



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

**A report on**

**Rainbow Sunbeams  
Firbank Dale Tennis Club  
Heather Rd  
Newport  
NP19 7LB**

**Date of inspection: November 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
<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

Rainbow Sunbeams Playgroup is a privately owned, English-medium playgroup in the St Julian's area of Newport, in Newport local authority. The setting is registered to provide day care for 19 children between the ages of two and twelve years. It offers early education sessions from Monday to Friday from 9.15 am until 11.45 am during school term time. There are currently 11 children in receipt of funded early education.

At the time of the inspection there were a very few children identified as having additional learning needs. Nearly all children are from a white British background and speak English at home. No children have Welsh as their home language.

There are three members of staff including the managers who are also co-owners of the setting. The two managers have been in post since 2004.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspected the setting in July 2017 and Estyn last inspected it in November 2010.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- Most children make good progress, particularly in developing their numeracy and Welsh language skills
- Nearly all children develop their physical skills well
- Nearly all children come into the setting happily and settle quickly
- Nearly all children behave well
- Most children concentrate appropriately and persevere effectively to complete tasks
- There is a good range of activities that children enjoy, across all areas of learning
- Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively, and create a warm and welcoming ethos
- Practitioners use the extensive outside space particularly well to help children learn, and develop a strong appreciation of the outdoors

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have a strong vision to provide children with engaging, good quality learning experiences that support them to become well rounded individuals
- Practitioners work together effectively as a strong team
- Leaders focus purposefully on national initiatives, including developing children's literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills
- There is a particularly strong focus on developing outdoor learning
- Leaders are reflective and consider ways to improve their practice regularly
- Practitioners work successfully with parents and other agencies
- There are strong links with the local community that benefit children well

## Recommendations

- R1 Provide an effective balance between child-initiated and adult-led tasks
- R2 Observe and assess children's progress across all areas of learning to make sure that they develop a full range of skills effectively
- R3 Review the organisation of the learning environment to support children's independent learning effectively
- R4 Improve processes and procedures to ensure that planning for improvement involves all stakeholders effectively and focuses purposefully on children's standards

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Most children start at the setting with skills at or just below that expected for their age and stage of development. Most make good progress over time in developing their skills, particularly their numeracy and Welsh language skills.

Most children develop good speaking and listening skills. They make themselves understood effectively, are eager to communicate with visitors and develop their vocabulary well. For example, they learn words linked to their topic effectively, such as when they look for 'treasure' and find 'coins' in the sand tray. A few more able children speak very confidently in full sentences in their play. Nearly all children develop effective listening skills and they follow instructions particularly well on their woodland walks. Most children understand that writing has meaning, and experiment confidently with writing 'lists' on a white board in the home corner. More able children show good control to make recognisable shapes. Most children develop their early reading skills successfully and enjoy listening to stories.

Most children develop worthwhile numeracy skills. They join in counting activities enthusiastically, and many count to at least five confidently. Most understand size and quantity well. For example, they identify big and small shells naturally while they play. Most children identify and name two-dimensional shapes accurately, and a few more able children identify three dimensional shapes accurately. Nearly all children develop an appropriate understanding of the purpose of information and communication technology (ICT) resources such as a digital camera and a tablet computer. Most are beginning to use these appropriately.

Nearly all children use a few Welsh words and phrases confidently and regularly in their play and as part of the setting's routines. For example, most children ask for help in Welsh when they want practitioners to support them. Most children develop their creative skills appropriately in different contexts. More able children make particularly good progress with modelling clay and dough into recognisable shapes. Many develop their thinking skills well, such as when they respond to practitioners' questions about what birds might be doing high up in the trees. Nearly all develop strong physical skills. For example, most run, jump and balance confidently.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children come into the setting happily and settle quickly. They enjoy their surroundings and the activities provided for them, and are eager to learn. For example, they greet the setting's pet ducks with enthusiasm, and enjoy dressing up as pirates and searching for treasure as part of the current theme. Nearly all children move about the room confidently, and most choose activities purposefully. Nearly all

understand the setting's routines and behave well during the sessions. For example, they follow instructions for their daily run without any fuss, and wait independently for others to catch up with them when they finish. Most are courteous and considerate towards one another, and co-operate well in their play. Most children concentrate well and persevere effectively to complete tasks, such as when they write shopping lists in their home corner.

Nearly all children take part in physical activities enthusiastically, such as swinging their arms, running and jumping at the beginning of the session and going for regular walks in the woodland area. Most children choose what fruit they want to eat confidently and pour their own drink increasingly independently at snack time. However, occasionally children do not develop their independence well enough, such as when putting on painting aprons and helping to tidy up.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners provide a good range of activities that children enjoy, and cover all areas of learning well. They use the foundation phase framework appropriately to plan learning experiences that help children build on their skills systematically over time. Practitioners plan themes that engage children's interest well, such as the current 'Pirate' theme.

There are purposeful opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills throughout the session. For example, there are carefully planned opportunities for children to develop their counting skills, to learn to recognise numbers and shapes and to sort and match objects in the different learning areas. Practitioners choose books to share with the children linked to the themes and identify specific vocabulary in their plans. There is a suitable focus on developing children's mark-making skills in different contexts, such as encouraging them to draw treasure maps, or to take turns to note what they hear on a listening walk. There is a suitable range of ICT resources for children to experiment with. However, practitioners' plans to develop children's ICT skills systematically over time are at an early stage of development. Practitioners develop children's Welsh language skills well. For example, they encourage children to use simple words and phrases naturally during the session.

There is a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and to become confident explorers of the outdoor environment. Through activities, such as growing vegetables in the allotment area, children have valuable opportunities to learn about the natural world and to understand that living things should be treated with respect and care. Visitors to the setting and visits to places of interest such as the fire station, enrich children's learning effectively. Practitioners plan suitable experiences to help children begin to learn to show respect for people from different cultural backgrounds.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners understand the foundation phase principles of learning through play and active involvement well. They plan purposeful practical experiences that include regular opportunities for children to learn in the outdoors. There are plenty of

opportunities for children to choose what they want to do. However, practitioners do not always manage the balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities well enough. This means that a few children do not concentrate on specific activities well enough during the session. In general, practitioners tend to plan what and how children will learn, including identifying what they will make in the dough and creative areas. This limits opportunities for children to experiment freely and develop their creative skills fully.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively, and create a warm and welcoming ethos. They model language effectively and develop children's language skills effectively by talking about what they are doing. They make good use of specific vocabulary related to r topics to extend children's use of different and new words. Most practitioners use questions well to encourage children to think. Practitioners expect all children to make good progress with developing specific skills. However, they do not always have high enough expectations of how well children can develop as independent learners.

Practitioners assess children's progress in acquiring specific literacy and numeracy skills regularly. They use the information appropriately to develop these skills progressively over time. However, practitioners do not observe and assess how well children apply their skills in their free play, or how well they progress across all areas of learning. This means that they do not always have a full enough picture of children's overall development. Practitioners share information about their children's progress with parents regularly and effectively both informally at the setting door and in a useful formal report.

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

There are regular and worthwhile opportunities for children to be physically active and to learn to appreciate the natural environment outdoors. This is a strong feature of the setting's work. Practitioners ensure that children have healthy food and drink at snack time and that they learn good personal hygiene habits.

There are particularly effective opportunities for children to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them. This includes opportunities to get to know the setting's elderly ducks and to swish through piles of autumn leaves on an autumn walk. Practitioners support most aspects of children's social and moral development well. For example, they help children learn to share and take turns effectively. They help children learn to be courteous and respectful towards one another and adults, such as by saying 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately. However, they do not always provide enough opportunities for children to develop their self-help skills effectively, such as putting on their own aprons to paint. There are suitable opportunities for children's cultural development and useful opportunities for them to learn about sustainability.

Practitioners identify emerging additional needs appropriately and act purposefully to support individual children. This includes contacting external agencies to seek specialist support. They keep suitable records of specific observations of children who are causing concern. They know the children well and engage effectively with parents. However, practitioners do not always organise the way they document emerging concerns formally enough to identify and track individual needs fully effectively over time. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting has a strongly inclusive and caring ethos. Practitioners provide a warm welcome for all children and make sure that they have equal access to all the setting's activities. The setting uses resources, such as books and jigsaws, appropriately to begin to develop respectful and tolerant attitudes towards people who are different from themselves.

Practitioners use the extensive outside space particularly well to support children's learning and develop a strong appreciation of the outdoors. For example, there is a carefully planned area where children can practise a wide range of skills, such as digging and experimenting with musical sounds. There is an allotment where children learn to grow bulbs, flowers and vegetables. A gate leads to a woodland walk that practitioners use regularly to help children notice changes in the seasons, and develop their physical and listening skills well. This contributes very effectively to children's wellbeing.

Recently, practitioners have improved the indoor environment to create suitably defined areas for children to work in, such as a comfortable book corner. However, the room layout does not always support children's learning well enough. Practitioners provide good quality resources that children enjoy using. However, practitioners do not always make sure that children can choose and manage resources independently. For example, in the paint area, practitioners do not ensure that paper is big enough for children to experiment freely, or that the area is set up so that they can work independently.

The accommodation is safe and secure. Practitioners organise worthwhile visits in the local area to enhance children's learning, including a visit to the fire station and to a nearby nature reserve.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The setting leaders have a strong vision to provide children with engaging, good quality learning experiences, particularly in the outdoors, that support them to become well rounded individuals. They share their vision effectively with all stakeholders, including parents. Leaders share roles and responsibilities between them well and make sure that practitioners understand what is expected of them effectively. This supports the smooth day-to-day running of the setting successfully. Leaders communicate well with one another and with setting staff throughout the week and through regular formal staff meetings. This helps them work together effectively as a strong team. They keep a suitable record of discussions to support them in moving forward. However, there is no formal structure to staff meetings, such as a set agenda, in order for meetings to be fully effective.

Leaders carry out regular appraisals that support practitioners well in evaluating and improving their practice, and help identify training needs appropriately. They establish worthwhile links with parents and other agencies, such as the local authority link teacher, and these support children's learning and wellbeing effectively. Leaders focus purposefully on national initiatives, including developing children's

literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills. They focus particularly well on developing worthwhile opportunities for children to learn in the outdoors.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Setting leaders are reflective and consider ways to improve their practice regularly. They take good account of advice and support from the local authority link teacher to help them move forward.

Leaders are beginning to monitor aspects of the provision more formally and to use the information to bring about improvements. For example, a recent evaluation showed that children were not using the book corner regularly. This enabled leaders to focus on making the area more attractive to children. However, this aspect of the setting's work is at a relatively early stage of development and it does not always support leaders to identify important areas for improvement, such as developing children's independent skills.

Leaders consult parents regularly using an annual questionnaire and through informal communication at the setting door. They use the information appropriately, alongside their own evaluations, to help them identify suitable priorities for improvement. However, leaders do not involve all practitioners effectively in evaluating the setting's strengths and areas for development. In general, when they evaluate and monitor aspects of the setting's work, leaders focus on the quality of the provision rather than on children's outcomes. As a result, they do not always identify the most important areas for improvement, or the most appropriate actions to move the setting forward.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Leaders have built up strong partnerships that support children's standards and wellbeing effectively. They share information about the setting's activities well with parents, such as through newsletters and by using social media. They support parents successfully to help their children learn at home. For example, they started a worthwhile lending library recently that encourages parents to share books with their children and develop their early reading skills. Practitioners are on hand regularly at the beginning and end of the sessions to talk to parents about any issues or concerns as they collect their children.

There are strong links with the local community that benefit children well. For example, practitioners make the most of support from the local community to teach children about growing different vegetables and to maintain the allotment area. Leaders develop worthwhile links with local schools and this helps support children when they move on to the next stage in their education, such as by sharing information about specific individual needs. Practitioners use support from the local authority advisory teacher well, for example, to seek advice and access training, including opportunities to visit other settings. The setting has used the partnership with the local authority particularly well to develop their Welsh language provision effectively.

**Resource management: Good**

Leaders ensure that the setting has enough appropriately qualified staff to teach the curriculum effectively. They deploy practitioners well to make the most of their experience and expertise. Leaders attend training regularly and use the information purposefully to improve standards of teaching and learning in the setting. For example, following recent training, the setting concentrated on using open-ended questions more regularly to develop children's thinking and speaking skills effectively. In general, leaders provide children with plenty of good quality learning resources to help them develop a full range of skills. However, occasionally, they do not monitor these carefully enough to make sure that they support children's learning fully. Leaders have focused well on providing useful resources to support children's learning in the outdoors. They often link resources helpfully to their topics, developing children's learning meaningfully. For example, they provide different shiny, metal objects for children to explore creatively as part of their 'Pirate' theme.

Leaders allocate funding effectively to meet the setting's needs. In view of the good standards achieved by most children, the setting provides good value for money.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CIW</b>	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education