



*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**

**Happy Days Day Nursery  
115 Russell Road  
Rhyl  
North Wales  
LL18 3NR**

**Date of inspection: May 2011**

**by**

**Eifion R Morgan**

**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:

| <b>Judgement</b>      | <b>What the judgement means</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b>      | Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice |
| <b>Good</b>           | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement   |
| <b>Adequate</b>       | Strengths outweigh areas for improvement                                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> | Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths                        |

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## Context

The Nursery is located in a large three story detached building situated just off the promenade in Rhyl, North Wales. The 3 year old children occupy a large room on the first floor and they also have use of an outside playground. There is ample parking immediately outside the building.

The nursery is open from 7.30 a.m. until 6 p.m. for five days of the week. It is open for the whole year apart from a period of Christmas to New Year and bank holidays. The setting also caters for babies and toddlers, flying start children and Holiday and Out of School Club.

Children attending the nursery come from the immediate locality – an area described as residential and comprising some socio-economic disadvantaged areas. All children come from homes where English is the spoken language. There are no children from an ethnic background or children identified with additional learning needs currently present. However, the nursery welcomes such children and has received them in the past.

Children are accepted into the nursery following their third birthday and leave for the next stage of their education usually in the term following their fourth birthday. The nursery is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accept up to 30 children aged 3 years. Currently there are 25 on the register of whom 20 are funded.

The room occupied by the 3 year olds is spacious and well lit and differentiated into activity areas designed, in the main, to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. It is approached via a stairway to a landing. There are toilets on the landing and the nursery room is immediately ahead. The nursery is adequately resourced and there is a small kitchen area at one end of the room. It is not separated from the main teaching area. Access to the main building is via a locked door and reception desk.

To access the outside play area children have to proceed down some stairs and out through the back door. This can only take place at specific times when the children are accompanied and supervised by adults. The outside yard is tarmaced and comprises moveable and static toys for the children. This is a safe and secure area.

The nursery was last inspected by the CSSIW in May 2010. There were several recommendations which needed to be addressed. It has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

## Summary

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Adequate</b>       |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> |

### Current performance

#### Good features

- \* The nursery is inclusive with equality of access and opportunities for all children.
- \* Children have good attitudes to keeping healthy.
- \* Partnership with parents is good.

#### Adequate

- \* Children's standards of achievement and progress.
- \* Range and quality of teaching approaches
- \* Care, support and guidance
- \* Provision for health and wellbeing of the children.

#### Unsatisfactory

- \* Leadership fails to give the nursery staff sufficient support.
- \* Children's learning experiences are not developed progressively and the curriculum lacks continuity.
- \* Results of assessment are not sufficiently used in planning the curriculum.
- \* Sessions are not well planned so as to maintain children's interest and motivation.

### Prospects for improvement

#### Adequate

- \* Staff receptive to new initiatives, such as the Foundation Phase curriculum.
- \* Staff in the nursery work well together.
- \* Leadership has delegated responsibility for the nursery

#### Unsatisfactory

- \* Leadership does not evaluate the provision so as to ensure good standards.
- \* Self-evaluation procedures are ineffective and have not identified areas for development.
- \* Lack of clear strategic planning focusing on improving standards.
- \* Impact of professional development, training and support has not been effective.
- \* Nursery staff inadequately supported.

## Recommendations

The nursery needs to:

- R1 raise children's standards of achievement;
- R2 improve the planning so that the taught curriculum builds systematically on children's knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the curriculum;
- R3 develop assessment procedures that clearly identify what children can do and the next steps in their learning;
- R4 evaluate the planned activities for each session, adapting teaching strategies so that children are actively involved and challenged;
- R5 develop the leadership role so as to identify the areas for development, plan and monitor improvements;
- R6 the leadership needs to support the nursery staff, provide access to training and use professional expertise to give them advice and support.

### What happens next?

I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that this nursery is in need of focused improvement. The nursery will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the nursery's progress 12 months after the publication of this report.

## Main findings

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| <b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |
|---|-----------------|

### **Standards: Adequate**

Most children make acceptable progress and achieve satisfactory standards commensurate with their age and ability. The children, when motivated, listen well and are keen to take part in question and answer activities. However, children, after prolonged periods of time, lose interest and fail to persevere on their tasks. Children have choice of activities within the confines of their classroom and the rather narrow range of activities provided for them.

Most children show good listening skills, such as at the beginning of the sessions when they are all gathered together for story time. A few are able to answer questions asked by adults. Overall, all children can make themselves understood and listen and carry out instructions. They have a developing language and converse with one another and with staff. A minority of children show an interest in books and hold them appropriately. Most children hold pencils, crayons and brushes appropriately and are beginning to experiment with mark making.

A minority of children count accurately to 4 and understand basic mathematical language, such as a bottle is full of water or empty. These children match patterns and can group objects based on one criterion, such as colour.

Children have little opportunity to use technology during their activities.

Children understand some common Welsh words when spoken by an adult. They understand more words than they can speak. Children in their play do not use Welsh words, nor do they have sufficient opportunities to listen and respond to the language. They do not show interest in Welsh books. Their progress in acquiring the language is very limited.

Overall, many children fail to persevere and apply their skills, particularly when faced with overlong periods of time on free choice activities. This also adversely affects children's behaviour, their progress and the standards they achieve.

### **Wellbeing: Adequate**

All children enjoy their time at the nursery and when actively involved work with a sense of purpose. The majority of children show an acceptable level of self-esteem and have a positive attitude to new experiences and learning. A few are sufficiently confident to speak to the inspector and talk about what they have been doing. Most children are developing good habits that will keep them healthy and enjoy robust physical activity. Children are capable of working co-operatively when given opportunities and in such instances display good attitudes and an interest in their work. However, after some time, they lose interest and engage in rather pointless activities. There are very few occasions when children are actively involved in making decisions about their life in the setting.

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|---|-----------------|
| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |
|---|-----------------|

**Learning experiences: Adequate**

A limited but appropriate range of learning experiences is provided for the children. At best, activities engage all children and learning experiences direct children's progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. The planning however is inadequate in that the curriculum does not build systematically on children's existing knowledge, skills and understanding. Neither does it show continuity and progression in children's learning.

Whilst children are acquiring relevant skills of literacy, communication and numeracy, these are limited and are not always developed progressively. Neither are they well co-ordinated to give coherence to the curriculum. Of concern is that activities do not sufficiently engage the children and they are left to their own devices for long periods of time. In the main, children's relationships are generally good, but there are too few opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills.

Planning does not provide for sufficient opportunities to develop relevant skills. All children have a range of new experiences, including opportunities to develop their physical skills when playing outside and to develop their creative skills through painting. The opportunities for children to develop an understanding of the world and the need to care for all living things are limited.

Planning does not provide for sufficient opportunities to develop the Welsh language and the traditions of Wales. There are little planned activities to develop children's knowledge of recycling and sustainability nor the roles they play in society.

**Teaching: Adequate**

Staff have a basic knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and a reasonable knowledge of child development. They have an understanding of the importance of providing opportunities for child development through play and active involvement. The nursery provides an acceptable balance between child-selected and adult directed activities although child-motivated and child-selected activities are often too long, and without staff intervening when children lose interest and motivation. Sessions lack pace resulting in children becoming restless and showing some anti-social behaviour. Such periods represent lost opportunities not only for learning but to develop good social interaction between children and between children and adults.

Questioning is insufficiently used to challenge children and for example, to develop their Welsh language. Staff working in the nursery are not sufficiently clear as to their roles and do not see what needs to be done. In consequence children's needs are not always met.

Assessment takes too little account of children's prior learning and staff do not consistently appreciate the next steps in children's learning. Whilst records are kept

of children's achievements, they tend to be descriptive and do not focus sufficiently on skill development so as to be an accurate measure of children's progress. The outcomes of assessment are not well used to plan future activities so as to meet children's needs and interest. Not all staff know the individual children's ability well so as to enable them to focus on the next steps in the child's learning. Parents, in the questionnaires expressed satisfaction on their children's progress and the information they were given.

### **Care, support and guidance: Adequate**

Appropriate arrangements are in place to support children's health and wellbeing. The day-to-day life in the nursery is generally effective in fostering values, such as honesty and fairness and helps children to distinguish right from wrong. Rules of behaviour are accepted by the children and there is little, if any, sign of harassment. Whilst stories read to children may develop their curiosity, there is little in the planned curriculum aimed at developing their understanding about other peoples' lives and living and sharing with others. Too few opportunities are provided for children to discuss and contribute to decision making.

Whilst there are no children currently present identified as requiring additional learning needs, such children have been well supported in the past. Outside specialist services have provided professional support. When necessary parents have been informed and involved at each stage. Induction arrangements are good and ensure that children settle in quickly.

In the main, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriate and consistent.

The nursery fully meets safeguarding regulations. Policies and procedures are in place that ensures the safety of children at all times. Procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008). Staff have taken part in relevant training.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The nursery is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all aspects and areas of the nursery's provision. Children enjoy attending the nursery. They show a sense of anticipation when they arrive and are soon involved in activities set out for them. The staff successfully promote a friendly environment for the children and there are adequate resources to support children's learning.

Children are free from harassment or oppressive behaviour. Policies and procedures are in place to eliminate any oppressive behaviour but have not been used. Staff are appropriately experienced in working with young children. There are no children with disability attending at present. Any child with physical disability would be disadvantaged due to the nursery being located at the top of a flight of stairs. Planning does not indicate any use of the local environment.

The nursery class occupies a large, well lit room, subdivided into activity areas that reflect the expectations of the Foundation Phase. The room is on the first floor of the



building so immediate access to the outside is impossible. However, all children, as a group, regularly use the outside play area.

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|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Unsatisfactory</b> |
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**Leadership: Unsatisfactory**

The leader has delegated responsibility for the nursery and the relevant staff know their roles. They share values that focus on creating a positive ethos for children's learning and to develop effective links with parents. These aims have, in the main, been achieved.

However, strategic planning to promote and sustain improvement is inadequate. The nursery has no clear sense of purpose based on a thorough knowledge of children's ability and needs. Neither is there a strategy for addressing low attainment. There is little sense of purpose evident in the nursery nor are there effective means to improve the provision. The leader is not well informed about the performance of the setting and the nursery supervisor and the staff are not sufficiently well supported in their work.

National priorities, such as the implementation of the Foundation Phase curriculum have been implemented.

**Improving quality: Unsatisfactory**

The self-evaluation procedures are ineffective in that the nursery's strengths and areas for development have not been clearly identified. Judgements are of a general nature and based on very limited amount of information. Overall the leader does not have a clear idea of the standards of the provision in the nursery and has been insufficiently involved in monitoring the provision. The nursery supervisor is insufficiently supported and guided. There are no sound procedures in place to secure improvement in the provision and to ensure positive gain for children.

Staff have undertaken professional development but the impact of training has not been evaluated in terms of children's progress and wellbeing. Staff have not routinely visited other settings.

**Partnership working: Adequate**

Parents, as reported in the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire are supportive of the nursery. All agree that their child is making progress and generally agree that their child is happy, settle in well and safe. Transfer arrangements to the next stage of education are satisfactory.

The nursery collaborates with the local authority but this has not been an effective partnership in that it has not improved the quality of the provision significantly. Links with other organisations have been limited.

**Resource management: Adequate**

The nursery is adequately resourced and generally used appropriately to support the learning. In the main resources such as those used in creative work motivate the children. The use of the outdoors to develop children's skills apart from their physical skills is limited.

Overall, the nursery provides adequate value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Four questionnaires were returned.  
In general, parents indicated support for the nursery.  
In most instances parents reported:

- (i) satisfaction with the setting
- (ii) that their child likes the nursery
- (iii) that their child had settled in well
- (iv) that the teaching is good
- (v) that children are well prepared for moving on to school
- (vi) that the setting is well run and children have a good range of activities.

All agreed that their child is making good progress. In some instances parents would like more information about their child's progress.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children are happy in the nursery.  
They arrive and show enthusiasm to take part in the activities.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Mr Eifion R Morgan | Reporting Inspector |
|--------------------|---------------------|

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

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