



*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**

**Upper Colwyn Bay Playgroup  
Seion Chapel  
Cherry Tree Lane  
Upper Colwyn Bay  
Conwy  
LL28 5YH**

**Date of inspection: February 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

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## Context

Upper Colwyn Bay Playgroup is situated in Colwyn Bay and sessions are held in the Seion Chapel. This English-medium playgroup is managed by a committee with the day to day running carried out by a supervisor and team of practitioners.

There were four funded 3-year-old children present during the first morning of the inspection and eight during the second morning. Children come from the local area and from a range of social backgrounds. Without exception children speak English as their first language and nearly all have a white British background. At present no children have additional help for their learning.

The playgroup opens for 5 mornings every week during school term time and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 25 children aged from two years and four months. Children attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in January 2014 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

The playgroup is a member of the Wales Pre- school Providers Association and receives support from the Conwy Early Entitlement Team.

## 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 children are confident learners who achieve well;
- all teaching is good;
- there is a good range of learning experiences; and
- 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
- the setting has made good progress since the last inspection.

## **Recommendations**

R1. Make more effective use of the outcomes of observations by evaluating and identifying the next steps for learning.

R2. Continue to develop outdoor experiences.

R3. Further develop links within the local community to extend and enrich the experiences of the children.

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

Without exception children make good progress from their starting points. Many demonstrate high levels of knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning. Most have developed good thinking skills and this has had a positive impact on learning and the standards they achieve.

Nearly all children develop effective skills in communication, numeracy and information communication technology needed to access the wider curriculum. Without exception children successfully develop literacy skills and show a good interest in books both fiction and non fiction and they follow the content well.

Nearly all children use mathematical ideas and successfully select appropriate equipment. They solve problems effectively and can recognise patterns and sequence. All children use a range of technology effectively including a computer and are able to control buttons and switches to operate different equipment successfully such as 'walkie talkies' and battery operated toys.

Most make very good progress in gaining skills in Welsh language. They understand and enjoy stories and songs and can follow basic instructions and use a good range of simple words and phrases.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Children feel safe in the playgroup. Many children are developing an awareness of how they can stay healthy by eating a nutritious snack and by wearing coats to keep warm in cold weather. Most children show high levels of self-esteem and are highly motivated and engaged in their activities.

Without exception children are developing positive attitudes to learning. Nearly all relate successfully to each other and to adults around them. All are very well behaved and many are starting to help their friends, for example when tidying away equipment or outside in the garden blowing bubbles. Nearly all are confident, competent and independent learners and as a result enjoy what they are doing and their time spent in the playgroup.

Without exception children are relaxed and happy and are interested to talk about what they are doing and what is happening in photographs in the book they have made about their recent visit to Tu Fewn Tu Allen. Nearly all concentrate well and persevere with tasks and activities they enjoy such as building a bridge for their train from strips of paper and take part enthusiastically in different learning experiences.

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

Practitioners plan short term flexible, interesting learning experiences that successfully engage all children and as a result they make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Skills in communication and numeracy are embedded successfully into the experiences of the children. A good range of information communication technology including a computer, headphones and a compact disc player successfully ensures that the children develop effective skills.

The curriculum effectively builds on children's existing knowledge and understanding. Learning experiences actively ensure that children have opportunities to experiment and develop a range of skills including good thinking skills across all areas of learning. Although there is good use made of the small chapel garden and children have opportunities to explore and learn, overall they do not have a sufficient range of outdoor experiences.

Activities and experiences effectively encourage children to form relationships with each other and with adults around them and to show respect for all cultural backgrounds.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to recognise their names such as self-registration and to develop literacy skills by looking at books including those written in Welsh and listening to stories. All practitioners use a good level and frequency of Welsh and effectively encourage the children throughout the session. They use a small 'Welsh' bear effectively and as a result the children are confident and keen to respond. The children have opportunities to celebrate festivals such as St David's Day.

There are good opportunities for the children to develop physical and creative skills, indoors dancing to music and in the outdoor environment blowing bubbles and wax rubbing. Children learn effectively about caring for living things by looking after birds and finding mini beasts as they explore outdoors.

A few visits and visitors to the setting, for example to the forest school and a visit from the Reverend and taking part in the flower festival increases successfully the children's understanding of the world around them.

**Teaching: Good**

Without exception practitioners have up to date knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase and as a result move the children's learning forward. All practitioners use language well and are consistently good role and language models for the children. They employ successful strategies to encourage the children to play together and to take turns with equipment. Circle times are used highly effectively to share stories, re-cap on the session and listen to the views of others.

There are high expectations of the children and practitioners make excellent use of spontaneous opportunities to develop their thinking skills and provide imaginative suggestions to extend the children's knowledge. Questioning and listening techniques are highly effective and further the learning of the children. Without exception practitioners are skilled at knowing when to intervene in the children's play and use effective strategies to provide skill development opportunities and promote independent learning.

Practitioners carry out useful observations of the children and provide praise and encouragement with effective verbal feedback so that the children know what to do to improve. Although outcomes are used to plan future activities and successfully meet the needs and interests of the children, they are not sufficiently evaluated or clearly identify the next steps for learning. Parents are involved in the achievements of their children and they are actively aware of their progress.

Without exception practitioners use a good level of Welsh with the children including organising a Helpwr Heddiw and they successfully encourage the children to respond with simple greetings, words, phrases and songs.

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

The playgroup has a good range of policies and procedures to support the children that effectively promotes their health and wellbeing including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and the practitioners have undertaken training. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Children learn about simple rules such as sharing and successfully learn to distinguish right from wrong. The playgroup successfully fosters values including honesty and fairness and effectively develops an understanding of living and sharing with others through learning experiences and good day-to-day practice. Children learn effectively about respect by looking after their chapel garden. There are good opportunities for children to take responsibility and as a result they show high levels of initiative and help each other effectively.

The children are starting to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by working in the garden, caring for living things and using a range of technology. Without exception children learn successfully about re-cycling through composting left over food from snack time and by sorting scrap paper into a bag.

The playgroup actively provides guidance and because all practitioners know the children well they respond highly effectively to their needs. They provide consistency and support with successful strategies to assist any children with additional learning needs, for example being part of the Conwy Support and Referral Scheme and work well with parents and other professionals. As a result children achieve and make good progress in the setting.



**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 a range of different learning experiences. Equal access to the curriculum is offered and there is an effective range of policies and procedures that supports the children, and promotes their health and well being including equal opportunities and complaints policies. There is a collaborative and supportive ethos and as a result all children are happy, secure and confident learners.

There are highly valued practitioners with relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children. All practitioners create a rich stimulating environment for learning with good quality displays.

Areas of learning are well defined to develop specific skills and equipment and resources are easily accessible to encourage and effectively support independent learning. There are opportunities for safe outdoor learning in the chapel garden that provides appropriate experiences for the children.

Resources including a range of 'real objects' are used well, are appropriate, suitable and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and effectively support the needs of the children in all areas of learning. Accommodation is of good quality, used effectively, secure and well maintained.

Opportunities for learning in the local environment as well as visitors to the playgroup to enrich the experiences of the children are insufficient.

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

The setting is efficiently managed and the practitioners who are well deployed work successfully as a team and as a result outcomes for children are good. There is a positive ethos in which leaders effectively understand their roles and responsibilities. They give good guidance, direction and develop a sense of purpose that successfully promotes and sustains improvement. Values, aims and objectives are shared during meetings and as part of the session and all are working for the benefit of the children. Practitioners and children are valued and managed well and as a result the focus is effectively on the needs of the children.

Learning and teaching are well organised and expectations are high with effective established links with parents that successfully support the learning of the children and ensure that parents are fully aware of the progress and achievements of their children. An effective training programme, a sound induction, supervision every term and annual appraisals make certain that practitioners are aware of what they need to do and can improve their knowledge and practice.

Leaders are effectively informed about the progress of the setting through regular committee meetings, self-evaluation and assessment and an annual quality of care

review. Leaders have high expectations for improvement and ensure that the Foundation Phase is successfully delivered. Relationships are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community.

Policies and procedures support children and their families effectively and relevant legislation and guidance are taken into account with information used well to make informed decisions. Leaders are aware of initiatives such as healthy eating and are involved in working towards other national and local priorities including collecting contributions for a local food bank.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting has made good progress since their previous Estyn inspection. Practitioners are able to evidence how the provision and standards of children's achievement and wellbeing have improved, for example their listening skills and concentration. All practitioners know the setting well and as a result strengths and areas for development are recognised and action is taken to maintain good practice and implement change.

There is a positive culture of self-evaluation and practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try different ways of working for the benefit of the children and to successfully support their learning.

Self-evaluation effectively takes into account the views of children, parents and practitioners. The setting actively uses information to prioritise changes, resulting in positive gains and improvements for the children.

Practitioners are engaged in professional development and attend courses that effectively raise standards and support the well being of the children. They successfully share their expertise and knowledge to benefit each other and ensure a positive impact on the setting.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The playgroup works effectively with partners for the good of the children. A range of partnership working, for example celebrating with the chapel makes a strong contribution to the progress of the children and their wellbeing and successfully enhances and supports their learning.

Practitioners take active steps to involve parents and carers and ensure that they are regularly told about all aspects of the playgroup's work through a successful newsletter. 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 by an on going assessment record. Parent questionnaires completed indicate a high level of satisfaction with the playgroup and the progress that their children make.

There is a good relationship with the local school however further links to effectively support the children moving on are in the early stages.

A positive relationship with the local authority advisory teacher, who visits the setting providing guidance, impacts positively on the progress and achievements of the children and enhances the work of the setting.

As a result of a successful partnership with the Wales Pre-school Providers Association and working with other professionals the playgroup effectively ensures support for all children including any with additional learning needs. Without exception practitioners work well together, effectively share information and know who to contact if extra support is needed.

Opportunities through the local environment and community links to extend and support the children's learning and to enrich the provision are insufficient.

**Resource management: Good**

The playgroup makes good use of a range of resources to motivate and encourage the children to learn. Indoors and outdoors is used successfully to develop the skills of the children across all the areas of learning. A good supply of high quality resources is well matched to the stages of development of the children and any additional learning needs.

Practitioners are deployed highly successfully to support learning and resources are managed well. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of budget matters and ensure that purchases are in line with planned action for improvement, prioritised to develop the provision and improve outcomes for the children.

Future resource needs are well planned for and financial decisions are evaluated to ensure a direct and positive impact on the achievement, progress and well being of the children. The funding that is received is used effectively to improve the setting and impact positively on the standards of achievements of the children. As a result the playgroup 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

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

<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.