



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

**Hanmer Playgroup
St. Chad's CIW Aided School
Hanmer
Wrexham
SY13 3DG
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: June 2014

by

**Anne Manning
Reporting Inspector**

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Hanmer Playgroup is located in the village of Hanmer near Wrexham. The playgroup meets in rooms in the primary school. This English-medium playgroup is managed by a committee and the general day to day running is carried out by a team of practitioners.

There were six funded 3-year-old children present during the inspection. Most of the children attending the setting are from the local rural community and come from a range of backgrounds. Nearly all children are white British and speak English as their first language. A small percentage has additional help for their learning.

Hanmer Playgroup receives support from the local authority Early Education Team and is a member of Wales Pre-school Providers Association.

The setting is open during term time every afternoon and offers early education for four sessions each week. The playgroup is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales to provide care for up to 16 children who attend a varying number of sessions.

The last CSSIW inspection was in December 2013 and this is the second inspection by Estyn.

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:

- wellbeing is excellent;
- children make good progress from their starting points;
- teaching is excellent;
- care, support and guidance are good; and
- learning experiences are varied and interesting.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is effective leadership;
- partnership working and transition with the school is highly effective;
- practitioners work very flexibly as a team for the benefit of the children; and
- the setting has made good progress since the last inspection.

Recommendations

R1. To ensure that self-evaluation links more effectively to improvements in standards and outcomes for the children.

R2. To further develop the assessment process by observing and recording planned learning outcomes as well as making general observations of the children.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which 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?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make good progress from their starting points towards the Foundation Phase outcomes in all areas of learning. All children make choices about their learning and as a result are successful in concentrating and persevering with activities such as matching 2d to 3d shapes. They are constantly engaged and work at full capacity.

Nearly all children develop good skills in communication, numeracy and information communication technology needed to access the wider curriculum. They express their feelings and are confident when speaking to adults in the setting. All children show good interest in books and stories and all mark make successfully and understand the functions of writing.

All children use a range of materials to solve problems and use mathematical language in an appropriate and relevant context. They count their friends in English and in Welsh and can recognise and re-create patterns in their play.

Nearly all are successful, independent children who use a variety of technology well as part of their play. They control battery operated equipment effectively and they successfully develop skills in information communication technology.

Most children use simple Welsh words and phrases effectively and understand instructions and know a range of words. All join in enthusiastically with songs and stories that effectively develop their Welsh vocabulary. The setting promotes the Welsh language exceptionally well and as a result nearly all make good progress.

Wellbeing: Excellent

Without exception children are happy and feel safe in the setting. Children are highly confident in their play and are involved in making decisions about their learning and choices in the playgroup. All children settle well and quickly to the activities and are highly keen to engage in and finish tasks. Without exception children have positive attitudes to learning and show a good interest in their work especially when working in the garden.

Nearly all show high levels of self-esteem and are highly motivated and engaged in their activities. All concentrate well and take part enthusiastically in different learning experiences such as weeding their garden and finding mini beasts.

Without exception children demonstrate exceptional behaviour and have highly successful relationships with each other and adults around them. They are kind to each other and exceptionally courteous. They help their friends, for example when tidying away equipment or finding shapes in the garden. All readily share and take

turns with equipment and resources. They all enjoy learning through play and are extremely interested in the activities. All sustain high levels of concentration and perseverance and their time spent in the playgroup results in highly competent and independent learners who are able, for example to pour their own drinks.

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

Practitioners plan together a range of interesting learning experiences that provide a challenge for the children and successfully take into account their differing learning needs and ideas. Practitioners have a language focus on the planning sheets that means language and literacy skills are well planned for. Indoors and outdoors are used to develop skills highly effectively and without exception children make good progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. The curriculum builds effectively on children's existing knowledge and understanding.

Good organisation ensures children learn successfully. Activities are focussed well and the children have good opportunities to try things for themselves and problem solve, for example how to raise and lower the pulley smoothly trying different techniques. As a result children acquire good thinking skills across all areas of learning. Children learn successfully about caring for living things through a range of different activities, such as observing mini beasts and the Grow with Me project where they have an opportunity to watch and measure the growth of their bean.

Skills in literacy and numeracy are embedded successfully into the experiences of the children and develop effectively through a consistently good range of activities. Practitioners develop children's literacy skills by sharing books including those written in Welsh and by story telling.

All practitioners use an exceptionally good level and frequency of Welsh and they encourage the children highly effectively both during circle time and throughout the session. As a result the children are confident and respond well. They celebrate traditions and festivals such as St David's Day and those of other cultures which have meaning for them.

Teaching: Excellent

There are very high expectations of the children and without exception practitioners are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene in children's play and when to let them discover independently. They introduce new ideas or problems to solve and they are aware of what to do to encourage the children to improve. All are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the children's achievements.

Practitioners have very good knowledge of child development and of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. A key, for example identifies learning outcomes, ensures effective skill recognition and as a result planned focussed opportunities are more successful. A range of activities and innovative learning experiences particularly outdoors provides highly effective challenge and through

good relationships and humour, practitioners enable the children to learn very quickly in an enjoyable way. Practitioners make creative and imaginative use of resources to keep the children's interest and focus on task, for example making a pulley to enable Ticw to travel with his friends in a basket.

All practitioners know the children well and as a result there are high expectations. Without exception practitioners are outstandingly well briefed and deployed to extend children's play successfully using an effective range of teaching strategies that promote independent learning and provide challenge. Adult support is exceptionally well focussed but highly flexible and makes a significant contribution to the quality of the children's learning.

All practitioners use an excellent level of Welsh with the children throughout the activities and successfully encourage the children to listen and respond with only a very few opportunities missed for Welsh language development. Circle times are used highly effectively to share stories, re-cap on the session and listen to the views of others. All practitioners understand how children learn and are very clear about the development opportunities and expected outcomes from each activity. Questioning techniques are highly effective in extending the learning and achievements of the children.

All practitioners work superbly well as a team and constantly review and evaluate their practice and the progress of the children during the session. This is highly effective and as a result they are flexible and able to continually adapt an activity to extend individual achievement or provide a different level of skill or way of working to successfully meet the developing needs of the children.

Although practitioners make useful observations of the children often these are too general and do not focus sufficiently well on the outcomes from planned activities. Parents are involved in the achievements of their children and they are aware of their progress by parents' evenings, link books, speaking to the practitioners each day or looking at their child's assessment records and as a result know what to do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are highly effective transition arrangements to move on to school and the playgroup has a range of policies and procedures that support the children and promote successfully their health and wellbeing including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are appropriate policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding and the practitioners have undertaken training and as a result the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

The playgroup provides a good level of care, support and guidance for the children, because practitioners know the children well they respond successfully to all their needs and as a result children feel secure and learn effectively. Interesting activities and experiences ensure that all children learn about sharing and taking turns, for example when raising and lowering a basket using a pulley system. The children know how to distinguish right from wrong very successfully and the playgroup fosters

values such as honesty, fairness and respect and develops an understanding of living and working with others as they share the school premises and resources.

They all have an awareness of how they can stay healthy by eating a nutritious snack, sometimes of the fruit and vegetables they have grown in their garden and by wearing hats in the sun. Children are confident learners who show good levels of initiative and help each other by working effectively together, for example when printing on a large piece of wall paper and deciding where to put the work to dry, when tidying up or when being Helpwr Heddiw.

The children respect and are involved in caring for their environment by re-cycling and have a sense of awe and wonder about the world in which they live by growing fruit, flowers and vegetables in their garden and observing birds and wildlife.

The playgroup draws upon external professional expertise successfully and practitioners employ positive behaviour strategies that encourage the children. Without exception practitioners provide consistency and a good level of individual support to assist children with additional learning needs and work well with parents. As a result all children achieve and there are effective links with their homes.

Learning environment: Good

Resources including those shared with the school are of high quality, used in an innovative way and are well matched to the needs of all the children. They are easily accessible for children to become independent learners, appropriate and sufficient to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase and successfully support the learning of all the children.

The playgroup has effectively developed a well established ethos that is inclusive and values all. The setting actively develops tolerant attitudes through a range of different learning experiences and good day-to-day practice. Equal access to the activities and experiences is offered and there is an effective range of policies and procedures that actively supports the children, and promotes their health and wellbeing.

The practitioners have knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase requirements. They create a rich, stimulating learning environment indoors and out making effective use of space and know what they need to do to help the children to succeed. They have relevant qualifications and experience of working with children.

All children are kept safe and the accommodation is used highly effectively, secure and well maintained to support the learning of the children. Indoors and outdoors are used well to develop play and learning and the forest school is used exceptionally well to enhance the facilities at the setting and enrich the learning of the children. Visitors to the playgroup extend the experiences of the children and provide a valuable insight for them into the world of work.

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

Leadership: Good

Good leadership contributes to the wellbeing and levels of progress and achievements of the children. Learning and teaching are well managed and because leaders are kept well informed by monthly committee meetings and children have continuity of care, they settle quickly and learn well in the playgroup.

The committee supports the playgroup very effectively and leaders respond to any advice and guidance and ensure that any changes impact positively on the provision. As a result practitioners and children are valued, enthusiastic and well motivated. A strong culture of self-reflection develops the setting and leads to successful improvements in practice. Leaders set targets and relevant legislation, guidance and national and local priorities are taken into account and used to effectively improve the wellbeing of the children, for example healthy eating, Grow with Me and caring for teeth.

There are well established and successful links with parents that support consistently well the learning of the children. Open evenings and a link diary ensures that parents are kept effectively up to date with the progress of their children. Practitioners are well trained and well deployed and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. There is a positive ethos with high expectations for all the children and as a result they achieve and make good progress in the Foundation Phase.

There are effective relationships with children and their families. The playgroup is managed to a good standard and values, aims and objectives are effectively shared through day-to-day working practice and there is a positive ethos, clear direction and sense of purpose that effectively promotes and sustains improvement.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has made good progress since their previous Estyn inspection. All practitioners are involved in self-evaluation and although self-evaluation identifies strengths and areas for improvement this does not always link effectively to improvements in outcomes and standards for the children. Information is used however to successfully prioritise and also to meet the needs of the local community.

Practitioners are able to show how successful changes in their work practice, have had a positive impact on the standards achieved and the progress of the children. Practitioners, parents, the registered person and local authority teacher are able to evidence how the provision has been improved by the regular opportunities to learn in the shared outdoor space and the forest school to improve outcomes and the wellbeing of the children.

All changes and developments in the group have the children at the centre of the provision and practitioners constantly review their practice and support each other, providing flexible teaching approaches. They make adaptations to the activities and resources and as a result improvements are used successfully to develop the provision and enable all children to achieve.

There is a positive culture of self-reflection and practitioners are open to new ideas and try different ways of working. All practitioners are engaged in professional development, and actively share their expertise and knowledge to benefit each other and as a result they effectively raise standards and support the learning of the children.

Partnership working: Good

The playgroup works effectively with partners for the benefit of the children and a successful range of partnerships within the local community and the school makes a strong contribution to the progress of the children and their wellbeing and successfully enhances and supports their learning.

There is clear communication between parents and the playgroup through parents' evenings, link books, news letters every term and parents are invited to playgroup committee meetings and as a result many take an active role in the running of the group. Parental feedback is encouraged to ensure issues are identified and the provision is monitored. As a result consistently good links between home and playgroup are maintained and learning is effectively supported. Assessment records speaking to practitioners and link books actively ensure that parents are well informed of their child's progress.

There is an effective partnership with the local authority advisory teacher who visits the setting, providing guidance, which impacts positively on the achievements of the children and enhances the work of the setting.

There is a highly efficient partnership with the school with effective transition arrangements including Foundation Phase meetings, sharing resources and special celebrations such as the harvest festival which also strengthen their relationship. There is a successful relationship with the local community that ensures effective learning opportunities for the children such as the visits to the church and visitors to the setting including a dental nurse effectively add another dimension to the children's learning.

The setting works effectively in partnership with other professionals to ensure a good level of support for any children with additional learning needs. Practitioners work highly successfully together as a team and effectively share information for the benefit of all the children. The playgroup is an active member of the Wales Pre-school Providers Association and partnership working ensures good support for children.

Resource management: Good

The playgroup is well resourced and managed to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum successfully. The playgroup has the use of rooms in the village school and practitioners set out the areas indoors and outdoors consistently well for the children's play and learning. All children are motivated, confident learners who develop their play by accessing resources independently.

Innovative and interesting activities encourage all the children to learn effectively. The setting makes exceptional use of the outdoors to support the children and enable them to learn successfully and to develop different skills across all areas of learning.

All practitioners have good opportunities to learn from others and share good practice. They are well prepared and well deployed. They are very flexible in their approach and move effectively round the areas of learning to successfully develop ideas and encourage the children and create a happy, safe and stimulating environment.

Leaders have a good understanding of budget matters and successfully take into account the developing needs of the children. This means that future resource needs are well planned for and any extra resources and equipment benefit the children and improve standards.

The funding that is received is used effectively, links successfully to improvements and overall the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Anne Elizabeth Manning	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnership's conditions of registration.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

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.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.