



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

A report on

**Happy Days Nursery/North Wales Childcare
115 Russell Road
Rhyl
Clwyd
LL18 3NR**

Date of inspection: March 2018

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 Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Context

Happy Days Nursery is an English medium private nursery near Rhyl, in Denbighshire local authority. The setting opened under the current management in 2015 and is owned by North Wales Childcare. The nursery is open 51 weeks a year for childcare and provides funded education between January and July, with sessions held Monday to Friday in school term time. These sessions run from 9.15am to 11.15am.

The setting is registered for up to 104 children in total and for up to 24 three-year-olds in the pre-school room. At the time of the inspection, there were eight three-year-olds on roll, all of whom the local authority fund for education. Nearly all children speak English as their first language. The setting has identified a very few children as having additional learning needs.

Two full-time members of staff work in the pre-school room, including the room leader. A manager oversees their work and that of the whole nursery. One of the owners is based at the setting and liaises closely with staff and parents.

The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) last inspected the setting in November 2017 and Estyn last inspected it in May 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children develop effective speaking and listening skills and enjoy chatting to visitors about their learning
- Many children develop their early writing skills successfully
- Many children develop their numeracy skills effectively
- Most children respond to instructions in Welsh well and many use a few simple Welsh words and phrases during their play
- Nearly all children enter the setting happily and settle into routines quickly
- Most children talk with increasing confidence and are developing their role in making decisions in the setting well
- Practitioners and the manager work together purposefully as a team to provide a suitable range of stimulating activities that engage children well
- Practitioners have warm and supportive working relationships with the children and actively encourage them to follow their own interests and make independent choices
- Practitioners work well together as a team and demonstrate a good understanding of when to intervene to help move learning on and when to take a step back
- The setting has effective arrangements to support children's understanding of how to be healthy
- Practitioners create a caring and inclusive learning environment where children feel secure and valued

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The manager and pre-school room leader are well motivated and dedicated, and share a clear vision for a happy and engaging learning environment
- The owner maintains a suitable oversight of the setting's work informally
- The setting takes good account of national and local authority priorities; for example, practitioners implement assessments conscientiously and use this data to identify the most appropriate next steps in children's learning successfully
- There is a developing culture of improvement in the setting
- Leaders and managers reflect on the quality of the provision regularly, identify areas for development and work towards improving these purposefully
- The setting has a strong partnership with parents
- Practitioners hold useful play sessions where parents can work alongside their children to gain an insight into how they learn
- Visits to a local shop and library further support and enhance the setting's topic

work successfully

- Practitioners make effective use of any training opportunities to improve provision and to raise outcomes for children

Recommendations

- R1 Improve planning for the development of children's ICT skills
- R2 Improve the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, and plan ahead to ensure that resources meet the requirements of the foundation phase
- R3 Strengthen and embed self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures to ensure that they focus robustly on improving children's outcomes

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

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

Most children enter the setting with knowledge and skills at the expected level for their age. They make suitable progress during their time at the nursery. Many recall previous knowledge well when talking about what happens next in a story and counting and matching farm animals to numbers. Most children develop effective speaking and listening skills and enjoy chatting to visitors about their learning. They respond well to instructions as part of daily routines and listen attentively during whole group sessions. Nearly all join in with the good morning and goodbye friends songs enthusiastically.

Many children develop their early writing skills successfully. They use different tools, such as paintbrushes, rollers and felt tips to make marks confidently. Most demonstrate good control when painting pictures outdoors, making marks in water on a blackboard and writing menus in the Chinese role-play café.

Many children enjoy listening to stories and recite familiar phrases well. A few are beginning to recognise their names and read back things they have written, for example a police account of catching a robber and a letter apologising to the Little Red Hen for not helping her to make the bread.

Many children develop their numeracy skills effectively. They count to seven accurately when counting the steps they make when balancing along a trail outside. Many children use appropriate mathematical language during their play, such as to describe water containers as empty or full. Many understand that the scales are heavy when measuring flour to make bread.

Around half of the children are beginning to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately. They operate simple toys, such as telephones, and cameras, in their role-play. Many record messages on a talking button device with adult support and use a computer tablet independently to take photographs during activities.

Most children respond to instructions in Welsh well. Many use a few simple Welsh words and phrases during their play spontaneously. They talk about the colours of tubes outside and can count to five when sorting animals.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills well. They make beneficial use of outdoor equipment to balance, ride trikes and to kick and throw a ball. This improves their co-ordination and spatial awareness effectively. Many are able to fasten their coats with growing independence and use tongs with increasing control to serve their fruit at snack time.

Many children develop worthwhile thinking skills when working out how to transfer water from one trough to another and when stacking blocks on top of each other to make tall beanstalks.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enter the setting happily and settle into routines quickly. Most talk enthusiastically to staff and each other when they arrive. They make choices about the activities they would like to work in confidently. Most share willingly, play well together, and have positive attitudes to learning. For example, they take on different roles in the role-play Chinese restaurant readily and share equipment happily.

Many children persevere well when faced with a challenge of building castles from wooden blocks and making sure that they do not fall over. Most children behave well and help to tidy up at the end of an activity, putting resources away sensibly.

Most children understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods and talk about their fruit snacks as being good for them. Most demonstrate good self-help skills when pouring their own drinks from a jug and washing up at the end of snack time.

Most children talk with increasing confidence and are developing their role in making decisions in the setting well. For example, they contribute ideas for what they want to learn at the beginning of topics and how they want role-play areas developed.

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

Practitioners and the manager work together purposefully as a team to provide a suitable range of stimulating activities that engage children well. They implement the foundation phase effectively to meet the needs of children and adapt planning regularly to match children's changing interests. This flexibility enables children to build on their existing knowledge and skills and to progress successfully.

Recent changes in planning ensure that there is a stronger emphasis on planning for the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners plan worthwhile opportunities for children to practise their speaking and early writing skills, for example when drawing shapes, lines and patterns with jumbo chinks. They use well-structured activities to develop children's numeracy skills, for example when children clip large pegs onto cards to match the number and count and fill jugs of water to make mud porridge. Practitioners plan a suitable variety of adult-led and free-choice activities. However, on occasions, planning for the development of children's ICT skills is not always specific enough. This inhibits children's independent use of equipment.

Practitioners take suitable account of children's suggestions for learning activities. For example, they set up a role-play police station outdoors. Staff promote children's independence and creativity suitably. This enables children to choose tools and materials with confidence, for example when making family pictures using natural resources such as twigs, leaves and pine cones.

Practitioners support children's use, understanding and enjoyment of Welsh well. As a result, many children are beginning to use simple words and phrases in their play. Practitioners promote children's understanding of Welsh culture and heritage effectively and most children know they live in Wales. They celebrate St. David's Day and Santes Dwynwen's Day, making cards and Welsh love spoons from dough.

Planning to support children's understanding of other cultures is effective. Children have the opportunity to celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year and to taste different foods such as soda bread as part of St. Patrick's Day.

The setting makes beneficial use of its immediate locality to support children's literacy and numeracy skills. Visits to a local shop support children's understanding of real-life situations, such as knowing that you have to pay for ingredients needed for baking. Regular trips to the library develop their interest in reading, and visits to a local residential home to sing and to hunt for Easter eggs develop their social skills well.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have warm and supportive working relationships with the children and actively encourage them to follow their own interests and make independent choices. They use questioning well to support children to think about how they can approach a task and to check their understanding.

Practitioners work well as a team and demonstrate a good understanding of when to intervene to help move learning on and when to take a step back. They use positive praise well to manage children's behaviour. This allows children to experiment and persevere for appropriate lengths of time, and develops their willingness to share and take turns successfully.

Practitioners are good language models in English and Welsh. This develops children's speaking skills and extends their vocabulary effectively. Staff use Welsh regularly as part of everyday routines. This raises the standard of children's oracy skills in Welsh and contributes to their enjoyment of the language.

The setting's procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are appropriate. Practitioners identify individual children's next steps in learning regularly. As a result, they challenge children that are more able and support those that need more practice well. Practitioners use this information to inform future planning clearly, allowing children to make progress in line with their ability.

Practitioners provide parents with regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Useful information is available to them at any time through the setting's 'open door' policy and via a social media page.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective arrangements to support children's understanding of how to be healthy. Well-planned routines encourage children to eat and drink healthily and indoor and outdoor learning opportunities provide them with daily physical exercise. Children brush their teeth daily and wash their hands before snack time.

Provision for children's moral and social development is appropriate. Practitioners encourage children to share and take turns and to say please and thank you. They praise children's positive behaviour well and help them to understand the importance of good behaviour.

The setting promotes children's cultural awareness appropriately. A range of children's artwork is on display and they enjoy talking about what they have made with visitors.

Practitioners support children's sense of awe and wonder in a meaningful way. Children plant and grow seeds and take advantage of the changing weather to play in, and experiment with snow. There are suitable opportunities for children to take responsibility for tidying up their environment and to develop their understanding of re-cycling through a visit to a local recycling centre.

The setting has sound arrangements for identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. Practitioners liaise suitably with support agencies, such as speech and language and English as an additional language services, when required.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Adequate

Practitioners create a caring and inclusive learning environment where children feel secure and valued. They make suitable use of all the available space, both indoors and outdoors. There are clearly designated areas of learning and this enables children to access resources easily and fosters their independence well.

The outdoor area is under development as part of the setting's improvement plan. A range of appropriate learning experiences, including opportunities for mark making, and experimental play using tubes, guttering and water, provides children with interesting learning experiences.

Children enjoy learning in different indoor areas, including construction, role-play, a reading corner, creative and mathematics zones. However, on occasions the lack of availability of a range of suitable and good quality resources across foundation phase areas of learning limits practitioners' planning choices. Practitioners display examples of children's work appropriately, allowing them to see that their work has value.

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

The manager and pre-school room leader are well motivated to provide high quality learning. They share a clear vision for a happy and engaging learning environment that challenges and supports the individual needs of children. They work together effectively to bring about improvements and share responsibilities successfully. All practitioners have up-to-date job descriptions and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The owner is highly visible on a day-to-day basis and maintains a suitable oversight of the setting's work informally.

There are appropriate processes to manage the performance of staff that focus well on improving provision and standards of teaching. Through annual appraisal meetings and regular reviews, managers identify personal training needs and agree targets with practitioners to help them improve their practice. They provide valuable support through regular informal discussions and suggestions, helping staff to progress towards meeting their professional needs.

The setting takes good account of national and local authority priorities. For instance, practitioners implement foundation phase assessments conscientiously and use this data to identify the most appropriate next steps in children's learning successfully.

Staff take good account of external advice and training to help them to improve provision and raise children's outcomes. As a result, leaders and managers have successfully developed children's Welsh language skills and the use of the outdoors to support children's early mark-making and physical skills, improving standards as a result.

Improving quality: Adequate

There is a developing culture of improvement in the setting. The self-evaluation process is relatively new to the setting. However, leaders and managers use it appropriately to support practitioners in developing a consistency of approach to teaching, and to improve provision. They reflect on the quality of the provision regularly, identify areas for development and work towards improving these purposefully. For example, they have reorganised the learning environment to make it easier for children to make independent choices, and have developed a more flexible approach to planning to reflect children's interests and preferences more closely. However, the current system tends to focus on what practitioners do, and does not focus well enough on how well children are progressing.

The setting asks parents for their views about the nursery through an annual questionnaire and make appropriate changes in response to any suggestions. For example, staff introduced a 'learning at home book' to share information about what the children do at nursery and to inform parents of their child's next steps in learning on a regular basis.

The setting improvement plan focuses suitably on areas for development to improve provision. However, it does not always link strongly enough to areas identified through the self-evaluation process. It sets out appropriately what the setting wants to improve, how it will do it and the resources required, but there is limited evidence of the impact on children's outcomes or information about how much actions will cost.

The setting makes good use of advice from the advisory teacher to improve provision and raise standards, for example when considering how the outdoor area can provide a better learning environment. While it is still under development, it now provides more opportunities for practitioners to develop a broader range of skills across foundation phase areas of learning.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a strong partnership with parents. Parents receive a broad range of information via email and social media and a regular newsletter. Practitioners encourage them to be involved in their child's education, for example holding regular play sessions where parents can work alongside their children to gain an insight into how they learn. This helps them to feel comfortable in approaching the setting about any concerns and keeps them well informed.

Valuable partnerships exist with local primary schools. A 'family link worker' from the schools visits regularly to liaise with practitioners and to work alongside the children. At the end of the summer term, they provide parents with an informative leaflet about moving on to school, supporting a smooth transition.

The setting has suitable links with a range of community organisations and receives visitors from the local police and fire service who talk about their jobs. Visits to a local shop and library further support and enhance the setting's topic work successfully.

The partnership with the local authority is effective in helping practitioners to access relevant training and guidance.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes effective use of its staff to support teaching and learning across the foundation phase. In particular, the setting manager and pre-school room leader work hard to bring about improvements in a timely fashion.

Practitioners make beneficial use of any training opportunities to improve provision and to raise outcomes for children. For example, training on planning for the development of early writing and numeracy skills across areas of learning helps to improve children's standards.

The owners monitor the budget appropriately and plan spending in line with the targets identified by the nursery as a whole, as priorities for improvement. However, on occasions this does not support the continuous development of foundation phase areas and resources well enough.

As a result, of the positive outcomes achieved by children, the setting provides good value for money.

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
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
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 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