



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

A report on

**Amlwch Pre-school Playgroup
The Memorial Hall
Amlwch
Isle of Anglesey
LL68 9ET**

Date of inspection: February 2016

by

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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

Amlwch Pre-school Playgroup is an English medium setting located in the Memorial Hall, Amlwch, in the Isle of Anglesey local authority. The setting opens for five mornings of the week and it has three full time staff. It has exclusive use of a large room within the building.

The setting's registration allows it to take up to 24 children in a session. It accepts children from two to four years old. At the time of inspection, 12 children attended, two of them funded by the local authority.

Nearly all children are of white British origin and a very few speak Welsh as their first language. Currently, there are very few children with additional learning needs.

The leader began her post in September 1998. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in January 2014. Estyn last inspected the setting in December 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

Although aspects of the teaching and assessment need improving, the setting's current performance is good because of the:

- Learning experiences, which are generally planned well
- Positive relationships between adults and children
- Co-operation between all staff
- Care of the children, which is diligent
- Successful use of resources inside the building
- Purposeful partnerships with the local community and parents and carers

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leadership's appropriate awareness that effective strategic planning improves provision and children's outcomes
- The development plan notes accurately what needs to improve
- Self-evaluation systems are regular practices, which support developments and improvements
- The leadership is eager to use support from external agencies to improve the quality of the provision and children's outcomes
- The willingness of the leadership and staff to fundraise has improved resources over time

Recommendations

- R1 Improve opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology skills (ICT)
- R2 Challenge individual children in line with their abilities
- R3 Complete regular assessments that lead directly to the next steps in children's learning
- R4 Ensure that introductions are matched appropriately to the ages of the children
- R5 Develop and enrich the resources and the experiences in the outdoor area

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Not applicable

Standards: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The setting provides a suitable range of interesting activities for children across all areas of learning. The planning meets the philosophy of the Foundation Phase effectively. The staff plan the curriculum together and the curriculum builds purposefully on many children's previous knowledge and experiences. The planning targets the needs of most children sensibly and staff challenge most children purposefully to perform at their best. However, the planning of challenging tasks for the more able children is not effective.

The provision for pupils' literacy, communication and numeracy skills is coherent. It enhances children's learning experiences successfully. Early writing tasks and mental arithmetic activities stimulate children well. They impact on standards successfully in all areas of learning. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is not as strong and the opportunities to use technological equipment are inconsistent.

The staff use the indoor environment well to encourage children to experience new activities, which develops their independent thinking skills effectively. For example, through playing with sand, experimenting with noodles, dancing with ribbons and role-playing in the Chinese restaurant. The use of the outdoor area is not as effective.

Children visit places outside the setting such as taking the children on train rides and to local farms. This is planned well and is conducted annually, so that all children experience the same opportunities to learn about their local area. The children learn purposefully from people who visit the setting such as a dental nurses and members of the emergency services.

The setting provides sound opportunities for children to develop their personal and cultural identity. They celebrate and learn successfully about Welsh festivals such as Saint David's day and Saint Dwynwen's day. They also research and discuss meaningfully about other cultures, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. All adults communicate appropriately with children in Welsh.

Teaching: Adequate

All staff have up to date information about child development and are knowledgeable about the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a positive relationship between all staff and children. Staff have an appropriate role in planning the curriculum and the best use is made of their expertise. However, staff do not stimulate children successfully during focus activities to ensure that individual children, especially the more able children, are challenged appropriately in line with their abilities.

All staff members are positive as children arrive and they continue with this enthusiasm throughout the session. Staff co-operate efficiently. They give all children the opportunity to choose sensibly between adult-led activities and child-led activities. Nevertheless, staff tend to intervene too much and they do not allow children to develop their independent skills successfully. Staff manage children's behaviour positively, safely and effectively. However, the behaviour and concentration of younger children does affect the learning of older children adversely during introductions to tasks and at story time.

Staff model language appropriately in order to develop children's thinking and communication skills. Staff encourage children to evaluate sensibly as they discuss stories and describe what they've created such as patterns with noodles. In the building, staff provide an interesting environment that ensures successfully that all children take part and enjoy. However, the teaching in the open air is not stimulating due to concerns with the outdoor area.

Appropriate assessment procedures exist. Staff complete the records of children's achievements suitably. All staff do not complete daily assessments regularly and consistently. Therefore, assessments do not lead, with enough detail, to individual children's targets and the next stages in their education. The setting informs parents and carers well about their children's achievements and the information is available to them at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective arrangements exist to support the health and wellbeing of children. These arrangements contribute well to the development and general welfare of children and support their learning effectively. The setting offers positive opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.

The setting fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect successfully. Worthwhile opportunities are available for children to reflect, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray daily. This is evident as they take turns politely when eating snacks and drinking around the dining tables. The setting has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Children recycle paper, cardboard and plastic. This begins to develop their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. However, the behaviour of some younger children interferes with the teaching and learning in collective activities such as reading a story. Children are happy and safe in the company of adults at the setting and they often ask for help and support. All staff have good qualifications and experience and the ratio of adults to children is favourable. Staff expertise is used well when supervising activities.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The setting is safe, the outer door is closed and only a member of staff opens it. A bolted gate prevents children leaving the room. No one can come in and a child cannot leave unaccompanied. The staff take care when children are collected from the room. The staff ensure that children are under the care of their parents or familiar carer at the end of each session.

The setting records children's learning needs effectively when they join and during their time at the setting. The setting reviews children's progress regularly. Therefore, the setting targets children well with additional support. The staff discuss these with appropriate agencies when the need arises. The additional learning needs co-ordinator is familiar with the procedures necessary to support children.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment. Staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. Every child has equal access to an interesting and varied curriculum inside the building.

The setting promotes a positive ethos through the daily activities and the approach adopted by the staff. Everyone places a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. Staff use specific stories from around the world to achieve this.

The setting uses its resources successfully inside the building to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Children are encouraged constantly to move freely around the areas of learning and to participate in various activities. The resources are accessible to children, which promotes children's sense of responsibility successfully. Continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enrich learning share resources effectively.

The building is of a suitable quality, safe and well maintained. The setting is currently making the best use of a very limited outdoor area that now has restricted access to the garden due to problems with the weather and concerns with equipment. Therefore, the use of the outdoor area is not effective. There is no challenge for children outside because of the lack of facilities and resources. However, children have good opportunities to perform physical tasks inside the building such as dancing. The setting uses the outdoor area for limited tasks that include climbing and walking with support on crates.

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

The leader promotes and attempts to sustain improvements. The leadership ensures that outcomes for children are appropriate to their age and ability. The staff receive relevant and appropriate training, which has a positive impact on the quality of provision. Policies are operational and the setting meets local and national priorities such as implementing the requirements of the Foundation Phase effectively.

The leader and the management committee ensure that staff understand their roles fully and they work together diligently as a team. They use the guidance of outside agencies effectively such as the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. This practice ensures the best use of staff expertise. The caring leadership is supportive to all staff. The leader, staff and management committee plan sensibly to provide interesting experiences for children inside the building. For example, through changing the provision for the Chinese New Year to include a role-play restaurant with take-away foods and by playing Chinese music.

The leader and the management committee use relevant information about the setting to create improvements such as improving staff's competency in Welsh through attending relevant courses. They have a clear focus on ensuring progress against the setting's priorities. The development plan is a useful document. There are sensible priorities for improvement identified through clear self-evaluation procedures. Consistent and operational processes ensure that resources are available to meet the improvement objectives inside the building.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation takes account of the purposeful views of children and their parents and carers through beneficial questionnaires. The setting also improves its quality of work through the advice of the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. This is beneficial to the development of the setting. The management committee and leader clearly demonstrate how they have improved the provision over time, by adopting different strategies and accepting valuable advice from others.

The leader and management committee are knowledgeable about the setting's current work. They have established consistent procedures to monitor the provision. Working together effectively on a daily basis achieves this. All staff share ideas sensibly on how to improve the setting's work. The management committee uses funding efficiently for indoor resources and appropriate staffing.

The areas for development are recognised well such as the need to improve opportunities for children in the open air and opportunities to develop the children's ICT skills. There are clear links between the self-evaluation and the targets of the development plan, which focuses on improvements in the setting. Therefore, a positive culture of self-evaluation exists that targets improvements in the setting's work.

Staff are open to new ideas and are willing to experiment with different ways of working. For example, they have just adopted the local authority's new system for identifying the starting points of all children. The staff are receptive to new ideas, suggested by the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association's advisory teachers. For example, the local authority's recommendations on how to improve the self-evaluation, through grading the setting's work against specific criteria, have affected the setting's ability to target its needs more successfully.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works strategically with partners to improve provision and children's standards and wellbeing. This is particularly evident and beneficial through the setting's partnership with the local authority and Wales Pre-school Providers Association. The positive relationship with the local authority's advisory teacher and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association officer challenges and improves the setting's work.

The setting's partnership with the school is an area identified as a target for development by the setting. The arrangements for transferring children's information are appropriate. The setting uses community links effectively to support children's learning, which includes participating successfully in village activities. Staff work and liaise with a good range of other organisations, which make a strong contribution to improving provision through fund raising activities. Outside agencies support the setting with training, for example first aid training and safeguarding courses, which improves the staff's awareness of important issues.

Staff take active steps to involve parents and carers in the setting's life. This includes accompanying their children on trips to local places of interest such as on railway journeys and farm visits. The setting regularly informs parents and carers about all aspects of the setting's work. They are encouraged to offer their own opinions on matters to improve the setting. The setting acts upon them to ensure improvements.

Resource management: Good

The leadership is efficient and it aims appropriately to improve all aspects of the setting's work. This enables staff to develop and share their professional knowledge effectively. The strategic planning supports good indoor resources and effective staffing levels. The leader and the management committee succeed in ensuring that the setting has qualified full time staff with appropriate training.

The setting manages its resources purposefully to support learning and to create improvements in the setting. The leader and the management committee have a sound understanding of their budget. They prioritise their spending in line with the targets for improvement purposefully. The setting ensures that the use of money has a direct impact on improving indoor provision and children's achievements and wellbeing.

Even though the setting needs to improve aspects of teaching and the outdoor area, the overall provision and commitment of the leaders and staff means that the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The Reporting Inspector

Mr Nicholas Jones	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.