



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

**The Wendy House Day Nursery
Bryn Sannon
Halkyn
Brynford
Flintshire
CH8 8AP**

Date of inspection: 7 June 2011

by

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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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Context

The Wendy House Day Nursery was opened in 1990 and relocated to its present venue in 2004. It is situated in the rural community of Brynford near the town of Holywell. It serves a wide area of farming and commuter villages; most families are relatively affluent. The nursery is registered for 66 children from the age of four months to four years and provides for the needs of the full range of abilities and backgrounds. The ability level of the children on entry into the nursery varies each year. A small minority of these speak Welsh as a first language.

The setting has enrolled with the Early Entitlement Scheme and can draw funding for registered children for the two terms following their third birthday.

The Wendy House is a purpose built facility situated close the centre of the village.

At the time of the inspection there were no “looked after” children or any requiring additional learning needs (ALN). The nursery has the facilities to supply both the needs of children learning English as an additional language (EAL) and those who have physical disabilities.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. It has achieved Investor in People accreditation and the Welsh Pre-school Playgroup Association Quality Assurance award.

The setting was last inspected in June 2010 by Care and Social Service Inspectorate in Wales (CSSIW). This is the first Estyn inspection.

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:

- all children, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress and have well developed social skills;
- children are happy during their time in the setting and are enthusiastic independent learners who generally adhere to accepted behaviour patterns;
- a very caring ethos prevails throughout the setting, staff know the children well and are able to support individual needs as they occur;
- staff provide a stimulating range of experiences which encourage progress and well-being.

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the staff form a dedicated team of professionals who respond well to guidance and are anxious to give the children the best opportunities possible to make individual progress;
- the setting is well led and evidence suggests that past improvements have impacted well on standards, provision and well-being;
- a culture of continuous improvement exists throughout the setting and updated educational practices have now been introduced into key operating systems.

Recommendations

The recommendations for improvement are to:

- continue to develop the children's information and communication technology skills to an appropriate level;*
- formalise the existing planning system to ensure a consolidated approach to learning *and offer an element of challenge for the more able in order for them to reach their potential;
- continue to improve the existing assessment procedures to facilitate a more focused way forward;
- continue to ensure that all new processes have been fully implemented, monitored and evaluated to assess the impact on standards, provision and well-being.

*These points have already been highlighted by the setting as priorities in the Improvement Plan.

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan which indicates how it will address the above recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children achieve well and make good progress across all areas of learning in relation to their starting point,. This includes children requiring additional learning needs (ALN). Their personal and social skills develop well as they quickly learn to adapt to their new surroundings. Many are able to demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding, cope with new and varied activities and initiate their own learning. Overall they are not afraid to make a mistake or take risks as they explore their new environment and its resources.

Most are beginning to make informed choices as they work independently on self-initiated or staff-led tasks. The majority persevere for appropriate lengths of time. Nearly all listen well and respond accordingly to their favourite stories and rhymes. Overall, their speech patterns are well developed as they hold articulate conversations with peers and adults alike. All readily share books with great enjoyment in the reading area and appreciate the conventions of print.

All children enjoy mark-making and readily apply these skills across the areas of learning; for example as they make bills and shopping lists in the role-play area. Many understand the purpose of writing and can copy their name independently.

The children enthusiastically take part in number games and use appropriate mathematical language across the areas of learning; for example as they bake pizza or feed the chickens. Many recognise the common two-dimensional shapes and can count to 10 in English and Welsh.

Most are beginning to solve simple problems, for example by using bricks to measure distances in the outdoor area. The majority recognise and complete patterns and extend sequences.

Overall the children are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum but on occasions not all reach their full potential.

The children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills are underdeveloped. This is a priority already identified by the setting.

The children are making good progress in developing their Welsh language skills through the adventures of Ticw Bear. They are beginning to use simple Welsh words and phrases throughout the day.

Nearly all children enjoy the creative element of the curriculum. They quickly become engrossed in role-play, particularly in the builders yard in the outdoor area. The majority use a variety of materials and equipment to produce group collages and individual art work which is beginning to reflect personal creativity. Over half are able to discuss their work with a known adult and make suggestions as to how it can be

improved. Almost all the children respond well to music and play imaginatively in the various areas of learning.

The children's physical skills are very well developed as they scoot, run, jump or climb in the outdoor areas. They are aware of other children's personal space and balance and control their own body speed with ease. The children's fine motor skills are enhanced as they work confidently with play-dough or play with the small world equipment.

Wellbeing: Good

Standards in well-being are good. All are conscience of personal hygiene, such as washing their hands after using the toilet. They appear to appreciate the need to eat healthily and understand food is good for body growth and strength. They understand the need to exercise regularly. All children interviewed state they feel safe within the group.

Most children quickly settle into the routine of the setting and readily adhere to acceptable behaviour patterns, however, on occasions a small number of children are restless. The majority work well together and show care and concern for distressed peers. Overall, they are courteous, considerate and respectful in their dealings with adults and classmates. All children have a very positive attitude to learning and a good level of self esteem. Many are well motivated and are beginning to make informed choices in their activities as they steadily develop into competent learners. They are able to form their own working groups and organise imaginative games without adult intervention.

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

In practice, the setting provides all children with a flexible curriculum of relevant activities across all areas of learning. Staff work well together to plan a range of tasks which interest, stimulate and engage the children. As a result they learn effectively and make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. On occasions these activities do not sufficiently challenge the more able to reach their potential.

Although the long, medium and short-term plans build on past learning, the formal structure is relatively new and still at the refining stage. The new Individual Learning Plans are beginning to map out a more focused way forward for each child and replace well established, informal procedures which have previously moved children forward according to their individual needs.

Overall opportunities are planned to enhance the children's problem-solving and independent learning skills as they take part in a raft of new experiences, particularly in the outdoor classroom. This resource is a great strength of the provision; particularly in encouraging children to apply acquired skills, accept responsibility for the own actions, take part in group decision-making and use their initiative. However, on occasions the resource is under used as a result of informal planning

arrangements. As they tend the plants in the garden the children learn the basic needs of living things. They are also beginning to understand the commitment of looking after pets as they take turns to care for their four hens.

The planned curriculum covers a wide range of subjects incorporating all areas of learning; such as their recent project on "Growing Things". The impact on the learner is to enhance the development of his/her literacy, numeracy and wider learning skills as well as their understanding of the wider world.

Planning for the Welsh dimension is developing appropriately. Plans to develop the Welsh language are gaining strength as staff and children enthusiastically embrace the relatively new scheme of work. Children are beginning to appreciate the needs of cultures further afield as they study festivals across the world; for example the Chinese New Year.

All children are given planned opportunities to further develop their physical and creative skills in the indoor and outdoor classrooms.

Children understand sustainable development linked to the natural world as they utilise all their garden produce. They are beginning to take part in a simple recycling scheme at an appropriate level.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff have a good working knowledge of current educational theories. All practitioners use a variety of strategies to deliver the curriculum and have a clear understanding of the Foundation Phase outcomes. They have good intervention techniques and listen well to the children. They use a range of approaches to stimulate play and active learning experiences for all children. They deliver a good balance of planned and child initiated projects.

Overall they have good expectations for the children but do not always challenge the more able or mature. They make learning fun, know the children well, are very sensitive to individual needs and generally manage discipline appropriately.

Practitioners are beginning to refine their questioning techniques to enable them to make assessments in a more focused manner. Long and short term assessment procedures are established within the culture of the setting. Although these reflect individual progress and well-being they are not always used effectively to guide future learning.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress on a daily basis through communications with relevant staff and in a written report every six months. They are able to contribute to on-going assessment and any resulting action plans.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has good quality arrangements to ensure children's health and well-being. These have a very positive impact on learning and development.

There are appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy living as well as the emotional and physical well-being of all stakeholders. Children are assessed for

additional learning needs (ALN) as soon as possible and early action taken if required. Processes to address and support the needs of ALN children are robust and include all interested parties. Out side agencies such as, the Speech and Language Support Team, the Health Authority and Social Services all contribute to the effective management of special needs.

Most children are aware of the health and safety rules within the unit and understand the need to keep themselves and others safe.

An effective personal and social scheme is ingrained in the planning process and planned activities and experiences promote children's learning well; including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, they display a sense of wonder as they gather warm hen's eggs to eat for tea. They learn to appreciate the diversity of the various cultures present in Welsh society today through a study of religious festivals. They learn to consider those less fortunate than themselves as they collect for various charities such as "Operation Christmas Child".

There are good induction arrangements that settle the children quickly into their new routine and robust transition links exist with receiving schools.

Children and parents/carers state they are happy in the setting and feel secure with peers and adults alike. They soon become confident learners who are able to ask for help and support when required.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding all children at all times. Staff are fully trained and understand their roles and responsibilities within the statutory framework. Regular health and safety risk assessments are conducted by senior managers.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is fully inclusive, treats all children equally and successfully promotes the importance of valuing diversity through a range of activities. All stakeholders have equal access to all areas of learning. Policies and procedures ensure the prevention of harassment, bullying or any form of oppressive behaviour; good attitudes to behaviour prevail throughout.

There are sufficient staff who are suitably trained to deliver the Foundation Phase within a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment. The well maintained accommodation is used extensively. Overall, good quality resources support the needs of all children on roll, including those requiring ALN, at each stage of their development. Community resources are used widely to enrich the curriculum.

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

The Wendy House is well led. The proprietor creates a very positive ethos throughout the setting in which all parents, staff and children are valued and respected. She has a strong strategic vision for improvement which is reflected throughout the nursery. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and give the unit a clear sense of purpose.

There is a developing culture of self-evaluation involving all stakeholders. Dedicated staff use the information gathered to initiate improvements and enhance their own performance through training.

Practitioners are involved in training linked to the delivery of the Foundation Phase and share good practice and appropriate resources amongst themselves and neighbouring colleagues. This has a very positive impact on the standards and provision. The outcomes for the children attending The Wendy House are generally good.

The appraisal process is used effectively to consolidate improvements and enhance practitioners' skills. Poor performance is rigorously challenged.

The setting responds well to local and national priorities such as Healthy Eating and the encouragement of literacy skills.

Improving quality: Good

There are developing procedures to evaluate the settings strengths as well as areas for improvement. Parents/carers, children and staff are regularly consulted about aspects of provision and management respond effectively to their suggestions. This information is beginning to be used to plan for future improvement.

All staff know the setting well and are beginning to reflect and evaluate on a regular basis. They are sufficiently confident to initiate change and assess the impact on the learning. They are able to provide evidence as to which of their actions have led to improved standards and provision. For example the rise in standards created by developing the outside area is well documented.

Professional development is linked to identified targets for improvement and is widely disseminated between staff.

The self-evaluation report is a working document that has links with priorities for improvement in the Improvement Plan.

The Improvement Plan is just beginning to focus on measured targets to bring about assessable improvements in standards, provision and well-being. However, on occasions it is not fully monitored to assess its impact on the teaching and learning.

Professional links with the Local Authority (LA), neighbouring National Day Nursery Association (NDNA) colleagues and local schools are part of a developing network of professional support groups who enable the setting to moderate their results.

Partnership working: Good

Parents appreciate the open-door policy and daily contact with appropriate staff. All value the care, love and attention their children receive on an individual level.

The setting benefits from the regular support of the Local Authority. Stronger links are developing with local primary schools. A network of special support services are used to support children who require additional learning needs.

The setting uses visitors from the community to enhance learning. Trips to the village, the beach, the quarry and neighbouring farms also extend the children's life experiences. All these partnership links impact very positively on the children's learning and encourage them to understand the wider world around them.

Resource management: Good

The setting has a good range of resources which are managed and deployed effectively to support different areas of learning and individual learning needs. There are appropriate numbers of suitably trained staff to deliver the Foundation Phase.

The utilisation of the outdoor area has a very positive impact on the children's physical development, their understanding of the environment and the development of their independent learning skills.

The proprietor manages the finances rigorously and tries to link spending to areas requiring improvement as highlighted in the self evaluation documentation. This has a very positive impact on standards, provision and well-being.

Overall the setting is well resourced and provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The majority of parents who returned the questionnaires stated they agreed with all aspects of the work of the nursery. All commented 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 care and respect by all adults and children in the setting

Responses to discussions with children

Conversations with children indicate they are happy and settled in the nursery. They all enjoy their learning and particularly look forward to the outdoor activities. They feel safe and know who to approach if they require help.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Jean Laura Hannam	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.