



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

**Aberporth Bilingual Playgroup
The Vestry
Chapel House
Aberporth
Cardigan
SA43 2DA**

Date of inspection: 22-23 May, 2012

by

Dorothy Morris

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

Aberporth Bilingual Playgroup was established in 1961. It is based in the chapel vestry in this coastal village near Cardigan, in Ceredigion. It caters for children between two and four years of age and meets for five sessions a week during school terms. The children who attend the setting are drawn from a very wide geographical area, which includes more advantaged and socially deprived areas. Most children are from English speaking homes. At present, there are no children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The setting is registered for 21 children. During the inspection, six children were in receipt of Welsh Government funding. The setting admits children with additional learning needs and appropriate support arrangements are in place.

There are five members of staff and they hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. The setting is in the care of two highly experienced lead practitioners and is managed by a local voluntary committee.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in March 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2011. It has achieved the Wales Pre-School Playgroups Association quality standard.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good:

- there are excellent features to the arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing;
- the children make consistent progress in their learning;
- the children are offered a wide range of rich learning experiences;
- the teaching is good;
- the provision to foster children's bilingual skills is good; and
- the setting provides a happy, caring and supportive environment for all the children.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because:

- the lead practitioners have high expectations and offer strong leadership;
- all the practitioners work very effectively as a team;
- there is a shared commitment to promoting children's development and wellbeing;
- development plans are implemented and secure improvements; and
- resources are used well to support the learning.

Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

R1 strengthen children's speaking skills;

R2 extend the more able children's learning skills; and

R3 develop curriculum planning and make greater use of assessment outcomes in identifying the next steps in children's learning.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

The children make good progress in their learning from their starting points. Nearly all children's listening and concentration skills are good. A few children speak clearly and can maintain a simple conversation confidently but many children offer very brief responses. The children have an increasing knowledge of some of the main letters of the alphabet and they enjoy looking at and handling books. They can recognise their names in print. They know a good number of songs and rhymes which they sing well. They use mark making tools purposefully in a range of media demonstrating an increasing awareness of some of the purposes of writing.

Most children demonstrate a good understanding of greetings, instructions and stories in Welsh. They sing songs enthusiastically and use familiar vocabulary well to count and to describe the weather.

The majority of children make appropriate use of their number skills in daily activities. Nearly all count to ten and use mathematical language, such as big and small, full and empty, accurately in practical situations. They know the names of basic shapes and understand that money is needed to buy goods in the shop. They use their information and communication technology skills effectively to complete number tasks, paint pictures and draw patterns. With support, they can input instructions to plan a journey for a programmable toy.

The majority of children are confident in exploring and experimenting with new learning opportunities and increasingly apply their skills in a range of mathematical, physical and creative tasks. They demonstrate good use of fine motor skills when using tools to cut, paint and glue.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children have a developing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. They take increasing responsibility for their personal hygiene and understand the importance of washing their hands regularly.

All children settle well into the setting. They are happy and feel safe in the company of adults and are ready to ask for support and help. Nearly all children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and are keen to undertake new experiences. They work conscientiously on their tasks and play co-operatively.

The setting works effectively as a close community which successfully promotes children's social awareness and skills. Nearly all show courtesy and consideration for others. The older children's readiness to support and help the youngest children is a notable feature. Children's standards of behaviour are very good.

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

The practitioners provide a range of rich and interesting learning activities which consistently gain the children's interest. Planning is based on the Foundation Phase learning outcomes. At times, however, the planning is too general to ensure consistent balance and progression in the learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Practitioners work well together to offer children good opportunities to develop their communication, number and information and communication technology skills. There are regular opportunities for children to listen to stories, speak about their experiences, look at books and use their marking skills. There is effective use of stimuli, such as growing tomato plants, to develop children's observation skills, their practical mathematical skills and their drawing and painting skills. There is a consistent emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills enabling them to form good relationships with other children and adults.

Purposeful activities develop the children's understanding of the need to respect and care for the environment and all living things. They include growing plants, planting

shrubs and vegetables, and learning about recycling. There is effective use of the local beach to teach children about sea creatures, shells and the effect of pollution on the environment. Visits to the market and to animal centres extend children's learning further.

Effective learning activities, including a range of creative experiences, promote children's awareness of the wider world. These include celebrating the festivals and celebrations of other cultures such as the Chinese New Year.

There is good provision for children to learn the Welsh language. Activities include listening to stories, singing songs and rhymes, counting and discussing the weather. Story sessions are particularly enjoyable occasions and impact very effectively on children's interest and involvement. The children also learn about the traditions and celebrations of Wales through activities which include celebrating St. David's day. Most practitioners are Welsh learners and consistently promote the incidental use of the language throughout the session. This is a very good feature.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good with effective use of a range of teaching approaches to stimulate children's interest and involvement. The practitioners have a secure knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and plan activities collaboratively. There is purposeful use of equipment and resources to support the learning. During activities, such as role-play, building and craft activities, and storytelling sessions, the practitioners interact very effectively with children encouraging them to participate fully. Nevertheless, activities are not always structured sufficiently to extend children's learning, particularly for the more able.

The practitioners know the children well and regularly assess and record their progress. Daily observations are analysed and the relevant information recorded systematically. However, the range of information collected is not used fully to plan the next stages in children's learning. Parents are kept regularly informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development through informal discussion and more structured feedback sessions. They also receive informative written reports on their children's progress when they leave the playgroup. A Graduation Coffee Morning is arranged and the older children are presented with a leavers' certificate.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Care, support and guidance of high quality are a key feature of the lead practitioners' vision for the setting's work. Well planned initiatives and a commitment to children's emotional health and wellbeing contribute highly effectively to promoting children's general development and their readiness to learn. The impact of these initiatives in fostering children's self-esteem and their confidence as learners is an excellent feature.

The induction arrangements, alongside the daily contact with parents, ensure that children settle well into the setting. The practitioners have clear expectations which promote very good behaviour. They are very effective role models and treat all children with respect and courtesy.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. Practitioners access regular training and risk assessments are routinely implemented. They know well how to respond appropriately if challenges arise in relation to aspects such as poor behaviour or safeguarding. They identify children's needs early and work conscientiously with appropriate agencies to ensure that these are addressed. Children are happy and secure in the company of the adults at the setting and are willing to ask for help and support.

The setting is proactive in building on collaborative working with other key agencies to support both children and their parents. Well targeted support for groups of more vulnerable children has resulted in significant improvement, for instance in attitudes, behaviour, confidence and achievement. Practitioners are particularly effective in working with parents to support both their own personal educational development and that of their children. As part of a very effective parenting programme, a range of activities, placements and support mechanisms is provided in the setting. Individual support is offered readily to assist parents further in accessing and completing any training opportunities.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as caring, kindness, and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered effectively through the curriculum and day-to-day activities. The strong emphasis on supporting children's emotional needs has a positive effect on their behaviour, self-esteem and attitudes to learning.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where children receive equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners succeed well in creating a warm, supportive environment. They consider and value children's different backgrounds and develop a good understanding of each child's needs.

There is an appropriate ratio of practitioners to children. Overall, there are sufficient resources which are used effectively to support the learning and teaching. There is good use of visits and visitors from the community to enhance children's experiences.

Overall, the accommodation offers appropriate facilities which are used fully by the practitioners. The hall is spacious with resources and equipment well organised and accessible to children. The learning environment is enhanced by displaying children's work and creating colourful displays to reflect current themes. There is no outdoor play area but the setting makes regular and effective use of the local beach and of the play areas at the local primary school.

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

The setting is led and managed efficiently. The lead practitioners offer a strong sense of direction and purpose. All the practitioners are aware of their responsibilities and work very effectively as a team. They share the same values

demonstrating a strong commitment to ensuring that children receive the best possible provision while in their care. Daily routines are well established and operate very effectively. Appropriate policies are implemented.

The management committee supports the setting effectively. It meets regularly and parents are invited to attend meetings. The registered person undertakes her role conscientiously. There are appropriate systems for the appraisal of staff with a focus on identifying further training and professional development needs.

The setting responds appropriately to national and local priorities including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum, developing children's language skills, and focusing on children's wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The lead practitioners know the setting well and regularly discuss and plan improvements collaboratively with other practitioners and the local management committee. Practitioners have a positive approach to self-evaluation and are open to new ways of working.

The annual audit of provision is used well to identify relevant targets. The setting draws upon the views of children, parents and partners. The provision is regularly monitored by the local authority link teacher. Areas for development are agreed and relevant strategies implemented. The setting benefits from this support.

The development plan arising from the audit identifies appropriate areas for attention which are addressed through practical action plans. They include references to timescales, resource needs and individual responsibilities to achieve the targets set. There is consistent progress towards meeting targets to introduce parent questionnaires, formalise the monitoring format further and extend transition links with the primary school.

All practitioners attend relevant training opportunities which impact positively on the quality of provision. The links with other settings, visits to observe good practice and training days offer practitioners effective opportunities to discuss and share ideas.

Partnership working: Good

A range of partnerships contributes effectively to children's achievements and wellbeing. The practitioners work well together and complement each other through the appropriate use of individual skills and expertise. There is a productive partnership with the local authority link teacher.

The setting is proactive in encouraging parents to become involved in their children's education. The constructive relationships were confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection. They are kept well informed through brochures, newsletters and daily contact. A notice board in the main foyer offers up to date information. The setting is fostering close links with the local primary school to which the children transfer.

There are beneficial links with community and local services. There are good links with local colleges of further education in mentoring students, and with specific agencies to provide adult education opportunities for targeted parents. There are

very beneficial links with the local Welsh medium setting. The links with a local artist are used well to develop children's painting skills.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed. Practitioners are well deployed and implement daily routines successfully. Overall, there are sufficient resources which are accessible to the children. This encourages independence. There is good use of local facilities such as the post office, market, church and chapel, to provide additional learning opportunities for children.

The lead practitioners and the registered person have a thorough understanding of the budget and prioritise spending according to the setting's needs. There is appropriate use of fundraising events to supplement resources. The setting offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Responses to discussions with the children

The children are happy in the setting and join in the activities enthusiastically. Many speak readily about the activities they enjoy.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dorothy Morris	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	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.

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