



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

A report on

**Aberporth Playgroup (WPPA)
Plas Howni
Aberporth
Cardigan
Ceredigion
SA43 2DA**

Date of inspection: November 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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Context

Aberporth playgroup is a bilingual setting in Ceredigion local authority. The setting is registered for twenty one children from the ages of two to four years. It offers early years education sessions from 9 am to 12:00 pm during school term time, for five days each week. At the time of the inspection, there were nine children in receipt of funded early education.

The setting has identified a very few children as having additional learning needs. A very few children speak Welsh at home and a very few children have English as an additional language.

There are four full-time and two part-time members of staff including two full-time setting leaders. One leader took up their post in September 1985 and one in September 2017.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspected the setting in July 2018 and Estyn last inspected it in September 2015.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is excellent because:

- Most children make very strong progress from their starting points, especially in developing their Welsh language skills
- Most children have excellent attitudes to and show enjoyment in learning, developing strong independent skills across all areas of learning
- Practitioners plan exciting, stimulating and fun activities for children that develop their skills progressively
- Practitioners make highly creative use of children's ideas as part of curriculum planning
- Practitioners are highly skilled and have an excellent understanding of when to intervene in children's learning and when to allow them to experiment with their own ideas
- All practitioners are very good language models and develop the children's understanding and use of Welsh exceptionally well
- The provision for supporting children with additional learning needs is highly effective and practitioners support children well in their learning and physical development
- It provides a welcoming and very inclusive environment where practitioners know all children well and ensure they have equal opportunities to all activities

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- Leaders and practitioners have high expectations of themselves and the children with a clear vision for raising standards and providing highly effective provision
- The setting has robust procedures for managing the performance of staff
- The management committee are very supportive of the setting and have a comprehensive understanding of the its strengths and areas for improvement
- Self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures are robust and leads to continuous improvement
- There are a wide-range of highly effective partnerships including with parents, other settings and the local community

- Practitioners access a wide-range of beneficial training that improves their own performance and has a positive effect on leadership, provision and children's standards

Recommendations

R1 Plan systematically to develop children's problem solving skills

R2 Consider the length and organisation of large group sessions to make sure that they maintain the interest of all children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to 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?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

During their time at the setting, most children make very strong progress from their starting points in line with their age and ability. Children with additional learning needs make very good progress in their literacy, numeracy and physical development skills.

Most children listen attentively to each other and adults during group sessions and activities. They speak clearly in full sentences and discuss familiar scenarios with enthusiasm and confidence, for example when telling the other children about how they kept safe using sparklers on Bonfire Night. Most older children use an extensive range of vocabulary in their play, for example when telling an adult that, 'you may have a cup of tea, but it will be very expensive!' Most are developing an excellent understanding of the Welsh language. Nearly all follow instructions given in Welsh highly effectively and many use simple Welsh phrases and words during group activities and when working independently confidently and without prompting from adults. An excellent example of this is when they describe how characters are feeling in a game using full sentences. Nearly all children enjoy stories and many sit for extended periods when listening to them. Many choose to look at books independently in the reading corner, turning pages correctly and using the pictures to retell the story with expression. Most recognise their own names and other children's names when self-registering and recording how they feel on a display. Most children choose mark-making activities independently as part of their play. They develop effective early writing skills, such as making symbols to represent words when writing in a diary. Many older children are beginning to write their own names successfully.

Most children have a very good understanding of number and count objects to 10 confidently in English and Welsh. Most sort objects into groups successfully and count the number in each group with accuracy. For example, children search for different animals hidden in sawdust and sort them in accordance to the markings on their coats. A majority identify the largest group and smallest group.

Most children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) confidently. For example, they navigate a remote control car around the room, moving it forwards, backwards and from side to side. Many are developing an effective understanding of the use of ICT in everyday life, such as when using a credit card and pin number to pay for a pet's treatment in the role-play veterinary surgery. Many children have a very good understanding of how to create pictures on a tablet and print them with minimum support.

Nearly all children develop physical skills exceptionally well. They participate enthusiastically in daily physical activities such as stretching like a giraffe and snapping like a crocodile. They use a range of equipment skilfully to develop their balancing skills, for example when sitting on a ball in the physical development corner.

Most children develop their creative skills very successfully, for example when painting pictures of their pets. Many are developing the ability to solve problems well, for example when using bricks from the building corner to make a road for a remote control car.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Nearly all children enter the setting confidently and engage with visitors and staff enthusiastically. They settle quickly and set about their daily activities without prompting. Nearly all children behave well and treat each other with courtesy and respect. For example, during snack time, they pour their own drinks without assistance and ask other children to pass the jug politely. Most wait their turn patiently if another child is using a piece of equipment they want and they share resources well.

Nearly all children demonstrate excellent attitudes and enjoyment in their learning. They maintain interest on their tasks for sustained periods of time. They demonstrate high levels of engagement and are extremely confident when making choices as they move between adult-focused and child-led learning tasks. Their high level of independence is an outstanding feature. For example, children choose from a wide-range of resources in the creative area independently to recreate a firework display. They show resilience when something doesn't work for the first time and persevere to try to overcome the problem. Nearly all children make very effective contributions to planning sessions when sharing their ideas about what they would like to learn about.

Most children take on responsibilities conscientiously. They take turns in being 'monitor' and lead circle time sessions for other children confidently. For example, children lead the daily routine in Welsh by using full sentences to ask others to recognise their name and to describe the weather. This is an excellent feature of the setting. Nearly all children take responsibility for tidying learning areas at the end of the session and putting equipment away.

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

The setting provides a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities across all foundation phase areas of learning. Although there is limited outdoor space, practitioners plan regular worthwhile activities for children to develop their skills outdoors through visiting the local beach and using the local sports field.

Practitioners make highly creative use of children's ideas when planning topics and weekly activities. They work closely with the children to map their ideas at the start of every topic, which motivates them to learn highly effectively. For example, when children asked where honey comes from, practitioners arranged a visit to a honey farm to observe working beehives and the process of making honey. They developed this further by planning activities following the visit such as baking honey cake and learning more about bees. This makes learning fun and stimulating for children within real-life contexts.

Planning ensures that children get regular valuable opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills systematically across all areas of learning. For example, there are regular opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills in all areas of learning, such as recording appointments in the veterinary practice. Practitioners plan high quality experiences for children to develop their creative and physical skills, for example during daily movement activities. There are beneficial opportunities for children to experiment and problem solve. For example, practitioners encourage children to put dolls back together in order of size. However, practitioners do not always plan to develop children's problem-solving skills systematically enough.

Practitioners develop children's understanding of the Welsh language exceptionally well. They use a wide-range of songs successfully and model language patterns daily as part of all activities. Consequently, nearly all children have an excellent understanding of the Welsh language and use words and phrases as part of daily activities and in their play. There are beneficial opportunities for children to learn about the culture and traditions of Wales, for example with regular opportunities for children to hear Welsh folk tales, such as the stories of Santes Melangell and Morwenna.

The setting makes highly effective use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum and children's learning. An effective example of this is regular visits to the local beach where lifeguards teach the children about how to keep safe.

Teaching: Excellent

All practitioners have high expectations of children. They plan exciting and stimulating activities that are fun and engage children well. An excellent feature of the teaching is how all practitioners make learning fun and exciting for all children. Practitioners have a highly effective understanding of foundation phase philosophy and of how children learn. They are highly skilled and have an excellent understanding of when to intervene in children's learning and when to allow them to experiment with their own ideas. They adapt activities skilfully to meet the needs of all children. They observe children carefully and use this information successfully to adapt activities. For example, practitioners observe a younger child watching an activity intently. They encourage the child to join in and complete the activity. As a

result, the child completes the task with confidence and shows obvious pride in their achievement. Nearly all practitioners have highly effective questioning skills that encourage children to think for themselves.

All practitioners are excellent language models. Their use of Welsh and modelling of correct Welsh language patterns is a strength of the setting.

One of the strengths in teaching is the close relationship between all practitioners and children. They manage behaviour firmly but sensitively and positively. Practitioners make excellent use of different strategies to praise good behaviour such as rewarding work with a 'pawen lawen' (high five). This leads to a supportive learning environment in which children enjoy experimenting and discovering new things for themselves. Generally, practitioners make very good use of focused tasks and large group sessions to develop children's skills. However, on occasions, group sessions are too long and as a result, a few children lose concentration.

Following recommendations from the previous inspection, practitioners have developed robust procedures for observing and assessing children. Through regular observations, practitioners gain a strong understanding of what children are able to do and what they need to develop. They use this information to plan very well for children's next steps in learning. Practitioners share useful information with parents about their children's progress through reports and the use of contact books.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The setting is a safe and welcoming environment for all children. Practitioners take exceptionally good care of children from the moment they arrive at the setting and work hard to ensure that they meet their individual needs. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing very well. Practitioners plan highly effective daily activities to promote children's physical development. These activities ensure that children are active on a daily basis. This is enhanced with weekly sessions on the local sports field where practitioners plan very successful activities for children to develop skills such as spatial awareness and ball skills. Snack time is a calm experience that develops children's social and moral skills very successfully. For example, practitioners encourage children to find their own snack, pour their own drinks and to be polite and courteous to their peers when asking other children to pass them the jug of water or milk.

Practitioners plan valuable opportunities for children to develop their awareness of other people's feelings. An effective example of this is when children record and discuss their feelings on a board daily and explain why they feel that way. This supports children's emotional and moral development effectively.

There are highly effective opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural development. For example, the setting uses real-life experiences to develop children's sense of awe and wonder in a meaningful way, such as arranging for children to observe bees in the process of making honey. There are practical opportunities for children to learn about sustainability when they recycle paper and food from the setting as well as with assisting with litter picking around the local community.

The arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs are highly effective. Practitioners have received a wide-range of training that allows them to identify children's needs early and understand how to access specialist support as necessary. There are well-established links with professional support services to provide children with specialist support when required. Individual play plans are of a good quality and practitioners use the information in these skilfully to plan the next steps in children's learning. Staff provide exceptional support for children who need extra help with their leaning and physical needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a welcoming and very inclusive atmosphere. Practitioners know the children well and ensure that they have equal access to all activities. As a result, children feel valued and are happy and confident in the setting. Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about different cultures and traditions through regular themed days and weeks, such as when learning about Australia, Scotland and countries in Africa.

The setting is a clean, well-maintained and vibrant learning environment for children. There is a very good range of high quality resources available, which are within easy reach of children. Children collect and store resources as needed throughout the session and this develops their independent skills well.

There is no direct access to the outdoor learning environment. However, practitioners make effective use of the local area such as the beach, and local sports field to plan activities that develop pupils' skills in the outdoors effectively. They also make very good use of the local community to enhance children's learning, for example when visiting the local café to develop the children's understanding of using money.

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

Leaders have high expectations of themselves, other practitioners and children. They have a clear vision for the setting that focuses on raising standards and providing high quality provision for children in an inclusive and safe learning environment. All practitioners share this vision effectively, have high expectations of

themselves and work diligently to provide exciting and engaging activities that are fun and meet the needs of all children.

There is a very strong ethos of teamwork among leaders and practitioners. All staff have very clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities extremely well. This is evident in the smooth running of daily activities, where staff demonstrate a flexible approach to any issues that arise during the session. Practitioners are continuously looking for ways to improve their performance and leaders empower staff to develop their leadership roles in the setting successfully.

The setting has robust procedures for managing the performance of staff through regular supervision and appraisals. Practitioners are highly reflective of their performance and have a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and what they need to do to improve.

Leaders pay very good attention to developing local and national priorities. An excellent example of this is how they plan strategically to develop the Welsh language skills of children and staff.

The management committee is very supportive of the setting. They meet regularly and have a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. They are very proactive in raising useful additional funds and challenge leaders to make beneficial improvements to provision.

Improving quality: Excellent

The setting has well established and robust self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures that have led consistently to improving standards and the quality of provision in the setting.

All members of staff play an integral role in self-evaluating the setting and have a very strong understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders and practitioners use a wide-range of information to evaluate the impact of leadership and provision on children's standards. These include information from assessments, staff contributions and regular observations of children. Practitioners collect views and ideas from children successfully about what they would like to learn and act upon suggestions quickly. This ensures that children have a strong voice in decisions that affect their learning. Leaders collect the views of parents and carers effectively through questionnaires and home to setting contact books. They use this information well to make improvements, such as the reintroduction of more formal parents' evenings.

Leaders take very good account of reports by inspectorates to improve their practice. The setting makes valuable use of advice from the advisory teacher and a professional association to improve practice. For example, following the recommendations from the previous inspection, leaders worked with the advisory teacher to develop robust assessment procedures. As a result, they now use information from assessment very well to plan the next steps in children's learning.

There are close links between self-evaluation procedures and the setting's development plan. The development plan outlines clearly what the setting wants to achieve and the actions required to make this happen. Leaders monitor progress against this plan regularly and evaluate the impact of any new initiatives on children's standards robustly.

The setting has a strong record of making sustained improvements. For example, the work on developing Welsh language provision has ensured that staff are confident in their Welsh language skills and offer high quality provision to children. As a result, most children make excellent progress in using the Welsh language on a daily basis in their play.

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting has well established, highly effective partnerships that make a positive contribution to the outcomes and wellbeing of children. The setting has extremely strong partnerships with parents who appreciate the support they receive from the setting. An excellent example of this is the use of contact books to exchange regular information about the children. This enables parents and the setting to deal with any issues that arise promptly. Practitioners update the information board in the foyer weekly and inform parents about what the children are learning and any new vocabulary they have introduced. Parents find this information extremely useful when helping their children at home.

The setting has highly effective partnerships with other non-maintained settings and the local primary school. For example, the setting works closely with another non-maintained setting and local primary school to review and improve transition arrangements. The leader has worked with leaders of other setting and the foundation phase leader at the school to create a leaflet to aid transition. This transition plan and leaflet have been shared as good practice across other settings and schools in the local authority.

Leaders have a strong partnership with the local authority advisory teacher and a professional association. They work with them closely to develop areas of provision and leadership, such as ensuring that all policies and procedures reflect current regulations and good practice.

The setting has a wide range of strong partnerships with the local community. These enhance the curriculum exceptionally well and have a positive impact on children's standards. For example, the setting works with local businesses such as the pharmacy and local supermarket to teach the children about roles in the community. The setting is proactive in ensuring that the children play an integral part in their community. For example, they hold a joint Christmas concert that is open to the community, with another setting. As a result, children play an active role in their community.

Resource management: Excellent

Leaders make very good use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning well. The setting has a good level of staffing and leaders deploy staff well to deliver high quality learning experiences to children. Through robust performance management procedures, leaders identify training needs very well and provide a wide-range of training opportunities to all staff. This has a positive effect on the performance of staff, the quality of the provision and children's standards. For example, staff have used speech and language training to recognise children's needs, and to adapt activities for them in line with their individual educational plans. This has had a positive effect on the progress of these children.

Leaders use the limited financial resources available to them beneficially to improve provision. For example, following self-evaluation processes, the setting recognised that children were not accessing the creative area. They prioritised funding effectively to purchase more resources to make the area more interesting and accessible to children. As a result, more children use the area and make purposeful choices in regards their learning. This has had a positive effect on children's creative skills. The setting is in the process of filming this provision to share the practice with other settings in the local authority.

In view of the standards children achieve and the highly effective teaching and leadership, the setting provides excellent value for money.

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
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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