



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

**Sunflower Tots Playgroup
Forest Children's Centre
Partridge Way
Duffryn
Newport
NP10 8WP**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Mary Dyas

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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About the setting

Sunflower Tots Playgroup is an English medium setting based in a Communities First Area within the Forest Children's Centre in Newport, Gwent.

The setting serves the Duffryn Estate, an area described as economically disadvantaged, and children attending come from a mix of backgrounds. About 50% of the children come from homes where at least one parent or carer is working. Ninety eight percent of the children have English as their home language and a small minority come from homes where one adult speaks Welsh. Two percent of the children have identified additional learning needs. Most children transfer to Sunflower Tots from Sunflower Tiny Tots Flying Start playgroup and move on to the adjacent nursery class of the Duffryn Infant School, both of which are situated on the same site

The setting is open from 8.55 am to 11.25 am and from 12.25 pm to 2.55 pm from Monday to Friday for 39 weeks a year. Wrap around care is offered to children who also attend the adjacent nursery class in the form of breakfast and lunch clubs. Children are admitted to the setting in the term following their third birthday. Twenty five three year olds were in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local authority at the time of the inspection.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April 2011 and by Estyn in November 2008.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Good
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- It provides a good learning environment where children are actively involved in a wide range of stimulating and interesting learning experiences
- All children enjoy their learning and make good progress; and
- Relationships between children and adults are warm and caring

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- A review of staffing and identification of the need to provide greater stability within the playgroup has resulted in the development of a strong team of practitioners who are working closely together to further develop the setting's positive attitude towards improvement
- The co-ordinator and supervisor work closely together with shared goals to address issues and to implement and monitor changes; and
- There is good evidence that improvements have been made and have been sustained over time

Recommendations

The recommendations for improvement are to:

- R1 Improve standards in, and provision for, Welsh language development
- R2 Develop observation and assessment strategies to inform the next steps in children's learning more effectively; and
- R3 Continue to develop and improve the information provided to parents about the activities offered to their children and also about their children's learning

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of Learning. Children acquire new knowledge and understanding effectively and enjoy the challenge of new and varied activities. Most are confident learners who are willing to learn from their mistakes, take risks and explore their surroundings.

All children apply their skills well to a wide range of play activities. They are developing good communication skills and converse appropriately both with one another and with the adults in the setting. Many are eager to speak to visitors and eagerly ask questions to find out more information. Most children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Many are interested in writing and make use of the range of opportunities to mark make. Many three year olds are able to recognise their written name and are beginning to make efforts to write one or two letters independently. Most children count together, and independently, to ten and many are able to count objects accurately to five. Most also use mathematical language correctly in their play. All children use electronic equipment such as a digital camera, toy till, programmable toys, calculator and computer with understanding.

Children's progress in Welsh is adequate. Most join in with Welsh songs enthusiastically, are beginning to know a few colours in Welsh and count to ten together with an adult. They respond appropriately to a limited number of simple commands and questions but only a very few use individual words in Welsh independently.

Wellbeing: Good

All children arrive happily at the beginning of the session and settle quickly and easily to the activities provided. Relationships between children are good. Almost all play very well together – they encourage one another in their play and are willing to include others in their activities. Most share happily and take turns naturally.

Behaviour is good. The children know the adults and one another well and relationships are relaxed and comfortable. Almost all children are eager to talk about what they are doing and are keen to welcome and question visitors. All children take responsibility for their personal hygiene and are aware of the need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before their snack. All brush their teeth after snack and many are able to explain that this is to stop their teeth from 'going bad'.

Many children make sensible suggestions about what activities they could do as part of their topic.

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

The learning experiences provided by the playgroup are firmly based on the principles of the Foundation Phase and meet the needs of the full range of abilities on roll. They effectively promote learning and facilitate progress across the curriculum. Overall, planning is developing appropriately and is beginning to be based on past learning. Although the nursery does not formally plan for differentiated activities to meet individual needs, practitioners know the children very well and adapt their questioning appropriately according to the individual needs of each child. The nursery is fully inclusive and understanding diversity is implicit within the taught curriculum.

All children take advantage of the many opportunities offered to develop their physical skills both indoors and outdoors. Most have good hand-eye co-ordination, can scoot and pedal with confidence, are spatially aware and control their body speed appropriately as they move around the setting. All understand that living things need care, respect and concern through caring for the class hamster and nurturing the plants they are growing outdoors..

Welsh language provision is adequate. Welsh is not used consistently throughout the session although it is well used during the morning group times. All children are developing an awareness of the traditions and cultures of Wales, particularly when they celebrate St David's Day. Appropriate opportunities are in place for the children to begin to understand the need for sustainability and recycling.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good. Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase and use a wide range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning. All make good use of questioning to challenge children and to extend their thinking. There is a good mix of planned activities and opportunities for children to choose their own activities.

Children are assessed on entry to the setting using the Local Authority baseline assessment. Children's progress is then tracked following the Foundation Phase skills framework. A helpful personal assessment profile charts children's progress using observations and photographs matched to individual skills. Parents receive this when their child moves on to their next setting. Daily assessment of children's progress is still mainly informal although a start has been made to set up observation books. Parents and carers are kept very well informed about their children's wellbeing but are not provided with enough detailed information about their educational progress and what they can do to help them to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they move across from the Flying Start playgroup. Sunflower Tots provides a warm and welcoming environment for all children and staff provide good role models which encourage children to treat one another with kindness and respect. Children are positively involved in the planning process and know that they can make suggestions about, or requests for, particular activities which they think will fit in with their topic. Most children move on to the school nursery which is in the next room and shares the outdoor space with Sunflower Tots. Children are therefore very familiar with the adults working in the nursery and know many of the children, some of whom also attend the playgroup for wrap around care. Practitioners work well with other professionals to support children with additional learning needs. Good systems are in place to support early identification and to support progression of children who need specialist support.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners receive relevant training from the local authority and understand their roles and responsibilities. The setting has a good range of policies to ensure children's safety during sessions.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. All children have equal access to all areas of provision and good quality resources meet the needs of all children.

Practitioners are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They work well together to create a stimulating environment for learning. The group is well resourced with a range of high quality equipment which is used appropriately to support children's learning.

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

Changes in staff structure over the past year have produced a stable, well-managed team of practitioners. The Childcare Co-ordinator, who works with all the pre-school provision within the organisation, is well organised and shows good understanding of the needs of the groups. She meets weekly with the supervisor of Sunflower Tots and together they have assessed the self-evaluation outcomes and have set realistic targets which are being positively addressed. Most important was the identification of the need to bring stability to staffing and this has had a major impact on the organisation and on the provision of positive learning experiences which are carefully planned to meet the needs of the children.

The setting supervisor creates a very positive ethos within the setting where staff and children are valued and respected. She has a clear sense of purpose and clear vision for improvement throughout the setting and both she and the childcare co-ordinator are keen to receive and act on advice and suggestions in order to raise standards.

The setting has clear policies and aims which are understood and implemented by all practitioners. There is a well established appraisal system in place to support and improve staff throughout the playgroup. Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation in the setting is developing well and practitioners know their setting very well. Formal self-evaluation is still in its early stages but there is a positive culture of informal reflection on practice. The recently produced self-evaluation document is a useful one which identifies many of the setting's strengths and appropriate targets for improvement. Evaluation of improvements in terms of children's progress is still at an early stage of development.

The childcare co-ordinator has established good links with other registered providers in the area and had attended meetings to share ideas and good practice.

Partnership working: Good

Results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are very satisfied with the care and the learning experiences provided for their children. Practitioners speak to parents every day about what their child has been doing and celebrate success. They have created strong relationships with parents and carers and are beginning to put into place regular systems to keep them up to date with information about the activities offered to the children.

The close links existing between the Flying Start group, Sunflower Tots and the school nursery ensure that children have a smooth transition between settings. The setting enjoys a very positive relationship with the Foundation Phase link teacher from the local authority who provides support and advice. There is clear evidence that this advice has been acted on to improve provision for the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of up-to-date resources which contribute effectively to children's learning. The managers have deployed staff into the group to ensure a strong team. The supervisor deploys staff on a daily basis appropriately and makes positive use of their individual strengths.

The finance officer has an appropriate understanding of the budget and the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires stated they agreed with all aspects of the work of the nursery. All felt their child enjoyed coming to the setting and felt safe and secure in their surroundings. They appreciated the good communications with the relevant staff and confirmed the children were treated with the upmost respect.

Responses to discussions with children.

Nearly all children state they enjoy coming to nursery and feel very safe. Many are able to recall their favourite activities and stress the need to share with others. Most look forward to outdoor activities with enthusiasm.

All know the staff well and understand they can go to any of them for comfort, help or guidance as required. Nearly all have begun to establish simple friendships and co-operate well in group activities such as making a class collage in the craft corner.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Dyas	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.