



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

**Little Rascals Playgroup
Community Centre
Cable Street
Connah's Quay
Flintshire
CH5 4SL**

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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Context

Little Rascals Playgroup was established in 2001. This medium-sized setting is located in Connah's Quay. 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 five funded 3-year-old children on the first inspection morning and six present on the second morning. All children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds. Nearly all children are from a white British background and at present no children have additional help for their learning.

Little Rascals 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 20 children aged from 2 to 4 years of age who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in November 2012 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:

- all children are confident learners who achieve well;
- there is a good range of learning experiences;
- care, support and guidance for the children are good.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership and management of the setting are good;
- self-evaluation is effective and identifies areas for development;
- partnership working is good;
- resources effectively support the provision and motivate children to learn; and
- the setting has made good progress since the last inspection.

Recommendations

R1. Continue to develop the outdoor area.

R2. To become more involved with national and local priorities.

R3. Increase opportunities for visitors to the setting and involvement with the local community.

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 plan flexible, responsive and innovative activities for the children. All children make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes.

The curriculum builds well on children's existing knowledge and understanding and nearly all are beginning to acquire good thinking skills across all areas of learning. Children are confident to try new experiences such as a remote control bee and to explain and show how it works. Activities and experiences effectively encourage children to form relationships with each other and with adults around them and show respect for all cultural backgrounds.

Practitioners provide good opportunities to develop literacy skills including looking at books including those written in Welsh and listening to stories. They use a good level and frequency of Welsh and effectively encourage the children both during circle time and throughout the session. The children are confident and keen to respond spontaneously in Welsh and they celebrate festivals such as St David's Day. There are very good opportunities to develop early mark making skills in the home corner.

Learning experiences actively enable children to develop physical and creative skills using dance with music and ribbons. There are limited opportunities for outdoor play that include short walks and playing on large equipment in the park. Children learn successfully about the world around them by practitioners bringing the outside in, for example planting seeds and a tray of snow.

Although children learn about re-cycling through their model making, opportunities to develop this understanding are insufficient.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have knowledge of child development and manage the behaviour of the children consistently well. There are three staff, the supervisor and deputy qualified to level 3, an assistant working to level 2 and parents who take a turn on rota duty. Circle time is used well to effectively share stories, rules and listening to each other.

Practitioners use language well and are very good role models for the children. They use indoors and on a few occasions outdoors for challenging activities that meet the needs of the children. The practitioners use a good level of Welsh with the children particularly during circle time using Ticw the bear who is used consistently well and actively encourages the children to respond.

Questioning techniques are effective and extend the learning and the achievements of the children. There are high expectations of the children and all practitioners successfully develop and progress the learning of the children. The majority of times practitioners intervene appropriately to let the children discover for themselves however on occasion teaching strategies do not always promote independent learning.

Practitioners are well deployed and make effective use of resources including puppets which are used successfully to keep the children's interest in stories.

Practitioners carry out useful observations of the children that effectively inform This is Me. Parents are involved in the achievements of their children and they are actively aware of their progress particularly as a result of the time they spend in the group on rota duty.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The playgroup has a range of policies and procedures to support the children and successfully promote their health and wellbeing including their moral, social and cultural development. Children learn about simple rules such as sharing and not running which are enforced during circle time. There are appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and the supervisors and the deputy have undertaken training. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The children successfully learn to distinguish right from wrong and the playgroup fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect and effectively develops an understanding of living and sharing with others. Children have good opportunities to take responsibility such as Helpwr Heddiw. They show good levels of initiative and help each other by passing resources and effectively work together when tidying up.

The children are starting to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by planting seeds and using technology including the remote control bee.

Practitioners know the children well and they effectively provide consistency. Successful strategies are in place to assist children with learning needs and to work with parents and other professionals. As a result children achieve well and their families are well supported.

Learning environment: Good

There is a well established ethos and the group has developed an inclusive setting that values the diversity of background of the children. The playgroup actively develops tolerant attitudes through a range of different learning experiences. 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 equal opportunities and complaints.

There are sufficient practitioners with relevant and appropriate qualifications. The supervisor and deputy both have level 3 and the assistant is working towards a level 2.

The playgroup uses a room in the community centre and as there is limited opportunity for safe outdoor play, practitioners successfully bring experiences inside to develop and extend the knowledge of the children. Work has begun, as part of a successful partnership, to provide a secure, outdoor area and garden that will effectively provide opportunities for the children's play and learning.

Resources are used well, appropriate, suitable and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the needs of the children. Accommodation is used effectively, however the local environment is used insufficiently to enhance the facilities at the setting.

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

The setting is well managed and the core staff have worked successfully in the setting for many years. There is a positive ethos, clear direction and purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement.

Values, aims and objectives are shared and all are working for the benefit of the children. Practitioners and children are valued and managed well.

There are high expectations and well established links with parents that effectively support the learning of the children. Parents have the opportunity to take part in a rota duty in the playgroup which effectively provides opportunities for them to observe what is happening in the group and also for them to be fully aware of the progress and achievement of their children. Appraisals ensure that practitioners can improve their knowledge and practice.

The leaders fully understand their roles and are effectively informed about the performance of the setting. Relevant legislation and guidance are taken into account and information is used well to make informed decisions.

Although leaders are aware of initiatives such as healthy eating, they are insufficiently involved in working towards other national and local priorities, for example the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School initiative.

Improving quality: Good

Very comprehensive self-evaluation effectively identifies strengths and areas for improvement and the setting actively uses information to prioritise changes. All practitioners are involved and this results in positive gains and improvements for the children. The setting has made consistently good progress since their previous Estyn inspection. Action plans are in place and practitioners are able to evidence the progress made including the development of a new, safe outdoor area.

Practitioners are engaged in professional development and attend courses that effectively raise standards and support the well being of the children. Although practitioners share their expertise and knowledge to benefit each other and ensure a positive impact on the provision, there are too few opportunities to visit other settings.

Partnership working: Good

A successful range of partnership working effectively enhances and supports the learning and achievements of the children and improves standards. There is a good relationship with the local school and when the children are ready to leave the setting they make visits to the nursery and the teacher comes to see them in the playgroup.

Parents have information about the playgroup and the Foundation Phase that is displayed on an information board in the entrance. A news letter every term effectively lets parents know what is happening in the group. There is clear communication between parents and the playgroup and they are involved in decisions about their children and their learning. Parents are actively informed of their child's progress by speaking to the practitioners and an assessment booklet, This is Me.

There is a good working relationship with the local authority teacher who visits the setting, providing support and guidance and suggesting learning experiences that impact positively on the progress and achievements of the children.

The playgroup is an active member of the Wales Pre-School Providers Association, the chair person of the playgroup is also a development worker with the association. Partnership working with other professionals ensures active support for any children with additional learning needs.

Practitioners undertake training and meet with colleagues from other groups and share good practice to effectively develop this provision.

Although there is a good relationship with the committee of Central Park, where the group is located and as a result this has led to developments with the outdoors, partnerships within the local community are insufficient to impact and develop the learning of the children.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are well deployed and a range of resources are used well and are effective in motivating the children to learn. Future resource needs are planned for and take successfully into account the developing needs of the children.

The outdoors is used insufficiently well to develop the skills of the children across all the areas of learning.

Leaders effectively deploy the setting's own resources. There is a good understanding of budget matters and spending is prioritised to develop the provision and improve outcomes for the children.

The funding that is received is used well and 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 are happy and busy. They are confident and enjoy coming to the group. They like all the staff and the activities.

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.