on their practice and identify targets for improvement.

Overall, the setting makes suitable use of practitioners and resources to support children's well-being, play and learning. However, the setting does not meet the required numbers of suitably qualified practitioners. This contributes to the focus on children's learning and development being underdeveloped. The setting has an appropriate range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. For example, leaders work effectively with a range of agencies and this ensures they support children's additional learning needs suitably.

## 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))

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