

Deganwy Playgroup

Ysgol Deganwy
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Playgroup manager – Lisa Morgan
Registered Charity No. 1182908



Quality of care annual report 2018/19.

Introduction

Deganwy Playgroup is a long established, ever changing playgroup. We are an English-speaking setting and provides a basic introduction to the Welsh language.

Through our fun and friendly environment set in a modern facility adjacent to Ysgol Deganwy, Deganwy Playgroup offers children the opportunity to learn new skills in order to ease the transition into Primary School.

We accept children from their 2 and a half birthday until full time school age. Through our Playgroup Plus sessions, the children can continue to develop and have fun with us, until they commence full time school in the Reception class of whichever primary school they attend.

As a charity, we run by a voluntary management committee made up of elected parents and grandparents of children who attend the Playgroup. This committee employs a dedicated and qualified team of staff who have decades of experience and service to the playgroup between them. Both the staff and the committee are proud of the provision that is provided by the organisation, and parents in the local area recognise the reputation that the group has developed over the years.

Our Playgroup setting operates in line with the principles of the Welsh Government's Foundation Phase, introducing education to children below school nursery age. It also provides subsidised education to three-year olds who, due to their date of birth miss the cut-off for a school nursery place.

There are also “Playgroup Plus” sessions which offers 2 wrap around care sessions in conjunction with Dosbarth Meithrin/Nursery Class at Ysgol Deganwy.

Children can be dropped off at 9am where they will be in our care until 1pm when they will be taken up to their class and signed in by their teacher/teaching assistant.

Or, we will collect them from school at 11am and care for them until 2.45pm when they are collected by a parent/guardian.

Playgroup

The school year commencing September 2018 started strongly, the Playgroup was immediately able to cover its operating costs from the incoming fees. It was the first full school year of us offering extended sessions to our Playgroup children from their third birthday. This was introduced at towards the end of 2017/18 school year due to a tricky year financially down to low child numbers. The three-year-old funding since it came into effect has brought a further increase in demand both from existing children and new starters. Child numbers remained strong throughout the academic year and the group was full to capacity on some days.

Playgroup Plus

This year Playgroup plus started strongly due to the reputation of the playgroup and the parent’s previous years’ experience. Generally, it is common for the child numbers in Playgroup Plus to build steadily throughout the year, due to parents wishing to familiarise their nursery-age children with 9am-3pm education as they get ready to begin school full-time the following year. In this respect we work in partnership with Ysgol Deganwy, whose teachers support our service. We are also fortunate that the transfer of the children from Ysgol Deganwy's Nursery class into Playgroup Plus can happen seamlessly due to our location – there is no need to send

staff out to pick up children in a car or a requirement for a long walk between sites, as is commonplace for other local settings. The introduction of the Welsh Governments 30-hour Childcare offer was a huge bonus to the group financially as parents who qualified increased the number of sessions their children attended, we also welcomed new children into Deganwy Playgroup on this scheme. As we have always kept our fees as low as possible to make us affordable to all, parents didn't have to pay any top up fees to us, their full fees were covered from the offer.

The Employed Staff and the Voluntary Committee

The Playgroup is fortunate to have a very high level of commitment and dedication from its small team of permanent staff, who work well as a team and care deeply about their place of work and the provision it provides. The staff continually develop themselves and are supported in their roles by committee members. Staff are appraised at least annually in conjunction with the committee, and more regularly in staff meetings.

The voluntary committee held their AGM in November 2018 where a new Treasurer and Secretary were appointed, and new general committee members joined the team. The new committee have strived to maintain the good reputation which Deganwy Playgroup is associated with.

We began the process of changing to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in May 2017, this was completed towards the end of the academic year of 2019.

Fundraising

The group organised successful fund-raising events throughout the year, such as the Christmas raffle and a sponsored bunny hop before Easter at the local park. Over the academic year we raised over £1000 thanks to the generosity of our parents, carers, staff, committee and local businesses.

We also raised money for other charities by holding events such as a Macmillan Coffee Morning in September and a wear your pyjamas to group day for Children in Need.

Staffing

Two of our playworkers completed their Level 2 in Childcare Learning and Development, they worked very hard to complete the course ahead of time.

We employed another member of staff as child numbers were high, she has been a valuable addition to the team as she has many years of experience in childcare and is qualified to Level 3 in CCLD.

Some amendments were made to contracted hours, one member of staff saw her hours increase from 12 to 16, another zero to 10 and one member of staff had a reduction in her contracted hours as she was appointed as a one to one carer for a child who had been with us in Playgroup and was moving on to Nursery class in Ysgol Deganwy.

Funded Places

The group receives £5 off per session for playgroup children after the term they turn 3, which reduces the cost to £3 per session.

Education and Resources

Children are educated using the principles of the Foundation Phase. Activities are carefully planned for the children; this process is carried out by the Manager and Supervisor and contributed to by all members of staff. Learning Outcomes are

monitored and recorded by a child's allocated key worker, and we encourage our parents to meet with their child's key worker to provide feedback on progress. In order that every parent has an opportunity to meet with the staff.

The playgroup regularly invests in equipment and resources to ensure that the children gain the broadest range of experiences and our staff has everything they need to do their job. As members of the Conwy Toy Library, there is a constantly changing selection of toys and learning tools available. This, along with our own stock of hands-on tools and toys, means our children are never bored and always have an activity in which to engage.

We continued to fund Extra Snack at snack time where the Children have the opportunity and are encouraged to try new foods along with their own piece of fruit they bring in, this has been a big success and the children enjoy it. We usually try to match the foods to our current theme, e.g. Prawn crackers for Chinese New Year, sweetcorn in yellow week and crab sticks during our under the sea theme.

Also, throughout the year we have encouraged parents/carers to come into group to see what their children do, how they interact with other children and the Aunties and on how they get along with the planned activities and resources that are available.

Provision of Information and Policies & Procedures

Parents/carers receive regular What's on guides and Newsletters to keep them informed of current themes, upcoming events etc.

The web site is regularly updated to act as the “formal” face of the group, with a link to the Playgroups Parent Information Pack, whilst the Playgroup Manager operates and regularly updates parents via Deganwy Playgroup's Facebook feed which has a large parent following, and is also visible on the web site.

A full review and update of the catalogue of Policies & Procedures is a task handled by the Playgroup manager, who will introduce new policies where required and keep updating those existing policies that require amending. Copies of any Policy or Procedure are available to parents on request.

Feedback

Towards the end of each school year, simple questionnaires are distributed to parents to allow for parents to feed back their thoughts in a manner that can be standardised and measured. At around the same time and during a normal session, staff will ask simple questions of the children themselves. Below are some of the comments we received:

- Fantastic Playgroup, Frankie has really settled here. He enjoys the variety of things that are on offer especially the role play area. His development has significantly improved since starting playgroup. All the aunties are friendly and approachable, really couldn't ask for a happier, safe environment for Frankie.
- My son has settled really well in Playgroup. It has helped him come on a lot in his communication and social skills.
- Elsie absolutely loves coming here. We can see the progress in her learning since she's been coming. Very clean and friendly place. Definitely recommending to all our friends, our second child will be coming when old enough. Thank you.

- Thank you all, Lottie loves coming to Playgroup and I am happy that you all create a warm welcoming environment for her! Many thanks, Sara.
- Thank you for all the support you have given Bonnie. (ALN).
- It is a very welcoming and safe environment. My daughter settled in the moment she started and looks forward to attending each session.
- Mia, Lucy and Sophie have all attended Playgroup. Amazing childcare and Aunties to all the children. Sophie will miss coming as she starts full time school this year. Thank you for everything!
- For the last few weeks our child has been picked up after the session by nursery, so we haven't received any information about what he has been doing at playgroup and he doesn't tell us much! So, perhaps there could be a better system for letting parents in this situation know how their child is doing.
- Very sorry our time using Playgroup is near the end. Past 2 years have been brilliant, always a variety of themes going on and staff are very friendly and supportive. Newsletters, what is happening the next term (handouts) very helpful.
- Barney has thoroughly enjoyed coming to Playgroup and I have seen his confidence grow through attending. He will miss it next year! Thank you to all staff for helping Barney settle into school life. Siobhan Dunne.
- Staff very friendly and our daughter is very happy at playgroup.
- Both my daughters have enjoyed going to Deganwy Playgroup. They have loved all the aunties and it set them up for full time school really well. Thank You.