



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

A report on

**Alphabet Playgroup
Undy Primary
Pennyfarthing Lane
Undy
NP26 3LZ**

Date of inspection: November 2015

by

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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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Publication date: 18/01/2016

Context

Alphabet Playgroup is a non-maintained English medium setting. It is a privately owned group situated in the village of Undy, near Caldicot in Monmouthshire. The playgroup is based in a demountable classroom in the grounds of Undy Primary School. It is registered to provide day care and education for a maximum of 19 children, under the age of eight.

The setting is open on weekdays during term time, offering morning and afternoon educational sessions and breakfast and lunch clubs. It works closely with the adjoining Nursery and offers flexible patterns of childcare.

At the time of the inspection 29 children were registered. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership funds one child.

Nearly all children are English speaking and British born. A very few are from ethnic minorities. No families speak Welsh at home. A very few children speak English as a second language.

The registered persons took over leadership of the setting in September 2013. There are four appropriately qualified practitioners, including the joint owners. Since 2014 the setting has gained the Healthy Eating Phase 1 Award and the Eco Bronze and Silver Awards.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in July 2015 and Estyn in May 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

Performance is good:

- A very good range of engaging learning experiences is imaginatively planned
- Teaching is lively, enthusiastic and often enthralled the children
- Provision for healthy development and to promote wellbeing is effective
- An inclusive, happy and purposeful ethos values individual qualities
- The organisation of resources encourages children's interest and curiosity
- Outdoor provision is particularly well developed

Prospects for improvement

Prospects are good:

- The joint owners provide dynamic leadership and have high expectations
- Leadership successfully promotes a lively, enthusiastic ethos of teamwork
- Practitioners enhance their expertise through attending training
- There is a good track record in addressing issues from previous inspections
- Strong partnerships contribute well to children's learning and wellbeing
- The Foundation Phase is well established

Recommendations

R1. Develop focused assessments linked to the skills identified in planned activities

R2. Ensure key educational priorities are monitored against challenging success criteria in order to secure their impact

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

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 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 at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

A very good range of engaging learning experiences match children's needs and interests well. Planning increasingly promotes progression and the Foundation Phase is imaginatively implemented. All areas of learning are well represented. Both indoor and outdoor activities are very well structured.

Broad themes provide interesting contexts for learning. Planning is detailed and activities are linked to appropriate learning objectives. Long and short term planning is implemented flexibly and provides a sound basis to guide practitioners in how and what children will learn in the activities provided.

Strong emphasis is placed on developing skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, communication skills are skilfully promoted through group activities and counting skills are developed particularly well in engaging play activities. The focus on developing ICT skills is developing.

Structured daily sessions promote well children's oral skills in Welsh and imaginative activities appropriately promote awareness of Welsh history and culture.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is lively and enthusiastic. Practitioners skilfully promote a sense of fun, so that children are often enthralled. They have very good relationships with children and consistently promote high expectations of behaviour and achievement.

Practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase. They use a range of teaching approaches well, for example when leading group activities and they skillfully ensure tasks engage children's interest. An appropriate balance between child selected and adult led activities is planned and children are given plenty of time to complete tasks. The models of language used by practitioners are generally good.

Appropriate procedures for assessment are implemented, but the use of assessment information to help plan the next steps in learning is not securely established. Profiles of achievement record 'remarkable moments' in learning and the outcomes of assessed activities are recorded. Practitioners discuss children's progress with parents informally and provide them with written reports that summarise their child's achievements well.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for healthy development and wellbeing is very well organised and implemented. This includes healthy snacks, energetic play and strong emphasis on developing positive values and relationships.

The promotion of children's personal development successfully fosters a sense of honesty and fairness. Practitioners strongly promote good behaviour and enthusiastically engage children in a range of community and cultural activities. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well in many different contexts. For example, craft activities and guided reflection on Armistice Day and also celebrating festivals such as Divali. Furthermore, outdoor activities successfully encourage curiosity about the natural world.

The setting has procedures to provide personal and specialist support when required. Arrangements to integrate children who need extra help with their learning are appropriate.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Procedures to ensure the setting is safe are consistently implemented.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has an inclusive ethos where children's individual qualities are valued. Practitioners take good account of individual backgrounds and needs. They skilfully foster positive relationships and treat children with respect. This helps ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners strongly encourage respect for and understanding towards others. They use positive strategies to manage behaviour. Equal opportunities and awareness of diversity are well promoted. Well-considered policies and procedures are evident in practice. The setting has fully considered how it would work to ensure any future child with disabilities does not experience less favourable treatment.

There are sufficient appropriately qualified practitioners for the number of children. A wide variety of age appropriate learning resources provides well for the Foundation Phase. The imaginative display of learning resources and artefacts helps create a vibrant learning environment. The outdoor provision is particularly well developed

The accommodation provides a safe and secure environment.

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

The joint owners provide dynamic leadership, have high expectations and are supported by enthusiastic and well-informed practitioners.

The setting is well led and managed on a day-to-day basis and practitioners well understand their roles and responsibilities. All expected policies are up-to-date and these are tailored closely to the setting. Leadership successfully promotes a lively, enthusiastic ethos of teamwork. Practitioners' involvement in shaping provision is a particularly good feature. Regular, structured staff meetings ensure initiatives are discussed and actions agreed.

The owners maintain appropriate oversight of the setting and communicate well with parents. Procedures for appraisal are implemented and suitable targets agreed. There is strong emphasis on practitioners' professional development. Managerial procedures are appropriate, but strategic planning for the medium term is not always clear.

The setting readily embraces national and local priorities. The Foundation Phase is established. There is good emphasis on healthy development, sustainability and tackling disadvantage.

Improving quality: Good

The setting is developing procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the setting's achievements and where they aim to be. A strong culture of reflection is evident among practitioners. They are involved in self-evaluation and regularly seek the views of parents and children.

There is a good track record in addressing the recommendations from previous inspections and in the action taken following a review of provision. Recent initiatives have a significant impact on both professional practice and the quality of provision.

The self-evaluation report and improvement plan have been refined and provide a sound basis to improve provision further. The areas for improvement identified are relevant. The key elements of a cycle of self-evaluation are in place. For instance, monitoring has been introduced for teaching and the quality of evaluation is good. However, the evaluation of key initiatives, over an extended period, is not always linked to specific goals.

Partnership working: Good

Strong partnerships contribute well to children's learning and wellbeing. Parents receive a very good range of information and their involvement in their child's education is encouraged. Good use is made of social media to keep parents informed and daily contacts promote well the exchange of information about children's achievements. Before the children attend the nursery unit parents receive a written report, describing their child's achievements. The setting has very good links with the adjoining primary school and draws well on community expertise to enhance learning.

Practitioners have visited other settings to share good practice and regularly attend training events. The setting also provides placements for work experience and students in training. Partnership with the local authority and other agencies, including the Wales Pre-school Providers Association, is beneficial in the provision of training and guidance. The support and quality assurance provided by the local authority impacts well on provision.

Resource management: Good

The setting is efficiently organised. Staff rotas and routines successfully promote good pace across activities. Practitioners are effectively deployed; sessions are well-organised and learning resources easily accessible. The management of resources is particularly successful in promoting learning. Very good use is made of indoor and outdoor facilities. Practitioners regularly attend training events and also participate in courses to enhance their professional qualifications. They reflect on the good practice discussed and enthusiastically implement strategies to improve practice in the setting.

The impact of resources on learning and teaching is reviewed informally. Leaders prudently manage income and expenditure and accounts are independently audited. There is evidence of planning short-term expenditure to improve provision, but forward planning for future resource needs is insufficiently formalised.

The setting uses its own resources and the funding received for early entitlement education, to good effect. This impacts well on children's outcomes and represents 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.	10	5 50%	5 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	10	8 80%	2 20%	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.	10	10 100%	0 0%	0 0%	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.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	18%	1%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	10	6 60%	4 40%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	10	10 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	8	6 75%	2 25%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed	10	4	6	0	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.		40%	60%	0%	0%		gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	6%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	10	9	1	0	0	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		90%	10%	0%	0%		
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	7	5	2	0	0	3	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		71%	29%	0%	0%		
		66%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	10	8	2	0	0	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
		74%	25%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	10	5	4	1	0	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		50%	40%	10%	0%		
		64%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	10	9	1	0	0	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		90%	10%	0%	0%		
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Michael T Ridout	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.wales)

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.