



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

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Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 Child Minding and Day Care (Inspection and Information for Local Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2010 The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010

Inspection Report

Bryn y Cabanau Playground, Ashfield Park,
Maesgwyn Community Centre, Bryn Y Brain Park, Johnstown Community Centre,
Parish Hall Field, Luke O`Connor House,
Chapel Lane Park, 1st Avenue, Behind Community Centre, Bryn Offa Playing Fields,
Garden Road Park
and Hightown Community Centre

Type of Inspection – Focussed
Date(s) of inspection – 23 July to 9 August 2015

Type of Inspection – Baseline
Date(s) of inspection – 21 July to 11 November 2015
Date of publication – 1 December 2015

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Summary

About the service

Wrexham Borough Council Open access Play schemes were registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in 2010. The responsible individual is Michael Barclay. The person in charge is Jay Davies.

The service provides 17 open access play scheme sites which are grouped into 6 community areas in the local and surrounding areas of Wrexham and is accessible for all unaccompanied children aged 5 years and above. Any children aged below 5 years must be accompanied by a parent or carer to take responsibility for them. At the time of this inspection there were 1230 children registered overall for 39 children per site, there was an average attendance of 15 children each morning or afternoon session. The play projects are then paired and organised so that 4 teams of play workers, led by Seniors, take responsibility for the community areas in the different sites within the locality.

Each project has an eye catching banner and a large tepee that is very useful as a marker for the site and particularly useful when the weather is wet. Most sites have barked adventure areas and fixed play equipment. Many of the sites have good access to and a variety of sports facilities for children, including: a BMX track, skate park and tennis courts. Some are held in large parks, or on a small patch of grass such as the site at Luke O'Connor House.

The play projects are open from 10am until 1pm and from 2pm to 5pm. They operate daily every school holiday apart from Christmas, even in all weathers. The play workers set up and clear away two sites each day. There is no charge for either the morning or afternoon session and the children are free to come and go as they please. All the children enjoy a variety of child initiated activities and the play workers support and facilitate their play and join in when invited.

Although the language of the provision is English, some of the play workers speak Welsh and freely converse with children in their language of choice. There is an increase of children from other ethnicities attending and the scheme has produced information about the service in their own language.

The ethos of the provision is that every child has a right to play. Although every play project site had the same equipment and resources, each was unique, offering a needed and much loved service. The provision caters for a wide range of children and young people and was run by a very well qualified, committed, enthusiastic and experienced team of staff. All children are encouraged and the less able are supported in a sensitive and empowering way. Many children access the play projects every holiday and are very well known to the staff.

What type of inspection was carried out?

This was a scheduled, unannounced baseline inspection which looked at all four quality themes and outcomes for children using the service. Information for this report was gathered from a range of sources:

- Pre- inspection meeting with the responsible individual and person in charge on 21st

July 2015 including examination of the full range of service documents and files, the Statement of Purpose and the Quality of Care Systems.

- A meeting with two HR persons at the Guild Hall Wrexham Borough Council to discuss recruitment procedures and view additional staff files on 22nd July 2015.
- A site visit to each of the registered play scheme locations operating during this inspection time frame.
- Observations of the interactions between the Play workers and children
- Detailed observation of a small sample of children present in each of the play areas using the Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI) tool which enables inspectors to observe and record life from a child's perspective; how they spend their time, activities, and interactions with others and the type of support received.
- Discussions with some of the play workers and each senior play worker at each site visit.
- A visual check of the individual sites and the resources and equipment being used
- Talking with some of the children during each site visit
- Talking with parents and carers as they dropped off or collected their children
- End of the inspection verbal feedback meeting with the responsible individual and person in charge on 11th November 2015.

What does the service do well?

A number of areas of exceptional practice were identified at this inspection which were over and above that which is determined by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care (NMS)

- Highly effective partnerships are in place between the provision, parents, schools, and the wider network of play work organisations. This means that children are consistently supported.
- There are excellent community links; play workers are placed within the communities in which they already work or live, ensuring they support the professional development of community members, whilst strengthening lines of communication with the communities in which the play schemes operate. These organisations support one another by sharing resources and experiences, including staff and junk / craft materials. The network also positively impacts upon the play agenda more widely by working with other local authority departments and partner agencies to raise the profile of play and ensure children have sufficient time and space for playing.
- The responsible individual, person in charge and all play workers demonstrate a high level of commitment to promoting children's safety and well-being. Arrangements for safeguarding are very robust, carefully managed and extremely effective in identifying and minimising risks to children.
- There is a very well qualified and experienced team who apply child development theory into their practice, thereby enabling children to problem solve and think for themselves.
- During each site visit play workers confirmed to us that they feel valued and their

development is exceptionally well promoted in this provision. Leadership and management of this service is a particular strength, staff are fully supported and valued for their unique contribution they make to the children and young people.

- The responsible individual and person in charge are committed to developing play work as a profession and recognise that the experience, knowledge and practice of their play workers is crucial to the quality of the provision. They aim to deliver accredited play work training and qualifications which are complimented by an excellent 'in house training' programme such as an intensive annual training programme in the spring, including an introduction or refresher play worker course and first aid qualification.
- Children have formed extremely strong and trusting relationships with play workers and seniors, who know them very well and understand their individual needs and personalities. Consequently, children feel very safe able are confident to share concerns and to participate in experiences.
- Inclusion Support: the service recognises that all children have a right to play but that some children may need more support than others to actualise that right. They deliver an effective high quality 'Inclusion Project' which provides additional support for families of children who may be experiencing extra-ordinary barriers to accessing the provision. We saw play workers working with individual children in a natural way meeting their support requirements, parents we spoke with confirmed that they have complete trust in the play workers whilst their children have access to different play opportunities, take risks and develop confidence.
- The children we spoke with confirmed that they enjoyed attending as many sessions as they possibly can, some follow staff from site to site. The parents/carers, grandparents we spoke with had nothing but praise for the play scheme and for the activities and care provided to their children by the staff in whom they have a great deal of confidence.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The provision has worked hard to improve the publicity of the play work project which has resulted in the fresh design of all their publicity documents. This includes new banners, leaflets and posters, play workers have bright uniforms to try and make sure that play workers are easily identifiable, this is important to parents and carers. Additionally, a social media campaign was launched aimed at promoting children's right to play, as recognised by Article 31 of the UNCRC, by encouraging people to create playful images of the number 31. This included producing a series of short videos and sharing them via the team's new twitter account; as well as being viewed over 600 times these videos resulted in over 100 followers in twitter presenting further opportunities to promote their play work projects.
- A new data base used by schools to manage the personal data of all pupils across the Wrexham County Borough has been implemented and established and has made a positive improvement to the way the play scheme registers children and understands their individual needs.

- The Quality Assurance Systems are continually improved, for example, the responsible individual, person in charge and play workers regularly and successfully reflect on practice and procedures, and they effectively use what they discover to improve experiences provided for children and drive up the quality of care even higher. To support this process play workers are encouraged to maintain reflective practice diaries and complete daily monitoring to evaluate the quality of the provision, any issues which emerge are discussed and addressed at the regular meetings held.

What needs to be done to improve the service?

There were no issues of non compliance or positive practice recommendations to report

Quality Of Life

We the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) found that Wrexham Borough Council Open Access Play schemes provide an exemplary quality of life for the children through play.

The children and their families are highly valued and are at the heart of this provision. Children and young people who attend the play schemes have a voice and are actively involved in shaping and developing the provision, this is because the providers have developed an exceptional range of consultation methods to keep up to date with their views. The responsible individual, person in charge, senior play workers and each individual play worker listen to children and their parents and implement suggestions to ensure positive benefits and as a result all the children are very confident and happy and demonstrate good levels of confidence motivation and self esteem when they attend the play sessions. Consequently, children feel highly valued as their ideas and interests are noted and they have excellent opportunities to decide for themselves during play.

The quality of the interaction between play workers and children is excellent. Through lively discussions, children are encouraged to think through ideas and solve problems, and they engage in a variety of activities which complement their learning at school. For example, the younger children often draw pictures or make creations from 'junk', and develop their creativity. They are outdoors in all weathers and practice ball skills and participate in team games. As a result children develop balance, coordination and muscle strength, and they learn to listen and take turns. Above all, children thoroughly enjoy the time they spend at the various sites. Children were observed to be comfortable to approach any of the play workers and clearly enjoyed being in the various play sites. All were happy and contented because they experience appropriate, responsive care from play workers who have an up to date understanding of their individual needs and preferences. It was observed that the play workers knew many of the children extremely well and were able to discuss the preferences of each because they work in a professional capacity in the schools the children attend. Despite the rigors of their professional employment many play workers have maintained a loyalty to the play scheme and give their time over the school holidays as play workers year on year.

Children often arrive early for the play sessions full of excitement and anticipation. Once the children are on the site / playground and or field, which they enter by their own free choice, the staff team work sensitively and tentatively to ensure that the child takes the playground at his or his own pace and engages in whatever play she/he chooses. They thoroughly enjoy the time they spend in this friendly and wholly supportive open access environment. Many children follow play workers from site to site. We saw the children playing enthusiastically making lots of independent choices about their play and learning with an innovative range of excellent resources where good opportunities are provide for different types of experiences. The play scheme recognises that in order to gain the most from a play environment the child must have control over the space and be given constant opportunities to shape and influence it; this was observed.

The children were constantly praised and encouraged meaning that they were happy to try new things and were observed to show well being and contentment as they played together. Play workers ensure that humour, positivity and fun are a big part of this

provision, and children respond to this approach with an abundance of enthusiasm and confidence.

Warm secure relationships were apparent during the inspection visits which meant that all the children were relaxed and had fun. All children were observed to be busy with lots of good humour banter and laughter heard and all were clearly enjoying spending time in the play environment with their friends. The play workers were observed to give appropriate affection, lots of praise and encouragement and smiles that resulted in confident, happy children.

Quality Of Staffing

Parents and carers can be sure that their children are cared for by a team of play workers who are able to support and meet the children's individual needs. The play workers are passionate about play and all its benefits and work hard to create play full environments, full of possibilities where children can play freely without unnecessary adult interruption but always safe in the knowledge that the play workers will be on hand whenever they may need them.

We found evidence of an outstanding play worker team spirit with dedicated, consistent people who are valued and proud to work in the play scheme. The play workers are all suitably qualified, many to degree level. They are familiar with many of the children as they work in local schools as teachers or class room support workers.

The responsible individual and person in charge ensure that prior to the start of each play scheme year there is a programme of training which is fit for purpose and goes well beyond expectation in order to provide children with the most exciting and interesting experiences and shows a great commitment to extending knowledge base and making improvements.

Children know what is expected of them and show a high level of respect for adults and their peers. Play workers use effective and consistent strategies, including role modelling and clear expectations, to establish the boundaries of the provision. Children say that play workers are 'firm but nice' and "tell us when we do well and behave nicely" Parents say 'my children have been able to express themselves and be creative', also "the play workers are very friendly and caring with the children." "Gets my little girl out of the house, stops her being fed up in the holidays. And staff are fab".

We observed children asking for help or raising questions and play workers responded immediately as such needs arose. Children learn consideration for others and confidence around children with special educational needs and /or disabilities. They have access to a range of activities and play opportunities which reflect diversity and acknowledge for cultural differences. We observed play workers differentiating activities according to the children's age and stage of cognitive ability. We observed even the youngest of children being supported to 'take risks' using saws and hammering nails as they made individual creations out of pieces of wood. A much treasured resource in short supply was the use made of old wheel chairs and zimmer frames, we saw all ages of children taking turns riding around in their adapted versions. It was a wonderful sight to see children pushing their friends who were sat in wheel chairs at high speed on roundabouts. Initially we were a little shocked at this sight but it was such a positive benefit from a fun perspective and also gave an inclusive message about disability

Quality Of Leadership and Management

The responsible individual, person in charge and senior play workers show an excellent knowledge and understanding of the play agenda and of their provision and legal responsibilities.

Rigorous monitoring and review of policies, procedures and play work practice ensures that children's safety and well being are always afforded the utmost priority. All play workers fully understand their roles and responsibilities with regards to child protection and know the correct procedures to follow.

Thorough recruitment and induction procedures are followed to ensure the suitability of play workers, and all required documentation is effectively maintained. The responsible individual and person in charge ensure that all play workers fully understand the provision's policies and procedures, and these are continually revised to reflect current legislation. Play workers are extremely vigilant in identifying hazards and take meticulous care to reduce the risk of accident and injury to children. We found that senior play workers could call upon the person in charge and gain instantaneous support when required. Consequently, children are safeguarded extremely well.

Quality Of The Environment

Parents and carers can be confident that their children are cared for within an open access community environment that is set up to foster their all round development . This is accomplished through active engagement in an excellent range of activities undertaken in the fresh air and in all weathers.

Engaging with uncertainty is one of the key characteristics of children's play, they state that children must be allowed to experience a degree of risk if they are to actualise their right to play. However they are clearly aware that as play workers they have a duty of care to the children and must balance this need for risk with the need to try and avoid serious harm. The providers have developed a risk-benefit management framework aimed at supporting play workers to make defensible and value based judgements based on their individual knowledge and experience as professionals. This policy has been endorsed by Wrexham Local Authority executive board and used by the Welsh Government in their toolkit for supporting local authorities in meeting new play sufficiency. In addition one of the play development team members is now a ROSPA registered operational play ground inspector.

We observed play workers and seniors undertaking a thorough risk assessment of the field or park prior to the children arriving and taking action to eliminate potential hazards they found such as litter and dog defaces. We saw that on the two rare occasions during the inspection visits that when substance misuse paraphernalia was found they sectioned off the area, made a call to the responsible individual or person in charge who then contacted the specialist team at Wrexham Borough Council and within the hour the play space was made safe. We examined the full range of risk assessments available at each visit, they were meaningful and pertinent. Risk assessment checks were meticulously recorded.

Children are kept safe because seniors and play worker's are trained in first aid and through discussion during the inspection visits evidenced that they have a comprehensive understanding of the need for robust safeguarding measures. Children have registration forms and there was a signing in and out system in place which worked well. Children under the age of 5 years are accompanied by their parents. Fresh drinking water is offered and children were observed to be supervised and assisted by Play workers when they cooked healthy snacks on the fire pit.

Parents and carers can be assured that their children are cared for within a physical environment that is safe, child friendly, and stimulating. It is an environment where the children can explore, investigate and develop an understanding of their external environment and learn through play, supervised by Play workers who are well qualified and enthusiastic.

How we inspect and report on services

We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focused. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focused inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focused inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focused inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under 'Quality Themes'. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet 'Improving Care and Social Services in Wales'. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by telephoning your local CSSIW regional office.