



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

**Llanddulas Play Group
The Pavilion
Ysgol Llanddulas
Minffordd Road
Llanddulas
LL22 8EW**

Date of inspection: April 2013

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Llanddulas Play Group is situated in a small, purpose-built building in the grounds of Llanddulas Primary School, Conwy. The playgroup and the nursery class share the building. Almost all children who attend the setting come from the village of Llanddulas and the surrounding area. The setting is open five mornings a week during term time.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 24 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years and three months. There are currently 43 children on roll. The number of children who attend varies from day-to-day. During the inspection, the setting provided care facilities for 19 children, all of whom receive their early years education in a nursery class each afternoon. There are currently seven three-year-olds receiving funded early years education in the playgroup, although not all were present during the inspection.

The children who attend the setting come from a wide range of family backgrounds. All children have English as their home language. No child is from a Welsh speaking home. There are no children with additional learning needs.

There are four permanent members of staff, including the playgroup leader. An additional member of staff is employed to for three days a week. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since 2003.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in May 2012. The setting was last inspected by Estyn in November 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

Llanddulas Play Group is a good setting because:

- learning experiences are exciting and motivating;
- teaching is good and effective teamwork ensures a consistency of approach to managing such things as children's behaviour;
- practitioners focus well on encouraging children to eat healthily and to take regular physical exercise;
- practitioners plan appropriately to foster values such as honesty, fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong;
- resources are of good quality and the indoor and outdoor accommodation is used effectively to enhance children's experiences and wellbeing; and
- relationships between adults and children are very good.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the playgroup leader and staff are committed to improving the quality of learning and teaching;
- practitioners are reflective and are keen to improve their skills;
- the setting deploys practitioners well to support children's learning;
- play and active learning is well established and promotes successfully children's attitudes to learning;
- the development of the outdoors has significantly improved the learning environment;
- there is a strong partnership with the school that supports children well as they move to their next stage of education;
- the management committee is kept appropriately informed about the setting and is highly supportive;
- the setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection; and
- recent initiatives, such as the use of key workers, have improved the quality of assessment and record-keeping.

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to encourage children to become more independent and to have a greater say in what they want to learn
- R2 Make better use of self-evaluation to set more focused targets for improvement
- R3 Seek advice and guidance as a matter of urgency about the health and safety issue identified during the inspection

What happens next?

The setting is not in follow-up as it is a good setting. The health and safety issue noted was outside our remit but could not be ignored.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Judgement
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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

The setting provides children with a beneficial range of stimulating and motivating learning experiences across all Foundation Phase areas of learning. Practitioners enhance children's experiences further by organising well-planned visits into the community and by making good use of visitors. There is an appropriate emphasis on play and learning through first-hand experiences in the setting. For example, children experiment with making porridge after hearing the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears and handle a real chicken and plant beans when learning about Jack and the Beanstalk. As a result, children are eager to try new things, persevere in their learning and maintain concentration and interest for sustained periods.

The setting provides children with effective opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children learn to recognise their names through self-registration each morning and count and sort bikes during outdoor play. There is suitable provision for developing children's skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Practitioners are beginning to encourage children to think for themselves and to provide greater opportunities for them to act independently. Planning is generally used well to identify children's next steps in learning. However, there are too few opportunities for children to make choices about what they learn.

Practitioners make good use of incidental Welsh, simple instructions and commands. There are regular opportunities for children to participate in singing a range of Welsh songs and rhymes and to listen to short stories in Welsh. Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating Dydd Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use an appropriate range of approaches to ensure that children engage purposefully in activities and sustain interest in their learning. The setting has well-established rules and routines and, as a result, children feel safe, secure and cared for.

Practitioners generally have high expectations of all children and use questioning skills well to extend children's learning. They are good language role models and this helps to enhance and improve children's oracy skills and vocabulary.

There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst all practitioners in the setting. This ensures that practitioners work well together to provide a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour or intervening appropriately in children's play. There is generally a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Occasionally, however, practitioners do too much for the children, which discourages children's independence.

Practitioners observe and interact carefully with children during play and active learning to monitor children's achievements consistently in all areas of learning. They use this information appropriately to inform future planning and to provide suitably challenging activities for all children.

Reports to parents provide useful information about children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing appropriately and provides good opportunities for access to physical development activities. For example, daily outdoor sessions encourage children to use the wide range of cycles and outdoor apparatus confidently.

Practitioners plan suitable activities to foster values such as honesty, fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong. They effectively encourage children to take responsibility for their actions, share equipment and take care of resources. An appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as the celebration of Chinese New Year. Children learn about the importance of caring for the environment well by growing plants, saving water and recycling and composting activities.

There are appropriate processes in place to support children with additional learning needs. Where available, the setting accesses professional help for children and their families and uses this effectively to support children's specific needs.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. However, a health and safety issue was raised during the inspection relating to nappy changing facilities.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community that offers equal access to the curriculum to all children. There are good procedures in place to help all children develop tolerant attitudes and, as a result, everyone works well together. Day-to-day activities promote equality and diversity appropriately.

The accommodation and site are well maintained and secure. The indoor area is small but practitioners make creative use of the space they have. Attractive displays celebrate children's work and achievements well. Practitioners label these displays clearly to ensure that children see print every day. The setting's outdoor area is of high quality and practitioners use it effectively to provide a comprehensive range of interesting experiences across the curriculum. For example, the mud kitchen

encourages children's physical and mark making skills while the vet's role-play area encourages their imaginative play. The setting makes worthwhile use of community resources, such as the local shops, to provide additional learning experiences that have a beneficial impact on children's skills.

Learning resources are of good quality and easily accessible to the children. Good use is made of the partnership with the school to enhance ICT provision through use of the school's ICT suite each week.

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

The playgroup leader provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing environment where children are happy, eager to learn and where they develop core values such as kindness and consideration. All staff share this vision. This has a positive impact on children's attitudes and the way they behave.

There is a sense of purpose and dedication amongst all staff to provide the best possible education for children in the setting. The playgroup leader is enthusiastic and highly committed. She has high expectations of staff and challenges them appropriately to ensure good quality learning experiences for children both indoors and outdoors. The playgroup leader works well with the management committee and keeps them appropriately informed of the setting's progress and areas for development. Relationships with children, parents and carers, the community and the feeder primary school are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of staff and all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are keen to learn and receptive to new ways of working. For example, they have adapted practice to allow children to take greater responsibility for caring for their environment.

The setting has implemented the Foundation Phase successfully. It is actively involved in the local authority's Healthy Pre-School Initiative, which has improved their provision for encouraging children's healthy lifestyles.

Improving quality: Good

The lead practitioner and staff are clearly committed to improving quality. They strive to find ways to make learning experiences exciting and motivating for children and to make sure that children are happy and ready to learn.

Practitioners know the setting well. They have a good understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve. The setting makes suitable use of self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement. For example, practitioners take appropriate account of the views of children when purchasing new resources. The lead practitioner considers carefully parental responses to an annual questionnaire and uses this information to identify some actions for improvement. However, targets for development are not always specific enough to enable the setting to evaluate impact effectively. Planning for improvement is generally appropriate, but does not focus sharply enough on how changes will benefit children.

Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement through attending training and learning from others.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a strong partnership with parents. Parents value the quality of the learning experiences provided and the level of care and concern shown by practitioners towards their children. Parents are well informed about what their children are learning through the setting's noticeboard, daily personal contact and an attractive and informative website.

The partnership between the setting and its feeder primary school is very good and supports the transition from playgroup to school effectively. For example, children from the setting attend collective worship in the school every week, and the playgroup leader and nursery teacher plan together, share resources and have common policies. As a result, children are well prepared for their next stage of education.

The setting has a valuable partnership with the community. The involvement of local people and visits into the community contribute well to children's understanding of where they live and people in the community who help them.

The setting has sound partnership arrangements with the local authority and Wales Pre-School Providers Association, which benefit the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting uses staff and resources well to support learning and developments. Staff are deployed effectively to make best use of their experience and expertise. The leader and treasurer deal with financial matters efficiently and use available funding appropriately to support improvements in the setting.

There is a well-established learning community within the setting. Practitioners frequently share ideas and make good use of training to improve the quality of their teaching and the learning experiences offered to children.

The setting successfully promotes activities that encourage children to learn and progress. As a result, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Beverley Jenkins	Reporting Inspector
Jane Rees	Team Inspector

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	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.