



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Berriew Playgroup
c/o Berriew CP School
Berriew
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8BA**

Date of inspection: December 2018

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:

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

Berriew Playgroup is an English-medium nursery in Berriew in Powys local authority. The setting is registered for 24 children from the ages of two to eight years. It offers early years education sessions from Monday to Friday from 9 am until 11.30 am during school term time. At the time of the inspection, there were sixteen children in receipt of funded early education.

The setting has identified a minority of children as having additional learning needs. There are a very few children from ethnic minority backgrounds and very few children have English as an additional language. No children have Welsh as their home language.

There are six members of staff including the management team. All members of staff work with the three and four-year-old children. The lead practitioner has been in post since October 2016.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspected the setting in January 2018 and Estyn last inspected it in March 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children's communication and numeracy skills are developing well from their starting points
- Most children co-operate successfully with each other and share toys and equipment readily
- Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of effective foundation phase practice
- A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well
- The setting is welcoming and all practitioners' interactions with children are respectful and caring

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Nearly all practitioners work together effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities well
- The lead practitioner is strongly committed to improving quality
- The setting's arrangements for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective
- The setting has a wide range of highly effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children extensively
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning successfully

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that children develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills progressively
- R2 Strengthen provision for Welsh language development to enable children to apply their skills independently and confidently
- R3 Plan sufficient opportunities for children to lead their own play, explore and develop their ideas, persist and solve problems

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 entitled: 'Working in partnership with parents to develop a holistic approach to supporting children's learning', for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

A majority of children enter the setting with skills and knowledge in line or above those expected for their age. During their time at the setting most children make good progress, particularly in the development of their physical and personal and social skills.

Most children listen attentively. They pay good attention when others are talking and allow others to speak without interrupting them. Most children understand and follow instructions successfully, such as putting their coats and wellies on before they go outside or sitting on the rug before group time. Many speak clearly and are happy to share information about what they are doing with familiar adults. Around half of the children chat confidently to adults about past experiences, such as enjoying a midnight feast.

During group time, almost all children pay close attention to a story and a few are able to answer simple questions relating to the storyline with confidence. For example, they predict who could be knocking on the door or what might happen next. A few children select books independently and talk about the pictures with interest. Most readily take part in mark making activities with a range of equipment and a few are beginning to write for a purpose independently. For example, they write 'm' on a Christmas card for mummy.

Most children's numeracy skills are developing well from their starting points. Many say numbers in order to at least ten and count five girls and three boys during registration accurately. Most are beginning to use money in their play and many are beginning to understand its purpose. For example, they use coins to pay for fruit in the 'snack time shop'. Around half of the children make good use of mathematical vocabulary. They describe a map of the local area as 'humungous' and suggest that 'there will be 100' when discussing how many children will be at nursery tomorrow.

Most children's physical skills are developing well from their starting points. They use a range of tools such as spoons, felt pens and chinks enthusiastically and a few use scissors successfully with little support. Many children develop good gross motor skills such as coordination and balance, when negotiating space on tricycles or balancing an upright peacock feather on the palm of their hand. They develop their ball skills successfully and a few children explore different ways to move a ball with a racket confidently.

Many children access and use a few familiar ICT resources appropriately. They play with recycled mobile telephones and a battery operated till independently. Many children use tablet computers and explore a programmable toy with support. For example, they take a photograph of a road they have built in the construction area. However, children's ICT skills are generally underdeveloped.

Nearly all children make decisions about the activities they undertake and the resources they will use. Many explore their environment confidently and a few are beginning to develop their thinking skills successfully. For example, they recognise that they need a longer piece of tape when wrapping a large present.

Many children develop their Welsh skills effectively in relation to their starting points. Many children respond positively to simple commands given in Welsh and join in with a range of Welsh songs and rhymes. During group time they count to eight in Welsh and a very few count to ten. A majority of children name a few colours in Welsh when collecting a cup at snack time. However, very few children use Welsh language independently.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children settle well as soon as they arrive at the setting. They co-operate effectively with one another and share toys and equipment successfully. Most children take good notice of instructions given by an adult and respond to requests positively such as washing their hands before they have snack.

Most children behave well. They look after the setting's resources and treat adults and children respectfully. They are courteous and show good manners when encouraged. A few children display very good manners such as introducing themselves and a friend to an unfamiliar adult.

Nearly all children make confident choices about their play from activities available, and nearly all children can do this when supported by an adult. Many children share their ideas for future activities with practitioners successfully. For example, they explain that they want to make Christmas cards and play with snow. Most sustain interest in activities and move confidently to another activity when ready. They particularly enjoy pretending to prepare food in the popular role-play area.

Most children are developing their independence effectively. For example, they wash their cup and bowl after snack time. However, a few children are quick to ask for help rather than persisting with tasks such as putting their coat and shoes on.

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

The setting provides a beneficial range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors that engage nearly all children successfully. Practitioners focus well on developing children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills. They consistently adapt provision to take account of individual children's ideas and interests. For example, they create a fairy garden in the sensory garden after children show an interest in fairies.

Practitioners use visitors successfully to enhance the curriculum. For example, community police and fire officers have supported children's understanding of how to stay safe. Children also have regular opportunities to go on visits to enrich their learning such as to a local supermarket where they make their own bread.

The setting provides effective opportunities for children to learn to care for living things. Practitioners support children to grow and look after a range of fruit and

vegetables such as strawberries and leeks. They encourage children to show kindness to creatures when observing minibeasts in the outdoor area and petting animals visiting the setting.

The indoor environment provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, such as using scissors, felt pens and tweezers. The outdoor area provides good opportunities for running, climbing and balancing, which children access confidently. Practitioners enhance provision through regular planned activities such as ball games and circus skills, successfully. This results in most children making good progress in developing their physical skills.

Nearly all practitioners provide an effective range of opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Role-play provision such as the snack time fruit shop provides children with opportunities to count, explore money, sort fruit and compare size. This has a positive impact on children's progress in developing mathematical skills. Planned activities such as wrapping different sized 'Christmas presents' support children's understanding of measurement well.

Provision to support the development of children's communication skills is effective. Nearly all practitioners engage children in conversation successfully and use resources such as used telephones to encourage children's speaking and listening skills well. For example, children chat to a friend on the phone and ask when they will be coming for tea. Practitioners share stories and rhymes with children and show them how to handle books with care. They provide interesting opportunities for mark making, which children take part in enthusiastically. These include painting with coloured shaving foam over melting ice and large-scale chalk boards in the outdoor area.

Provision for developing children's ICT skills is evident in the indoor area and there is an effective range of equipment available. These include, digital cameras, tablet computers and a listening centre. However, practitioners do not use these resources to develop children's skills across the curriculum progressively enough.

Nearly all practitioners support children's Welsh language development appropriately. A few practitioners model Welsh through singing songs, counting and using Welsh words and phrases during group time effectively. However, most practitioners do not use Welsh systematically throughout the session. Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage, for example when making models of daffodils as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Teaching: Good

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of effective foundation phase practice. They use a range of strategies skilfully to encourage and to motivate children to learn. Nearly all practitioners explain things clearly, model activities and question children effectively. They use resources imaginatively to capture children's interests. For example, they provide opportunities for children to explore painting with coloured shaving foam over melting ice.

Activities build effectively on children's interests as practitioners observe how well children have engaged with different resources and consult them on the things they would like to do. For example, practitioners plan a throwing game using toy snowballs after children express an interest in playing with snow.

The setting has a very effective range of assessment procedures. For example, practitioners observe children during their first few weeks at the setting and identify what they can already do. They also record useful observations to show children's progress and responses to provision. The setting keeps parents very well informed about children's progress. Termly consultations with parents ensure that parents and practitioners work in partnership to discuss children's recent achievements and how best to support their future learning.

The setting has developed a useful range of strategies to promote positive behaviour and most children respond to these well. Nearly all practitioners have clear expectations and explain rules to children appropriately. For example, they explain why the children should share the coloured mats when playing a hopping game outside. This ensures a team approach and consistency for children.

Practitioners combine focused tasks with children's free play appropriately. However, adult directed tasks dominate the timetable and many children do not access extended periods of uninterrupted learning. This limits opportunities for children to become deeply involved in their play, explore their ideas, persist and develop their problem-solving skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has successful arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. For example, practitioners encourage children to eat healthy snacks and to try new foods such as kiwi and humous. They provide a choice of milk or water to drink. Consequently, nearly all children's food choices are healthy. The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to take regular physical exercise both indoors and outdoors. This develops children's co-ordination successfully and encourages them to adopt a healthy life-style.

A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Practitioners are good role models and support children to develop respect for others and a sense of right and wrong successfully. They encourage children to share equipment and to take care of resources effectively. As a result, many children learn to cooperate with each other well. For example, they make play dough cup cakes with a friend in the role-play kitchen.

Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children successfully, for example, through encouraging them to observe a grass hopper they find in the outdoor area. The setting provides worthwhile opportunities to develop children's cultural awareness, such as regular singing sessions, providing a range of instruments and delivering musical movement sessions.

The setting provides meaningful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability such as recycling their food waste. Practitioners act as positive role models through using many recycled resources in the learning environment. The setting encourages children to use natural and recycled materials in their play such as logs, feathers and shells.

There are beneficial processes to support children with additional learning needs. These include effective links with a range of support agencies that help meet children's individual needs effectively.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is very welcoming and all practitioners' interactions with children are respectful and caring. They encourage all children to take part in activities and have equal access to each area of the setting's provision. Practitioners lead by example in encouraging children to show tolerance towards one another and respect for the setting's equipment. As a result, many children play and learn happily.

The setting's new accommodation is secure and well presented. There are enough good quality resources across the areas of learning, which meet the needs of the children well.

Practitioners make creative use of the space indoors, which is attractive and engaging. They ensure that resources are easily accessible for children which supports their independence well. The popular outdoor area and sensory garden have been developed successfully into valuable learning environments, which promote the development of children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills effectively.

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

The lead practitioner has a clear vision to ensure that the setting provides good quality care that supports children to become independent learners. She works effectively with setting staff to provide a nurturing and caring environment for all children. Leaders manage practitioners and children effectively to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following well-established routines. Practitioners work together effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities well.

The setting has effective arrangements for managing staff performance. Nearly all staff have useful opportunities to discuss and reflect on the quality of their work. The lead practitioner supports staff effectively in developing their knowledge of the foundation phase and improving their skills in delivering it. Practitioners take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development that link appropriately to the setting's priorities for improvement.

There are a range of beneficial policies and procedures to support the organisation of the setting, and staff review these effectively. Leaders pay appropriate attention to local and national priorities and, as a result, there is a successful focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The management committee plays an active role in the life of the setting and communication between the lead practitioner and committee members is effective. The committee provides valuable support, particularly with managing the setting's finances.

Improving quality: Good

The lead practitioner is strongly committed to improving quality and the setting's arrangements for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective. The lead practitioner makes beneficial use of information from a range of sources to inform the self-evaluation process. For example, she considers the views of staff when they share their evaluations about the quality of provision.

Nearly all practitioners know what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve. They can explain what they have identified as priorities to raise standards. Many staff have a positive approach to continuous professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact on the quality of provision, for example by improving provision for children's communication and physical skills.

The improvement plan sets out clearly what the setting needs to develop. It is an organised document that identifies appropriate actions, timescales and responsibilities. The targets in the plan come directly from the monitoring and self-evaluation process and form useful priorities for the setting.

The setting has made effective progress in addressing recommendations from the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting has a wide range of highly effective partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children extensively.

Partnerships with parents are very strong. Nearly all parents show exceptionally high levels of satisfaction. The setting communicates extremely effectively with parents through daily social media updates, open days, newsletters and informal chats. This results in parents feeling very involved in the life of the setting and having ample notice for events and celebrations.

Practitioners hold termly consultations with parents. During these meetings parents and practitioners share detailed information about children's interests, achievements and progress across areas of learning. Practitioners and parents work together to identify experiences and opportunities to support children's future learning very well. These include suggestions of useful activities that could be done at home such as mark making and baking. This ensures that parents are consulted and feel extremely well informed about their child's progress. Practitioners gain a full view of each child and use this information effectively to inform their planning.

Practitioners actively involve parents in decision making and the management committee is made up entirely of parents. Practitioners are highly responsive to parents' ideas and regularly ask for their views. For example, the lead practitioner contacted a catering organisation and arranged for hot meals to be available for children, after a few parents suggested that this would be beneficial.

The setting invites parents to join celebrations and events such as the Christmas concert and sports day. Practitioners regularly involve parents in improving the quality of provision and parents are very responsive to this. For example, they

recently helped the setting to create a stimulating sensory garden. Parents and families contributed resources and time to build a raised bed and plant a range of vegetables and herbs. This has resulted in improved provision to support the development of children's physical, numeracy and literacy skills.

There are highly effective arrangements for children's induction into the setting and gradual transition to the school. The lead practitioner has developed a very strong partnership with the school that supports children's learning extensively. She welcomes the reception class teacher into the setting regularly throughout the year, enabling the children to get to know their teacher before starting school. Children from the setting attend regular celebration assemblies at the school and pupils from the foundation phase regularly visit the setting to read stories to the younger children. Towards the end of the year, practitioners share beneficial information about individual children's interests, learning and development with the school. This supports their continued progress as they enter the reception class exceptionally well as children are settled and ready to learn.

The lead practitioner and reception class teacher regularly discuss practice and attend training together. This enables them to share expertise and resources successfully. For example, the setting has benefited from borrowing maths resources from the school and gaining advice about how to improve the provision for skills in the outdoor area.

The setting makes extensive use of its links with professional organisations and other external agencies. For example, the setting invited a wildlife charity to support children to make their own bug houses for the outdoor area and to take home. This project involved the children in using real tools and supported their physical skills very effectively.

Resource management: Good

The lead practitioner makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning effectively. The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the foundation phase successfully. Resources are plentiful and of good quality, such as the wide range of equipment to support physical development.

The setting ensures that most staff access training based on needs identified through the appraisal process. Most practitioners also make good use of training to improve provision. This has supported them to improve aspects, such as practitioners' knowledge of how to support children's communication skills.

The committee and leaders plan effectively to resource identified priorities. For example, the setting recently purchased numerous resources to support the development of children's physical skills. The setting is proactive in organising fundraising events and securing grants which support the setting's budget well.

Due to the good quality of teaching, the quality of provision and the progress children make, the setting provides good value for money.

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
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation 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