



*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**

**Highway Playdays  
Highway Community Rooms  
The Highway  
Ewloe  
Flintshire  
CH5 3DN**

**Date of inspection: September 2012**

**by**

**Anne Manning**

**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

Highway Playdays was first established about 30 years ago and was originally set up as a mother and toddler group. In 1999 the group relocated to their current premises. The medium sized setting is situated near the village of Ewloe in Flintshire, North Wales. The setting is managed by a committee and the general day to day running is carried out by a team of practitioners.

The entrance has information for parents to view when they drop off or collect their children. The pre-school provision is set out in one large room that is divided into areas for play. Outside; the garden to the rear of the building provides good opportunities for a variety of outdoor activities.

The setting is open all year and is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 20 children who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in September 2011 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

There was one child present aged three who was not eligible for funding during this Autumn term.

Highway Playdays is English speaking, providing care and education for children from families for whom all this is their first language. All are White British and no children have additional needs.

The group has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. Nearly all children attending the setting are from the local area and come from a range of social backgrounds.

Highway Playdays receives support from Flintshire Early Education and is a member of Wales Pre-School Providers Association.

## 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:

Teaching is good.

There is a good range of learning experiences including the opportunity to handle snakes.

The provision for the care, support and guidance of the children is good.

Good use is made of the local community and environment to develop and extend the learning of the children.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

There is an experienced and consistent team of practitioners.

There is a commitment to self evaluation and improvement.

Practitioners have an effective partnership with families that enable them to provide very effectively for the wellbeing of the children.

The setting has a good working relationship with the local authority to develop the provision.

## Recommendations

R.1 Plan more specifically for outdoor play.

R.2 Strengthen the planning and assessment process to take into account individual development needs.

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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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.

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

All practitioners are involved in planning learning experiences that engage all children and effectively contribute to the children making good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Although there is a range of interesting activities and experiences both indoor and out across all areas of learning, planning specifically for learning outcomes outdoors is under developed. Planning provides an overview of the term and includes planned visits and visitors to the group such as the police and fire service and notes a learning intention and an effective evaluation.

Communication, literacy, ICT and numeracy are embedded into the experiences provided. Although the organisation of the curriculum ensures continuity and progression it is not always clear where planning links to assessment and has taken into account individual needs.

Children are confident and independent learners. They actively find out about re-cycling by putting paper and newspaper into a re-cycling box and using the sunflower seeds they have grown for bird food. Learning experiences effectively encourage children to care for animals and treat them with respect as they look after birds and other wildlife in the garden.

Children develop thinking skills across all areas of learning; they enjoy the challenge of new activities, for example, looking at, touching and holding snakes and other exotic creatures.

The children learn how to grow and take care of their own plants and flowers that include beans, courgettes and sunflowers and enjoy eating the produce at snack and mealtimes.

Practitioners note the ideas and interests of the children and learning experiences enable the children to work together and help each other. Highway Playdays makes good use of the local community and visitors to the setting to extend the learning of the children.

All practitioners encourage the use of Welsh during the session, both in an informal and more formal way, for example, through rhymes and stories. A Helpwr Heddiw supports the other children to carry out simple tasks such as giving out plates.

Children effectively learn about their own Welsh culture, other cultures and traditions, for example, they are involved in celebrating Chinese New Year in a simple and meaningful way.

### **Teaching: Good**

Five practitioners work in the setting and all are qualified in early years.

All practitioners effectively question the children to extend their learning and have high expectations of the children. All have knowledge of the Foundation Phase methodology and child development. They provide a range of different learning experiences, are well deployed and make good use of resources to enhance the learning of the children both indoors and outdoors.

All practitioners give good support and intervene appropriately in activities to extend the play or to provide good feedback to help the children to improve.

Activities are evaluated and have observations and comments that effectively improve the teaching and learning.

Practitioners observe and assess the children and track their progress and achievement in This is Me, but information about skill development is not always formally noted to plan the next steps for individual children. Practitioners are skilled in keeping children interested and on track with their learning. They all manage behaviour well and are good language models.

Most practitioners use the Welsh language effectively both formally and informally throughout the session, particularly during circle time, singing songs and rhymes.

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

The setting effectively promotes the health and wellbeing of the children. They are encouraged to develop a sense of curiosity about the world in which they live, for example, by visitors to the setting and to develop awe and wonder by looking closely at different animals from other countries.

Highway Playdays fosters good values such as fairness, honesty and respect and practitioners are good role models. Children are encouraged to differentiate between right and wrong. Children have clear goals and boundaries for behaviour and they follow simple rules and instructions. Practitioners are skilled in a variety of methods in order to help children effectively settle into the group.

The learning experiences promote the moral, social, and spiritual development of the children and the setting actively supports engagement with the community and respect for diversity of belief and attitude. A parent pack contains a range of information, policies and procedures that support the service.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedure in place to safeguard the children, updated to link more effectively to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. All practitioners know how to respond appropriately and are aware of child protection issues. There are systems in place to update practitioners and further child protection training is booked for later in this Autumn term.

Although there are no children with additional needs, there are schemes in place to work alongside parents and other professionals to directly support the children and their families, for example, 'Pathway' documentation and an additional needs policy.

Effective risk assessments keep the children safe.

The children have good opportunities to learn about and care for living things such as the birds, other wild life that visit the garden and creatures brought in to the setting for the children to handle and observe.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides an inclusive environment where all children are valued. There is a consistent staff team with sufficient qualified and very experienced practitioners working with the children. One member of staff has worked in the setting for 12 years, one for almost 12 years, one 9 years, one 6 years and one for 3 years.

A good range of policies and procedures support the children in the setting. An equal opportunities policy ensures that all children are treated on an individual basis and the rights of the child are promoted. There is equality of access for all children to the curriculum and the provision.

The resources are suitable and sufficient for the requirements of the Foundation Phase and the needs of the children attending. The accommodation is used effectively, in particular the alcove made into a kitchen area for the children and toys and equipment are easily accessed both indoors and outdoors. The room is set out so that children can see what resources are available and help themselves, ensuring the children develop into confident and competent learners.

The local environment is used well to enhance the facilities at the setting, for example, visits to the duck pond, library and pet shop. A range of visitors extend the experiences of the children. The immediate outdoor area is effectively used to develop a range of learning experiences such as chalking, planting, sand and a climbing frame.

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

The leaders give clear direction and there is a sense of purpose. Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities and the practitioners and children are well managed and supported. Staff have annual appraisals and meet together on a regular basis. A positive ethos has been created and there are high expectations for all. Children are valued and are at the heart of the setting and the focus is clearly on their needs.

There is effective administration for the setting to update and review policies and procedures to support the group. This effectively enables leaders to ensure that the Foundation Phase is successfully delivered and outcomes for the children are good.

A newsletter, verbal and written information for parents keeps them effectively informed and up to date with what is happening in the setting.

Local authority initiatives are followed such as healthy eating whereby the setting provides home made rather than processed foods and ensures healthy snacks for the children, often with ingredients they have grown themselves.

**Improving quality: Good**

The setting has made good progress since the last inspection by Estyn and satisfactorily addressed the previous recommendations.

There is a very positive culture of self-evaluation throughout the setting and areas of strength and areas needing development have been identified. There is a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement.

Parents and children have been consulted about improvements and their views are valued in developing the provision, resulting in positive gains for the children. Highway Playdays uses information well to prioritise areas for improvement.

Practitioners have input into the setting's self-evaluation and action is taken to make changes and practitioners can see how the provision has improved. This process has had a very positive impact on standards, quality of provision and outcomes for the children. Photographs clearly evidence positive changes.

Practitioners effectively evaluate, share ideas and their expertise with one another.

**Partnership working: Good**

There is trust and clear communication between partners and a good range of successful partnerships contributes to the learning of the children, their achievements and wellbeing. A good working relationship with the local schools, where most children from the setting will transfer, has resulted in teachers visiting the setting and the practitioners have been to one of the schools to look at their outdoor area. The children from Highway Playdays have been to watch a Christmas play and have seen a concert at the schools.



Year 6 come into the setting to do 'story books' with the children and students on placement from the local college and from school on work experience add to the richness of the curriculum and extend the learning of the children.

The setting is involved with fundraising and children have carried out a sponsored toddle.

An information board and newsletter every half term effectively informs parents of what is happening in the setting. Parents are able to talk to practitioners at the end of the session when they collect their children or when they drop them off in the morning.

Highway Playdays has a very good working relationship with the early education local authority teacher who regularly visits the setting. Any suggestions are quickly acted upon and the support and guidance to develop the provision is appreciated by all in the setting.

### **Resource management: Good**

A good range of existing and additional resources are effectively used both indoors and outdoors to develop children's skills across all areas of learning. These motivate the children and help them to achieve.

There is a good understanding of budget matters and financial decisions are evaluated to ensure that the resources have a positive impact on raising standards.

Future resource needs are well planned for and practitioners are able to purchase the resources they need. Fundraising is carried out to purchase equipment that benefits the children and practitioners increase resources in relation to planning needs and individual children's interests.

Funding is used well and Highway Playdays gives good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received. (This is because there were only a small number of relevant children at the time of the inspection.)

### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children are happy.

They like all the staff and the activities at the setting.

## Appendix 2

**The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate**

Anne Manning	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))

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

## 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 partnership's 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>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.