



*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**

**Towyn Under 5's Playgroup  
Salem Chapel School Room  
Gors Road  
Towyn  
LL22 9LR**

**Date of inspection: March 2014**

**by**

**Anne Manning  
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:

<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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW..or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2014: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.**

**Publication date: 04/04/2014**

## Context

Towyn Under 5's Playgroup is based in the School Room next to the Salem Chapel in Towyn, Conwy. This English-medium playgroup is over seen by a committee with qualified practitioners who carry out the day-to-day running of the group. The playgroup uses the School Room which comprises of one large room divided into areas of play.

The playgroup is open for four mornings each week during term time and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 16 children.

Almost all the children who attend the playgroup are British and all use English as their first language. A very small percentage of children have additional learning needs. Nearly all of the children who come to the setting live in the local area and come from a range of backgrounds.

The playgroup receives support from Conwy Early Entitlement and is a member of Wales Pre-school Providers Association. There was one funded three-year-old child on the first inspection morning and none present on the second.

The last CSSIW inspection was in September 2012 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

## 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 current performance of the setting is good because:

- all teaching is good;
- the setting makes highly effective use of the local community and visitors;
- there is an excellent range of interesting and challenging learning experiences; and
- children are exceptionally well supported to learn, in particular those with additional needs.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership and management of the setting are good;
- practitioners effectively reflect on their practice and make changes to benefit the children;
- self-evaluation successfully identifies areas for development; and
- the setting has made exceptionally good progress since the last inspection.

## **Recommendations**

R.1 To continue to develop outdoor experiences.

R.2 To further develop partnerships with the local school to help the children move on when they leave playgroup.

R.3 To provide more opportunities for the children to be involved in re-cycling.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan which 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

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: Excellent

Planning includes an outstanding range of interesting learning experiences that successfully engages and provides a challenge for all children. Although the outside area is used to develop appropriate skills, learning experiences in this small space are limited. Good organisation ensures children settle quickly to activities and learn successfully. Experiences effectively encourage children to form relationships with each other and with adults around them and to show respect for all cultural backgrounds.

The curriculum builds highly effectively on children's existing knowledge and understanding and provides unique opportunities to develop thinking skills across all areas of learning including through experimentation and discovery. Skills in numeracy and particularly in literacy are embedded highly successfully into all the experiences of the children. Numeracy and mathematical language are an integral part of the learning of the children during the session. A good range of information communication technology including battery operated toys, successfully ensures that the children develop effective skills.

Children make excellent progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes and develop appropriate skills. Practitioners develop children's literacy skills highly effectively by sharing books including those written in Welsh and by story telling. Books are brought alive both by skilled story telling and by an outstanding re-creation of parts of the book by high quality visits in the local community. As a result progress and learning are highly successful because the children are able to create role play situations with real objects from their visits. There are outstanding opportunities to develop mark making and early writing skills through an exceptional range of different medium such as making patterns and drawing with fir tree twigs, blackberry juice, graphite, charcoal and lipstick and an exceptionally high value is placed on children's first writing attempts. As a result children respond extremely well and a very few are starting to write letters from their names. There are good opportunities too for children to recognise their names, for example through self-registration.

All practitioners use an exceptionally good level and frequency of Welsh and they encourage the children highly effectively both during circle time and throughout the session. As a result the children are extremely confident and very keen to respond.

They celebrate traditions and festivals such as St David's Day and those of other cultures including Chinese New Year.

Children have opportunities to learn superbly by visiting many places outside the playgroup, such as to the hairdressers and to the local bakery. They learn through their senses and about caring for living things as they watch caterpillars change into butterflies and feed the ducks at the local park. By visiting within the community, re-creating their experiences in the playgroup and then making books, children are learning highly effectively about the world of work and the world in which they live.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners are well briefed and deployed. They have up to date knowledge of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase and as a result move all the children's learning forward. All practitioners use language well and are consistently good role models for the children. Practitioners all employ positive strategies to encourage the children to learn, join in and to share equipment exceptionally well. They support the spontaneity of the children and highly effectively channel this into learning and achievement.

Without exception practitioners are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to let them experiment and discover independently. Practitioners let children take the lead and make good suggestions about how to extend their play. Both practitioners successfully plan an exceptional range of activities that highly effectively meet the needs of all the children.

All practitioners know the children well and as a result there are high expectations. Without exception practitioners successfully use an effective range of teaching strategies that promote independent learning and provide challenge. Adult support is well focused and makes a highly significant contribution to the quality of the children's experiences.

All practitioners use an excellent level of Welsh with the children and successfully encourage the children to listen and respond. Circle times are used highly effectively to choose Helpwr Heddiw, share stories, introduce new resources and listen to the views of others.

Both practitioners carry out observations of the children that effectively inform assessment records and parents are appropriately involved in supporting the learning of their children.

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

The playgroup has a good range of policies and procedures to support the children and effectively promote their health and wellbeing including their moral, social and cultural development. There are appropriate policies and procedures and checks in respect of safeguarding and the practitioners have undertaken training and as a

result the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Children learn very effectively about simple rules such as sharing and successfully learn to distinguish right from wrong through a good range of learning experiences. The playgroup successfully 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 the lead in their learning and contribute to decisions. They are highly confident learners who ask for help and have good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative, for example when being Helpwr Heddiw to support their friends.

The children have a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by growing plants and observing living things on their visits to the beach and the park and also by watching their caterpillars change into butterflies. Although children are involved in re-cycling paper in the playgroup, opportunities are too limited for sustainability and caring for their environment.

The playgroup provides a good level of guidance and because practitioners know the children well they respond highly effectively to their needs and as a result children are happy and feel secure. Without exception children settle exceptionally well and quickly into the setting.

Practitioners employ positive behaviour strategies using effective explanations and high levels of praise that encourage the children to successfully take turns and listen. They provide consistency and an excellent level of individual support to assist children with additional learning needs and work exceptionally well with parents and other professionals. As a result all children achieve and make very good progress and their families are well supported.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The playgroup has effectively developed a well established ethos that is inclusive and values the diversity of the children's backgrounds. The setting actively develops tolerant attitudes through an excellent range of different learning experiences and good day-to-day practice. 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.

Both practitioners have knowledge and expertise with relevant, appropriate qualifications and experience of working with children. They create a rich, stimulating learning environment indoors and out making good use of space and know what they need to do to help the children to succeed.

There are good opportunities for safe outdoor play and resources are used effectively. They are easily accessible for children to become independent learners, appropriate and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and highly successfully support the needs of the children in all areas of learning. The



accommodation is used effectively, secure and well maintained to assist the learning of the children.

The local environment, community and visitors to the setting are used outstandingly well to enhance the facilities at the setting and enrich the learning experiences of the children.

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

### **Leadership: Good**

The leaders of the playgroup fully understand the meaning of their roles and are effectively informed about the performance of the setting through a quality review of the service. Relevant legislation and guidance underpin the service and the setting is involved in national and local priorities such as Designed to Smile, which impacts very positively on the health and wellbeing of the children.

The setting is very well managed and there is a positive ethos, clear direction and sense of purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement. Values, aims and objectives are shared and all are working for the benefit of the children. Practitioners are exceptionally well deployed and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There is a positive ethos with high expectations for all the children and as a result they achieve and make excellent progress in the Foundation Phase.

Learning and teaching are organised well with very successful parental links to support the achievements of the children. An effective training programme and appraisals ensure that practitioners are aware of what they need to do and can improve their knowledge and practice.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting has made exceptionally good progress since their previous Estyn inspection. Practitioners, the registered person and local authority teacher are able to evidence how the provision and standards have been improved in particular the use of the community and the outdoor space.

There is effective leadership, and as a result the children have continuity of care and settle quickly and learn highly successfully in the playgroup. Self-evaluation effectively identifies areas for improvement. Both practitioners know the setting exceptionally well and changes are made to ensure positive gains and successful improvements for the children.

There is a positive culture of self-reflection and practitioners are open to new ideas and try different ways of working. All practitioners are engaged in professional development and attend all courses and as a result effectively raise standards and highly successfully support the wellbeing of the children. They actively share their

expertise and knowledge to benefit each other and this ensures a positive impact on the setting.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The playgroup works effectively with partners for the benefit of the children and a range of partnerships makes an exceptionally strong contribution to the progress of the children and their wellbeing and successfully enhances and supports their learning.

There is clear communication between parents and the playgroup through news letters and fundraising together. There is information about the setting displayed in the playgroup entrance and by coming in to the group they are involved in supporting the learning of their children. Parents are also successfully informed of their child's progress by an open morning where they can look at their child's work and speak to practitioners and by an on going assessment record.

Although there is a good relationship with the local school, effective transition to support the children is in the early stages. There is an effective partnership with the local authority advisory teacher who visits the setting, providing guidance, which impacts positively on the achievements of the children and enhances the work of the setting.

There is a highly successful relationship with members of the local community that ensures outstanding learning opportunities for the children. Highly successful partnerships within the local community resulting in visits to the bakery, the doctor's surgery, the hairdressers and the nursing home and visitors to the setting, for example the police and fire service very effectively add another dimension to the children's learning and enable the delivery of high quality experiences.

The setting has an effective partnership with other professionals to ensure an excellent level of support for any children with additional learning needs. Practitioners successfully work together as a team and effectively share information for the benefit of all the children.

### **Resource management: Good**

A very good supply of high quality resources is well matched to the stages of development of the children and excellent adaptations successfully enable all the children to learn. The setting makes exceptional use of the community and local area to motivate the children in their learning. All practitioners including a key worker are very well deployed and support the children highly successfully.

Leaders have a good understanding of budget matters and as a result future resource needs are well planned for and practitioners ensure that all develop the provision and improve outcomes and the wellbeing of the children.

A report on Towyn Under 5's Playgroup  
March 2014

There are good opportunities for a range of learning experiences both indoors and in the outdoor environment where the children effectively develop different skills.

The funding that is received is used effectively and 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 Anne Elizabeth Manning

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

<p><b>Areas of Learning</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>CSSIW</b></p>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<p><b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Foundation Phase</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b></p>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<p><b>Local authority advisory teacher</b></p>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<p><b>Mudiad Meithrin</b></p>	<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>

A report on Towyn Under 5's Playgroup  
March 2014

<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.