



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

**Treehouse Day Nursery
289 Chester Road
Oakenholt
Flintshire
CH6 5SE**

Date of inspection: November 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

Treehouse Day Nursery is an English-medium setting which meets in a large detached house on the eastern outskirts of Flint. The setting serves the town of Flint and the surrounding area and the children attending the setting are considered to come from a mix of social backgrounds. The nursery has an equal opportunities policy and an admission procedure that welcomes all children. Sixty six percent of the inspected pre-school children speak English as their main home language and there are no children who speak Welsh at home.

The current owners took over the setting on 31st January 2011 and immediately renamed it. They have redecorated throughout to a high standard and are gradually putting other improvements into place. Children move into the pre-school room around the time of their third birthday. The room is quite small but appropriately laid out with the full range of areas of learning and there is direct access to the extensive outdoor area. The room is registered for up to twelve children and at the time of the inspection there were ten children on roll, three of whom were not also attending a school nursery for part of the day. There were no children currently in receipt of funded educational provision from the Local Authority.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in August 2011 and this is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement.

Strengths:

- Children enjoy their time in the setting and make good progress
- Relationships in the setting are warm and caring
- Children behave well and are eager to participate in activities

Areas for improvement:

- Daily routines and formal planning are still in the early stages of development and need to be more fully embedded
- There are currently no evaluations of weekly plans to feed into future plans
- Parents are not informed of the activities which are planned for their children

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The new nursery owners are very experienced and have previously run a successful nursery together
- Although formal self-evaluation is very much in its early stages, there is good evidence that practitioners are working toward the identified targets for improvement
- Good progress has been made in a comparatively short time to establish a stable learning environment where children are able to access all areas of provision of the Foundation Phase
- The room leader has a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1 Ensure that weekly plans are clearly evaluated and that findings feed into future plans to ensure that children develop skills systematically over time

R2 Develop the use of the outdoor area to provide a range of learning experiences which support or mirror those indoors

R3 Improve the information provided for parents on the activities provided for their children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

The supervisor in the pre-school setting has recently established a daily routine to which children have become accustomed. Sessions flow smoothly and calmly, children anticipate what is going to happen next and respond positively. The setting provides children with a range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning and the supervisor plans carefully to ensure that all areas of the Foundation Phase are covered.

The supervisor works mainly on her own to plan activities which stimulate and engage the children in meaningful learning activities. She knows the children well and tailors activities carefully to develop individual needs. The best learning experiences develop communication, numeracy and communications technology skills effectively. Children are allowed free choice of their activities and are encouraged to experiment and extend their play. Some good use is made of incidental opportunities to develop children's skills. There is currently no systematic evaluation of planned activities and experiences to ensure consistent development of children's skills.

Welsh language provision is good. Children have been introduced to a good range of simple words and phrases and are beginning to use these themselves. Good use is made of group times to involve children in Welsh songs and rhymes and to read stories about Ticw the bear who only speaks Welsh. Incidental Welsh is used throughout the sessions. St David's Day is used as an opportunity to develop the children's understanding of Welsh culture and traditions but there are not enough opportunities for children to learn about other cultures

Teaching: Good

The setting supervisor demonstrates a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and supports the children well in their learning using good questioning skills. There is a good range of planned activities and the practice of following the interests of the children is developing well. Processes to identify individual needs and to plan specifically to address these are developing.

Children have full and free access to all equipment and are able to select different activities which are clearly labelled with photographs for easy identification.

Children's welfare is well cared for and the setting provides a warm and caring environment which enables children to thrive and to make good all round progress.

Informal sharing of information with parents is good. Parents are kept well informed about their children's well being and arrangements for formal meetings to discuss learning and development are in progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Good procedures are in place to ensure children's health and wellbeing and these contribute well to the children's overall development. Induction into the group is effective in ensuring that very young children settle happily and is dependent on the individual needs of each child.

Although there are no children with additional learning needs at present, staff are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures in place for recording individual progress would fully support early identification.

A good range of policies to ensure the children are safe is in place and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities and have received recent training.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Adequate

A particularly strong feature of the setting is the very positive ethos where staff and children are valued and respected. The children share well and take an interest in each other.

All children have equal access to all areas of provision. The physical environment is appropriate for physical disabilities and would enable full participation in all activities.

The pre-school room is bright and airy and an ample supply of good quality resources supports the planned learning experiences. There is direct access to the extensive outdoor area but this is not yet being used to its full potential. Good use is made of a local park and pond to widen the children's experience of the local community.

Due to the small number of children present in the setting there is often only one practitioner working with the children at any one time. This makes it difficult for the supervisor to ensure consistency of provision through the week and there are few opportunities for staff working with the children to share their experiences.

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

Leadership: Good

The new owners of the nursery are very experienced and have worked successfully together for a number of years and the newly appointed part-time manager has also worked with them in a previous establishment. They form a strong team with shared vision and realistic plans for the future. Good procedures are in place for the monitoring of staff performance and all staff have up to date detailed job descriptions

Relationships with children, parents and carers are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community. Practitioners respond positively to relevant national and local priorities. They are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self evaluation within the setting very much in its early stages. The recently produced self evaluation document was completed by the nursery manager and is not yet fully owned by the practitioners in the setting. Self evaluation does not yet take into account the views of children, their parents and carers and other interested partners.

Practitioners have attended a wide range of training for both education and care of the children and the nursery owners are involved with a local group of owners and managers of day nurseries who have provided them with a warm welcome and positive support.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a very good relationship with the parents of the children in their care and results from the parents' questionnaires show that parents are 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. Since the arrival of the new owners the nursery has sent out regular newsletters which have been appreciated by parents and carers.

The setting has good links with the Wales Pre-school Providers Association, the National Day Nursery Association and with Flying Start. A very positive relationship has been established with the Early Entitlement advisory teacher from the Local Authority who has provided advice and practical support and helped to establish sound routines in the pre-school room.

Resource management: Good

The present owners have demonstrated good management of resources with a clear plan for the future which has been prioritised and linked to availability of finances.

The setting has a good range of up to date resources which are managed and deployed effectively to support learning. Day to day finances are efficiently managed and all spending is carefully considered and reviewed. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Due to the very small number of questionnaires received there is no report on the responses from parents and carers.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

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| 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.