



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

**Leeswood Playgroup
Youth Club
Leeswood School
Leeswood
Flintshire
CH7 4RQ**

Date of inspection: March 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

Leeswood Playgroup is a medium-sized setting located in the village of Leeswood next to the local school. This English-medium playgroup is managed by a committee and the general day to day running is carried out by a team of practitioners.

There were no funded 3-year-old children on the first inspection morning and three present on the second morning. All children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds. All children are from a white British background and at present no children have additional help for their learning.

Leeswood Playgroup receives support from Flintshire Early Education and is a member of Wales Pre-school Providers Association.

The setting is open during term time only and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 25 children aged from 2 to 4 years of age who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in September 2011 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

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:

- care, support and guidance for the children are good;
- children have good opportunities to hear and use the Welsh language;
- there are effective links with other professionals to support the children; and
- teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership and management of the setting are good;
- there is a good working relationship with the school for the benefit of the children;
- self-evaluation is effective and identifies areas for development; and
- the setting has made good progress since the last inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Provide regular opportunities for outdoor play.

R2. Introduce early mark making into more areas of learning.

R3. Extend opportunities for the children to become independent learners.

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?

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: Good

Planning successfully engages all children and practitioners meet weekly and plan together a good range of learning opportunities and activities. All children make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes but there are insufficient opportunities for regular learning outdoors.

The curriculum builds consistently well on children's existing knowledge and understanding and nearly all are beginning to acquire thinking skills across most areas of learning. The setting provides good opportunities for children to learn about numbers, Information Communication Technology and to successfully develop their skills.

A variety of topics link effectively to the children's own experiences thereby strengthening the partnership between home and family. Activities and experiences actively encourage children to form relationships with each other and with adults around them and to show respect for all cultural backgrounds. Learning experiences provide good opportunities for the children to work together, for example when using the parachute or tidying away the equipment.

Practitioners develop children's literacy skills by looking at books including those written in Welsh, listening to and sharing stories. All children mark make whilst in the role play area but there are insufficient opportunities to develop these skills in other areas of learning.

Practitioners successfully use the Welsh language and effectively encourage the children to celebrate festivals such as St David's Day.

Although children learn about re-cycling through their model making, opportunities to develop this understanding are insufficient. Visitors to the setting extend the learning and knowledge of the children about the world of work.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners are well deployed including volunteers from the committee. They make effective use of resources to keep the children's interest in activities and promote their learning. All practitioners have good knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase and use this understanding consistently well to benefit the children.

All children are praised and encouraged in their learning. Questioning techniques are effective and extend the achievements of the children. There are high expectations of all and practitioners successfully develop and progress the understanding of the children.

Practitioners make good use of circle time to extend learning and to re-cap on what has been done during the morning, consolidating learning. There is the effective development of the Welsh language when children join in with songs and listen to stories. The practitioners use Ticw the bear consistently well to actively encourage the children to respond in Welsh.

Practitioners assess the children regularly, carry out useful observations and effectively use the observations to measure the progress of the children and link to planning. Parents and carers are involved in the learning of their children and know what to do to help them to progress. Practitioners successfully complete assessment records and parents have a copy of This is Me.

All practitioners are good language models and manage the behaviour of the children well. They know and understand their roles and responsibilities. All manage the behaviour of the children well and use successful strategies linked to the individual needs of the children.

The majority of times practitioners intervene appropriately however on occasion teaching strategies do not always promote independent learning. Opportunities are missed for children, for example at snack time when the children are given insufficient opportunities to do things for themselves.

Care, support and guidance: Good

A good range of policies and procedures effectively supports the running of the group and the learning of the children. Learning experiences successfully promote the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The playgroup actively promotes the health and well being of the children. Practitioners have undertaken training and as a result the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Through different activities and the playgroup routine the children successfully learn to distinguish right from wrong and develop values of honesty, fairness and respect.

Children have good opportunities to take responsibility such as Helpwr Heddiw when they consistently help and support their friends.

Practitioners work closely with parents and other professionals. There are effective systems in place such as 'Pathways' to identify any concerns including additional learning needs that provide beneficial support for the children, their families and help them achieve.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners have effectively established a setting that is inclusive and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. Tolerant attitudes are successfully developed through good day-to-day work practices.

Resources are used well. They are appropriate, suitable and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the needs of the children attending the setting. Accommodation is used effectively, however the local environment and outdoor area are used insufficiently well to provide a range of activities and different learning opportunities.

The setting actively takes account of security and practitioners ensure the door is securely locked when the group is in session. As a result of the premises being shared, practitioners have to set out and clear away the learning activities almost every day so a portable board is an effective way to share information with parents.

There are sufficient practitioners with relevant qualifications and appropriate experience of working with young children. The supervisors both have level 3 and there is a relief assistant to provide support for the children's learning.

Equal access to the curriculum is offered and there is an effective range of policies and procedures that actively support the children and promote their health and well being including behaviour, equal opportunities and complaints. These policies ensure that there are appropriate boundaries, all have a voice and that equal opportunities and human rights are effectively promoted.

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

The setting is managed well and the committee take an active role in the running of the playgroup. They have the opportunity to take part in a rota duty in the setting which effectively enables them to observe what is happening in the group.

The leaders fully understand their roles and are effectively informed about the performance of the setting. There is a positive ethos, clear direction and purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement.

The two core practitioners have worked successfully in the setting for over eight years. Values, aims and objectives are effectively shared through meetings and the day-to-day working practice for the benefit of the children.

There are well established links with parents that effectively support the learning of the children. Regular appraisals undertaken ensure that practitioners can successfully improve their knowledge and practice.

Leaders set challenging targets and relevant legislation, guidance and national and local priorities are taken into account and used consistently well to improve the health and well being of the children, for example a healthy eating initiative.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has made consistently good progress since their previous Estyn inspection and effective action planning has ensured the recommendations from this have been met. All practitioners are involved in a self-evaluation process that effectively identifies strengths and areas for improvement. Information is successfully used as a result to prioritise areas for development.

Practitioners have good opportunities for shared learning with colleagues from school and attend courses, including the three day Foundation Phase training, that effectively raise standards and support the well being of the children.

Practitioners have opportunities to visit other settings, share expertise and develop their practice and they actively ensure any changes have a positive impact on the provision.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships within the local community are beneficial and successfully develop the learning of the children.

The playgroup is an active member of the Wales Pre-school Providers Association, and as a result there is good support for any children with additional learning needs. Partnership working with other professionals including the health visitor, who has an open morning in the group, ensures active support for children and their families.

Transition arrangements with the school next door are good, children make visits to the nursery and the teacher comes to see them in the playgroup. Children take part in a reading week in school and as a direct result of this partnership working, children quickly develop relationships in preparation for nursery. The playgroup makes good use of school resources, for example the field where the children can observe hens and sheep in a natural environment.

Parents have information about the playgroup and they are kept successfully informed of their child's progress by speaking to the practitioners and by a completed assessment booklet, This is Me. A coffee morning provides a good opportunity for

parents to see the practitioners at work. A newsletter every half term or when required keeps parents successfully up to date with events in the playgroup.

There is a good working relationship with the local authority teacher who visits the setting, providing support and guidance. The setting acts quickly on any recommendations and as a result this has a positive impact on the standards of provision.

Practitioners undertake training and meet with colleagues from other groups and share good practice, such as the forest school experiences that successfully develop the children's understanding of the world around them.

Resource management: Good

Resources of good quality are stored, managed and organised well to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum and are effective in motivating the children to learn. Action plans from self-evaluation link consistently to future resource needs, equipment purchases are prioritised and successfully take into account the developing needs of the children.

Although all practitioners are efficiently deployed and a range of resources is used well, the outdoors is used insufficiently to develop the skills of the children across all the areas of learning.

Leaders effectively deploy the setting's own resources and those from the local authority. There is a good understanding of budget matters and the funding that is received is used well and as a result the playgroup provides 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. (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 the staff and the activities. Nearly all like the parachute to play with.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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

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.