



*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**

**St Winefride's playgroup  
Parish Centre  
St Winefride's RC School  
Whitford St  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7NJ**

**Date of inspection: May 2014**

**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

St Winefride's Playgroup is in Holywell in Flintshire local authority. The playgroup is based at St Winefride's Catholic Primary School.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 25 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years. There are currently 29 children on roll, ranging in age from two to four. At the time of the inspection seven three-year-olds received funded early years education in the setting, although not all were present during the inspection.

All children have English as their home language and are of white British ethnicity. No child is from a Welsh speaking home. At the time of the inspection there were a few children with additional learning needs.

There are six permanent members of staff, including the playgroup leaders and one temporary member of staff. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leaders have been in post since 2001 and 2011 respectively.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in September 2013 and by Estyn in June 2008.

## 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:

- the setting provides children with a beneficial range of stimulating and motivating learning experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning;
- the setting provides children with effective opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills;
- teaching and assessment are of high quality;
- the setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully;
- there is a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos within the setting; and
- the accommodation is attractive, well maintained and secure.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- leaders have clear aims that focus strongly on raising standards and ensuring high quality provision for all children;
- leaders have high expectations of all staff and support and challenge them appropriately to provide high quality experiences for all children;
- practitioners work together effectively to identify appropriate areas for development and to plan how to achieve improvements;
- the setting has a track record of improving outcomes and provision for children based on its self-evaluation processes;
- the setting has a good range of extremely effective partnerships; and
- the setting provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

- R1 Refine planning so that it consistently identifies the skills to be developed
- R2 Develop the use of the Welsh language so that children gain greater confidence in using it

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

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

N/A

#### Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development and Welsh language. 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.

#### Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's 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

The setting provides children with a beneficial range of stimulating and motivating learning experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning. Practitioners enhance children's experiences further by organising well-planned visits into the community and by making good use of visitors, such as a paramedic and a dentist to talk about keeping healthy and what to do in an emergency. There is an appropriate emphasis on play and learning through first-hand experiences in the setting. For example, children drop pasta and rice onto a large drum and listen to the different noises made. As a result, most children are eager to try new things and many maintain concentration and interest for sustained periods.

The setting provides children with effective opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children are beginning to recognise initial letter sounds and are encouraged to experiment with writing their name. Children count a number of objects such as how many children are present at registration, steps on the way to the playground and coins when experimenting with ways to clean them. Children develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT) through using remote control toys and taking photographs. Practitioners provide very good opportunities for children to think for themselves and to act independently, such as when making their own sandwiches.

Planning clearly identifies children's next steps in learning and pays good attention to children's interests. However, it does not always relate learning intentions to the skills that children need to develop well enough.

Practitioners are beginning to make good use of incidental Welsh for simple instructions and commands. There are suitable opportunities for children to participate in singing a range of Welsh songs and rhymes and to listen to short stories in Welsh. However, children do not use Welsh independently and not all children respond to commands given in Welsh. Children have appropriate

opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating Dydd Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day.

### **Teaching: Excellent**

All practitioners have high expectations of children and deliver a wide range of stimulating learning experiences using a comprehensive range of teaching styles and approaches. Practitioners have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase. They are skilled at knowing when to intervene to extend learning and when to allow children opportunities to discover for themselves. They make very good use of questioning to develop children's thinking skills and to encourage them to sustain interest in tasks.

Throughout the setting, practitioners focus effectively on using praise and positive reinforcement to manage behaviour and to ensure that children are familiar with expectations and daily routines. Practitioners have very good, supportive relationships with the children, which ensure that all children feel safe and secure and develop the confidence to try new experiences.

Assessment procedures are of very high quality. Practitioners make very good use of voice recorders and cameras to note significant moments in a child's day at the playgroup. They use this information very effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. Staff work very well together as a team and share observations to ensure that all practitioners are aware of the support individual children require and how to extend learning for the more able. Leaders have a thorough knowledge of the stages of child development and support other practitioners effectively in developing high quality individual learning plans for children. Practitioners share and agree these plans with parents each half term and, in addition, provide useful informal feedback on a regular basis.

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

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. It provides good opportunities for children to try a range of healthy foods and to access physical development activities of good quality. Practitioners make good use of indoor and outdoor equipment for children to practise and to develop physical skills, for example by using tricycles and parachutes.

An appropriate range of learning experiences, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year, fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children are encouraged to treat each other with respect and to share toys and equipment. Practitioners lead by example and provide very good role models for children to follow. Children have effective opportunities to learn about the importance of caring for the environment through recycling paper and plastic and planting and looking after vegetables.

There are comprehensive arrangements to support children with additional learning needs. Individual education plans are appropriate and practitioners involve parents successfully in evaluating progress and developing new plans. Staff provide effective support for children who need extra help with their learning.

There are well-established links with professional support services to provide children with specialist support when required.

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

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting creates a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos and ensures that all children have equal access to activities. There is an appropriate emphasis on celebrating diversity and good procedures in place to help children to develop tolerant attitudes. The setting has sufficient suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Leaders and managers ensure that the accommodation is very well maintained and secure. The indoor area is bright and welcoming. Practitioners make good use of children's work and photographs to create attractive displays. The setting has a wide range of stimulating learning areas that are supported by good quality resources, which are well organised and accessible. Practitioners make effective use of the good range of different spaces available both indoors and outdoors.

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

Leaders manage the setting well. They have clear aims that focus strongly on raising standards and ensuring high quality provision for all children. Leaders support each other well to create a positive ethos. They share their vision 'to be the best we can be' appropriately with staff, parents and the management committee. Leaders keep the management committee well informed of the setting's progress and areas for development.

Leaders have high expectations of all staff and support and challenge them appropriately to provide high quality experiences for all children. Staff work together as a team successfully. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. These are very clearly defined and practitioners work together effectively with a clear sense of purpose to fulfil the aims of the setting.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of practitioners. Leaders use these processes well to identify training needs and they respond to these needs appropriately. They support staff effectively in developing their knowledge of the Foundation Phase and improving their skills in delivering it. All staff are eager to take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development and strive to improve their performance.

Leaders pay good attention to local and national priorities and there is a suitable focus on developing children's literacy, numeracy skills.



### **Improving quality: Good**

Leaders and managers know the setting well and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. All staff work together effectively to identify areas for development and to plan how to achieve improvements. Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond positively to advice from the local authority. They are proactive in seeking training opportunities and, as a result, have improved the quality of provision in the setting, particularly in the way they have developed an assessment system based on observation.

Leaders and managers consider the opinions of staff, parents and children and respond appropriately. They make good use of the results of annual consultations to address any concerns and to improve standards and provision.

The setting has a track record of improving outcomes and provision for children based on its self-evaluation processes. The self-evaluation report is an accurate reflection of the setting and feeds into the action plan that identifies a suitable number of specific priorities. The action plan sets out clearly who will take a lead role for each priority and identifies success criteria, cost implications, timescales and how the plan will be monitored and evaluated.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The setting has a good range of extremely effective partnerships. Partnerships with parents are particularly strong. Practitioners keep them very well informed about activities and what their child is learning through regular newsletters, half termly reviews and daily informal contact. They share information about child development with parents and provide effective advice about activities parents can do at home to support their child. In addition, they provide resources, specifically tailored to the needs of individual children, for parents to use at home. These resources often respond to children's particular interests that practitioners have observed in the setting. For example, they provide children who have an interest in insects with a magnifying glass and identification chart to use at home. This aspect of the setting's work is sector leading.

The setting has very well established links with the local school. This promotes smooth transition for children from the playgroup to the next stage in their education. Practitioners make effective use of support from the local authority advisory teacher to seek advice, to access training and to develop new resources.

The setting makes regular visits to the local library to enjoy story telling sessions and to borrow books and this has increased children's interest in books and stories. Practitioners make effective use of their location near the town to make regular, well-planned visits to local shops connected to current themes or in response to children's interests.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning well. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified staff.

They deploy practitioners effectively to make the best use of their experience and expertise.

Practitioners access an effective range of suitable training. They frequently share ideas and make good use of training to improve the quality of their teaching and the learning experiences offered to children.

The management committee have effective processes for keeping spending under review. They allocate funds appropriately to the setting's priorities.

The setting successfully promotes activities that encourage children to learn and progress. As a result, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mrs Jane Rees	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))

## 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.