



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

**Rhoscolyn & District Playgroup
Ysgol Santes
Gwenfaen
Rhoscolyn
LL65 2DX**

Date of inspection: April 2012

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
Reporting Inspector**

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

Rhoscolyn and District Playgroup is an English medium setting registered for 16 children aged between 2½ and three years. It provides nursery education to children from the local rural area, Trearddur Bay, Four Miles Bridge, Valley and Holyhead. It provides generally for three terms prior to transfer to other settings, almost always to the nursery at Ysgol Santes, Gwenfaen, Rhoscolyn. The setting currently provides for 17 children on the register but with never more than 16 attending sessions at any one time for five afternoons a week for two hours (1:15-3:15).

Children attending come from a wide range of social and economic circumstances. Generally they are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. One child is considered to have some degree of additional learning needs. All children come from white British backgrounds. No child has Welsh as a first Language.

The setting was last inspected by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in the summer term 2011, which did not make any significant recommendations. The setting was previously inspected by Estyn in March 2006.

During the inspection the person in charge was absent due to personal circumstances. Her place was taken by the assistant practitioner. A temporary relief practitioner assumed her responsibilities.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because of:

- the good progress made by all children in nearly all areas of learning;
- the well balanced curriculum;
- the quality of teaching;
- the careful use of assessment information to identify individual needs; and
- the good use of the local environment.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the progress made since the last inspection;
- the close working relationship with the nearby primary school and the local authority;
- the well-organised and effective system of administration;
- the very close and effective working arrangements between all practitioners; and
- a thorough and frank assessment of the setting's strengths and areas for development.

Recommendations

The inspector has agreed with the setting the following recommendations for improvement:

- R1 extent opportunities and the equipment for children to develop their skills in the use and application of information communications technology;
- R2 review arrangements for children to use the outdoor area on a more regular and informal basis in order to make better use of the available resources; and
- R3 strengthen the link between the setting's development plan and the setting's self evaluation process so that the development plan consistently and systematically addresses identified areas for improvement and records the progress made.

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning during the time they are in the setting. They are thoughtful and enthusiastic learners and show good levels of concentration in their activities. They make choices sensibly and persevere at their investigations and challenges.

From an early stage of development, all make good progress in their communication skills in English and in Welsh. In English they talk confidently and clearly to each other and to adults. They know that books contain stories and information and books should be read from left to right. They enjoy finding out about the topics they are studying, for example when looking at 'Tractor Gwych' and join in familiar stories such as 'Mrs Wishey Washie'. In Welsh they are beginning to use simple phrases and to follow instruction given in Welsh. They count in Welsh and English to 10 and know the names of the primary colours in both languages.

All are interested in finding out more about the world around them. They notice the changes which take place as the seasons move on. They look at how seeds grow and need protection from the birds by making a scarecrow. They know that the birds need special foods, particularly in winter. Nearly all recognise their own names and know that letters have sounds which they are beginning to make accurately. They are at an early stage of forming letters, making large shapes with chalks and painting brushes enthusiastically.

Nearly all recognise numbers within 10 in array and when written as numerical symbols. They know the names of simple shapes and how to count sheep on the farm. They are beginning to appreciate that heavy objects sink and lighter objects float.

Within the setting nearly all use a small range of electronic equipment appropriately. They follow the route of a programmable toy and are beginning to understand how to make it follow a prescribed route. They use a camera appropriately and know that toast is made in a toaster. They use a 'telephone' in the vet's surgery to speak to the farmer.

However, they have only recently had any access to a computer and have very limited understanding of how to navigate through simple programs and to listen and respond to material on the computer or to use computer programs to create simple pictures.

Nearly all children in the setting are developing good skills in their creative work. They enjoy vigorously stuffing a scarecrow with straw and decorate scarecrow masks

carefully using glue and a wide range of materials to create an effect. They make paintings of flowers using an appropriate range of colours and techniques.

Wellbeing: Good

All know the importance of washing hands after using the toilet and before eating or making food. They have an increasing understanding of, and appetite for, healthy foods. They are beginning to look after their own personal needs confidently. They eat neatly and many put on and take off their outer clothing independently. They all make choices for themselves.

All enjoy their time in the setting, arriving happily and leaving looking forward to their next visit. They are thoughtful in their play and share their ideas and equipment unselfishly. They enjoy taking on responsibility, for example when putting on the red apron to be the helper of the day at snack time.

All know and follow the setting's rules and what is expected of them. They show concern for others' welfare and take care to avoid accidents when playing out of doors.

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

The building is relatively new and provides an attractive and stimulating environment for all children to learn. The experiences provided are rich and imaginative. They are all closely related to ongoing themes which are regularly changed. For example currently planning and provision is closely related to 'The Farm in Springtime'.

The setting has many stimulating activities which children choose to enhance their learning in all areas. The curriculum is carefully planned so that the skills are developed systematically and the needs of individual children are met. Practitioners rigorously note when children are successful and what the next steps should be. The setting deliberately and effectively encourages all children to explore for themselves and to make their own choices.

There is thorough planning to develop children's literacy and communication skills, numeracy and Welsh language skills and in all other areas of learning. Planning clearly sets out what the medium and short-term objectives are and what activities should be organised to meet these successfully. It ensures that all children receive an interesting and well balanced range of experiences and learn something about other cultures and lifestyles, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The setting plans in detail to develop children's confidence to use English and Welsh together and ensures that much of its documents to achieve this are in both languages. A particular strength is the way in which the setting organises and plans to use the rich, local environment and to begin to understand life in the wider world.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners very successfully organise a wide range of activities and lead children to make their own choices of when and how long they wish to experience each of them. They do this through careful questioning and positive encouragement. They question cleverly to encourage children to think things out for themselves. All have very positive relationships with all children and successfully encourage them to work hard, knowing that efforts are warmly recognised and rewarded. They have high expectations of what individual children should achieve and demonstrate effectively what children should do to meet these expectations.

The setting has a thorough and carefully applied system to assess children's basic skills and maturity on entry and to record the progress they make. There are good systems used to record short-term progress and to indicate the next steps. These are used rigorously to indicate to parents and of the next setting, the standards and progress made.

The setting makes good use of photographic evidence to provide parents with a useful and meaningful record of their children's progress.

Practitioners discuss informally with individual children how they are enjoying their activities. However, they do not always encourage children to consider how they might improve what they have made or to identify what they have done well. Most children are only at an early stage of becoming self-critical.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has extensive and effective arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing. There are some very good arrangements for children to explore the outdoors, including the local beach and nature reserve, where they show a growing sense of awe at the natural world and of how animals and people live and grow. All children are given clear guidance and encouragement to be honest and truthful and to respect the rights and feelings of others.

Children with additional learning needs are quickly identified and all children have their personal and particular needs thoroughly addressed.

Links with parents in these areas are strong. Parents are successfully encouraged to identify in detail their children's basic skills and maturity on entry and to monitor with the setting, progress being made. All children feel safe in the setting and enjoy being part of it.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The relatively new building (Y Caban) is a colourful and stimulating place for children. It is skilfully organised to support children's learning and to emphasise the coherence of the experiences which are assembled. These successfully foster children's curiosity and give them confidence to investigate in a supportive family atmosphere.

There is an appropriate ratio of practitioners to children. All permanent practitioners are appropriately qualified and all relate very well to all children in the setting. There are good arrangements to identify practitioners' training needs and to provide for them. The setting has good access to the nearby primary schools, extensive outdoor facilities as well to its own secure outdoor play area.

Resources are on the whole of a good quality and quantity. They meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. However, the recent addition of a computer facility has not had sufficient time or additional resources to impact successfully on children's learning.

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

The setting is well-organised and administered. The setting leader ensures that the requirements for the Foundation Phase are met in full. The setting has a positive and caring ethos, successfully reflecting the well motivated and experienced background of all practitioners. They share a common commitment to provide well for all children. There are good arrangements to share ideas and to work together as a cohesive team. All have a strong commitment to continued professional development and to continuous improvement. Parents are successfully encouraged to play a full part in the life of the setting and to share in their children's early learning experiences.

There is a small and hardworking management committee which is effectively led by a well informed chair. The management committee ensures what decisions are made on the basis of a thorough understanding of the needs of the setting. The management committee fulfils its legal duties.

The setting meets local and national priorities well. Good progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the Foundation Phase and in introducing children to Welsh.

There are close and mutually beneficial links with the nearby primary school. The setting gives significant time and resources to developing children's early skills in literacy and numeracy. All children have a good awareness of their own area and of the need to protect it as well as the wider world.

Improving quality: Good

The setting leader and staff have informally and formally discussed the strengths and areas for development across the setting. Parents' perception of the setting have also been considered in this process as well as the views of the local authority. The self evaluation document which has been produced as a result of this process is a frank and honest analysis. It is accurate. The management committee have also been involved in its construction and are well informed of the needs for future improvement.

The subsequent school development plan to address areas for improvement however is not sufficiently linked to the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation. It lacks sufficient detail to make it a thoroughly effective tool for future success. It does not set out clearly enough steps to be taken, timescales and ways of judging the success of initiatives undertaken.

Partnership working: Good

Links with the nearby primary school's Foundation Phase are well established. These include detailed arrangements to ensure that children transfer successfully to the school's nursery provision. The partnership between both settings is also well used to provide mutual advice and support, for example in evaluating additional learning needs and in developing consistency in the use of assessment criteria. Links with parents and on social and educational basis are strong and include a regular and attractive newsletter. The local authority advisory service works closely and effectively with the setting.

Resource management: Good

Staff are well deployed and effective. The setting has a good range of stimulating and well chosen resources and equipment which are generally well used. However, there is limited space available for outdoor play when all of the children are taking part in this activity.

As a result, children do not always have appropriate opportunities to extend their skills when using these resources. Funds are well used. The setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parent responses to questionnaires

Ten parents responded to the questionnaire. All had positive views about nearly all aspects of the way in which the setting was organised and run. No parent disagreed with any of the questions asked, although a very few were unsure of how to answer a small number of the questions.

Parents felt that their children liked the setting and were helped to settle in well. They thought they were making good progress. All thought that behaviour was good and the teaching was good. They believed that staff treated their children with respect and encouraged them to be healthy. All felt that their children were safe in the setting and had suitable support.

All thought that they were well informed about their children's progress and were comfortable about approaching the setting if they had a concern. They all knew the procedures to follow if they had a complaint.

Overall, they believed that their children were well prepared for the next phase of their education and thought that the setting gave their children a good range of activities and visits.

Pupil responses to questionnaires

All children in the setting were happy and confident when meeting with adults. They liked the setting and were eager to attend. They enjoyed the company of their friends. They knew what was expected of them. They liked their helpers and appreciated the warm and caring way in which they were treated. All children looked forward to being asked to help and to take on responsibilities which they carried out willingly.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	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.