



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

**Forden Pre School Play Group
Forden Community Centre
Forden
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8NE**

Date of inspection: March 2013

by

Mary Dyas

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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About the setting

Forden Pre-school Playgroup is an English-medium setting which meets in the community centre of the village of Forden between Welshpool and Montgomery for three mornings a week and in the Early Years classroom of the adjacent primary school for one afternoon. In the community centre the playgroup has the use of a large, airy room with access to toilet facilities and grass and tarmac surfaces outdoors. On these mornings all equipment has to be set out and put away again. When using the classroom in the school, the setting has access to all resources and also direct access to the Early Years outdoor area.

Children attending the setting come from the local area and surrounding villages from a mix of homes considered to be neither significantly advantaged nor disadvantaged and all speak English as their main home language. The setting welcomes all children and, although there are currently no children with additional learning needs, there are policies and procedures to ensure appropriate support.

The setting is registered to take up to twenty children aged from two-and-a-half years. At the time of the inspection there were twenty children on the register of whom thirteen three-year-olds and two four-year-olds were in receipt of funded educational provision from the local authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in December 2010 and by Estyn in March 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- All children are happy, relaxed and well settled in the setting;
- All children enjoy their learning and make good progress;
- The setting is well managed and works hard to provide a wide range of interesting and exciting activities to stimulate and interest the children; and
- All children behave well and relationships within the setting are caring and affectionate.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The supervisor, supported by the management committee, has a clear vision and strategic direction for the setting;
- The setting has a history of self-evaluation and evidence that improvement have been secured as a result of appropriate target setting; and
- All practitioners in the setting have a good understanding of the need to evaluate improvements against the impact on children's learning.

Recommendations

R1. Ensure that parents are given information about their child's progress and how they can help them to improve.

R2. Provide opportunities for children to input ideas into planning activities in line with their interests.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During their time in Forden Pre-school Playgroup all children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. All make good progress with numeracy and mathematical skills. All count confidently to ten by rote and most are able to count objects accurately to ten. Many children are beginning to recognise written numbers and around half are able to do so to ten.

Most children are very articulate and are confident to talk to adults about what they are doing and most carry out instructions promptly. All children enjoy stories in both English and Welsh, show an interest in books and their content and handle them correctly as readers. All practise mark making in a range of media and many are beginning to write their names independently. Most children enjoy expressing themselves to music, dancing joyfully along and also making sounds themselves with a range of musical instruments.

Most children are making good progress in their understanding and use of ICT as they play confidently with a range of electronic toys and equipment. All children understand the simple Welsh words and phrases to which they have been introduced and a few are beginning to use them spontaneously. Most join in singing Welsh songs with enthusiasm.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy and confident in the setting. They come into the playgroup happily and settle immediately to an activity. All join in with activities and are interested to try out new experiences such as peeling and snipping vegetables to make soup for their snack. They say that they enjoy coming to the group and have made friends that they look forward to seeing and playing with. They are developing responsibility and independence through taking their turn at being 'Helpwr Heddiw' and carrying out their tasks which include giving out plates and cups at snack time and taking uneaten food to the food recycling bin.

Children all have good relationships with the adults in the setting. They show that they trust and care for them and freely ask for help. Behaviour in the setting is good. Children understand the need to share and to take turns and know that it is important to treat each other nicely.

All children know that it is important to have clean hands after using the toilet and before eating their snacks. They are beginning to understand that they need to eat certain foods such as fruit and vegetables to be healthy. Most understand that when they take exercise this makes their heart beat faster and that it will slow down again when they rest. All are developing good independent skills: most are able to cut their fruit and to spread butter on bread at snack time and most are also able to put on and take off their coats independently.

Although children are not yet involved in helping to plan activities for the setting they do make decisions about what they would like to do and know that if they ask for a particular activity the practitioners will try to organise this for them

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

The playgroup provides children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Planning is done collaboratively and, although children are not directly consulted for their ideas, practitioners take into account the children's interests when discussing plans. Staff meet together daily to discuss children's progress and responses to the activities and adapt the planned activities appropriately to meet their needs. These activities succeed in engaging children's interest and curiosity both indoors and outdoors and enable children to make good progress in communication, numeracy, ICT and the wider creative skills.

Welsh is well used during group times and practitioners use Welsh words incidentally throughout the sessions. Children count in Welsh when prompted and a majority know some colours in Welsh when asked. All children celebrate and learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day.

All children are encouraged to switch off lights so as not to waste electricity and they help to recycle paper and left over snack food. There are many opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and communities through the range of multicultural resources in the setting and through celebration of a range of festivals.

Teaching: Good

The setting leader and her assistants are very experienced and have a sound understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase and they implement their ideas imaginatively to suit the needs of the children. All staff interact positively with the children. Daily shared evaluations ensure that they all have a good understanding of the developing needs of each child and they direct their questioning appropriately. There is a good balance between adult intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas to develop their decision making skills. Children are free to select from either adult led or independent activities but are not yet involved in planning future activities.

Practitioners assess by observing the children while they are engaged in their learning experiences. The information gathered informs the next steps in planning and contributes to the local authority's assessment document which builds on an on entry assessment. When a child leaves the playgroup, parents and carers are given a document indicating skills achieved under the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase alongside photographs of their child during their time in the setting. There are currently no arrangements for parents to receive regular information on the progress of their children or of what they can do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has good arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing and arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs. Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle well when they start. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children and all staff are attentive at the beginning of the session to support individual children. All children behave well and understand the need to treat one another with respect. Almost all children attending the setting move on to the primary school and practitioners work closely with staff from the Early Years department to ensure a smooth transition. This is enhanced by the afternoon sessions spent in the classroom once a week.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. All children have access to the full range of activities. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The setting makes good use of the space available and the room is attractively decorated with examples of recent children's work. Staff have worked hard on the outdoor provision to provide a learning environment which enables children to explore a wide range of interesting experiences and have plans to further develop the area. The setting provides a warm and caring ethos where children are enabled to pursue their learning in a stimulating and supportive environment,

The setting employs sufficient well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. A wide range of resources, including natural, recycled and man-made, are carefully selected for their quality and effectiveness in supporting the children's learning needs

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

The setting is strongly led and the leader makes good use of the qualifications and experience of her team to share the responsibilities. Practitioners meet together each week to discuss planning but also communicate daily to evaluate and assess the planned activities and children's progress. A clear sense of purpose and a desire for improvement is shared by the whole staff team. All are keen to receive and act on advice and suggestions in order to raise standards in the playgroup. The setting is managed by a management committee which provides positive and practical support. The committee meets regularly and is well informed about the work of the setting.

The setting has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented by all practitioners. There is a well established appraisal system in place to support and improve staff. Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase. The setting is a pilot setting for the Welsh Assembly Government 'Healthy Pre-school' scheme and has successfully completed modules on physical development and healthy eating.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation is a strength of the setting and practitioners know their setting well. They have discussed the strengths and areas of relative weakness across the setting and the subsequent self-evaluation document is honest and clearly identifies areas for improvement. These are already being addressed. In addition to the relatively recent system of self-evaluation, the setting has identified and set targets for improvement for different areas of learning for several years, for example they are currently looking specifically again at language and literacy, in particular oracy skills, and this has been identified in the setting improvement plan.

Practitioners have undertaken training with the local authority regarding aspects of the Foundation Phase, and they effectively evaluate and share ideas with one another.

Partnership working: Good

A range of effective partnership working contributes to the progress and wellbeing of the children, for example the playgroup's use of the early years room in the school has led to sharing of resources between the school and the setting.

The practitioners were observed to have a good relationship with parents and there are good opportunities for verbal feedback when parents collect or drop off their children in the playgroup. Informative newsletters and an information board in the foyer ensure that parents and carers are aware of the activities provided for their children.

The partnership with the local authority link teacher is purposeful and beneficial and has had a positive impact. Practitioners in the playgroup value the support they receive and the link teacher reports that the playgroup responds positively to training and to any advice and guidance.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners make use of one another's interests and abilities when deploying themselves during the sessions. The playgroup has a good range of resources which are used appropriately to support the planned activities. Practitioners work well together to ensure that the areas of learning both indoors and outdoors are effectively overseen to support children's learning.

The management committee works hard to raise money for the setting through a number of imaginative schemes and spending decisions are carefully considered to ensure that new resources are of high quality and will support the children's learning and wellbeing.

The setting gives good 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.

Responses to discussions with children

All children thoroughly enjoy their sessions in the setting. They say that they like the things they do there and also like playing with their friends.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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

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>

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.