



*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**

**Bumble Bees Playgroup  
Ysgol Pendref  
Gwaenynog Road  
Denbigh  
Denbighshire  
LL16 3RU**

**Date of inspection: February 2013**

**by**

**Wil Williams**

**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
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW..or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2013: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.**

**Publication date: 20/03/2013**

## Context

Bumble Bees Playgroup is situated in Ysgol Pendref, Upper Denbigh and has been opened for over ten years. The area served by the setting is identified as being socially and economically disadvantaged.

Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, very few children were identified as having additional learning needs. There are no children from minority ethnic groups or who use English as an additional language at the setting. English is the main language spoken at home by all the children.

The setting provides five afternoon sessions a week for two to four year old children, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. Currently, places for nine children are funded by the local authority.

A leader and four practitioners, all of whom are appropriately qualified to teach early years, support children's learning.

The setting meets in a large classroom which is the Foundation Phase site of Ysgol Pendref. The room is used by the Flying Start group in the morning and the setting in the afternoon. The setting has an enclosed outdoor area which is accessible from the room.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in August 2012 and by Estyn during February 2007.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- most children achieve good standards and make realistic progress in all areas of learning;
- most children apply their literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills well;
- nearly all children are well motivated and enjoy their time in the setting;
- the quality of teaching and assessment is good;
- careful planning provides progression and continuity in children's learning;
- the setting promotes children's health and wellbeing effectively; and
- the setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader provides a strong sense of purpose which promotes and sustains improvement effectively;
- expectations are high with the leader actively supporting and challenging everyone to do their best;
- practitioners know the setting well and are continuously exploring ways to improve;
- practitioners are open to new ideas and different ways of working; and
- a range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing.

## Recommendations

R1. Increase children understanding and use of the Welsh language.

R2. Further develop the area for outdoor learning.

R3. Strengthen the setting's links with the local community.

### 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**

Bearing in mind their age and their starting point, most children achieve good standards and make realistic progress in all areas of learning. Most recall previous learning well, develop good thinking and problem-solving skills and acquire new knowledge and skills with increasing confidence. Nearly all children work at full capacity. Most make a sustained effort to concentrate and persevere with tasks for extended periods of time. During free choice activities, nearly all children experiment and explore confidently, take risks and make good progress towards becoming independent learners.

Most children apply their communication and literacy skills well in a variety of contexts across the curriculum. Nearly all make themselves understood, listen to and carry out instructions and use appropriate language in their play. All children show an interest in books and enjoy their content, with or without an adult, handling them as a reader. Most enjoy experimenting with mark-making and are beginning to understand some of the functions of writing, such as for taking orders or making lists.

During practical activities, nearly all children apply their numeracy skills well in different contexts. Nearly all are confident users of information communication technology equipment such as computers and electronic toys.

Most children have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh. A minority of children respond appropriately to basic instructions and understand more words than they can speak. During whole group activities, these children repeat some familiar words and phrases and join in Welsh action songs and rhymes enthusiastically. However, the majority of children do not have enough confidence to use the language in informal situations.

#### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most of the time, nearly all children demonstrate a good level of interest and motivation towards learning and enjoy their time in the setting. Children's participation in various initiatives such as the Healthy School's Initiative, enables them to develop a secure understanding of how to become healthy through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake. Children have a close relationship with practitioners and trust their guidance. Every individual feels safe in the setting and free from physical and verbal abuse.

Most children behave well in and around the setting and are considerate and courteous towards each other and adults. During their engagement in specific activities or in tasks of their own choice, most co-operate amenablely demonstrating increasing levels of independence. All children very willingly undertake

responsibilities such as counting the number present during registration and as they mature, learn to make more informed decisions about their learning.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
-----------------------------------------------	-------------

### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners plan flexible and responsive activities that enable children to make good progress towards meeting Foundation Phase outcomes. Interesting and stimulating activities engage the interest of all children enabling them to make good progress according to their age and ability. Careful planning ensures that the curriculum builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills and provides progression and continuity in learning. Children are encouraged to form positive relationships with others in the setting and to become confident explorers of their environment both indoors and outdoors, and to develop as independent learners.

The setting plans the development of children's communication, numeracy, information communication technology and thinking skills well. Children are encouraged to communicate their feelings and ideas as individuals and in groups, to listen attentively to others and to participate in role play and other forms of imaginative play. Practitioners introduce the children to a range of reading and information books and encourage them to share a book with other children or adults. There are good opportunities for children to experiment with mark-making and to understand the different functions of writing.

Although practitioners occasionally encourage children to use the Welsh language in their learning, this provision is not coherent or sufficiently well-planned to ensure progress in children's understanding and learning. There are appropriate opportunities to promote children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales.

Practitioners ensure that children are actively involved in the setting's aim to act sustainably through minimising waste, saving energy and recycling paper. They promote their understanding of the wider world effectively.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations for children's learning. The stimulating, challenging and exciting environment created encourages children's involvement, participation and enjoyment. Through their role as key workers, practitioners ensure that learning experiences are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of all children, including the more able and talented and those with additional learning needs. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning. They do so sensitively and skilfully to encourage children to challenge themselves as they learn. A good balance is maintained between child-initiated and practitioner led activities. Imaginative use is made of a variety of resources to appeal to children's interests and improve learning.

Adult support is clearly focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning.

Children's progress and learning are assessed and tracked thoroughly across all areas of learning and this information is used purposefully to plan the next step in learning. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and are kept well informed about their child's achievements, wellbeing and development.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing effectively and has appropriate policies and practices which ensure these aspects are firmly rooted in its daily routines. All children are encouraged to eat healthily during snack times, to clean their teeth after lunch and to partake in daily physical exercise. Effective induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. Practitioners help children to manage their feelings, develop self-awareness and self-respect. The fostering of values such as honesty and respect for truth helps children to distinguish between right and wrong. Practitioners encourage children to show initiative, to understand simple rules of behaviour and to take some responsibility for their own actions.

When the need arises, practitioners know how to access professional support and advice from the Foundation Phase teachers and also from the local authority, the social services and from educational psychologists. There are effective arrangements for the early identification of children who may have additional learning needs. Practitioners conduct regular reviews of children's progress and ensure that the setting offers children with additional learning needs full access to all areas of learning.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. There are enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of learning experiences and to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual. Resources in the locality such as the nearby adventure playground are used occasionally to support learning in the classroom.

The buildings and accommodation are of good quality and are used extensively. Although there is a designated area for outdoor learning, it has not been developed to its full potential.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

### **Leadership: Good**

The leader has succeeded in creating a positive ethos in the setting whereby children and staff feel valued. Practitioners share common values about learning, behaviour and relationships and work collaboratively to make sure that the Foundation Phase is successfully implemented. The strong sense of purpose provided by the leader promotes and sustains improvement effectively. Learning and teaching are managed well, and the setting's policies are implemented effectively. Members of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities which they fulfil conscientiously. Relationships with children, parents and the primary school are very positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community.

Expectations for securing improvement are high, but realistic, with the leader actively supporting and challenging everyone to do their best. Procedures for monitoring and appraising staff performance and identifying individual needs are thorough and effective, as are those for identifying whole-setting training and developmental requirements. They have a very positive impact on the setting's development and implementing change.

The management committee is well informed about the setting's performance and fulfils its responsibilities diligently. It supports the setting as a critical friend and is influential in maintaining high standards and setting priorities.

The leader's willingness to undertake new national and local initiatives ensures that current developments in the Foundation Phase are successfully implemented in the setting. Recent initiatives, such as assessment for learning, the healthy school initiative and the adoption of 'key workers' for groups of children, have led to discernible improvements in the quality of children's learning and welfare.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation is an on-going process that is undertaken effectively, resulting in positive gain for children. Practitioners know the setting well and through the leader's purposeful management, are continuously exploring ways to improve. The setting has established secure procedures to maintain good practice and implement change in areas that require improvement. Self-evaluation takes careful account of the views of parents and those of the management committee. The setting benefits substantially from the advice of the local authority support teacher.

Information from self-evaluation is used purposefully to prioritise the matters which the setting wishes to improve. The setting has taken steps to improve standards and provision and to address the recommendations of the previous inspection report. This has led to positive outcomes.



The well-established culture of collaboration, together with the willingness of staff to undertake responsibilities, is enabling the setting to develop as a strong learning community. Practitioners are very open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working and to share their knowledge with others in the setting. This is a major strength which has impacted significantly on the effectiveness of recent developments.

**Partnership working: Good**

A range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. There is a very productive partnership with Ysgol Pendref with the setting benefitting substantially from the school's willingness to share resources and to offer advice. Parents are kept well-informed about all aspects of the setting's work with the leader taking advantage of every opportunity to include them in their children's learning. Practitioners work very well together, share information about children and know who to contact and when, if additional support is required for individuals who have specific needs.

Few links have been formed with organisations in the local community. Regular visits, reports and professional advice by the local authority support teacher have a very positive impact on the setting's development.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting is appropriately staffed to teach all aspects of the curriculum and members of staff are deployed effectively to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. Resources are managed well and replenished on a regular basis.

The leader and the management committee have a thorough understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are carefully evaluated by the leader and treasurer to make sure that they have a positive effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parental questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received

### Responses to discussions with children

Children say that they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Wil Williams	Reporting Inspector
-----------------	---------------------

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

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

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.