



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Sunflower Tots
Partridge Way
Duffryn
NP10 8WP**

Date of inspection: November 2016

by

**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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Context

Sunflower Tots is an English medium setting in a Communities First area in the Newport local authority. It is based within the Forest Family Centre in the grounds of Duffryn Infant School and managed by Duffryn Community Link, a community organisation. The setting serves mainly the immediate locality and is registered for up to 26 children per session.

The setting is overseen by a management committee and managed on a day-to-day basis by a childcare co-ordinator. A further seven well qualified practitioners make up the staff team. The setting meets every week day for morning and afternoon sessions.

There are currently 50 children on roll from two to four years of age. Four three-year-olds are in receipt of funded educational provision from the local authority. A very few children have additional learning needs and nearly all children speak English as their home language. No children come from homes where Welsh is spoken.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in November 2014. The setting was last inspected by Estyn in June 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good because:

- Nearly all children are happy in the setting and enjoy their learning
- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences that successfully engage most children
- Practitioners know the children very well and focus clearly on the next steps in their learning in order for them to make good progress
- Relationships between staff and children are very strong and are based on mutual respect and affection
- Activities in the outdoor area provide good opportunities for children to extend their knowledge and understanding
- The carefully structured planning process ensures the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills highly effectively
- The setting promotes the health and wellbeing of the children successfully
- The strong partnership with parents and carers provides highly beneficial support to children's learning and development

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have an outstanding vision for developing the playgroup
- Practitioners work closely together in a strong team that results in high quality planning and very good provision
- Practitioners collaborate highly effectively to develop targets for improvement relating to the setting improvement plan
- Practitioners ensure that children have a clear voice in making decisions about what they would like to learn about
- The setting has a wide range of beneficial partnerships in the community which supports children's learning and wellbeing successfully
- There is a strong culture of improvement within the setting that is underpinned by an effective programme of appraisal and staff monitoring
- The setting has an outstanding network of communication with practitioners in other settings that impacts on performance and children's progress beneficially

Recommendations

- R1 Continue to develop staff confidence in using Welsh words and phrases with the children throughout the sessions
- R2 Provide parents and carers with information about how they can help their children to progress in the next steps in their learning

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

Wellbeing: N/A

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: Good

Practitioners work together purposefully as a strong team to provide an interesting range of stimulating activities that engage most children well. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a good emphasis on children learning through play both indoors and outdoors and practitioners ensure a good balance between child initiated and adult directed activities. Children make marks on mind maps to record their thoughts and preferences which are then incorporated into planned activities. For example, when talking about winter children suggested they could make snow globes like the ones they had seen being made on television. Practitioners ensure that the next steps in learning for the children, for whom they are responsible, are accommodated in the planned activities well. The carefully structured planning process ensures the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills effectively. For example, when counting how many decorations they were putting on a tree more able children were able to say how many one more would make.

Welsh language is incorporated into circle time and story time appropriately and most practitioners further enhance children's use of the language throughout the sessions suitably. This enhances children's understanding and enjoyment of the language appropriately. However, a minority of practitioners are not confident in their use of Welsh. There is a suitable focus on developing children's understanding of Welsh traditions and culture. Children celebrate St David's Day by dressing up, making foods and creating pictures and craft items.

There is a wealth of opportunity for children to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They have free access to a variety of toys and equipment. As a result, nearly all three-year-olds are familiar and confident with using programmable toys, age appropriate programmes on a tablet computer and listening devices.

The setting makes beneficial use of the immediate locality to support children's understanding of the world around them. Trips to the library develop children's interest in reading well; nature walks around the area and a visit to a local farm give them first-hand experiences of the differing seasons. This supports their developing sense of awe and wonder successfully.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners work together as a close team with shared values. They know the children well and support their individual needs very effectively. They have high expectations and use a range of teaching strategies to support the children in their learning successfully. Practitioners make positive use of all activities, such as snack time when they sit in small groups with the children and encourage conversation. Without exception all practitioners have a clear understanding of when to intervene in an activity and when to allow children time to explore and experiment for themselves. As a result, most children develop good levels of independence and make clear decisions about what they want to do during the sessions.

A strong feature of the setting is the positive relationships between practitioners and children which results in good behaviour and warm, caring interactions. Practitioners are good role models and encourage children to take part, to share and to take turns.

Practitioners carry out useful observations of the children that enable them to gain a useful understanding of what the children are able to do. They use this information to plan for their next steps in learning effectively. The setting invites parents at the end of every term to discuss these observations and their child's next steps in learning. However, practitioners do not yet inform parents about how they can help their child to improve well enough.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners ensure that children's health, happiness and wellbeing are at the heart of everything they do. Children learn about the importance of keeping healthy through good hygiene routines, being encouraged to make sensible food choices and undertaking regular exercise. Most know that it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet and before they eat. All practitioners treat children fairly and value their opinions. As a result, children's social and moral development is good and nearly all children behave well. They show respect for one another and for the equipment they use. They know it is important to share and to take turns and manage this successfully most of the time. Nearly all children are beginning to understand the need to take care of their world. They save their left over scraps of food for composting and recycle the plastic milk bottles at snack time to use on the school's eco-friendly greenhouse.

The setting promotes children's spiritual and cultural awareness well. For example, it celebrates a range of festivals and traditions from around the world, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. There are good opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder, for example when they make and eat soup made from vegetables they have grown in the playgroup garden.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There are effective policies in place to ensure the security of the premises and the setting follows safe recruitment guidelines well.

At the time of the inspection the setting identified that there were no children with additional learning needs in attendance. However, there are clear procedures in place to support them should the need arise. The co-ordinator is very experienced in working alongside outside agencies.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a caring and calm environment for the children. Practitioners place a strong emphasis on children's wellbeing and on their personal and social development. They promote positive attitudes such as fairness and being kind to one another and deal sensitively and calmly with any rare incidents of difficult behaviour. Practitioners take good account of children's different backgrounds and encourage understanding towards others. All children have equal access to both indoor and outdoor areas of learning.

The setting has sufficient practitioners for the number of children and all are well qualified in working with young children. The indoor space is large and bright and set out with well-defined areas of learning. The classroom gives direct access to the well-equipped outdoor area which is securely fenced. A covered space and large wooden shed directly outside the door enables children to use the outdoors in all weathers. The accommodation both indoors and outside is well maintained and provides a safe and secure environment. Visits to the setting's forest school area, and a range of visitors to the setting, further enrich children's learning experiences beneficially.

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

The childcare co-ordinator leads the setting highly effectively. She works closely with the setting supervisor and together they are jointly responsible for the day-to-day operation of the setting. The centre manager is in overall charge and is a regular visitor and provides strong support. All leaders have a very good understanding of the work of the setting and of its current targets for improvement. They provide robust strategic direction to the daily and long-term practices of the setting. For example, they regularly review progress, including observations of teaching and planning, to ensure that resources and training are available to support this drive for improvement. This is outstanding practice.

Leaders establish a clear vision focused on raising children's outcomes and delivering high quality provision, whilst maintaining a caring and happy environment. They communicate these aims very effectively to practitioners and parents. As a result, there is a strong sense of teamwork and all practitioners demonstrate high expectations of themselves and others. All have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities and fulfil their roles diligently. Leaders support practitioners exceptionally well and recognise and use their individual expertise successfully to benefit the setting and others. For example, practitioners make valuable contributions to the weekly planning and each takes responsibility for planning the specific programme for their keyworker group. They readily share this information with other settings. This supports the setting in providing high quality activities which enable all children to make good progress and to develop their independence and confidence.

All practitioners have clear and up-to-date job descriptions and a well-established annual appraisal system informs training needs successfully. This has a positive impact on children's outcomes and engagement in learning.

Leaders conduct useful fortnightly one-to-one meetings to discuss the progress of individual children and to listen to any concerns or contributions practitioners wish to make. This enables all staff to know the needs of individual children very well and to focus on the next steps in their skills development clearly.

The setting works effectively to meet national priorities, for example in the development of outdoor learning to support children's literacy and numeracy skills and the promotion of healthy eating.

Improving quality: Good

There is a positive culture of self-evaluation which pervades the work of the setting. Practitioners are open to new ideas and different ways of working to inform the future direction of the setting. There is a strong commitment to providing the best possible learning experiences for the children and maximising their potential. Self-evaluation takes good account of the views of children, their parents, and the management committee and local authority advisory staff. For example, as a result of the children's comments regarding the issue of their block play being inadvertently knocked down by other children as they passed, practitioners moved the blocks and other construction equipment outside into a purpose built space. This has proved to be extremely popular with the children.

The setting's self-evaluation documents are very thorough and successfully identify the strengths of the setting and areas for development. Targets for improvement are clearly identified and sound strategies are in place to bring about the desired improvement. Funding is allocated appropriately.

The setting benefits from regular and ongoing self-evaluation and regular reviews of progress. This ensures that actions taken have a positive effect on the provision and result in improvements in children's standards of achievement and wellbeing. For example, the creation of a small sensory area within the classroom creates a calm and tranquil area of learning in the midst of the busy learning environment.

All practitioners are fully involved in training and professional development. They routinely evaluate the benefit of courses they attend and assess the impact on the progress and wellbeing of the children. The setting shares regularly shares its good practice with other settings through visits and via a local professional network.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a wide range of partnerships that contribute very effectively to the quality of provision and outcomes for the children.

There is a close partnership with parents and carers and they value and appreciate the care and concern shown by practitioners towards their children. Practitioners provide useful and up-to date information, including photograph albums, information about songs and Welsh phrases the children are learning and what the current topic is. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress throughout their time in the setting.

Parents' suggestions for improvement are used constructively and, as a result, they feel valued. For example, parents recently reported that the corridor was quite congested when they brought and collected their children. Following consultation with the school, arrangements have been made for the nursery children to use a different entrance which has relieved the problem.

Very good links are in place with the local primary school where the setting is sited and this facilitates the transfer of children to the next phase of their education successfully. The playgroup is often invited to events in the school and they hold a joint graduation at the end of the summer term, for the children who will be moving on to full time school. Similarly, strong links with the Flying Start setting on the site allows children moving to the playgroup to make several informal visits before they start. As a result they settle in quickly and happily.

There are strong links with the local community, with regular visitors to the setting and trips around the community enriching children's learning experiences effectively.

The constructive partnership with the local authority advisory teacher is very effective and helps to raise standards by providing the setting with valuable advice and suggestions.

The setting is proactive in establishing effective partnerships with other settings to share best practice ideas. Leaders have created an online professional learning network which is a very popular and a useful tool. For example, the setting has sought advice from other settings regarding the setting up of a musical exercise programme with the children. This is outstanding practice in upskilling staff within and beyond the setting and is used regularly by the local authority to support training.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners make beneficial use of training opportunities to improve provision and outcomes for children. For example, practitioners attended a Welsh language course to improve their own skills and consequently those of the children. Leaders and managers monitor the budget regularly and systematically to ensure the most efficient use of funds. This means that spending decisions are well planned and in line with the targets identified as the setting's priorities for improvement in its action plan.

In view of the consistently good provision, the effective teaching and high quality leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mary Elspeth 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.wales)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.