



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 Care Centre
Building 11
Milford Marina
Milford Haven
Pembrokeshire
SA73 3AF**

Date of inspection: November 2017

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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Publication date: 11/01/2018

Context

Happy Days Childcare Centre is a privately run English-medium setting in Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire local authority. It is registered to provide sessional care for a maximum of 75 children under twelve years of age. The setting is owned by the company director, who manages the day-to-day operations alongside an assistant manager.

There were 24 children on the register in the playgroup during the inspection. Nine of these are three-year-olds of whom three receive early years funding from the local authority. Three members of staff work regularly in the playgroup. All have appropriate early years qualifications. The room leader has been in post since March 2017.

All children have English as their home language. At the time of the inspection, the setting has identified that there are a minority of children with additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in February 2016 and by Estyn in January 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children make consistent progress from their individual starting points across all areas of learning
- Nearly all children are eager to learn
- Many children develop a good understanding of numbers and shape
- Many children are developing their thinking skills well
- Nearly all children enter the setting happily and settle quickly into their routines
- Practitioners work closely together to plan a broad range of interesting activities that engage the children well
- The setting has a warm and welcoming ethos where children feel safe and valued

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting leader provides clear vision and direction
- Roles and responsibilities within the nursery are well defined
- Practitioners work well together as a purposeful team
- Leaders ensure that areas for development are identified and addressed successfully
- Strong community links support the children with a range of beneficial learning opportunities
- The setting takes good account of support and advice of the local authority to raise standards and improve the quality of provision

Recommendations

R1 Improve the use of Welsh throughout the sessions

R2 Provide more opportunities for children to make decisions about their learning

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children make good progress from their individual starting points in line with their stage of development. They arrive full of interest for the session ahead and involve themselves enthusiastically in their chosen activities.

When listening to a story, nearly all children sit quietly and attentively showing interest in what is happening. A minority of children access books independently in the course of their play. They handle them carefully and turn pages correctly. During group times most children join in happily with songs and rhymes. They sing enthusiastically and join in with familiar actions. The morning 'wake and shake' time is a great favourite where practitioners and children exercise to start their day together.

Most children listen carefully to instructions and follow them appropriately. Many take part happily in conversations with each other, staff and visitors. For example, when making a train track together children discuss which piece they will use next. Many children show a growing understanding of the written word. Nearly all recognise their name when they register in the morning and show increasing control when tracing with a pencil or making marks in a range of different substances, such as paint or shaving foam.

Many children count confidently with an adult to ten and back. They demonstrate their understanding of numbers when they name written numbers up to five confidently. A few children know numbers up to ten. For example, they demonstrate this when they identify their cup at snack time. Most identify a good range of shapes such as circles, stars, hearts and triangles accurately. Many use correct mathematical language when comparing the sizes of penguins, correctly identifying them as little or bigger or smaller.

Most children understand the Welsh words and phrases used by practitioners and around half name several colours in Welsh correctly. However, children's independent use of the Welsh that they have learned is limited.

Many children are confident in using ICT equipment. They use an interactive screen to match simple shapes and programme a toy to move along a street grid to visit specific shops.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills well. They join in eagerly with movement sessions and manoeuvre bikes and scooters skilfully around outdoor areas. Many children are developing their problem solving skills effectively, for example when wondering how to free creatures trapped in ice blocks.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy their time in the setting and make independent choices about what they would like to do. Most engage fully with their learning and show good levels of motivation and focus. For example, when covering an igloo shape with sugar cubes they take their time and concentrate carefully to make sure they cover every part.

Nearly all children are developing good independent skills such as when putting on and taking off their coats and protective clothing to go outside. They are keen to try new experiences and spend time making sure they complete a chosen task to their satisfaction, for example concentrating carefully to create an intricate house out of small blocks.

Relationships in the setting are strong. Children are polite and respectful to adults and know they should share and take turns with one another. They understand the rules of the setting and behave well.

Nearly all children have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They know that it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating to make sure they wash off the germs to avoid becoming ill. At snack time nearly all children brush their teeth enthusiastically along to a familiar song and enjoy their fruit and milk or water.

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

Practitioners work closely together to plan learning experiences for the children. They discuss themes and activities, which they match closely to the children's learning needs and to the requirements of the foundation phase. Particularly good attention is paid to the specific learning needs of individual children. A recent and successful target has been to ensure that the majority of children's learning takes place outdoors whenever possible. This is a beneficial feature of the setting. Practitioners provide a useful range of equipment and experiences that offer positive learning opportunities for the children. These are stimulating and relevant to the children and engage them in learning successfully. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to make suggestions about what they would like to do.

Practitioners provide useful opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The book areas are well resourced and there are ample opportunities for children to read independently. Practitioners offer a library book lending service to families of children in the playgroup. They change the books weekly and encourage families to share them together. They use the morning welcome time well to support children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as colour and shape, and use songs and rhymes effectively to develop children's early counting skills.

An interesting range of visits and visitors contributes well to children's learning experiences. For example, a recent visit to Pembroke Castle, a visit to the local fire

station and visits from a guide dog for the blind all add interest and variety to the curriculum. The celebration of festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali contribute beneficially to children's understanding of the world around them and promote tolerance and understanding.

Practitioners introduce children to simple Welsh vocabulary and phrases. They encourage children to count and to sing a range of familiar songs in Welsh. However, they do not reinforce this consistently throughout the sessions. Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through their activities on St David's Day and as part of other topics, such as when they learned about the different types of Welsh dogs during their topic on pets.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners are fully involved with the children during the sessions. Their sound knowledge and understanding of the foundation phase principles ensure they provide support where needed, but also know when to stand back and enable children to explore and investigate for themselves. As a result, children follow their own interests and make choices confidently. All practitioners use open-ended questions skilfully to promote children's thinking. They manage children's behaviour well through encouraging children to follow the setting's simple rules and providing a range of stimulating experiences, ensuring that children are fully involved in their chosen activities.

The setting has recently established worthwhile procedures to assess and track children's progress. Practitioners make relevant observations of the children, from which they identify any further needs or next steps in learning. They use this information purposefully to inform future planning. In this way, practitioners are able to provide both support for those children who need further reinforcement and opportunities for the more able children to move forward. Another recent introduction is termly reports to parents that provide useful information about the progress their child is making and the next steps in their learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a warm and caring community where children feel safe and valued. Practitioners treat the children with respect and encourage their individuality. Well-established procedures help children to understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. During snack time, children enjoy healthy snacks with a choice of milk or water to drink. Children brush their teeth in the setting every morning and there are useful opportunities for them to take physical exercise both indoors and outdoors. Children place their scrap paper into a special bin for recycling and understand that it is going away to be made into other things.

Practitioners develop children's moral, social, cultural and spiritual development successfully. They encourage children to share, take turns and to be kind to one another consistently. They support their spiritual development appropriately through the range of interesting experiences they provide to generate a sense of awe and wonder. For example, children planted vegetables, watched them grow and then harvested them to cook for their lunch.

The setting has well-established procedures to support children with additional learning needs. When needed, children have individual play plans with personal targets. Practitioners share these with parents and review progress regularly. Beneficial links with external agencies provide useful additional support and advice. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children are valued and treated with respect. Practitioners know the children well as individuals and ensure that all have equal access to the full range of learning experiences. As a result, all children feel valued, are confident and enjoy talking to visitors. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children.

Practitioners make good use of the available space both indoors and outdoors. They ensure there are good quality resources in all areas of learning that meet the children's needs effectively. Resources are freely available and children access them independently during their play.

Practitioners further enhance the learning environment with colourful displays of children's work. A strong feature of the setting is the imaginative exploration areas provided for the children to investigate their current topic. Examples of these include sorting dog biscuits and making mehndi patterns using stones on coloured sand.

Practitioners have good links with the town library and borrow books to enhance the children's reading corner and to support their lending library to parents. The setting makes good use of the local environment. For example, an exciting visit to a pumpkin farm enhanced children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

The nursery director provides the setting with strong and effective leadership. She oversees the playgroup with the support of the assistant manager and together they have a clear understanding of the work of the setting and the current targets for improvement. Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff in the nursery share her vision

Practitioners in the playgroup are well motivated and work well together provide the best possible learning environment for the children. The room leader has only been in post for a few months, but she has already made some positive changes to improve the planning and assessment process. These ensure that practitioners identify and meet the needs of every child effectively.

A well-established annual appraisal system informs training needs successfully. All staff have up-to-date job descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and they fulfil their roles conscientiously. Managers review the setting's policies regularly and reflect changes in guidance and legislation appropriately. The setting pays good attention to local and national priorities. Provision for outdoor education is effective and practitioners ensure that good attention is paid to planned activities that develop children's literacy and numeracy.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's self-evaluation successfully identifies what the playgroup does well. The recent changes to assessments of children's learning show that practitioners have a good understanding of what is required to help them move forward. Practitioners are fully involved in this process and share information with one another daily. The setting seeks parents' views through a short annual questionnaire.

Leaders have met the recommendations from the last inspection successfully, for example through the development of the lending library that enables children and their parents and carers to share books at home.

The development plan is a useful document with appropriate targets for improvement. It identifies what they need to do, how they intend to do it and the persons responsible. The setting has made good progress towards meeting current targets.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners keep parents well informed about what their children are learning through a short daily written report. At the end of each term, keyworkers write a progress report on the children in their care that include short targets for their next steps in learning. Parents have the opportunity to make an appointment to speak to their child's keyworker about the progress their child has made and ways in which they can help them to improve.

The setting's development of its social media page has enhanced the level of communication to parents. This has a positive impact on children's wellbeing and their engagement in learning, as parents feel more informed and involved. Displays in the entrance keep visitors up to date with a flavour of the work that the children have been doing.

Partnerships with the schools to which the children transfer are positive. The nursery has built up good relationships with school staff and this facilitates transfer of information.

Support from the local community is strong. The children are welcomed into the numerous retail outlets nearby and often visit the library to borrow books for their current topic. Local businesses have provided practical support such as plastic and metal tubing for music making and custom made wooden furniture for the outdoor areas.

Resource management: Good

The setting has enough experienced, qualified staff to support children's learning well. Practitioners develop their professional knowledge effectively through a range of training linked to their performance management targets. They use this knowledge within the setting to bring about improvements. For example, training ensures that all staff have a clear and up-to-date understanding of the requirements of the foundation phase.

The director has a clear understanding of the budget and ensures that there are enough good quality resources to meet the needs of the children and to respond to the targets for improvement identified in the setting's development plan.

The quality of the provision and the commitment of the managers and practitioners means that the setting provides good value for money

Appendix 1

The reporting inspector

Mrs 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation 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.