



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

**Bellevue Playgroup
The Community Centre
Bellevue Park
Bellevue Road
Wrexham
LL13 7NH**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

Anne Manning

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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Bellevue Playgroup was first established in 1984. This English-medium setting is situated at the edge of a park in the centre of the town of Wrexham. The setting is managed by a committee and the general day to day running is carried out by a supervisor and team of practitioners. The supervisor is also the registered person for the group.

Bellevue Playgroup receives support from Wrexham Early Education and is a member of Wales Pre-School Providers Association.

There were four children present eligible for funding at the time of the first visit, and three on the second day. The majority of children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds. The majority are from a white British background and at present no children have additional support for their learning.

The setting is open during term time from 9.15 am to 11.45 am and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 26 children aged between two and a half and three and a half who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in June 2012 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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| The Setting's current performance | Good |
| The Setting's prospects for improvement | Good |

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

Care support and guidance are good

The provision and use of the Welsh language is good.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

Relationships between partners have been effectively developed.

There is a commitment to improvement.

There is a good relationship with the local authority teacher.

Recommendations

R1. Further develop the assessment process by linking it more effectively to planning. Include a review and ensure there is sufficient supporting evidence.

R2. Make more effective use of outdoors and develop the outdoor area to provide a greater variety of learning opportunities.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill development, Welsh language and 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: Adequate

All children are encouraged to try new experiences such as putting paint into a salad spinner to mix colours.

Learning experiences enable children to use the Welsh language, for example they count and answer the register in Welsh. They learn about the traditions of Wales as they celebrate St David's Day and wider traditions such as Chinese New Year. Although the children have opportunities to develop their skills in Information Communication Technology, the range of resources is limited.

The children learn to recognise their names because they have place mats with their names on that they recognise when they sit down to eat their snack and self register. They have made books to show visitors about the time they spend in playgroup such as A Busy Day at Playgroup which reinforces their learning.

Visitors including a musician, the 'lollypop lady' and the Designed to Smile team have visited the setting to extend the learning and experiences of the children and help them learn how to take care of their teeth.

All children are encouraged to be confident learners and independent by using a camera to take their own pictures and pouring their own drinks at snack time. Their physical skills are developed through using a climbing frame indoors and outdoor play.

Although children learn to care for living things by planting trees and growing vegetables as part of the Grow with Me project there are insufficient opportunities to learn about re-cycling.

A range of learning experiences indoors and out encourages children to make progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Children enjoy outdoor play but this is limited to part of their routine and more use should be made of the outdoors to provide greater access during the session and to develop further learning opportunities.

Planning includes a topic and covers focused activities and continuous provision in all areas of learning but does not link sufficiently well to observation.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners are well deployed and keep the children interested in learning. They praise the children and develop their language.

All practitioners manage behaviour well and use effective strategies for individual children. They make good use of their voices to settle and calm the children and encourage them to listen. Practitioners are good language models; they give helpful advice for the children to improve.

Practitioners have knowledge of learning outcomes and of the Foundation Phase however they provide mostly adult directed activities with equipment set out. Good use is made of circle time when children are effectively reminded of simple rules such as sharing and pushing up sleeves before playing in the water and when painting. They are also actively informed of what will be happening during the session.

Practitioners are sensitive and helpful and use a good level of Welsh with the children during circle and story time and in the book corner with Ticw the bear looking at Welsh books.

Practitioners record observations on post it notes, however when they observe that a child needs more skill development opportunities these are not followed up or reviewed. There is not always sufficient evidence to support the assessment statements made and some observation opportunities are missed.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Children are well supported and the setting effectively supports their health and well being. The playgroup fosters values such as fairness and honesty.

There are appropriate risk assessments, policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and child protection and practitioners have undertaken training. Practitioners encourage children to understand the difference between right and wrong and they learn about following simple rules and acceptable behaviour such as sharing possessions and taking turns.

Practitioners support children and their families and successfully identify where one to one support may be needed. Practitioners work closely with families to actively support these children and funding is accessed from Wales Pre-School Practitioners Association.

Visitors have brought pets into the setting and the children are involved in Grow with Me projects where they plant and grow their own vegetables, giving them an understanding of caring for living things and treating them with respect.

The group has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup room is well set out into areas of learning and welcomes all children, offering equal access to the curriculum. The large entrance has a good range of information for parents that keeps them well informed about what is happening in the setting. Policies and procedures effectively support the running of the group and the learning of the children. Children’s achievements are valued and their work is proudly displayed.

The playgroup successfully establishes an ethos that is inclusive, takes into account and values the diversity of the children and their differing backgrounds.

Varied resources are a good match to the stage of development of the children and meet any additional learning needs. They are suitable and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the needs of the children attending and the accommodation is appropriate and effectively used.

Although the setting uses outdoors to develop the skills of the children, the playgroup needs to develop this area to provide a greater range of learning opportunities.

The three main practitioners have appropriate qualifications and experience working with young children.

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

There is a clear direction, sense of purpose and high expectations of both the practitioners and the children. There is a need to make improvements to develop the setting together with others, for example working with Bellevue Park to improve the outdoor provision.

Practitioners are enthusiastic and motivated and this has had a positive impact on the group. There is a culture of improvement that maintains and develops the setting. The committee is well informed and takes account of relevant legislation and guidance.

There is a positive ethos that focuses on the children and their needs. The practitioners and children are well managed, supported, valued and respected and there are effective links with parents to support the learning of their children.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has made good progress since the last Estyn inspection and successfully addressed the recommendations. The local authority reports that the playgroup has made good progress in all aspects of the provision particularly over the last term.

Effective self-evaluation has been carried out that identifies areas of strength and for development. Changes have been made in the provision as a result and practitioners are able to evidence where this has had a positive impact on the learning and development of the children.

Practitioners have visited other settings and share their expertise with each other to effectively update their knowledge and skills.

Partnership working: Good

The playgroup has a good relationship with parents. They are made effectively aware of what is happening in the playgroup by both a notice board in the entrance that displays a good level of information including the Foundation Phase and a moveable white board. The latter changes daily and includes the names of the practitioners present, the snack, what the children have done that day and also a couple of highlights of the term so far successfully informing parents.

A digital photo frame and a piece of children's work are also displayed so that parents can see what their children have been doing that day. This effectively gives both the children and their parents a sense of achievement and pride.

The playgroup work with Designed to Smile and have achieved a silver award for their enthusiasm and commitment to this initiative of helping children to care for their teeth.

A good working relationship exists with the local authority and the link teacher who visits the setting regularly to provide valued support and guidance.

There is a developing partnership with the park keeper of Bellevue Park with whom the children have planted trees and bulbs, extending their knowledge of how things grow.

There are effective relationships with local schools, for example with visits to the group from the nursery teacher and joining their Christmas service extend the learning and achievements of the children. They have celebrated World Book Day with a visit from a librarian who came in to read the children a story. A visit to Techniquest has successfully furthered the children's knowledge of the technology in the world around them.

Resource management: Good

A successful lottery grant has enabled the group to purchase new toys, equipment and furniture including a bookcase and two storage units that have benefitted the children.

The practitioners are well deployed and resources are used well to encourage the children and motivate them to learn. Practitioners make creative use of equipment and activities to interest the children and effectively support them to work towards the Foundation Phase outcomes.

Overall the playgroup gives value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. (This is because there were only a small number of relevant children at the time of the inspection.)

Responses to discussions with children

Children enjoy coming to the playgroup.

They like all the staff and playing and learning.

They also enjoy looking at books and Ticw stories.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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| Anne Manning | 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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

Glossary of terms

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| 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 partnership's 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> |

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| 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. |