



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

A report on

**Benllech Playgroup
Uned Mathafarn
Ysgol Goronwy Owen
Benllech
Ynys Môn
LL74 8SG**

Date of inspection: February 2022

by

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

and

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Benllech Playgroup

Name of setting	Benllech Playgroup.
Category of care provided	
Registered person(s)	Rachael Barber
Responsible individual (if applicable)	
Person in charge	Natalie Hajbok
Number of places	19
Age range of children	2 to 4
Number of children funded for up to two terms	8
Number of children funded for up to five terms	0
Opening days / times	Open daily for early education between 8.50 and 10.50.
Flying Start service	No
Language of the setting	English with Welsh used regularly throughout the sessions.
Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?	Yes
Welsh Language Active Offer	The Welsh language offer is not offered by the setting.
Date of previous CIW inspection	14/10/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection	20/01/2012
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	01/02/2022
The setting leader was appointed to her leadership role in September 2021. She was previously employed at the setting as joint leader with another experienced colleague from January 2021.	

Non-compliance

No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Record responses and actions taken regarding incidents

R2 Inline with the setting's development plan, increase opportunities for practitioners to use Welsh during children's play

R3 Evaluate the impact of the setting's developing curriculum on children's progress

What happens next

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

CIW and Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a case study on its work in relation to building children's independence and confidence through high expectations and supportive relationships for dissemination on their websites.

Main findings

Well-being:

Nearly all children are thriving at the setting and their well-being is flourishing. They have a strong voice, and make choices with confidence. Children move from the indoors to the outdoor play areas independently and sustain interest for extended periods of time.

Most children communicate confidently. For example, they ask visitors their names and explain who they are. Many speak about their pets and show how they can use sign language for the word for 'dog'. A few children express their wishes through gestures and facial expressions and their requests are responded to in a timely manner. Many children talk about their favourite activity and demonstrate how they can jump into the sand pit.

Most children demonstrate a high level of resilience. They cope extremely well with separation from their parents and carers because daily routines recognise and support their individual needs. They thrive and develop confidence through opportunities to make their own decisions about what they would like to play with. Most children greet their friends with a smile and hang up their coats and bags independently. The younger children feel comfortable while having their nappy changed as they listen to the practitioner chatting to them.

Most children express enthusiasm and enjoyment in the company of their friends and the practitioners. They have a strong sense of belonging, forming positive relationships. For example, they tell their friend that they are their 'best friend' and this makes them happy. They enjoy the social occasion of meal times and show interest when their friend chats about what is in their lunch box. Children approach practitioners with ease and confidence, or sit on their knee for a cuddle when feeling tired.

Throughout their play activities, nearly all children are fully engaged and consistently show respect for their toys, resources and each other. They are continuously involved in making decisions about what they want to do and show good awareness of rules which keep others safe. For instance, during lunch time a child said they had spilt jelly on the floor and asked for a tissue to clean it up.

Most children have considerable freedom to explore their environment safely. They are self-motivated to choose their own play and guide their activities. For example, they took turns to act out the role of a tractor driver and the loader.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to develop independence, enabling them to do things for themselves successfully, and to solve problems confidently. For example, during outdoor play they explore how they can use a rope. They wrap it round some wood to pull and tug. They work out how to unravel the rope and investigate how they could make it wriggle on the floor.

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

Most children make good progress and develop confidence when applying a wide range of skills. They communicate happily together when engaged in periods of extended creative play, for example when explaining that Gino, the toy dog, wants to go for a walk outside. Many demonstrate well-developed early literacy skills, and engage with books and stories, sitting together as they enjoy the pictures and talk about the story. They respond confidently to practitioners' prompts and questions about why they had brought their pet to see the vet. Many have an appropriate understanding of letters and sounds and a few can write their names independently. During their play, they are starting to develop their writing skills, for example when they jot down the best treatment for their pet who has had to visit the vet's surgery. Most children's confidence when using Welsh is developing appropriately. They enjoy joining in with familiar rhymes and songs, and understand an increasing vocabulary. Most children access a range of information and communication technology equipment as appropriate, for example to support their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds.

Most children's physical skills are developing well in line with their stage of development. Nearly all children demonstrate confidence when deciding which equipment and activities they would like to access. Most enjoy spending extended periods playing with particular resources and collaborate well with their friends, for example when working together to load the trailer with pebbles ready to take into the farmer's field. They develop good physical strength and co-ordination through a range of activities, for example when helping one another to climb onto the top of the tunnel.

Many children are very creative, selecting a range of materials and resources to develop their own ideas. They use scissors carefully and safely when cutting out different shapes to develop their own designs. They use glue and paint maturely, and learn how much paint they need from the pump action bottle for different parts of their painting and when mixing different colours.

Many children have good numeracy skills and enjoy playing with a wide range of mathematical equipment. They count to ten with confidence in groups and have a growing understanding of the relationship between numbers and groups of objects. They are beginning to identify different shapes and discuss the number of sides. Many children develop perseverance through returning to resources such as the balance scales to investigate how many small keys can fit into the pots on either side. Many children are good at problem-solving, for example working together to build a tower using a range of three-dimensional shapes. They decided to use ever smaller shapes, and were successful until they needed to place a shape on top of a pyramid, which caused them to have to pause and think again.

Care and development:

Practitioners have a friendly, caring approach and manage interactions with children positively. They consistently praise children for their efforts and celebrate their achievements.

Practitioners understand and implement appropriate policies and procedures to promote healthy lifestyles, physical activities, personal safety and well-being. They understand their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe and healthy. The setting's arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Incidents are recorded appropriately. However, practitioners do not always include sufficient detail about the action taken. Practitioners complete accident and incident records accurately and these are signed by parents and carers to evidence that they are kept informed. Practitioners conduct fire drills to make sure that children know what to do if they have to leave the premises in the event of an emergency and the outcome is recorded.

The setting promotes healthy lifestyles, and practitioners encourage children to eat healthily, be active and play outdoors in the fresh air. Nappy changing procedures are in line with current infection control guidance. Practitioners encourage children to wash their hands and this helps to develop their personal hygiene practice well. First aid and safeguarding training is current and suitable for the ages of children cared for.

Practitioners are responsive to children, and they listen and respect their choices and requests. Interactions are positive, demonstrating warmth and kindness. Practitioners are committed to providing a broad range of opportunities to develop children's play and learning successfully.

Practitioners are currently introducing and preparing to deliver the new curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. They focus exceptionally well on the interests of the child, their individual needs and development. Practitioners provide suitable and sensitive support for children who may have an additional learning need. They collaborate well to build children's confidence and resilience. Practitioners organise interesting opportunities, which are led by the child's choices and decisions. Practitioners track children's progress effectively and have drawn on these observations to create stimulating play and learning experiences for the children. They plan well for the next steps in their development and review progress regularly.

Practitioners provide children with varied and valuable opportunities to learn about the world around them, for example by going on nature walks to pick blackberries and using the blackberry juice to paint a picture. Leaders plan purposeful opportunities for the children to engage with the local community. For example they visit the local shop to buy ingredients to make their chosen recipe. Celebrations and festivities are explored successfully through using a range of craft materials and stories.

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

The setting has made significant strides towards developing responsive planning. The sessions are organised as predominantly free play, with practitioners facilitating the learning and understanding when to intervene, and when not to. Practitioners have a sound grasp of child development. They understand that children need to be allowed to develop confidence through using a range of stimulating resources, adapting and investigating together and on their own. The setting has benefited from being part of the local authority's pilot for developing provision in-line with the curriculum for non-maintained nursery settings. Leaders support practitioners as they

develop the setting's approach, and continually enhance the learning environment to ensure that resources are stimulating and accessible for all. Practitioners are skilful in the way they support and encourage the children. They often ask probing questions, sometimes directing the learning to ensure that the children grasp a particular aspect or skill, for example when discussing the most effective way to fit the bridge onto the railway line, and how to use the different sections of line to achieve a perfect circle shape. Practitioners use the Welsh language regularly according to their own level of confidence, but there are sometimes missed opportunities to use the language naturally as the children play.

Practitioners have high expectations of the children. They provide opportunities for the children to take responsibility as far as possible for their own actions and learning, for example when having to return to the snack table to put their own drink away or tidy up after themselves. Practitioners encourage children and allow them time to follow their own interests, develop their skills and grow in self-confidence.

Practitioners use books and resources skilfully to spark discussion and appreciation of differences such as ethnicity and disability and the importance of valuing everyone equally. They provide a range of opportunities for the children to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world, for example when listening to different sounds of the sea in a selection of beautiful shells. As a result, many children, regardless of ability or additional learning needs, grow in confidence and develop resilience.

Assessment opportunities are planned as a natural part of the learning process. Practitioners focus on a small group of children each week, and note their development across a range of skills and competencies. They also maintain an ongoing record of every child's progress over time and share all information appropriately with other practitioners. One priority area for the setting this year is to grow the practitioners' understanding of different schemas. They all have a summary of different schemas in their work bags, which they refer to when necessary.

Environment:

Leaders provide a safe and clean environment where children can play and learn effectively. The environment is secure, and well maintained both indoors and outdoors. Leaders ensure that the environment meets the children's needs and enables them to reach their full potential.

Risk assessments are comprehensively written and identify the potential hazards to children and what measures are in place to manage these risks. Since the onset of COVID-19, cleaning routines have increased and leaders ensure that practitioners follow current guidance. There are satisfactory hygiene practices and suitable infection control measures in place, which help towards minimising any risks to children's health and safety.

Leaders make sure that everyone understands their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. They ensure that clear information is available to everyone about how emergencies are dealt with. However, some equipment in the first aid kit has expired. Practitioners supervise children well across all areas of the setting. The layout of the play area promotes children's independence successfully. Indoor storage for toys and equipment is suitable and accessible to children. Areas of

play and learning are organised attractively. There is a good selection of re-cycled and natural resources to develop children's sensory, language, numeracy and self-awareness skills. Cosy corners are organised appropriately for children to rest with areas for sleep being developed. There are ample toys, resources and furniture suitable for the ages cared for.

Leaders raise children's awareness about the world around them to learn about their wider society. For example, there are dolls and small world figurines showing people from different cultures. Leaders have purchased new resources and developed the outdoor play area, giving children more opportunities to play in the fresh air in all weathers. This area is accessible for children to freely use throughout the day. The outdoor play area is organised attractively with a range of equipment for children to choose from and develop their physical and fine motor skills. Leaders make sure that children have the opportunity to learn about the natural world and have organised areas in order for them to learn about planting and growing flowers.

Leadership and management:

The setting leader has a clear vision for developing the provision and works closely and successfully with the registered person who chairs the management committee. This vision is based securely on ensuring equity of provision for all children, and on the understanding that nothing is impossible. Staff share the leader's high expectations of all children. They consider the children's well-being to be paramount; the foundation upon which they build the wider provision. This is demonstrated by the way the children are settled and happy at the setting. Leaders and practitioners have established a strong, supportive relationship with parents and carers. Parents feel able to share information about their child with practitioners and appreciate the regular feedback they receive about their child's progress and well-being. This has been particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when information has been shared successfully through useful online applications.

Leaders have established a thorough process of regular self-evaluation based on engaging with a range of stakeholders. This process highlights a suitable range of strengths and areas for improvement and the actions required to make these improvements. However, there is not always sufficient regard to how leaders will know if they have been successful in reaching their goals, especially in relation to curriculum development.

There is a clearly defined and shared statement of purpose and the document provides an accurate picture of what the setting offers. The setting leaders, including the management committee, ensure that concerns and complaints are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Parental questionnaires and discussions with parents and carers during the inspection confirm that leaders respond to any issues promptly. However the setting's recording and retention of relevant information about staff and children is not always collated effectively to ensure that leaders maintain oversight of this information in the most efficient manner.

The setting allocates elements of grant funding appropriately. There is a suitable range of resources, which leaders and practitioners continually develop to ensure that children are stimulated and excited by their learning environment. Practitioners receive an effective range of professional learning opportunities to support them in

their roles. The way the setting has changed it's pedagogy in line with the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings demonstrates their adaptability and positive attitude towards change.

The setting has a strong partnership with the local primary school. They share opportunities to collaborate, for example through ensuring consistent messages to school and setting parents and carers. There is also a strong collaborative relationship with the early years advisory team at the local authority, which provides valuable opportunities to share experiences, practice and professional learning with other settings.

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:

This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).

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