

## **Monitoring**

**of**

**Happy Days Nursery  
115 Russell Road  
Rhyl  
Denbighshire  
LL18 3NR**

**Date of inspection: March 2012**

Happy Days Nursery was inspected in May 2011 and judged as requiring focused improvement. Estyn undertook a monitoring visit in October 2011 and a further visit in March 2012.

### **Outcome of the monitoring visit**

Happy Days Nursery is making good progress in relation to the recommendations for improvement identified in the inspection of May 2011 and subsequent Estyn monitoring visit of October 2011. As a result of this progress, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing Happy Days Nursery from the list of settings requiring focused improvement.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

#### **R1: raise children's standards of achievement**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Well-established routines and a warm welcome help children to settle quickly when they arrive in the morning. Most children are beginning to work and play together co-operatively, showing care and respect for one another and for staff. Behaviour is generally good. All children persevere for a reasonable amount of time and are willing to share and take turns. Most respond well to instructions both in English and Welsh. All children show pleasure in the activities on offer. For example, children show enjoyment and demonstrate increasing physical skills when mark making using 'squeezy' bottles of water to copy zigzag patterns.

Children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills are developing appropriately. Most children make good progress in learning to listen attentively and speak clearly. They show an interest in books and like to listen to stories. Most children make steady progress in early writing; they handle paintbrushes and crayons competently to create pictures and understand that the marks that they make communicate meaning. Many children understand the terms

'full' and 'empty' and abler children recognise numbers to 10 and count objects to ten accurately. Children show an increasing awareness of information and communication technology. For example, a few children confidently start and stop a CD player. Many children show good problem solving skills when trying to find ways to fill a bottle with water.

**R2: improve the planning so that the taught curriculum builds systematically on children's knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the curriculum**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and provides an appropriate range of learning experiences across almost all areas of learning. Over time, planning for continuous, enhanced and focused activities has improved. Planning documents are now far more specific about what children should learn and activities are clearly linked to the topic. For instance, the 'Around the World' topic for this term has meant that children have designed their own pizzas, tasted croissants, baked Welsh cakes and made rangoli patterns. Practitioners generally make good use of the local authority's skills matrix to plan progression in children's skills. In continuous and enhanced provision areas, children's skills are listed and displayed, which provides a good prompt for staff to talk to children about what they are doing.

Practitioners are gaining confidence in using incidental Welsh but do not yet use enough Welsh with the children. Planning for developing children's skills in Welsh is at an early stage of development.

**R3: develop assessment procedures that clearly identify what children can do and the next steps in their learning**

This recommendation has partially been addressed.

Practitioners make regular observational assessments of children during continuous, enhanced and focused activities. These assessments are generally of good quality and provide a clear picture of individual children's strengths and areas for improvement. Suitable use is made of assessment to inform planning for whole class issues, such as when assessment identified that almost all children were uncertain of ordering by size or needed to revisit common 2D shapes. It is not always clear, however, how assessment information is used to meet the needs of individual children, particularly the more able.

**R4: evaluate the planned activities for each session, adapting teaching strategies so that children are actively involved and challenged**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Practitioners consistently evaluate short term planning. They identify what went well and what to improve. Joint planning sessions provide good opportunities for practitioners to discuss and share their perceptions about the success of activities.

As a result, practitioners are becoming more reflective and questioning about what they do.

Topics are usually changed every term but practitioners are now confident enough to change topics sooner if they feel that children's interest level is waning or extend topics if interest level is high. Short-term planning is similarly adapted if necessary. In this way, children's interest and engagement guide practice and are a contributory factor in creating a calm, purposeful learning environment.

Practitioners also evaluate long-term planning regularly as this information is used appropriately to inform the setting's self-evaluation process. These evaluations are now far more focused on learning and teaching.

**R5: develop the leadership role so as to identify the areas for development, plan and monitor improvements**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Leaders, managers and staff share a belief and optimism that the setting is improving and will continue to do so. Since the inspection, roles and responsibilities have changed and staff made more accountable for children's progress through key worker groups. The Floor Manager supports the setting well and provides a good role model for other staff. Practitioners in the setting are enthusiastic about what they do and are working very hard to bring about the necessary improvements.

The proprietor and senior staff regularly observe in the setting and monitor progress in areas such as staff interaction with children and the use of resources. They also attend planning and staff training sessions to support staff and improve their own skills and understanding of the Foundation Phase. This has provided them with a good understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.

The setting is responding positively and quickly to advice and guidance from the local authority support teacher.

**R6: the leadership needs to support the nursery staff, provide access to training and use professional expertise to give them advice and support**

This recommendation has largely been addressed.

The setting is well staffed to teach almost all curriculum areas appropriately. The exception is Welsh language development where practitioners lack confidence in using the language on a day-to-day basis.

The new arrangement for deployment of practitioners means that best use is made of practitioners' expertise and skills. Practitioners are planning together, sharing good practice and learning from each other.

Appropriate appraisal systems are in place and each member of staff has a personal action plan, which identifies their developmental needs. Leaders and managers have begun successfully to meet these needs and the needs of the setting. For example,

the setting has organised in-house training on using the outdoors, external training on literacy and behaviour, additional support from the advisory teacher on planning and a visit to a local setting to view good practice with further visits planned. This professional development has impacted positively upon children's standards of behaviour and wellbeing and the overall quality of provision, such as improved learning experiences and better use of the outdoors.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the setting should:

- R1 improve provision for Welsh language development;
- R2 make better use of assessment of individual children to inform their next steps in learning; and
- R3 continue to build on practitioners' knowledge and understanding through ensuring regular opportunities for continuous professional development.