



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

A report on

**Irfon Valley Rainbow Tots
Irfon Valley CP School
Garth
Llangammarch Wells
Powys
LD4 4AT**

Date of inspection: October 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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Context

Irfon Valley Rainbow Tots is an English-medium setting for three and four-year-olds in Garth, Powys. All the children come from the local area. The setting is registered to take up to 14 children per session. At the time of the inspection, there were five children in receipt of funded education. The setting meets for one session each day from 9:00 to 11:30.

The playgroup is based in the hall of Irfon Valley CP School and has access to their outdoor area and some other facilities. The setting has not identified any children as having additional learning needs. All children speak English as their first language and very few children speak Welsh at home.

The present leader took up her post in April 2017.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in December 2015 and by Estyn in October 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Practitioners have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the principles of the foundation phase
- Practitioners work together purposefully and their nurturing approach creates an effective learning environment
- All children enjoy their time in the setting and behave well
- All children have a positive attitude to learning
- Planning focuses suitably on the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills
- Arrangements for care, support and guidance are very effective
- The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully
- The setting is a warm and inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of its provision
- The accommodation is well maintained, attractive and secure

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader is enthusiastic and has a clear vision for the setting
- There is a very strong commitment to team working
- The setting responds positively to external advice
- Training attended by practitioners is effective and has a positive impact on children's learning
- The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection and has developed a reflective approach to support improvement
- The setting has satisfactory processes and procedures to evaluate its provision and the standards that children achieve
- Partnerships with the local school are strong
- Partnerships with parents are effective and are continuing to improve
- The setting provides good value for money

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that areas of continuous provision capture children's interests fully and provide challenge and opportunities to promote exploration
- R2 Develop observation and assessment procedures for child-initiated tasks to identify individual children's next steps in learning
- R3 Develop practitioner's knowledge and understanding of progression in early writing to ensure that planned activities match the developmental needs of the children

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?	N/A
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Standards: N/A

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report and children's progress, standards in their skill's development, Welsh language and well-being. This is because the number of relevant children at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

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

Practitioners provide a good range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors that engage children successfully. There is an appropriate emphasis on learning through play and first-hand experiences. For example, children explore the outdoor area to collect, count and compare the leaves that have fallen from the trees. All children show enthusiasm and are engaged in activities when there is an adult present. However, not all areas of provision offer enough interest or challenge to motivate children to play independently for extended periods.

The setting makes good use of visitors to enhance the curriculum, such as a local ice-cream seller to support children's numeracy skills. The setting joins with the local school to share events and experiences including special assemblies and sports day. However, there are very few opportunities for children to go on local visits.

Practitioners plan a good range of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills throughout the setting including riding trikes, using an outdoor sand pit, threading items onto strings and doing puzzles. Practitioners make good use of musical movement sessions and engage children in a range of whole body movements. The popular physical play area provides opportunities for balancing, climbing and jumping. It presents children with appropriate challenge and enables them to develop their confidence successfully.

There is good provision to develop numeracy skills. Children have regular opportunities to count and to recognise numbers and quantities. Resources available, such as sand timers and a toy till with money, provide children with the opportunity to develop mathematical concepts. Provision for developing thinking skills is appropriate. For example, practitioners ask children where they think all the leaves on the ground have come from.

Practitioners plan many opportunities for children to develop their communication skills effectively. They support children to join in with conversations and ask suitable questions. Practitioners provide cosy spaces, which promote children's communication skills very effectively. They share books, stories and rhymes with children extensively and model how to handle books with care. The environment is

full of language with many captions and labels written in both English and Welsh. Practitioners provide useful opportunities for children to take part in mark making activities. Provision for developing early writing skills, such as writing a shopping list in the role-play area, is effective.

Practitioners use a tablet well to support children in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. There are other useful opportunities to use ICT such as a personal computer programmable toys and a camera.

Practitioners plan effectively to support children's skills in Welsh. They model Welsh consistently through reading stories, counting and using Welsh for daily routines. They sing a range of songs and use Welsh to greet children on arrival and when asking them to find their name when self-registering. Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage and celebrate St David's Day. They learn about Welsh symbols through making Welsh flags and planting daffodils.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have an effective understanding of foundation phase practice. They use a beneficial range of strategies to encourage and motivate children to learn. Practitioners support children to self-correct and encourage them to recall their prior learning. They offer a suitable balance between focused tasks and children's free play. Practitioners have very good working relationships with the children. They know the children well and manage their behaviour sensitively and effectively. However, practitioners do not always match activities to children's needs effectively. For example, some children practice writing their names before they have developed an appropriate pencil grip.

Activities build suitably on children's interests and experiences. For example, practitioners set up the small world area as a farmyard in response to children's interest. Practitioners explain things clearly, model activities and make effective use of questioning. They use resources imaginatively, for example creating a home for a well-known story character.

The setting has an appropriate range of assessment procedures. For example, practitioners use mind maps well when introducing a topic to find out what children already know. They then use this information as a starting point for planning. Practitioners also assess children against the weekly learning outcomes identified on their planning. Procedures to observe children during child-initiated learning are at an earlier stage of development. As a result, practitioners do not always identify well enough what children can do already, their strengths and what they need to do to take their learning forward.

Practitioners keep parents informed about their children's progress and development appropriately.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has satisfactory arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. During snack time, practitioners encourage children to eat a range of foods and provide water or milk to drink. Most food options are healthy. Children make choices about what they would like to eat and they help to prepare snack.

The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to take regular physical exercise. Children take part in healthy community events such as Sports Day. This develops children's co-ordination successfully and encourages them to adopt a healthy life-style. Practitioners are good role-models and support children to develop respect for others and a sense of right and wrong. They encourage children to share equipment and to take care of resources effectively.

A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Practitioners foster a sense of awe and wonder in children through encouraging them to observe a mouse that visits the outdoor area. Children have appropriate opportunities to find out about other cultures through for example, learning about Chinese New Year and Hanukah. Practitioners plan opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and children recycle their food waste and rubbish.

The setting has developed a good range of strategies to promote positive behaviour and children respond to these well. All practitioners have clear expectations, which they communicate successfully. This ensures a team approach and consistency for the children.

There are appropriate processes to support children with additional learning needs. The setting has effective links with a range of support agencies and involves parents in developing children's individual education and play plans.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and do not give cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is welcoming and practitioners are friendly and approachable. It is an inclusive community where all children are encouraged to take part and have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Practitioners lead by example in encouraging children to show tolerance towards one another and respect for the setting's equipment. As a result, all children play and learn happily together.

The setting has suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the foundation phase. The setting is situated within the school hall and benefits from access to the school's outdoor area. The setting's accommodation is secure and well maintained. There are plenty of good quality resources across the areas of learning, which meet the needs of the children.

The leader makes creative use of the space indoors, which is attractive and welcoming. Designated learning areas make resources easily accessible for children. The popular outdoor environment has been developed successfully into a valuable learning environment.

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

The setting leader is enthusiastic and manages the daily work of the setting effectively. She has a strong vision for the setting, which she communicates clearly

to staff. This focuses on providing a high standard of care for all children while enabling them to become independent learners for life. There are beneficial policies and procedures to support the organisation of the setting, and practitioners implement these consistently.

The leader has high expectations of all staff and models the behaviours that she expects others to follow, such as treating all children with respect and using a calm and consistent approach. All practitioners within this new team understand their roles and responsibilities. These are defined clearly and practitioners work together effectively with a clear sense of purpose to fulfil the aims of the setting.

The setting has effective arrangements to manage the performance of staff. All staff have good opportunities to discuss and reflect on their performance. The leader supports staff effectively in developing their knowledge of the foundation phase and improving their skills in delivering it. All staff are eager to take advantage of opportunities for continuous professional development and strive to improve their performance. Effective procedures for induction and supervision are in place.

The leader pays good attention to local and national priorities and there is a suitable focus on developing children's literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well and all practitioners are committed to improving quality. Leaders take good account of the views of staff, parents and children and respond appropriately. They also make good use of information from any external reviews to inform the self-evaluation process. Practitioners know what the setting does well and areas that they need to improve. They explain clearly what they have identified as priorities in order to raise standards. However, the self-evaluation document does not always identify what the children can do well and where they need additional support.

The improvement plan sets out the setting's priorities clearly. The targets in the plan come directly from the self-evaluation process and are suitable targets for the setting. The improvement plan is a well-organised document that sets out appropriately actions, success criteria, time-scales and training implications.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond to support from a range of sources. This results in improvements to the quality of learning experiences, for example the development of numeracy provision using a new resource.

The setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has an effective range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. Practitioners keep parents and carers well informed about what their child is learning through regular feedback at the end of sessions, communication books and reports. Useful noticeboards inside the setting, make clear the current topic and display key information for parents and carers. Practitioners use a comprehensive settling in pack to consult with parents about their child's strengths, preferences and interests when children first join the setting.

The setting has very well-established links with the local school in which it is situated. The foundation phase teacher from the school provides useful support to the setting about how to deliver the foundation phase effectively. This partnership works well as the teacher is on site to provide advice when required. There are opportunities for children to make settling in visits before they transfer to the school, which promotes a smooth transition for children from the playgroup to the next stage of their education. The setting makes beneficial use of the school's facilities, such as the outdoor area and a range of resources.

Regular visitors from the community enhance children's learning. For example, the local postman talks to the children about the work of the post office.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well. Leaders and managers make sure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well-trained practitioners to support the effective delivery of the foundation phase curriculum. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and used appropriately to support children's learning.

The setting ensures that staff can access training based on needs identified through the appraisal process. Practitioners make good use of training to improve provision for example, by developing the use of the foundation phase profile. Practitioners share ideas and record the impact of the training on the setting. A recent good practice visit has been effective in supporting practitioners to assess and track children's Welsh language skills.

The leader and the management committee have a good understanding of resource needs and prioritise these in line with the setting improvement plan. Due to the good quality teaching and the quality of provision, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

The reporting inspector

Amanda Hilton	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