



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

A report on

**Overton Pre-school Playgroup
The Playcentre
School Lane
Overton
Wrexham
LL13 0ES**

Date of inspection: January 2018

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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Context

Overton Pre-school Playgroup is an English medium setting in the village Overton, near Wrexham in Wrexham local authority. It is located in a dedicated building adjacent to the local primary school. It is run by a management committee and employs nine members of staff. One practitioner has responsibility for leading the setting and has been in post since September 2017.

Overton Pre-school Playgroup is registered to provide care for up to 30 children between the ages of 2 to 12 years old. At the time of the inspection there were 7 three year olds on roll, all are funded by the local authority. All children speak English as their first language. A very few children speak Welsh at home.

The setting was last inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in January 2017 and by Estyn in July 2014.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children make appropriate progress in the development of their skills during their time at the setting
- Most children develop strong oracy skills
- Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting
- Practitioners have a good understanding of children's skills and what they need to improve
- All practitioners have gentle, positive working relationships with the children

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Practitioners have a clear focus on continued improvement
- The setting's leader and management committee have an accurate picture of the their strengths and areas for improvement
- The setting has beneficial partnerships with parents
- Partnership working with the local primary school is strong
- The setting deploys its resources well to support the learning needs of the children

Recommendations

R1 Improve children's Welsh language oracy skills

R2 Improve the use of focussed tasks to address children's specific needs, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills

R3 Improve the use of enhanced provision to engage the interests of all children

R4 Plan beneficial opportunities for children to develop their thinking and problem solving skills

What happens next?

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

Main findings

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

Most children enter the setting with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are at least appropriate for their age and ability. They make sufficient progress in the development of their skills from their individual starting points.

Most children demonstrate good speaking and listening skills and develop these well during their time at the setting. For example, they enjoy listening to a pre-recorded story displayed on an interactive whiteboard and join in independently with the repeated phrase 'with a squash and a squeeze.' A few children express preferences about favourite books. They select these from the book corner and enjoy sharing their ideas about what may be happening in the story with an adult. For example, suggesting that the dog is 'splashing through the puddle.' Most children understand how to hold a book and many turn the pages in the correct direction.

In the indoor and outdoor areas, children enjoy mark making in a variety of ways. For example, they make shapes and attempt simple letters with their fingers in the sand tray in the outdoor area. Many children enjoy drawing pictures and attempting to write their own labels, such as when drawing a picture of their family and writing their names underneath. A very few children make lists in the role play shop. Many demonstrate increasing control when, for example, using a felt tip pen to write a Santes Dynwen card in the writing area.

As part of registration routines, nearly all children join in with adults when counting the number of children who are present. A few children count up to ten with assistance from a practitioner, such as when counting the number of tractors in a picture book. Many understand the concept of relative size. For example, they talk about the larger or smaller tower in the construction area. A few order objects according to size, such as the dinosaurs in the sand tray. A very few name simple shapes, such a circle and a square, when drawn by an adult in the sand tray.

Most children develop basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills. For example, they enjoy playing with pretend mobile phones to communicate with each other and adults in their role play.

Nearly all children develop good fine and gross motor skills, such as when holding a felt tip pen to colour in a picture or when using a balance bike in the outdoor area. However, few children demonstrate the ability to use their thinking skills or solve problems in a variety of contexts.

Many children develop a few basic Welsh language oracy skills, such as when joining in with counting in Welsh or responding to the register with 'yma'. In the very few cases when practitioners use the Welsh language, for example to describe colours, most children respond well to this. However, overall, pupils do not develop their Welsh language oracy skills well enough.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children arrive happily at the setting, settle quickly and enjoy the activities they engage in when there. They have a positive attitude to learning and interact well with each other. Children feel that practitioners value them and will listen carefully to their opinions and concerns. As a result, they participate well in the routines of the setting and make the most of the activities they undertake.

Most children play well together and their behaviour is good. They listen carefully to adults and often to each other. They understand the importance of waiting for their turn and that they cannot always have their own way. For example, when making ice cream, they understand that they have to go along with the decision of the majority of the group to make it honey flavoured rather than their preference of red berry.

Many children demonstrate suitable levels of self-confidence. For example, they put on their coats independently to go outside, take off their wellies when they come in and put on their shoes to go home. Most children are happy to express their views about their learning. For example, they talk with confidence about the area of learning that they wish to engage in next and a few express reasons why. Most access resources with independence and confidence, such as when selecting felt pens to colour in a picture or choosing scissors to cut out objects.

Most children understand the importance of eating healthily and staying active. They know that eating fruit and drinking water is good for you and that running and jumping in the outdoor area helps to make you strong. They recognise the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating food. When taking part in a cooking activity, they know that if they lick the spoon they need to use a clean one to stir the mixture.

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

The setting offers an appropriate range of first hand and practical experiences to engage the interests of the children. For example, they enjoy a visit from a local ice cream making company, creating their own ice cream and role playing the selling of pretend ice cream in their outdoor area. The setting bases learning experiences suitably on the foundation phase ethos and encourages children to learn and develop their skills through active play. However, this does not include sufficient opportunities for the children to engage in activities that develop their problem solving and thinking skills.

The setting is making good progress in ensuring that its continuous provision addresses the learning needs of the children and encourages the development of an appropriate range of literacy, numeracy, physical and creative skills. For example, there are good opportunities for children to experiment with mark making in the writing, role play and painting areas. The outdoor ice cream stand is effective in encouraging children to develop their understanding of money and numbers up to ten. However, the setting does not enhance its provision sufficiently or frequently enough to develop a topic based approach to the children's skills development. Similarly, whilst practitioners have a good understanding of the next steps in children's learning, they do not plan focussed tasks in enough detail to address the development of their individual literacy and numeracy skills.

There are a few useful opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language oracy skills. For example, many practitioners greet children with 'bore da' on their arrival at the setting. They lead the morning registration song in Welsh and encourage the children to join in and respond with 'yma'. However, overall the opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language oracy skills are too infrequent and not built sufficiently into the daily routines of the setting.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have gentle, positive working relationships with the children. They speak to the children with respect and listen to their comments and views carefully throughout teaching sessions and as part of home, registration and snack time routines. They encourage children to persevere with their task and offer appropriate support when needed. As a result, most pupils make good progress in the development of a range of skills over time.

Practitioners are positive language role models for the children. For example, they encourage them to develop their communication skills when role modelling a conversation on pretend mobile phones. Practitioners use questioning well to support children's learning. For example, they encourage the children to recognise and talk about the colours they are using when creating a drawing of their family in the writing area and talk to them about where cream comes from when making ice cream. Practitioners ensure that the pace of sessions is appropriate and this maintains the children's interest in their activities. However, a few opportunities to develop children's sense of independence and responsibility are missed for example during snack time and when it is time to tidy up.

Practitioners have developed effective assessments procedures and make beneficial observations of the children's skills. For example, they note that a child can order soft toys with numbers on them and recognise that one is missing. Practitioners use this information well to feed into overall assessments of children's ability and achievements that they pass to the feeder primary school upon transition. The leader has developed a useful tracking system that identifies clearly the progress that the children have made and the next steps in their learning. However, it is too early measure the impact of this new system.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners respond to the individual needs of the children with care and consideration. They work well to create a happy and caring environment within the setting. This ensures that the children are enthusiastic about attending every day and that they enjoy their learning.

As part of a supportive and caring ethos, all practitioners maintain high expectations of the children's behaviour. They ensure that they understand the importance of taking turns and think about how their actions impact upon others. In the few instances when children do behave in an unacceptable way, practitioners gently remind them of their expectations of good behaviour and ensure that they respond appropriately. As a result, most children behave well and show good levels of consideration towards each other and adults.

The setting plans an appropriate range of learning experiences to promote children's spiritual, cultural, moral and social development suitably. Practitioners arrange

beneficial opportunities for the children to explore the features of Welsh culture through celebrating St David's and Santes Dwynwen days, as well as regular visits to the local church. They explore other cultures through the celebration of special days and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Practitioners are beginning to develop the children's understanding of living sustainably. For example, children use junk materials for modelling and recycled crates as part of outdoor play. However, overall provision for raising the children's awareness of sustainability is at an early stage of development.

Practitioners develop children's understanding of how to stay healthy and fit suitably. For example, they ensure that the children understand the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They use cooking activities and snack time well to lead discussions with the children about how to eat healthily, such as the importance of not eating too much sugar. Practitioners make sure that children undertake regular physical activity during the day by using the outdoor area and play equipment.

The setting has appropriate arrangements to support children with additional learning needs when they arise and practitioners have effective partnerships with a range of support agencies.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

A positive, collaborative and supportive ethos pervades the setting. There is a 'buzz' of activity with nearly all children engaging enthusiastically with their learning, supported well by practitioners. Practitioners include all children successfully in making choices about what activity they wish to engage with next and ensure that they have equal access to activities and areas of learning. Practitioners value and recognise children's achievements well through the display and celebration of their work. They match resources successfully to children's needs and interests.

Practitioners have developed an appropriate range of attractive learning areas within the main room that encourage children's learning and play effectively. These are well organised to ensure that children make their own choices about their next task and develop their independence. For example, the role play shop encourages children to improve their oracy, early writing skills and understanding of money.

The setting is developing its outdoor area successfully. An appropriate range of areas, such as the music and water play zones, encourage the children to practise and develop a wide range of skills. Practitioners are beginning to use an area of land at the rear of the setting to allow children to explore their creative skills, such as through willow weaving when creating a 'wigloo' as part of their study of Antarctica. The leader has imaginative plans to enhance this area further.

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

The leader, management committee and chairperson, have a clear long term vision for the development of the setting. This focusses well on building the skills and expertise of the practitioners to ensure the best outcomes for the children.

Communication between the leader and the management committee is clear and effective. They have a beneficial partnership which supports the improvement priorities of the setting well. Regular management committee meetings focus well on improving the quality of provision. The leader and management committee have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting.

Leaders focus well on what is required to run an effective setting and to ensure the smooth operation of basic routines and procedures. They have developed clear policies and plans to support the setting's work. Leaders have high expectations of the work of the practitioners. As a result, the many newly appointed members of staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The leader and management committee have been successful in appointing practitioners with a wide range of previous experience that meets the needs of the setting well.

The leader places a strong emphasis on developing a sense of teamwork amongst practitioners. She partners practitioners together for the purpose of mentoring and monitoring. This ensures that they share their expertise and work collaboratively to improve their professional practice and develop confidence in their roles. As a result, practitioners are improving their practice continually and developing a consistency of approach that impacts positively on outcomes for children.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has good procedures in place for self-evaluation. The setting's self-review is honest and straightforward, and focuses appropriately on many of the areas that the setting needs to improve. Leaders have a strong track record of self-evaluation and improvement and are quick to include newly appointed members of staff when evaluating the setting's work.

The setting action plan for improvement, clearly identifies training, resources and planned initiatives for the future. These address the issues outlined in the setting's self-evaluation effectively and indicates appropriate actions to make improvements. For example, they recognise the need to improve provision for the development of children's ICT skills and have arranged training and purchased resources to address this.

Leaders and practitioners meet each half-term to review and reflect on their practice. These meetings are beneficial in identifying areas for improvement, sharing good practice and ensuring consistency of approach amongst newly appointed practitioners. The leader has recently improved this arrangement to ensure that meetings take place on a fortnightly basis. The setting has made good progress against the recommendations of the previous inspection. For example, practitioners now use their observations of the skills of the children effectively to feed into the setting's ongoing assessment system and children have free flow access between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has strong partnerships with parents, the local feeder primary school and the community. It maintains good communication with parents through the setting website, noticeboards, social media and newsletters. Parents' opinions and input into new initiatives are valued by the leader and management committee. As a result, most parents are highly supportive of the setting. For example, many parents and supporters attended its most recent annual general meeting.

Most children transfer to the local primary school adjacent to the setting and well established transition links ensure a smooth changeover between the establishments. These arrangements include, joint parents meetings, storytelling sessions and shared use of the school's forest area. The setting also benefits from practitioners participating in joint training sessions with school staff, for example through looking at ways to develop effective continuous provision.

The link teacher from the primary school provides consistent valuable support to the setting. She models good practice and identifies next steps in conjunction with the setting's leader to plan for improvement and ensure consistency of provision. The setting makes good use of the support offered by the local authority advisory teacher, particularly to support staff training needs.

Community links are strong. For example, the setting provides a monthly update to the local newsletter informing the community of past and future events. Practitioners organise regular visits to the community, such as the local church and shop, to support the children's learning. It organised recently a successful celebration of the fifty years since the opening of the setting with a garden party and ball.

Resource management: Good

The leader and management committee manage the setting's limited resources well. They are realistic about the funding available and prioritise it well to meet the needs of the children. They have been effective in applying for grants to supplement the setting's income. For example, they used a sustainability grant to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Leaders are successful in providing an engaging, positive and well-resourced environment for the children. The setting has sufficient practitioners to meet the learning needs of the children. The management committee works closely with the leader to purchase new, good quality resources, such as play telephones and remote controlled trucks, to support the children's development. Practitioners value the setting's resources and maintain them well. The leader audits these annually and prioritises the setting's purchasing needs accordingly.

The leader has established a comprehensive staff training plan. This targets successfully the individual needs of staff and supports the setting's improvement priorities well. All staff have attended an induction day and benefit from the ongoing support of the link foundation phase teacher from the local primary school.

In view of the outcomes achieved by the children, the effective provision and successful leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Glossary of terms

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| 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 partnerships 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 three to seven 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 that 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 |
| 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. |

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| National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) | This organisation 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 |