



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

A report on

**Cynfran Playgroup
Ysgol Cynfran
Dolwen Road
Llysfaen
Conwy
LL29 8SS**

Date of inspection: June 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

Cynfran Playgroup is an English-medium nursery in Lysfaen, in Conwy local authority. The setting is registered for 19 children from the ages of two to four years. It offers early education sessions from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am until 11.30 pm during school term time between January and July. There are currently eight children in receipt of funded early education.

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

There are four 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 September 2017.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspected the setting in May 2018 and Estyn last inspected it in May 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:

- The setting provides a good range of learning experiences that develop children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills well
- Practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice and use resources imaginatively
- Practitioners take account of children's preferences and capture their interests successfully
- A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual and cultural development effectively
- Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability
- The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of its provision

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement is good because:

- The lead practitioner uses effective systems for identifying the setting's areas for development and is committed to making improvements
- Practitioners assess and monitor children's progress effectively
- Practitioners work together purposefully and understand their roles and responsibilities
- Practitioners use information from training well to improve the provision
- Partnerships with parents and other agencies are worthwhile
- The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well

Recommendations

- R1 Develop provision for Welsh language in order to improve children's oracy skills and confidence in this area
- R2 Improve provision for developing children's early writing skills progressively
- R3 Identify next steps in learning consistently, to ensure that all children, including more able children, are challenged effectively
- R4 Ensure that risk assessments and safety procedures are robust and applied consistently

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?	n/a
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Standards: n/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills 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.

Wellbeing: n/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills 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
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Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners provide a good range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors that engage nearly all children successfully across all areas of learning. They focus well on developing children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Practitioners consistently take account of children's ideas and preferences when planning. For example, the children choose to make honey sandwiches and mix paint to make mud during a topic on mini-beasts.

The setting uses visitors successfully to enhance the curriculum, including the local fire service, a midwife and a road safety team. Children also have worthwhile opportunities to learn from visits within the local area. For example, they visit the local park, the post office shop and the school cook.

Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to learn to care for living things. They support children to grow and look after a range of plants such as cress and beans. There are meaningful opportunities for children to observe and look after living creatures, such as the worms in a wormery.

The indoor environment provides useful opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, such as cutting up fruit for snack time and using tweezers to collect seaweed. The outdoor area provides effective opportunities for children to practise and develop large physical movements. For example, they run confidently through the forest area, balance on suspended walkways and jump from climbing equipment. This area presents children with appropriate challenge and enables them to develop their confidence successfully.

Practitioners ensure effective provision to develop children's numeracy skills. They provide children with regular worthwhile opportunities to match, count and recognise shapes and patterns. For example, children enjoy developing their mathematical

skills as they sit in a pretend boat and catch numbered fish. Resources available, such as a toy till, coins, and shape puzzles, provide children with a range of experiences that develop mathematical concepts well.

Practitioners provide useful opportunities for children to develop their communication skills effectively. They support children to join in with conversations and ask relevant questions. For example, practitioners display interesting beach items such as seaweed, razor shells and barnacles which gain children's interest and promote speaking and listening effectively.

Practitioners share books, stories and rhymes with children regularly and model how to handle books with care. The environment is full of language with many captions and labels written in both English and Welsh. Practitioners plan an appropriate range of activities for mark making. These include useful opportunities for children to use clip boards, sticky notes and chalk boards. Practitioners model writing for a purpose such as writing price labels for the beach shop. However, they do not ensure that children have regular access to these activities so that they develop their early writing skills progressively.

Practitioners use tablet computers well to support children in developing their ICT skills. For example, children swipe and select images and use a variety of educational applications confidently. Practitioners also provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their ICT and creative skills by using walkie talkies, programmable toys, torches and digital cameras.

The setting supports children's Welsh language development appropriately. Nearly all practitioners are developing their confidence in using Welsh and model Welsh through singing songs, counting and using Welsh words and phrases throughout the session. Many children respond by joining in with songs and counting. However, practitioners do not always plan sufficiently well to develop children's Welsh oracy progressively and to encourage them to use simple phrases independently during activities. Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, they make models of daffodils and draw Welsh flags as part of their St David's Day celebrations.

Teaching: Good

Nearly all practitioners have a good understanding of foundation phase practice. They use a range of strategies well to encourage and to motivate children to learn. Practitioners use resources imaginatively to capture children's interests. For example, they encourage children to create their own 'sea world' after watching videos of sea creatures on tablets. They combine focused tasks with children's free play effectively. However, on a very few occasions practitioners distract children from their learning by introducing new ideas and resources too often.

Nearly all practitioners build suitably on children's interests through consulting them about future topics and include their ideas in planning. Practitioners ask children to evaluate sessions with thumbs up or down and their views feed into daily adaptations to provision. Nearly all practitioners explain things clearly and make effective use of questioning.

The setting has a worthwhile range of assessment procedures. Practitioners observe children and identify what they can already do during their first few weeks in the setting. At regular intervals, they update these records to show children's progress over time. Practitioners record observations systematically to show children's progress and responses to provision. However, they do not use these evaluations to plan the next steps in learning to provide consistent challenge for individual children, especially the more able.

Most practitioners make effective use of specific feedback to encourage children, such as praising 'good listening' and 'good sharing'. They keep parents and carers informed about the topics covered and what their child is learning effectively. For example, the setting invites parents to meet with the lead practitioner to discuss their child's progress.

The setting has developed a good range of strategies to promote positive behaviour and children respond to these well. All practitioners have clear expectations and explain rules to children appropriately. This ensures a team approach and consistency for the children.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has successful arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. During snack time, practitioners encourage children to eat a range of healthy foods and provide water or milk to drink. Children make informed choices about what they would like to eat, and practitioners encourage them to try new foods. The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to take regular physical exercise. This develops children's co-ordination successfully and encourages them to adopt a healthy life-style.

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, children learn to co-operate with each other well. For example, they play co-operatively with large boxes in the outdoor area and offer food to a friend during snack time spontaneously.

The setting plans a beneficial range of learning experiences that foster children's spiritual and cultural development well. Practitioners develop a sense of awe and wonder in children by encouraging them to observe plants and mini-beasts in the garden area. Children have appropriate opportunities to find out about other cultures such as learning about Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Practitioners provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about sustainability. For example, they encourage children to put their waste food in the correct bin in their recycling area. Many children show an interest in sustainability and a few make up their own recycling game where they pack their waste into a pretend wheelie bin.

The setting has beneficial processes to support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners use effective links with a range of support agencies to ensure that children's individual needs are met appropriately.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements. However, in a few cases, practitioners do not always carry out risk assessments carefully enough.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is welcoming, and practitioners are friendly and approachable. It is an inclusive community where all children are encouraged to take part and have equal access to all areas 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. For example, they explain why they need to listen at story time. As a result, all children play and learn happily.

The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the foundation phase. It is situated within the school grounds and benefits from access to the outdoor area and dining hall. The setting's accommodation is secure and well maintained. There are plenty of 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 welcoming. Resources and furniture are generally of good quality and appropriate. Designated learning areas make resources easily accessible for children.

The new outdoor area is being developed successfully into a valuable learning environment. It supports the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills well.

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

Leaders work effectively with setting staff to provide a caring and stimulating environment for all children. They manage practitioners and children well to ensure that the setting runs smoothly, following established routines. There is a strong commitment to teamwork resulting in a consistent approach. The lead practitioner has a clear vision to provide children with a solid foundation that will support their learning as children continue their education.

The lead practitioner ensures consistent improvements in standards and provision through regular meetings to discuss the effectiveness of provision and children's progress. For example, a recent focus on developing children's ICT skills has resulted in improved provision and standards.

All practitioners have clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities. There are appropriate arrangements for the appraisal of practitioners including the appraisal of the lead practitioner. All staff complete a pre-appraisal questionnaire, which prompts reflection on professional strengths and achievements. However, targets for improvement are not always identified and agreed for individual practitioners.

Leaders provide monthly supervision for all practitioners. During these meetings actions are identified which link to the setting's priority areas for improvement. These

are followed up at the next meeting and new actions identified. This way of working supports the setting's development successfully.

The setting has a suitable focus on national priorities, such as developing children's ICT, literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are effective and all practitioners are committed to improving quality. The lead practitioner includes the views of children, parents and professionals in the self-evaluation process. She makes good use of external reviews and this supports continued improvements to standards and provision.

The lead practitioner compiles information from foundation phase profiles to monitor children's progress over time effectively. Practitioners know what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve. They explain clearly what they have identified as priorities to raise standards. All staff are eager to take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development and strive to improve their performance. This has a positive impact on the quality of the provision, for example by improving behaviour management.

The improvement plan is a well organised document that sets out appropriate actions, cost implications and timescales. The targets in the plan come directly from the self-evaluation process and focus on outcomes for children effectively.

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

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships with parents are effective. Practitioners keep parents well informed about what their child is learning through social media and 'pop in' sessions. Useful noticeboards inside the setting, display the current topic and details of activities available. The lead practitioner invites parents to progress meetings to share information about their child's learning. This provides valuable opportunities for parents to see the sort of activities that their child takes part in and helps them to support their child's literacy and numeracy skills. Parents support children's learning through donating resources such as books, plants and play mats.

The setting has well-established links with the school in which it is situated, and practitioners make beneficial use of facilities such as the adventure playground and forest area. There are appropriate arrangements for children's induction into the setting and smooth transition to the school. For example, the lead practitioner is flexible in organising settling in visits in order to meet the needs of individual children.

The setting has effective links with the local authority and accesses regular advice and support from the advisory teacher. Practitioners make appropriate use of links with the local community to enhance the curriculum. For example, children visit the local post office shop.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well. Leaders and managers make sure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well-trained practitioners to support the effective delivery of the foundation phase curriculum. Resources are plentiful and of good quality, for example the wide range of equipment to support children's knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

The setting ensures that staff access training based on needs identified through the appraisal process. For example, practitioners are supported to work towards higher level qualifications after requesting this during appraisal meetings. Leaders place a strong emphasis on working collaboratively and learning from each other. Practitioners make good use of training to improve provision, for example in developing the use of ICT within the setting.

Leaders plan effectively to resource identified priorities. For example, the setting recently secured funding for a new outdoor area. In view of the good teaching, the progress that children make and the quality of provision, 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