



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

**Babes in the Wood Playgroup
Llanmartin Primary School
Waltwood Road
Llanmartin
Newport
NP18 2HB**

Date of inspection: January 2012

by

Mary Dyas

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

Babes in the Wood Playgroup is an English-medium setting which, since the last inspection, has relocated to a demountable building in the grounds of Llanmartin Primary School. The setting mainly serves the communities of Langstone and Llanmartin and the children attending the setting are considered to come from a range of backgrounds.

The playgroup has an admission procedure that welcomes all children and offers some assisted places for two sessions a week for families on income support who meet the criteria. All children speak English as their home language and there are no children who speak Welsh at home.

The setting is open for nine sessions a week for up to 24 children aged from two to five years. Pre-school and younger children attend for four mornings and one afternoon and the setting provides wrap around care in the form of breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs and afternoon sessions for children who attend the school nursery in the morning.

At the time of the inspection, there were 35 children on roll of whom 13 were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority. Nine were three-year-olds attending the pre-school sessions and four were three and four-year-olds attending the afternoon sessions because there were no places available in the school nursery.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in December 2011 and by Estyn in March 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- All children are happy in the playgroup and enjoy their learning
- All children make good progress in the setting in relation to their starting points
- The setting provides a good range of interesting and exciting activities which support and extend children's learning; and
- Relationships in the setting are positive

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting is well organised and managers have a clear vision for improvement
- All staff are aware of, and involved in, the implementation of the setting improvement plan
- Progress has already been made towards achieving targets in the setting improvement plan; and
- The setting has a history of identification and achievement of informal targets for improvement

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1 embed the recently established provision for developing children's experience and understanding of information and control technology

R2 ensure summative comments in pupil profiles are fully supported by a wide base of observations

R3 build on links with other settings to share good practice

Recommendations R1 and R3 have been identified as targets in the setting's improvement plan.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning. Children acquire new knowledge and understanding effectively and enjoy the challenge of new and varied activities. Most children are confident learners who are willing to learn from their mistakes, take risks and explore their surroundings. Many children in the setting speak confidently and are happy to talk to visitors. A few three-year-olds still speak in single words or short phrases rather than complete sentences. Many make good progress with mark making using a range of instruments in different areas of provision. During free play a majority of children like to choose to read familiar books which they do so individually, in pairs and sometimes with an adult. Many of these are able to retell the story as they look at the pictures.

All children are developing their understanding of mathematical concepts and many are beginning to apply this and to use mathematical language in the course of their play. Most children use electronic toys with some understanding and play games on a computer confidently. Most are also developing good levels of independence. They visit the toilet unaided and understand the need to wash and dry their hands afterwards, before they eat their snacks and meals. Many children show great enjoyment and developing skills in their creative development. They explore and experiment confidently with a range of different techniques and materials and make clear personal choices about the materials they use. Children's progress in Welsh is good. Most show a good understanding of the Welsh that has been introduced to them and are beginning to use words and phrases as part of their day. For example they often ask for help in Welsh and also for specific items at snack time. All children join in singing Welsh songs with enthusiasm.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards of wellbeing are good. Children are relaxed and happy in the setting and are eager to try new experiences. All are purposefully engaged throughout the session and most children concentrate for appropriate lengths of time according to their age and stage of development. They are beginning to express opinions and to ask for particular resources. All children interact positively with one another and with adults and behaviour is good. Children are polite to each other and to adults. Most children take turns and share toys and objects. Many are keen to talk about their experiences and are confident to ask for help from adults. Many children show an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily. They enjoy snack-time, eating a range of fresh, healthy food prepared for them and know that they need to wash their hands first to make sure they don't have germs that might make them sick.

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

Practitioners work very well together to plan a wide range of activities which stimulate, engage and challenge most children to learn effectively. Plans are based on ensuring coverage of the areas of learning using the Foundation Phase Development Profile and Skills Framework and on specific needs identified from observations of children's learning. This ensures that more able children are challenged in their learning experiences and all children have their specific learning needs met. Planning is well co-ordinated and provides good opportunities for children to reinforce their learning across different areas of provision.

Practitioners know the children well and respond appropriately to their varying needs, abilities and interests. Planning clearly addresses the needs and interests of the children and children have been involved making decisions about their learning. Overall, learning experiences successfully enable children to develop communication and numeracy skills every day.

Provision for Welsh language provision is good Welsh is used consistently throughout the session and practitioners encourage children to use the words and phrases they have been learning. The setting involves all children in recycling paper and leftovers from the children's snacks are saved and children are accompanied by an adult to take them to the school compost heap.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. All intervene appropriately and make good use of questioning to challenge children and to extend their thinking. There is a good mix of planned activities and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. Practitioners are very enthusiastic and fully committed to supporting children and to providing high quality all round provision.

The setting operates a keyworker system. A simple baseline assessment profile has been developed which is completed on entry. Practitioners know the children well and update profiles at the end of each term with a comprehensive summary of children's progress. However, although observations of children's learning and development are recorded by all staff, there is not a wide enough range to fully support the comments in the profiles. All parents receive an end of year report on their child which indicates progress under all the areas of learning and includes a comment on the child's next steps in learning. Parents are also encouraged to contribute comments on their child's report.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has good arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing and arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs are effective. Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they start at the playgroup. The setting provides a warm and welcoming environment for the children. Children attending the playgroup move on to the nursery of the school where the setting is situated and the managers work closely with the class teacher to support transition arrangements.

Children, and their parents or carers say they feel safe in the setting. A good range of policies to ensure the children are safe is in place and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant. Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The setting makes thoughtful use of the space available and the room is attractively decorated with examples of recent children's work. Since moving to their current location, staff have worked hard on the outdoor provision to provide a learning environment which enables children to explore a wide range of interesting experiences. The setting also has shared access with the school nursery to a large playground where children are able to run and climb and to ride wheeled vehicles.

Practitioners in the pre-school group are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to create a stimulating environment for learning. Practitioners regularly attend training courses to update their knowledge, understanding and skills. The group is well resourced with a range of high quality equipment which is used appropriately to support children's learning.

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

The setting is efficiently managed. There are clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented well by all practitioners. There is a culture of self-improvement which helps to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. Leaders respond to advice and support, and ensure that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision. Good procedures are in place for the induction of new staff and students.

Annual staff appraisals are in place and targets are set for the improvement of both the setting and the individual. Managers lead by example and pass responsibility on to staff when they are ready. All staff are encouraged to take a full role in the delivery of both large and small group activities. Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's self evaluation is detailed and comprehensively addresses the three key questions for inspection. Although this is a comparatively recent document, areas of success and improvement are clearly identified and targets for improvement have been set and are being worked towards. Managers are keen to move the group forward and would benefit from involvement in professional learning communities beyond the setting. This has been identified as a target in the setting improvement plan.

Partnership working: Good

Parents and carers are kept well informed through newsletters and an informative notice board in the waiting area. The setting regularly seeks the views of parents and carers on the work of the playgroup; for example a recent questionnaire focussed on their perception of the impact of the teaching of Welsh on their children. The playgroup is very much at the heart of the local community and the children make visits to the local doctor's surgery, chemist and post office as part of their topic on 'People Who Help Us'.

The setting has good links with the Llanmartin Primary School and has shared funding for some recently acquired playground equipment. Managers are in regular contact with the nursery teacher and are working towards more shared experiences, particularly regarding the use of the outdoor area. Good arrangements are in place to share children's targets when they move on to the nursery which ensures a smooth transition and appropriate expectations for all children.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of resources which are well used to support different learning experiences. Practitioners are effectively deployed to maximise children's learning and independence both indoors and out.

The setting managers who are also the owners of the playgroup, manage its finances efficiently. They are mindful of the impact of spending decisions on the quality of provision and the progress children make. The setting gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Thirteen replies were received to the parent questionnaire. Nearly all were very supportive and parents and carers felt that they were happy with the work of the playgroup.

Responses to discussions with children

Most children were happy and confident when talking to a visitor. All said they liked coming to the playgroup and enjoyed their activities. They felt that they had made friends and were happy. Most of those spoken to knew what to do if they were unhappy or needed help.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

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.