



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

A report on

**St Padarn's Playgroup
Heol Llanbadarn
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 1EZ**

Date of inspection: November 2019

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About St Padarn's Playgroup

Name of setting	S Padarn's Playgroup
Category of care provided	Full Day Care
Registered person(s)	
Responsible individual (if applicable)	Rebecca Barratt
Person in charge	Rachel Cutter
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 to 4 years
Number of children funded for up to two terms	16
Number of children funded for up to five terms	3
Opening days / times	8.30am to 5.45pm, Mondays to Fridays during term time
Flying Start service	Yes
Language of the setting	English
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh Language.
Date of previous CIW inspection	17/08/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection	11/03/2013
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	19/11/2019
Additional information	
Almost half of the children in the setting have special educational needs and a minority have English or Welsh as an additional language.	

Summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Good
Learning (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Care and development	Poor
Teaching and assessment (only applies to three and four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting)	Good
Environment	Adequate
Leadership and management	Poor

Non-compliance

We notified the provider that the service was not compliant with the following regulations which must be addressed:

- Regulation 30 (1) (a) because there was not a full and accurate record of the children's hours of attendance and who was looking after them
- Regulation 28 (2) (b) (ii) because not all relevant suitability checks had been completed on staff before they began working at the setting

A notice has not been issued with regards to these matters on this occasion, as there was no immediate or significant impact for children using the service. We expect the responsible individual to take action to rectify these matters and it will be followed up at the next inspection.

The service is non-compliant with Regulation 22 (1) (a) because practitioners and leaders had not followed safe procedures in relation to child protection.

This is a serious matter and we have issued a non-compliance notice to the provider.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that provision and resources meet the needs and interests of the full age range of children including the children attending the after school club
- R2 The Responsible Individual must address all issues of non-compliance identified during the course of the inspection
- R3 Ensure that all policies comply fully with regulations and that they are applied consistently
- R4 Ensure that strategic planning focuses on key priorities and leads to timely improvements

What happens next

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Estyn and the Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales are of the opinion that focused improvement is required in relation to this setting. The setting will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn and CIW will monitor the setting's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are settled and cope well with separation from their parents. They are relaxed and happy when playing with their peers and practitioners. Children benefit from a flexible settling-in process where their individual needs are fully considered. Most children enjoy coming to the setting and older children are confident that they can share their worries with practitioners and ask them for help.

Most children interact well with each other. They share appropriately with their peers most of the time and show consideration for others, such as when children find items that belong to their peers and they return them spontaneously. Almost all children tidy up together without prompting.

Nearly all children in the playgroup enjoy their play; they are fully engaged in freely chosen play and participate well in-group activities. For example, younger children proudly announced that they were making a 'birthday cake' for a practitioner during a role-play session. Most older children enjoy participating in chosen activities such as performing a show together. However, the range of activities on offer in the after school club do not reflect the interests of a minority of older children and do not engage them well enough. As a result, a few children behave boisterously in the shop area and disrupt the play of younger children.

Most children in the playgroup are confident that practitioners will listen to their opinions. Children in the playgroup make choices frequently and contribute their ideas to activity planning. For example, they identify the things they want to make and do on a mind map. Older children make independent choices about what they want to do in the after school club, for example to play energetic games or relax.

In the playgroup, nearly all children develop a range of skills successfully through daily routines and play activities. They develop their communication skills well through talking about their play with practitioners and singing familiar songs. Most children talk openly to peers and practitioners about their news. Nearly all children speak with clarity and express their needs successfully. For example, they explain what they want to do or do not want to do. Many children demonstrate enjoyment in the activities available and most sustain interest and concentration for extended periods, for example using craft resources to make faces out of paper plates. Nearly all children respond well to regular praise when completing an activity. This provides most children with a sense of achievement.

Children in the playgroup develop their independence well. Nearly all attempt to put their own outdoor clothes and shoes on and many do this successfully. Most children pour themselves a cup of water from a jug and take their plates and cups back to the kitchen when they have finished with them. They find their names on pegs to self-register. However, opportunities for older children to develop their independence and to engage purposefully with younger children in the after school club are more limited.

Learning (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Nearly all children make good progress from their individual starting points during their time in the setting. Many children show a high level of perseverance when solving a problem or mastering a skill. They enjoy their learning, make confident choices and engage well with adults and other children.

Most children are developing good communication skills. Many speak clearly and with confidence about what they are doing and engage appropriately in conversations with each other and with adults. Most children use simple sentences to convey meaning. A minority talk at length about things that have enthused them and to explain what they are doing or how they are feeling. Nearly all children join in with familiar songs in English and Welsh with enthusiasm.

Most children listen well to familiar stories, responding positively to questions and joining in with familiar phrases. They enjoy looking at books and treat them with great care. Most children are developing skills as readers, making sure the books are the right way up and turning pages carefully.

Many children make marks with increasing confidence using a wide range of instruments, for example when they take notes in the forest school. Most children hold writing implements using an appropriate grip and form recognisable letters and shapes. Many children write their name with support and a few children are able to do this independently.

Most children make good progress in developing numeracy skills. They are beginning to use mathematical language across a range of contexts, for example to compare the length of sticks they have found outdoors. Most recognise and use the names for two dimensional shapes successfully. Nearly all children count to ten with support and the majority touch count to five. A few more able children count independently to twenty and recognise numbers up to ten. They add two numbers together successfully such as to count the number of legs on two minibeasts.

Many children use a range of information and communication technology (ICT) with increasing confidence and little support from practitioners. For example, children take photographs and read codes using an electronic tablet, they programme electronic toys with accuracy.

Nearly all children demonstrate good physical skills. They jump, skip, run and stretch with confidence, particularly in the forest school area where they navigate steep slopes and uneven ground skilfully. Most children use a range of small instruments such as scissors with increasing skill. Nearly all children catch and throw a ball confidently with two hands.

Many children develop Welsh language skills well. They respond confidently to simple instructions and questions from adults. Most recognise Welsh names for familiar objects such as a butterfly and name primary colours with little support from adults.

Care and development: Poor

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements and give serious cause for concern. Its safeguarding policies require improvement and leaders and practitioners do not follow and apply child protection procedures well enough. This is a serious issue and a non-compliance notice has been issued.

Practitioners supervise children well in the setting and remind them regularly about how to stay safe. For example, they establish and reinforce rules for the forest school area and teach children how to cross the road safely. All practitioners apply their training to ensure that they treat accidents, record incidents and administer medication effectively. They take swift and appropriate action when there is an accident at the setting.

Practitioners support children well to stay healthy. They follow good hygiene procedures when changing nappies and when providing food. They encourage children to wash their hands when appropriate. Practitioners provide a range of healthy snacks such as fruit, rice cakes, and toast, and ensure that children have access to water throughout the day. They provide very regular opportunities for children to play outdoors.

Practitioners are caring and kind. They create a positive atmosphere, speaking with children in a warm and constructive manner throughout the day. Practitioners use effective and positive behaviour strategies well. They praise children frequently and this helps them to feel valued. Practitioners are observant and proactive, intervening appropriately to support children and helping them to manage their behaviour appropriately. They respond very calmly and positively to rare cases of challenging behaviour, crouching to the child's level, making good eye contact and speaking in a soft tone of voice.

Practitioners provide a nurturing environment and act as good role models for children. For example, most use the Welsh language frequently and naturally and as part of the daily routine. Practitioners support children whose home language is not Welsh or English sensitively and, as a result, these children demonstrate a high level of confidence when communicating with others.

Practitioners support children's individual development effectively. They know the children very well and complete regular observations of their skills. They support children well in their play and in focused activities. For example, they use open questioning to develop children's communication and thinking skills. Practitioners know the strategies to use to support individual children with special educational needs. They provide speech and language sessions where required and work closely with professionals to help assess children's needs.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to three or four year old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting): Good

Practitioners establish strong working relationships with children. They use praise and encouragement effectively to support learning and wellbeing. They know the children very well and offer a range of activities that engage nearly all children successfully.

Practitioners have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to plan worthwhile learning experiences, indoors and outside, responding to and following children's interests well. For example, they identify what children want to learn about within the theme of autumn animals, such as making an autumn cake, using mind maps.

Practitioners plan successfully to develop children's communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. They adapt tasks so that they meet the needs of nearly all children in the playgroup, including children with special needs and children who are more able. For example, they encourage more able children to make mud cakes following a greater number of instructions.

All practitioners observe children and meet to discuss and record individual progress regularly. They use the information they gather suitably to plan and adapt activities that support and challenge children beneficially. They provide a good balance between adult led activities and those initiated by children. Practitioners have a good understanding of how and when to support children to help them move forward in learning. Most practitioners use questioning appropriately to develop children's skills and confidence.

Practitioners use visitors and visits to places of interest beneficially to provide authentic learning experiences such as, going to the local library to choose a book, visiting the local shop to buy food and use money in a real-life situation. They make good use of planned and unplanned opportunities to enable children to experience a sense of awe and wonder, for example sitting with their eyes closed listening to sounds in the forest school area and watching a centipede crawl under a log.

Practitioners plan a suitable range of opportunities for children to learn about other cultures for example by celebrating Chinese New Year and Divali. They read stories from different cultures such as Handa's Surprise and use them as a stimulus for food tasting, and role-play activities.

There are worthwhile activities for children to experience and learn about the language and culture of Wales. For example, practitioners use Welsh words and phrases throughout the day and provide regular opportunities for children to hear stories read in Welsh and sing traditional Welsh songs.

Environment: Adequate

Leaders ensure that the environment is secure and that appropriate measures are in place to keep children physically safe. For example, they have provided a new fence and gate around the outdoor play area. Leaders ensure that the toilets and kitchen are kept clean. However, overall, the environment is not maintained well enough. For example, parts of the play area are damp and there is no effective system for keeping all areas of the setting clean. Risk assessments are completed for all areas of the setting and for visits. However, these are not used effectively to improve the quality of the provision, such as providing age appropriate resources to meet the needs of older children attending the after school club .

Practitioners make the most of available space to provide a rich and accessible environment for play and learning both inside and outdoors. The outdoor play area is

immediately accessible from the building, allowing children to move freely when the weather is suitable. Children benefit from access to the school's outdoor yard area where they have more space to move around, play ball games and use ride-on toys. The setting uses the forest school area twice a week, providing children with a natural space to explore and play.

The layout and design of the environment encourage younger children's independence effectively. For example, toilets are easily accessible from the main play area. Basins, soap dispensers and paper towels are at the children's level so that they can wash their hands independently. However, in general, the setting's furniture, including tables and chairs, is not suitable for older children.

Learning areas are well-defined and younger children have access to a wide range of suitable resources. For example, the role-play area is well stocked with appropriate resources to support imaginative play. Leaders provide a good amount of natural and sensory resources such as leaves, pine cones, conkers, gravel, mud and sand for children to explore. However, many of the toys and games used in the after school club are not suitable for the older children attending the setting. The range, quality and accessibility of these resources are limited.

Resource boxes are available for use at relevant times for multicultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year. However, resources to promote cultural awareness and diversity are not easily accessible on a daily basis.

Leadership and management: Poor

Leaders promote an inclusive ethos within a positive learning environment that supports children in the playgroup well. They share their aims and vision appropriately through the information they provide for parents and on social media. Leaders ensure that practitioners work together effectively and that daily interactions between practitioners and parents are positive. However, the setting does not comply with all CIW regulations. Leaders and managers do not follow child protection procedures consistently. This is a serious matter and a notice of non-compliance has been issued. The setting has relevant policies, but leaders do not ensure that these are kept up to date with all the relevant information needed to support practitioners effectively. They do not keep accurate enough records of attendance for children and practitioners, and they do not follow safe recruitment processes consistently.

Leaders involve most practitioners appropriately in evaluating the quality of playgroup provision regularly. Leaders and practitioners show a commitment to securing improvement and act appropriately to improve outcomes for younger children. For example, they have developed the outdoor play area, introduced one page profiles to support children with special educational needs and improved communication with parents. However, leaders do not evaluate the quality of provision in the after school club to ensure that it meets children's needs well enough. In general, the areas identified as main priorities for improvement in the setting are too broad, and this means that leaders are not able to focus well enough on specific actions within a manageable timeframe.

The setting has a well-established and effective system of supervision and appraisal. As a result, staff feel well supported and confident in fulfilling their role. Practitioners take every opportunity to attend training courses that help them develop professionally and address the setting's priorities. These include Welsh language development and supporting children with speech and language difficulties. The setting has sufficient practitioners with experience of working with young children. However, leaders do not comply fully with all safe recruitment processes.

Partnerships with parents and carers are strong. They feel welcome at the setting and are confident about approaching practitioners if they have a concern or complaint. Practitioners ensure that parents and carers know how well their child is doing and what they have achieved during the day. This includes providing termly meetings where they share detailed information about children's progress. Practitioners provide beneficial advice to parents to enable them to support their child effectively at home and, as a result, the impact on children's learning and wellbeing is very positive. There is a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the local school. Transition for pupils with additional learning needs is a strong feature and results in nearly all children making a successful transition into school.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) (www.estyn.gov.wales)

CIW and Estyn evaluate a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh weaknesses but improvements are required
Poor	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths and significant improvements are required

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