



*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**

**Littlefolk Playgroup  
Bethel Chapel  
Main Road  
Church Village  
Pontypridd  
CF38 1RL**

**Date of inspection: March 2015**

**by**

**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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## Context

Littlefolk Playgroup is in Church Village, Pontypridd. It opens on five mornings each week during school terms. The setting has one full-time practitioner and eight part-time staff. The setting's leader owns and manages the playgroup independently.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 26 children from two to four years of age. The local authority currently funds 11 three-year-olds at the setting. Nearly all children are white British and speak English as their first language. There are no children who speak Welsh at home. No child has a statement of special educational needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in July 2012 and was last inspected by Estyn in January 2009.

## 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 make good progress in their time at the setting
- Most children talk confidently to one another and adults in the setting
- Most children's number skills develop well
- All children enjoy coming to the setting
- Nearly all children have positive attitudes to learning
- All children have good relationships with the adults in the setting and this helps them to learn happily and confidently
- Practitioners interact with children skilfully and usually use opportunities to extend their learning well

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The lead practitioner is enthusiastic and manages the daily work of the setting proficiently
- The leader has a clear vision that focuses strongly on children's education and wellbeing
- All practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and contribute effectively to a supportive team
- The setting is developing an appropriate culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement
- The setting responds positively to external advice on how to improve

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's ability to use Welsh independently in their play
- R2 Ensure that planning develops children's skills in the Foundation Phase areas of learning systematically
- R3 Use assessment information more effectively to plan activities that will challenge children of all abilities
- R4 Plan and carry out self-evaluation activities that use first-hand evidence to guide improvement

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

Most children make good progress during sessions and in their time at the setting.

Most children talk confidently to each other and to adults in the setting. Many join in with songs enthusiastically. A few more able children make accurate observations of objects and discuss their physical appearance in detail. Nearly all children listen to and follow instructions well, for example when preparing their snacks. All children show interest in books. They look at books independently and with adults, pointing out pictures they like confidently. Most children experiment with mark making competently and handle writing implements confidently. Many are beginning to realise some of the purposes of writing, such as creating party invitations.

Most children's number skills are developing suitably. Most recite numbers to five confidently and a majority touch-count correctly to the same number. The majority recognise and re-create patterns accurately. Many children use mathematical language precisely, for example when describing the movement of objects as forwards and backwards or containers in the sandpit as full or empty. Many children sort objects by properties such as colour, shape and size well.

Most children develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT) successfully through play. For example, they operate buttons and switches to control mini-robots.

Most children understand basic instructions in Welsh and respond appropriately. A majority use vocabulary associated with colours and numbers suitably. However, most do not use the language independently in their daily activities.

Many children have suitable physical skills. They undertake a range of physical movements, such as touching their toes and walking backwards confidently. Most use small tools, such as markers and paintbrushes, effectively.

### Wellbeing: Good

All children enjoy coming to the setting. Nearly all have very positive attitudes to learning and focus on activities well for their age, for example when listening to stories or playing with remote control cars. All children have good relationships with the adults in the setting and, as a result, they learn happily and confidently. Most children participate in adult-led tasks well. Children influence their day-to-day learning suitably and are confident when choosing and undertaking independent activities. However, children have less say in the long-term planning of their learning topics.

All children behave well. They are courteous and considerate of others. Most take turns and share willingly. During snack time, most children show good manners and help to prepare their snacks competently. Most children know that they should wash their hands before eating.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The setting offers children interesting experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning. Adults use the national framework to plan provision that reflects the requirements of the curriculum appropriately. However, long and short-term planning is not detailed enough and does not build systematically enough on children's skills. Planning is beginning to take account of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and provide children with appropriate opportunities to develop these skills. There is a suitable range of opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills.

Practitioners use the locality well to support the curriculum. For example, children visit a local dentist to learn about looking after their teeth. A comprehensive range of visitors, such as local charities, also provides interesting and useful learning experiences for the children.

Planning for adult-led and independent activities is generally appropriate. Practitioners provide a range of activities to meet the needs of different children.

All adults at the setting provide an extensive range of opportunities for children to hear the Welsh language, such as Welsh greetings, songs, rhymes and counting activities. However, they do not ensure that children respond in Welsh frequently enough. Adults develop children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales well through activities such as celebrating Saint David's Day.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase well. They are enthusiastic and build good relationships with the children. They promote children's personal and social development successfully.

Nearly all practitioners interact with children skilfully. They intervene in children's play appropriately, asking questions to extend their learning effectively. Practitioners ensure that sessions have good pace and engage and motivate all children well. However, a few practitioners do not always act as good language role models.

The setting has appropriate procedures for assessing children on entry and throughout their time at the setting. Practitioners carry out a useful range of observations of children's learning, including regular assessments of their progress against Foundation Phase outcomes. However, they do not use the information they gather well enough when planning learning to ensure that activities challenge all children suitably.

The setting provides clear information about children's progress for parents through face-to-face meetings and annual reports.

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

The setting has effective arrangements in place to support children's healthy eating and drinking and to encourage them to take regular physical exercise. For example, children prepare their own healthy snacks and drinks regularly. Provision for promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The setting ensures that the safety of the children in their care is a high priority. Leaders have effective procedures for managing children's arrival at and departure from the setting. There are good arrangements for children to appreciate what is acceptable behaviour and to know what is right and wrong. All children are encouraged to undertake responsibilities suitably, such as putting things away at the end of sessions.

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

There are effective arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, including suitable links with support agencies, such as education psychologists and local health visitors. These ensure that the setting provides prompt support for children with additional needs.

### **Learning environment: Good**

Staff at the setting create a friendly learning environment for all children. The playgroup has an inclusive ethos that celebrates and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. As a result, all children play and learn happily. Leaders ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all activities and resources. A range of activities, such as tasting food from China, helps children to develop a good understanding of, and celebrate, cultural diversity.

The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Resources match children's needs well and are of a good quality. Leaders make creative use of the space indoors, which is bright and welcoming. They have developed the outside space successfully into a valuable learning environment. However, an issue of health and safety means that they do not use this area at present. Although leaders are dealing with this situation promptly, the loss of this area reduces their ability to offer children the full range of the curriculum at present.

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

The lead practitioner is enthusiastic and manages the daily work of the setting proficiently. She demonstrates a strong commitment to providing high quality care for all children in the setting. All practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and contribute effectively to a supportive team. However, a few job descriptions for those with leadership responsibilities lack sufficient detail.



The leader has a clear vision that focuses strongly on children's education and wellbeing and she shares this effectively with her team. As a result, all staff at the setting have a clear sense of purpose. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place to support the organisation of the setting, and practitioners implement these consistently.

The leader has appropriate arrangements in place for staff appraisal. She organises team and individual training suitably, in line with identified needs and local and national priorities. However, staff do not have individual targets that challenge them to improve their practice.

The setting takes appropriate account of local and national priorities. It has adopted the ethos of the Foundation Phase well and is beginning to plan children's learning in line with the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks suitably.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The setting is developing an appropriate culture of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The leader consults staff about the setting's practices and uses this information effectively to identify what is successful. However, the setting is less efficient at identifying its priorities for improvement. The setting does not yet have a clear plan to ensure that it evaluates all the areas of its work systematically. As a result, leaders do not have enough first-hand evidence to support their evaluations of outcomes and provision robustly.

The setting responds positively to external advice on how to improve its provision. For example, it has improved the quality of its assessment of children successfully. The setting leader works diligently to provide a good range of resources for children and improve the environment of the setting. However, planning for improvement is at an early stage of development. Current improvement plans focus suitably on national priorities, but they do not always identify clear monitoring strategies or criteria for success that focus well on outcomes for children.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has an effective range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children.

Practitioners provide parents with regular information on the children's activities and provide them with suitable opportunities to contribute to learning topics. Good use is made of text-messaging and social media to keep them up-to-date with the setting's activities. Parents feel comfortable to approach the setting with questions and suggestions.

The setting's close partnership with the local chapel enables practitioners and children to make good use of an outdoor area. As a result, children have good opportunities to develop their learning outside. The setting has suitable links with two local schools. Children have opportunities to visit the schools and the setting shares a range of useful information about the children that help them to settle more quickly when they move on to full-time education.

Practitioners make good use of advice from local authority advisory staff. As a result, processes to assess children's achievement and progress are improving well. The setting makes effective use of the community to enhance its provision. For example, a local building company contributed to extensive enhancements to the setting's environment. Visits to local shops develop children's understanding of healthy food and drink well.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has sufficient well-qualified staff and a good range of resources that it uses effectively to provide a wide range of learning experiences for children.

Practitioners have suitable training that meets the setting's development needs. For example, all practitioners have training to allow them to support children with speech and language difficulties.

The setting leader makes spending decisions suitably. She monitors income and expenditure and develops resources effectively to support children's learning. In view of the good progress made by most children during their time at the setting, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	11	11 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	0%	0%		
Teaching is good.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	11	11 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	10	8 80%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	11	7 64%	4 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	5%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	11	11 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	24%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	11	10 91%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Andrew Thorne

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))

## 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 partnerships 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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.