



*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**

**Little Puffins Playgroup  
Ysgol Gynradd Beaumaris  
Beaumaris  
Isle of Anglesey  
LL58 8HL**

**Date of inspection: October 2011**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## About the playgroup

Little Puffins Playgroup is an English medium playgroup based in Ysgol Gynradd Beaumaris on the Isle of Anglesey. All the children attending the playgroup come from the local village and the surrounding area. The area is recognised as neither privileged nor socially or economically disadvantaged.

The playgroup has been in this location for over ten years and shares the use of a large room and outdoors area with the after school club.

The playgroup reports that a few children come from homes where Welsh is spoken. Children represent the full range of ability and the playgroup accepts children with additional learning needs. The playgroup is currently receiving assistance from outside agencies to support children that have additional needs. The playgroup states that no children attending at present are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few children are from socially disadvantaged homes.

The playgroup is registered for a maximum of 24 children and accepts children from two and a half years old. There are currently 13 children attending the playgroup at some time during the week. The local authority's Early Years Partnership funds children from the term after their third birthday and the Wales Pre-school Providers' Association supports the playgroup. During the inspection, one child of three years old was present in both sessions.

The two joint leaders have held their positions for around six years. They have suitable qualifications and are assisted by one other member of staff.

There is an informative booklet available for parents and carers that provides them with details of the playgroup. Parents and carers bring their children into the playgroup each morning and this provides for a meeting with the staff if needed. The playgroup opens for six sessions a week between 9.00 am to 11.00 am and 11.00 am to 1.00 pm, Tuesday to Thursday.

The playgroup is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. The playgroup's management committee oversees the work of the playgroup.

The playgroup was last inspected by the Care and Social services Inspectorate Wales in July 2011. Estyn previously inspected the playgroup in October 2005. There have been no significant changes since then.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The performance of the playgroup is good because:

- learning experiences are planned well;
- all children are supported well and benefit from a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum;
- the teaching is effective and concentrates well on Foundation Phase outcomes;
- on the whole, good resources are available, which includes the outdoor area;
- the playgroup is led and managed well;
- there is a good relationship between adults and children;
- there are good links with the local primary school; and
- the staff work effectively together and everyone contributes purposefully to the success of the playgroup.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leadership and staff provide a clear direction for the work of the playgroup;
- changes and developments over time show that the playgroup has a good record of improving for the sake of the children;
- the new self-evaluation systems are beginning to impact on developmental planning;
- all the staff have a positive and active attitude towards development and training;
- good support links are used consistently; and
- the learning environment is stimulating.

## Recommendations

In order to improve, the playgroup needs to:

- R1 set clear learning objectives and success criteria for the children at the start of every focus activity;
- R2 extend the provision and use of information technology equipment to further develop the children's skills;
- R3 continue to develop the self-evaluation systems, so that the practices become embedded in the day-to-day life of the playgroup; and
- R4 ensure that the process of development planning is structured appropriately according to specific targets, time scales and success criteria.

### What happens next?

The playgroup will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the playgroup's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

#### Standards:

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.

#### Wellbeing:

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**

#### Learning experiences: Good

Valuable time is set aside for all staff to meet to plan the curriculum. This provides the children with useful and interesting activities. The curriculum is flexible and is matched to the children's interests.

The curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and to achieve the identified outcomes for children's learning. Overall, the curriculum builds on children's previous knowledge and experiences and incorporates good opportunities for the development of skills across the curriculum.

There are worthwhile opportunities incorporated into the day-to-day working of the playgroup for children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners. Whilst specific activities are planned, children have freedom to select their own tasks and activities.

The purposeful provision includes opportunities for all children to develop respect for each other; opportunities to form good relationships with each other and with adults; and to become tolerant of each other.

Stimulating opportunities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy, understanding of the world, physical and creative skills. A good aspect of children's learning experiences is the provision made for children to acquire the Welsh language. Although Welsh is not the natural language of communication between adults and children, the staff provide a broad range of opportunities, through songs and rhymes, to develop the children's Welsh language skills well.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their thinking skills through challenging activities like role play and painting, which focus on numeracy skills and wellbeing.

The traditions and celebrations of the culture of Wales are given due emphasis, like celebrating of St. David's Day. Good opportunities are also provided for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions, such as during their study of the Chinese New Year and other customs such as Diwali. Such activities help children to develop an understanding of the wider world and raise their awareness of age appropriate global citizenship.

All children have opportunities to plant seeds, grow vegetables and look after plants in growing beds. This develops their understanding of plant growth and sustainability well. The playgroup has achieved Step 2 of the Anglesey Healthy Pre-school Scheme.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching shows that the staff have a good, practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The staff have high expectations of the children and these expectations are put into practice well. The staff's active role in planning the curriculum ensures that all know their roles well and best use is made of their expertise. However, when a focus activity is introduced, there is not enough reference made to the activity's learning objective and its success criteria.

The system of sharing responsibilities means that staff have a detailed knowledge of a small number of children and as such are well aware of their achievements and progress.

There is a good balance of provision between adult directed and child selected activities, both indoors and out of doors. Children are free to select from either independent or adult led activities. However, at times, adults interfere too much, which reduces the opportunities for children to enquire and investigate independently.

Staff model language well to the children's development levels and use questioning effectively to develop children's thinking and communication skills. The standard of the staff's Welsh is continuing to develop and they are endeavouring to raise their standards further through support from the local authority. The staff provide a stimulating environment that successfully ensures children's involvement and enjoyment.

Assessment procedures and recording children's achievements are completed efficiently. There are detailed records of children's achievements and these are made available to parents. Staff know the children well and are able to plan the next steps in their learning.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The playgroup's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing is good. All children enjoy their time at the playgroup. They arrive showing a sense of anticipation and are keen to get involved. They partake enthusiastically in activities set out for them. The broad curriculum, which consists of visits and visitors, further develops children's experiences effectively.

The structured follow-up work in the classroom shows the wide range of experiences that arise from their activities. Visits to the community and visitors to the playgroup develop children's knowledge and understanding of their own community well.

The playgroup's provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children experience a well-planned curriculum. The playgroup is an organised unit, where children value each other and the staff, in turn, value them.

Values, such as honesty, fairness, respect and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered well through the day-to-day activities and accepted without question. Children know and accept the social norms of living together, sharing and accepting the views of others and being members of a community. Individual children, in turn, accept specific responsibilities that develop their self-esteem.

Children's cultural development is good, which incorporates Welsh customs and traditions and it extends to other cultures when children celebrate the Chinese New Year and Diwali.

The playgroup's staff are vigilant in identifying children requiring specialist help. They make use of professional help and guidance when needed. The playgroup has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Staff have received regular and appropriate training. Staff undertake risk assessments routinely.

The playgroup is safe and secure, where the entrance door is locked and only opened by a member of staff, consequently no one can enter or a child leave unaccompanied. Good care is taken when children are being collected to ensure that they are in the care of their parents or of a known carer.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that any child suspected of requiring additional help is noted and their progress is monitored closely. External agencies are involved if needed. The playgroup's leaders have joint responsibility as the special educational needs co-ordinator and they are familiar with the necessary procedures for supporting such a child.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The playgroup, through its day-to-day activities and the approach adopted by the staff promotes a positive ethos. Staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. All children have equal access to a stimulating curriculum.

The homely atmosphere and the friendship provided by the staff ensures that a tolerant attitude pervades the playgroup. The playgroup employs positive behaviour



strategies that have successfully eliminated any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. All children enjoy equality of opportunity.

The playgroup's staff are well qualified and experienced and there is a favourable child to adult ratio. Staff expertise is used well both in planning and in supervising activities. The playgroup is resourced well on the whole to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and the needs of the children; however, the provision of information technology equipment is adequate. The resources are accessible to children and this promotes children's sense of independence and responsibility.

The building, local environment and the playgroup's resources are used well on a regular basis and they contribute well to children's understanding of the world around them.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and work together well as a team, sharing values, aims and objectives. The leaders involve all staff in planning and this ensures the best use of their expertise. The leaders are actively involved, giving clear directions and a sense of purpose to the work of the playgroup. There is a positive ethos and a commitment to provide the best possible experiences for the children.

The leadership and all staff are well focused on children's needs and the playgroup successfully achieves this aim in practice. Recently, staff have received relevant and appropriate training and this has impacted well on the quality of provision.

Effective links with the parents are in place. Parents are kept well informed of their children's achievement and progress and this helps them to support their children's learning.

There is a well-established management structure in place with clear definition of duties. The management committee has taken good account of relevant legislation and guidance and they meet legal requirements in full. The self-evaluation systems are new and the process of development planning is not structured well in terms of appropriate time scales and success criteria.

The playgroup has taken good account of National priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum. It has also made good use of opportunities to work with the primary school that shares the same site to ensure extremely useful and solid links.

**Improving quality: Adequate**

The playgroup has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement when self-evaluating. It has recently identified areas for improvement and is beginning to

implement them for the benefit of the children. This has included attempts to develop information technology across all areas of learning and to improve methods of reporting to parents. However, the self-evaluation systems are new and they have not had time to develop into a practical, regular process that affects the playgroup's development planning in enough detail.

The targets noted to achieve the improvements are not detailed or prioritised in an appropriate and effective development plan. Therefore, the playgroup does not have appropriate time scales and success criteria in place to achieve the targets identified from the self-evaluation.

The recommendations from the previous Estyn report in 2005 have been successfully completed.

Staff attend training opportunities and the professional learning experiences impact positively on children's learning and wellbeing.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Parents, in the questionnaire replies and in discussion, expressed their total satisfaction with the playgroup and are highly appreciative of the standards of care and the quality of education available. They appreciate the open door policy and the opportunities they have to meet staff on a daily basis.

By the time children leave the playgroup; parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The link with the local primary school, where the playgroup is located, is good.

The support provided by the local authority staff and the Pre-school Playgroup Association benefits the playgroup. Their advice and suggestions have helped in developing the playgroup and has contributed to the good standard of provision.

### **Resource management: Good**

Staff work together effectively. Planning is completed collaboratively and this results in individual expertise being used well.

Apart from information technology resources, the playgroup is resourced well and the resources are used to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum effectively. Resources are also accessible to the children and this encourages independence and has a positive impact on their learning.

The playgroup provides good outdoor experiences for the children through regular use of the outdoor areas throughout the year.

The playgroup has identified areas for development including resources that need to be acquired and they are aware of how to move the playgroup forward.

Overall, the playgroup provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Eight questionnaires were returned. Discussion with a sample of parents during the inspection and the questionnaire responses indicated their positive support for the playgroup. Parents and carers were pleased with all aspects of the playgroup, particularly with the care provided and with their children's progress.

#### **Responses to discussions with learners**

All children are happy in the playgroup. Their enthusiasm is evident when they arrive and meet with their peers. Most of them are self-confident from knowing that they are well supported and that they have interesting and challenging tasks.

## Appendix 2

### Reporting inspector

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.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))