



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

**Shirenewton Playgroup
Shirenewton Recreation Hall
Shirenewton
Monmouthshire
NP16 6RQ
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: July 2014

by

**Mary Dyas
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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About the setting

Shirenewton Playgroup opened in the mid 1970s. The present owner no longer works there but maintains contact and financial control. It is registered for up to twenty six children aged from two and a half years to compulsory school age.

Shirenewton is a rural village five miles west of Chepstow in South Wales and the playgroup uses the village recreational hall. Other groups use the hall in the afternoons and evenings so equipment has to be set up and put away every day.

The playgroup has the use of a large, bright and airy room with an adjacent kitchen for the preparation of snacks and also a large storage cupboard. There is a smaller room which is used for registration and circle time and is set out with quieter activities such as mark making, a book corner, interest tables and a computer. Some children's work is displayed around the walls but has to be taken down between sessions. The supervisor and her deputy work in all sessions and are supported by five other part-time members of staff ensuring adequate staff:pupil ratios

Children attending the playgroup come all speak English as their first language. A very few have identified additional learning needs and the playgroup makes good arrangements to provide the appropriate support and care. At the time of the inspection there were 32 children on roll of whom 13 three-year-olds and 18 four-year-olds were in receipt of funded educational provision.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in April 2013. Estyn last inspected the setting in May 2008.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- nearly all children make good progress in their learning from their starting points;
- nearly all children behave well;
- relationships between adults and children are warm and caring; and
- practitioners provide a good range of interesting and stimulating activities to engage and motivate the children to learn.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the process of self-evaluation is well established;
- the current self-evaluation document accurately reflects the current practice in the setting and practitioners have set realistic and manageable targets for improvement;
- there is good evidence that they are working towards meeting current targets;
- practitioners work closely together as a team with shared values; and
- leadership is effective and efficient.

Recommendations

R1. Ensure parents and carers are informed about how they can help their child to improve

R2. Ensure the supervisor has a job description that she is included in the performance management process

R3. Strengthen the role of the keyworker

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
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Standards: Good

Nearly all children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their age and stage of development. They are developing independence and confidence in making choices about what they want to do and nearly all are fully involved in the activities they choose. Most children are very articulate and express themselves well. Most children join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. They handle books correctly and know that words and pictures carry meaning. When listening to stories, many show their understanding by joining in with familiar passages and asking appropriate questions. All children experiment with mark making using a variety of instruments. Nearly all older children can write their name on their work and many younger children are able to write at least the first letter of their name. Most can recognise their written name when they self register on arrival and when they record that they have accessed the morning snack.

Most children are making appropriate progress in numeracy. They use mathematical language correctly during the course of their play; for example they refer to common shapes such as circles, triangles and squares without prompting while working with playdough. Most count confidently to ten and many to twenty by rote. Most older children are beginning to recognise written numbers and many are able to do so up to ten.

Nearly all children show increasing understanding of familiar Welsh words and phrases. Most count to ten with confidence and are beginning to name basic colours. A few are able to count correctly in Welsh to at eighteen. Nearly all understand simple instructions and use of individual words in Welsh and a few are beginning to use them spontaneously themselves.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy, settled in the playgroup, and enjoy their time. They come in happily and take a full part in the morning welcome session to which parents of younger children often stay. During the session most children are well behaved. They show that they know the importance of sharing, taking turns and being kind to one another and most of the time they are successful in this.

Nearly all children show an eagerness to play and to take part in the planned activities. Most are confident in selecting an activity for themselves and show an increasing ability to concentrate and persevere at a task, for example when creating a collage at the mark making area. There are good opportunities for children to have a say in what they would like to learn and the current topic is a good example of this.

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

Practitioners plan together a wide range of exciting and interesting activities for the children based on the Foundation Phase principles. Planned adult-led activities include provision for extension activities for the more able and take good account of skills ladders to ensure progression. The learning opportunities are fun and interesting and encourage children to interact with one another and to form good relationships. Good attention is paid to the development of literacy and numeracy skills in planning activities. The setting makes very good use of the outside area to extend the planned activities indoors.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills during group sessions. For example when talking about a story about going to the beach they recall a beach they have visited as being 'rocky and shelly with little and middle-sized and BIG waves'.

Practitioners promote the Welsh language positively through songs, rhymes and the use of simple words and phrases throughout the session. This is particularly evident during the morning welcome time. Children are introduced to Welsh traditions and customs such as food and songs when they celebrate St David's day.

Teaching: Good

The lead practitioners are very experienced and have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and first-hand experience and knowledge of child development. There is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-selected activities across the curriculum and all staff have high expectations of themselves and of the children whatever their age or stage of development.

Practitioners use open questioning well to challenge children and to encourage them to think for themselves. There is an appropriate balance between adult intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas.

Practitioners ensure that children are purposefully engaged in the activities they choose. Children are encouraged to be independent and many make worthwhile suggestions when planning a new topic. Practitioners provide an interesting and exciting environment both indoors and outdoors that stimulates children to want to investigate and to learn. Teaching sessions have good pace. All staff show enthusiasm for the activities they have planned which involves and encourages the children to take part and to find out for themselves. They intervene appropriately and know when to stand back and allow children to investigate and explore for themselves. Children behave well and adults respond kindly yet firmly to deal with any inappropriate behaviour

Practitioners assess by observing the children while they are engaged in their learning experiences. The information gathered is useful, effectively informs the next steps in planning. All staff are involved in making observations of children's progress. These are useful and clearly linked to both learning intentions and children's individual targets. The recorded evidence contributes to the local authority's assessment document, which builds on an entry assessment. This record is shared with parents when their child leaves the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are good arrangements in place to ensure children's health and wellbeing and these contribute positively to children's general development. Practitioners treat all children with kindness and respect and most of the time the children respond by treating one another in the same way. Policies and procedures are in place to promote healthy living and well-being. Arrangements to ensure children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are good. They promote a sense of curiosity about the world and foster values such as honesty and fairness. Children are encouraged to share and to co-operate with one another and are generally successful in doing so. Practitioners communicate with parents daily and share information about the children's progress and wellbeing. Children are encouraged to take responsibility by washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack and by putting on their own coats before going outside.

Practitioners support children with additional learning needs extremely well. They liaise with outside agencies and work hard to support integration and full access to all activities. Meticulous play plans are in place and parents are consulted when they are reviewed..

All children recycle their uneaten food at snack time. Members of the eco committee efficiently sort waste items such as paper, card, cans and plastic for recycling.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. There are good procedures for managing the daily transfer of children and equipment to the dedicated outdoor learning area.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is an inclusive community and children are encouraged to treat one another fairly. Practitioners pay good attention to ensure that all children have access to the full range of activities. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The outdoor provision has been well developed to provide a learning environment which

enables children to explore a wide range of interesting experiences. The daily visits across the grass to access the area are a very positive feature of the children's day.

The setting employs sufficient well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. There are ample good quality resources to support the planned activities.

Good use is made of the local area and visitors from the community enhance the children's understanding of the world around them.

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

The setting is strongly led by the supervisor who makes good use of the experience and expertise of her staff team. There is a well-established culture of self-improvement amongst practitioners, which helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. The leader responds well to advice and support and ensures that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

Roles and responsibilities within the playgroup are clear though generally informal. The supervisor manages the annual appraisal process for all other practitioners to address targets for training and development. A good feature is the shared whole setting target. The owner of the setting is not involved in day to day management or strategic development of the playgroup and this is devolved to the supervisor who carries out her duties successfully. However, the supervisor does not have a job description and there are no arrangements for her performance management. All staff attend training courses provided by the local authority and have implemented ideas and strategies from these courses to improve the provision. An innovative feature of the setting is the peer appraisal set up by the supervisor where staff write notes about good practice that they have seen in others – these are kept in a file for all practitioners to see and then transferred to their individual files during the performance management process.

The setting has successfully implemented initiatives such as developing outdoor learning, gaining the silver Eco-schools award and is working towards the Healthy Pre- school awards.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has a well-established culture of self-evaluation that provides a clear and accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. There are useful opportunities for all practitioners to record moments of success, things they might have done better, ideas for future activities and suggestions informally in a shared notebook. These ideas inform and improve the day-to-day provision.

Practitioners have worked together to produce an annual self-evaluation document that demonstrates a good understanding of the setting and how the provision can be improved. Parents are consulted annually as part of the setting's self-review process. The current setting improvement plan has an appropriate number of targets that clearly indicate costs, persons responsible, timescales and proposed impact. The setting is making good progress towards meeting these within the timescales.

Practitioners review the targets for development to agree how well they have progressed in meeting them. The leader and practitioners are open to new ideas and have responded positively to support from the local authority advisory teacher. As a result, children now have regular opportunities to express their views on the setting and the things they like to do which. This has had an impact on their interest and involvement in their learning. For example, the current topic on Treasure Island is a result of some older children remembering something they enjoyed last year about pirates and asking if they could do something like that again.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents and carers. Newsletters and daily comments on the notice board keep them well informed and the setting offers opportunities for parents to come to discuss their children's progress. Almost all parents speak highly of the work of the setting. They say their children enjoy attending and are making good progress.

The playgroup has good relationships with the local school and almost all children move on to the reception class. The playgroup and school have agreed a joint transition plan that promotes a smooth start to the next stage in the children's education. The setting has developed good links with a number of different organisations in the local community and these have positive effects on the children's learning experiences and wellbeing. A good example of this is the link with the local army base. Soldiers have been to visit the playgroup and talk to the children and have donated two tank tyres for planting in the outdoor area. The children planted poppy seeds in one of the tyres and know that this is to remember the brave soldiers who died.

The local authority support teacher works effectively with the setting and practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance. There is good evidence that the advice she has given them has improved their practice, particularly in relation to self-evaluation and improvement planning. Practitioners have been to visit other settings for local cluster group meetings and have hosted a meeting to share their own good practice in their outdoor area,

Resource management: Good

The playgroup has sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners and the supervisor ensures that they make the best use of their experience and expertise. Good use is made of the available space indoors to provide for the full range of areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners use the outdoor space well to provide a wide range of interesting activities that encourage children to investigate and develop their skills. The playgroup is well resourced and effective use is made of natural and recycled materials to enhance the children's experiences; for example, using cardboard boxes to make a pirate ship and providing a tray of stones for children to investigate what happens when they get wet.

Finances are independently managed by the owner who ensures that the playgroup has the equipment they need. In view of the good outcomes achieved by children, the setting provides good value for money

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	14	13 93%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	14	12 86%	1 7%	1 7%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	14	11 79%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	14	10 71%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	14	11 79%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	14	13 93%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	14	14 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	14%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	12	9 75%	2 17%	1 8%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed	14	10	3	1	0	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
about my child's progress.		71%	21%	7%	0%		gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	29%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	14	10 71%	4 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	14	9 64%	3 21%	1 7%	0 0%	1	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	14	10 71%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	13	7 54%	4 31%	2 15%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas	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)

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

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 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.