



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

**Llandudno Junction Play Group
Brickfield Terrace
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9YB**

Date of inspection: May 2012

by

**Mr Peter Mathias
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:

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

Llandudno Junction Playgroup is situated in the town of the same name. The immediate area is a mixture of residential houses and commercial buildings. The local authority is Conway. The setting is accommodated in part of the local Youth and community Centre. It provides nursery education for children between the ages of two years and six months and three years, for four morning sessions per week, Monday to Thursday between 9:30 and 12:00. The hall is occupied regularly by other users and equipment is disassembled and stored away at the end of each session.

The setting is registered for 24 children. Currently there are 17 children on roll, none of whom is considered to have additional learning needs.

The setting is organised by a supervisor who is the registered person and assisted by a deputy and an assistant. All have worked in the setting for some time. There is a small management committee.

Children come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Generally they are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged.

No child has English as a first language and no child has Welsh as the language of the home. All come from white British backgrounds.

The setting was last inspected by care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in the spring term 2011 and by Estyn in the summer term 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because of:

- very good progress children make in speaking and listening in English and in Welsh;
- children's very positive attitudes to learning and to each other;
- consistently good teaching;
- high quality and diligent support for all children;
- very positive relationships between all practitioners; and
- the effective management of staff and resources.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because of:

- good and effective links with the local authority;
- training needs are carefully identified and addressed;
- commitment of all practitioners to continuous improvement;
- progress made since the last inspection; and
- accurate assessments of the setting's strengths and areas for development.

Recommendations

The inspectorate has agreed with the setting the following recommendations:

- R1 improve provision for children to develop their skills and confidence to use computer programs regularly to enhance their learning;
- R2 strengthen the link between the setting's self-evaluation process and its plans for future improvement and involve the management committee more in reevaluating the performance of the setting;
- R3 enhance provision for children to understand the ways of life of people from other cultures and backgrounds; and
- R4 develop further links with other settings and the schools to which children transfer.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Bearing in mind their young age and the short time they spend in the setting, nearly all children make good progress and achieve well. They are interested in investigating for themselves and enjoy all their activities, working enthusiastically and often concentrating hard for longer periods.

From their individual starting points, nearly all make good progress in learning how to communicate in English. They speak confidently to adults when in a group and when talking to each other and to practitioners during their sessions. They listen attentively and enjoy stories, showing real enthusiasm to hear more and to predict what will happen next. They find books in both English and Welsh interesting and know that they should be treated with care and looked at from left to right. They are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. They make circular motions when practicing their mark making and recognise their names. They enjoy role-play and take on different personalities, for example when taking sick animals to see the vet.

All children make very good progress in Welsh and by the end of their time in the setting achieve very well. They recognise and use phrases to describe the weather, to say how they feel, to count within 10 and to name the primary colours. They are beginning to build up a range of Welsh rhymes and songs and practise them enthusiastically.

Children's mathematical development is good. They sort pots by size when visiting the garden centre and know how to operate a till when buying and selling. They recognise simple sequences and have a growing understanding of the relationship between objects in array and numerical symbols. They count to 10 quickly and accurately and use measuring sticks when they visit the forest school.

Children use 'electrical' equipment in their play and know the function of domestic kitchen devices. In the vet's surgery at 'Milfeddygfa Llandudno Junction' they use mobile telephones to make appointments and use a disused laptop computer to record the medicines given. However, they have very limited understanding of how to control battery operated toys and to use simple computer programs, for example to make pictures or to extend their learning in other areas.

In the setting nearly all are beginning to develop good manipulative skills, many using scissors accurately to follow a line when cutting paper. They enjoy using different media to create effects and build up colourful pictures and collages. All enjoy music and enthusiastically join in the songs and rhymes they have learnt.

Wellbeing: Good

All children make good progress in learning how to look after themselves. They understand the importance of 'clean hands' and know how to clean their teeth

independently, brushing vigorously after their healthy snacks. They show increasing independence when making choices for themselves.

All come to the setting confidently knowing that they will enjoy being there. At the end of session they look forward to being with their friends again soon. They share their ideas and equipment generously. They have good eating habits and enjoy taking on responsibilities associated with snack time.

All know the setting's expectations and follow them, behaving with care and consideration to each other. They are anxious to please and relate well to their helpers. They show a growing independence and ability to make choices for themselves.

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

Despite the difficulties in putting out and putting away all equipment for each session, the setting is well-organised to provide a wide range of stimulating and carefully put together learning experiences. They successfully meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. However, while the setting organises appropriately for children to experience a range of indoor physical activities and investigations, the restrictions around the accommodation inhibit children's use of large wheeled toys out of doors.

Practitioners plan carefully using local authority guidance to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are regularly addressed. Planning is closely related to a range of experiences, thoughtfully grouped together as topics for themes. For example, currently the setting is developing skills through activities related to 'the farm'. This planning is based around detailed guidance which indicates clearly the appropriate levels of challenge which should be provided for children of this age.

There is extensive planning to encourage learning in literacy and communication, numeracy and the understanding of children's Welsh heritage and culture.

Planning on a short-term basis indicates objectives and builds systematically on what children already know and can do.

The setting is increasingly aware of the importance of giving more opportunities for children to know something of other cultures, to understand differences and to treat others with respect and consideration. Currently awareness of other cultures is limited. Planning includes good opportunities for children to understand the importance of showing care for all aspects of the living world and to understand how plants and animals develop and what they need to be healthy.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a good understanding of how to provide appropriate challenges for children of this age and to support them skilfully in their learning. They have high expectations of what can be achieved and positively encourage all children to be active and inquisitive. They cleverly extend children's thought processes by the way in which they encourage children to form opinions and to think things out for

themselves. They know each child well and encourage them to be confident, independent learners. They very successfully ensure that all children feel valued and important members of the setting.

Across the setting practitioners take many opportunities well to encourage children to build on their confidence to use English and Welsh in their activities. They work closely with individual children to help them overcome specific difficulties and to show how a task can be achieved. They read expressively and make learning fun.

There are sound procedures to observe and record children's progress. Practitioners carefully note the individual small steps children make and update weekly their records to show the progress they have seen individual children achieve. They use a well-organised system to record longer term progress which forms an overview of each individual's all round achievements over the time they have spent in the setting.

Practitioners regularly review what has been learnt during each session and warmly acknowledge success. However, the setting is at an early stage of encouraging children to evaluate their own efforts and to begin to suggest ways in which they themselves could improve their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are appropriate policies and arrangements to ensure healthy living. Children are given every encouragement to be independent and well motivated learners who find learning fun. They are given good opportunities to be curious and to find out more for themselves. They benefit substantially from opportunities to experience aspects of the natural world when engaged in regular visits to a forest school. They feel a sense of wonder at the minibeasts they find and the materials they collect.

There are good arrangements for all children to understand what is expected of them and what is right and wrong. All know what good behaviour is and how to treat each other with kindness. They readily take on responsibilities to help others and to be useful members of the group.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

All children feel safe and happy in the setting. They receive good personal support when necessary. The setting has appropriate arrangements to provide specialist assistance where required. Parents are kept well informed and given useful advice and guidance.

Practitioners are very aware of ensuring that children who have additional needs are identified quickly and receive appropriate support.

Learning environment: Good

Despite limitations in the accommodation, the setting is well-organised and set out. It has a positive, busy atmosphere where all children work in a supportive and happy environment. Practitioners are very aware of treating each child equally and of encouraging them to do the same. There are well established arrangements to ensure that the setting is a welcoming and inclusive place.

There is an advantageous ratio of practitioners to children. All are appropriately qualified and very experienced. There are well established arrangements for the continuous professional development of staff. Resources are well matched to the needs of children of this age and the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The setting takes as many opportunities as possible to utilise the wider environment.

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

The supervisor works hard and she sets a purposeful and busy tone to the way in which the setting is organised. She works closely with an experienced team who are all very committed to providing well for all children. There is a very positive ethos where all children are encouraged to work confidently and to learn through experience.

The setting has a small management committee which meets its legal duties and takes account of relevant legislation and guidance. However, it is not sufficiently formally involved in working with the setting's leadership to plan ahead and to judge the settings effectiveness.

The setting meets local and national priorities well. Despite restrictions there has been good progress in putting the requirements of the Foundation Phase into practice. The setting gives considerable emphasis to the development of children's understanding of Welsh and makes it a significant feature in children's everyday experiences. There are some links with the primary schools to which children move. However, these are limited to the transfer of information and do not contribute to partnerships for professional development.

Improving quality: Good

The supervisor and staff have informally discussed strengths and areas for development as part of the self-evaluation process. The views of parents have also been considered.

The self-evaluation document is sufficiently detailed and is accurate. There are close links with the local authority in carrying out the process and beginning to link outcomes to the setting's plans to address identified areas for development.

Partnership working: Good

There are effective contact arrangements with parents. They are fully involved in decisions about their children. The setting shares information regularly with primary schools to which children transfer. The partnership with the local authority is particularly strong and effective. Relationships between practitioners and the local authority advisory staff are close and contribute significantly to the setting's continued development.

All staff regularly attend a wide range of professional courses and discussions organised by the local authority and other organisation.

Resource management: Good

All staff are effectively deployed and work closely with individual children and small groups. The setting has an appropriate range of good quality resources and equipment to address nearly all areas of the Foundation Phase curriculum; these are well used. All resources are carefully stored and readily available. The setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Parents

Eleven parents responded to the questionnaire. All believed that their children made good progress and behaved well.

All parents who responded felt that the teaching was good and staff treated their children well. They believed that their children were encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. They thought that their children were safe in the setting, and received good quality additional support.

Nearly all felt well informed about progress. All understood the setting's procedures for dealing with complaints and felt confident about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem. All parents believed that their children were well prepared for moving on to the next school and that their children experienced a good range of activities and visits. They thought the setting was well run.

Learners

All children came to the setting happily and were eager to learn and to begin their activities. They enjoyed the company of their helpers and their friends.

During the session all children knew what was expected of them and they knew who to turn to if they needed any assistance. They took on responsibilities eagerly and were keen to help in putting away their equipment. They looked forward to returning.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	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)

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

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
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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 partnership's 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 3 to 7 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 which 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.

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation which 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.