



*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**

**Kelsterton Playgroup  
Connah's Quay Youth and Community Centre  
Connah's Quay  
Deeside  
Flintshire  
CH5 4BH**

**Date of inspection: January 2013**

**by**

**Mr Eifion R Morgan**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<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

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**Publication date: 22/02/2013**

## Context

Kelsterton Playgroup meets in the Community Wing of Connah's Quay High School, Flintshire. Its intake is almost entirely from the immediate surrounding area. Children's backgrounds are very varied. There is a new housing estate nearby with owner occupied houses and also an area which is described as socio-economically disadvantaged. There are a small number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Practically all children are from English speaking homes, none are from a Welsh speaking background with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds learning English.

The Playgroup is open for five mornings a week 9.30 – 12.15 and afternoons from 12.15 – 14.40 for 38 weeks a year.

The Playgroup is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate up to 25 children in any session. Currently there are 62 children on the register, of whom 13 are three years old. All the three year olds are funded.

The Playgroup accepts children from aged 2 years and 3 months and children normally leave for the next stage of their education in the September following their third birthday. The Playgroup is happy to receive children whatever their background, including children identified as having additional learning needs (ALN). Some children aged four attend on a part time basis having attended the local primary school for the morning session.

The Playgroup is approached through the community entrance hall. Children meet together in a small teaching room. The playgroup also uses the pool room and a large hall (gymnasium). There is a kitchen for the preparation of snacks. Children have direct access to the outside activity area from the main teaching room.

The Playgroup does not have exclusive use of the accommodation so staff have to set up and clear away before and after each session.

The Playgroup was previously inspected by Estyn in 2007 and the recommendations were addressed, but some issues remain. The most recent inspection by CSSIW was in 2012 and the short report made no important recommendations.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

#### Good features

- The provision for ensuring the care, support and guidance that children receive.
- Children's enjoyment, their positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Relationships between adults and children and between individual children.
- Partnership with parents and carers.

#### Adequate features

- Learning experiences provided for the children that successfully maintain their interest.
- Assessment of children's ability and progress.
- Learning environment and activity areas set out for the children, including the out of doors provision.
- Informal self-evaluation procedures.
- Leadership style.

### Prospects for improvement

#### Good features

- The quality of support provided by the local authority advisory teacher and the current programme in place for professional development.

#### Adequate features

- The general acceptance by staff of the need to change.
- Commitment of staff to become more involved in planning.

## Recommendations

R1. Review its planning procedures including:

- (i) providing opportunities for collaborative planning so that staff's expertise is fully used and their roles defined.
- (ii) planning for the systematic development of children's knowledge, understanding and particularly skills across the whole curriculum.
- (iii) providing sufficient differentiated work to match children's differing abilities and to provide challenge.

R2. Use assessment results in planning so as to ensure suitably differentiated activities.

R3. Undertake regular self-evaluation involving all staff and to focus on priorities for improvement.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards, in their skills 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?

**Adequate**

#### Learning experiences: Adequate

Planned activities provide children with a range of experiences that are designed to capture their interest. Activities are generally matched to the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The planned activities are well designed to encourage children to work together, to share and to form good relationships.

Good opportunities are planned for children to work independently so as to develop their self confidence. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's physical skills.

The recently adopted planning sheets provide suitable opportunities to show in detail the learning intentions planned. Overall, however, planning does not indicate how children's knowledge, understanding and skills are to be developed systematically and progressively.

Planning includes opportunities to use the Welsh language through the incidental use of the language in day-to-day activities, such as registration and story telling. The children's understanding of the traditions and celebrations of Wales are enhanced through studies linked to St. David's day.

Planning to develop children's ideas of sustainable development includes the recycling of plastic and paper.

Overall, however, there is little evidence of collaborative planning and too little use is made of the expertise of all the staff.

#### Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have varying experience of working with children of this age. At best this includes substantial experience of teaching young children and a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Activities provide an adequate balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities and overall children behave well. At best these activities are challenging but do not always meet children's needs in that they are insufficiently differentiated to meet children's differing abilities. Children have easy access to the outside area which is used whatever the weather. The playgroup provides the children with suitable outdoor clothing.

Practitioners are not sufficiently involved in the planning process and do not have opportunities to use their expertise.

Children are assessed regularly and observations recorded. Such observations tend to focus on children's personal and social development. This gives a good indication of children's progress over time. The playgroup has recently begun to use the Local Authority new assessment format.

The assessment results are not used in planning future activities so as to ensure that tasks are suitably differentiated to meet children's needs and interests and to provide challenging work.

Parents, through discussion with practitioners, reported that they were aware of the progress their children were making. However, they are less aware of what they can do to help children improve.

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

The provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good.

The day-to-day activities successfully develop children's values such as honesty, fairness and respect for each other. Children are developing a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly. Good emphasis is placed on developing their social skills and rules of behaviour. Activities in the out-of-doors area such as growing seeds, helps children develop an understanding of caring for living things.

There are appropriate links in place with specialist agencies and this benefit the children. Contact is made with these agencies such as the social services, when necessary.

Children are well cared for and protected at the playgroup. The setting provides the children with a safe environment. No one can enter or leave the setting unannounced. All children are contented at the setting and by their behaviour and confidence they display, show that they feel safe and free of any harassment.

There are good arrangements in place to identify and to support any child in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff have received recent and relevant training, policies and procedures are in place and the setting promotes safe practice and displays a culture of safety.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Children with additional learning needs (ALN) have access to all areas of learning. The setting is vigilant in identifying such children and seeks professional help when required. There is regular consultation with parents or carers and they are involved at each stage. When necessary such children receive additional help and 1:1 support.

The setting provides support for children with emotional and behavioural problems

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The ethos of the setting is inclusive and provides equality of opportunity for all children. There is a tolerant attitude and children are treated with respect. Children are free from harassment and do not suffer any form of oppressive behaviour. Suitable policies and procedures are in place to ensure that children are well looked after.

There are sufficient practitioners who have experience of working with young children. The leader has attended a good range of local authority professional courses but course attendance by her assistants varies. In general their records show that their attendance has been less frequent and have subsequently not benefited from advice and training provided by the local authority.

The accommodation is dated and in need of redecoration. The main teaching room is small giving children too little room to work and provides a limited range of activity areas. The reading corner is small and the display space for books is restricted.

The pool room area is poorly organised. The main hall provides a good space for physical activities. Storage space is limited and the setting has the disadvantage of being multi-use and requiring materials to be set out and cleared away each day. The out of doors is being developed and currently provides children with an adequate area for play.



<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Leadership: Adequate**

The leader understands her role and responsibilities and with her staff ensures that each morning, activity areas are set out in readiness for the children. Activities are, in the main, matched to the requirements of the Foundation Phase outcomes, although the space available for children to work is restricted in the main teaching room, such as the children's reading, writing and number work area. However the outside area has recently been developed and this is a useful addition to the range of activities available for the children.

The Playgroup staff work with a sense of purpose focused on children's wellbeing and the setting displays a positive ethos.

Overall, staff have too few opportunities to contribute to strategic planning and this represents a wasted opportunity to make best use of their expertise, particularly where their expertise comprises experience of teaching young children. Staff are sensitive to children's needs but planning does not focus sufficiently on providing tasks well matched to their needs and ability. Tasks are not sufficiently differentiated to provide challenge for the children.

Induction and appraisal are done informally but appraisal does not focus sufficiently on what all staff need to do to improve.

Effective links have been established with parents and carers and they are very supportive of the setting, however, they are less clear in what they can do to support their children's learning.

The management committee is established and fulfils its legal duties.

The Playgroup meets national and local initiatives including establishing the Foundation Phase Curriculum.

**Improving quality: Adequate**

Self-evaluation has been undertaken informally but insufficient emphasis is placed on identifying clearly the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. Improvements that have been made have resulted in positive gains for the children. Children appreciate, for example, the outdoor facilities and parents commented positively on the facility. The leader is aware of improvements that are necessary and these have been prioritised. However, improvements have not been formally evaluated.

Self-evaluation and planning for improvement is not done systematically. It does not involve all practitioners and, as such, their ideas and expertise are not fully exploited.

Practitioner's needs in terms of professional development are not fully realised and the impact of training is only evaluated informally.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has good relationships with parents. Parents reported their complete satisfaction with the playgroup. Children enjoy attending the playgroup and parents reported on the progress children are making, particularly in terms of their personal and social development.

Parents are happy in that the playgroup is a safe environment for their children and the staff are approachable. A good feeling of trust has been established.

Good links exist with the receiving primary school. Children visit before they transfer. Several part time infant school pupils return to the playgroup for the remainder of the day, usually in the afternoon.

The Local Authority advisory teacher is providing very good support. She knows the setting well and what needs to be done to improve. This is an effective partnership that promises well for the future.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting is adequately resourced but the main teaching room is rather cramped and does not provide adequate space for the children's activities. Areas for mark-making, scribbling and number work are limited and do not allow for easy access for the children. Practitioners are qualified and experienced.

The outdoor area is spacious and allows children easy access. It is well used to develop children's skills and functions well to improve their self-confidence and independence. The hall is also a good resource and provides children with space to undertake physical activities.

Future resource needs have not been formally identified.

The setting provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Parents

Ten questionnaires were returned:

Parents were asked to respond to 16 statements indicating one of five categories – “strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or don’t know”.

The responses can be summarised as follows:

90% strongly agreed with

*Overall I am satisfied with the setting.*

*Teaching is good*

*Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.*

*My child is safe at the setting.*

*I am kept well informed about my child’s progress.*

*The setting is well run.*

More than 50% strongly agreed

*My child likes this setting.*

*My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.*

*Children behave well in the setting.*

*My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.*

*My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.*

*I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.*

*I understand the setting’s procedure for dealing with complaints.*

*My child is well prepared to moving on to school.*

*There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.*

There were no responses that disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements.

### Children

All children showed, by their enthusiasm, that they enjoy coming to the playgroup. They spoke of their enjoyment in taking part in the play activities set out for them, particularly role play and playing outside.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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](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>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<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.