



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

**A report on**

**Saplings Private Day Nursery  
Wrexham Technology Park  
Wrexham  
LL13 7YP**

**Date of inspection: March 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:

<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

Saplings Children's Nursery is an English medium setting in Wrexham local authority. It is registered to take up to 118 children aged between 12 weeks and 12 years old.

There are currently 29 children on the register in the pre-school room. . Twenty-four of these are three-year-olds and four receive early years funding from the local authority. One staff member supports the room supervisor, who has worked in the pre-school setting for several years and took over the leadership in 2014. Both have appropriate early years qualifications.

Most children attending the setting come from the local area. Many have English as their home language and a few come from homes where Welsh is spoken. At present, none of the children attending the setting have additional learning needs.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in October 2010 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in August 2016.

## 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:

- Nearly all children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding during their time in the setting
- Children enjoy their time in the setting and behave well
- Practitioners plan a broad and balanced curriculum that supports children's learning well
- Practitioners work together purposefully to provide an interesting and purposeful learning environment
- Relationships between practitioners and children are affectionate and caring
- Nearly all children come into the setting happily and settle to activities quickly
- The setting is bright and attractive, and both indoor and outdoor learning areas engage children's interest successfully

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The nursery director supports the pre-school staff well and enables them to develop their practice progressively
- Practitioners work together effectively and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- The current self-evaluation and resulting action plan reflects the setting's needs accurately
- Practitioners respond positively to advice and guidance to make regular improvements in their practice
- Practitioners are keen to develop their professional skills and training opportunities are used successfully

## Recommendations

- R1 Develop children's problem solving and thinking skills effectively
- R2 Improve children's use of Welsh
- R3 Improve opportunities for children to learn about the history and culture of Wales
- R4 Provide children with meaningful opportunities to learn about other people's lives and beliefs

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

By the end of their time in the setting, most children make good progress from their starting points. They explore their surroundings confidently and are eager to try out new experiences.

Most children are articulate speakers and are happy to engage visitors in conversation. Nearly all listen well in a large group and respond appropriately. For example, when listening to a story about Ticw the bear, they comment about the colours of the paper he is holding and wonder where he has gone later in the book. During their free play, many children choose to look at books, either independently or with a friend. They handle books confidently and turn the pages as natural readers. Most children enjoy joining in with familiar songs and rhymes in both English and Welsh. Many children develop their early writing skills well using a variety of mark making equipment such as paint, chalk, pencils and playdough.

Most children use mathematical language well in appropriate contexts. When playing in the sand tray they talk about their buckets being full or empty and exclaim when they are heavy. Most children count confidently by rote to ten. Many count objects accurately to at least three and a few to ten. More able children confidently find hidden numerals in the garden, which they match and order correctly to three.

Most children use technical equipment such as cameras and electronic books confidently. They enjoy pressing the correct buttons to view their photographs on an interactive screen.

Nearly all children join in enthusiastically with familiar Welsh songs during morning circle time. Most children use simple Welsh words and phrases appropriately as part of regular routines. They respond suitably to basic instructions, such as tidying up when it is 'amser tacluso'. However, very few children use the Welsh that they have learned independently.

Most children develop their physical skills well. They pour their own drinks carefully at snack time, and run and jump confidently in the outside area. However, in general, children do not develop their thinking and problem solving skills well in the setting.

### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy their time in the setting. They come in full of enthusiasm and settle quickly to a chosen activity. Nearly all behave well. They are polite and friendly to adults and to one another. Nearly all children know that it is important to share and to take turns and they do this well at snack time when they share their fruit with one another. Most children are developing good levels of independence. For example, they put on their coats and wellingtons ready to go outside to play, and they

pour their own milk or water at snack time. Most concentrate on their chosen tasks for a worthwhile length of time and work well both independently and with other children.

Most children show a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They show an understanding of what healthy foods are, and know that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating.

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

Practitioners work well together to plan a wide range of interesting and engaging activities that motivate the children to learn purposefully. They base the curriculum firmly on Foundation Phase principles, and practitioners ensure that they cover all areas of learning appropriately. Recent changes in planning ensure that there is a strong emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills both indoors and outdoors. However, practitioners do not yet plan effectively to develop children's thinking skills. Practitioners take children's interests into account when planning, and adapt their plans well to respond to specific events and experiences.

Practitioners plan interesting activities to enhance children's understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) such as sequencing photographs of a 'bear hunt' in the garden. As a result, children handle equipment such as cameras confidently. There are planned activities for the outdoors every day, when children have the opportunity to ride wheeled vehicles, run, jump and dig. This develops their physical skills successfully. Other activities such as snipping paper for a collage promote the development of their fine motor skills well.

Visitors to the setting, such as the police and fire service, enhance children's understanding of the wider world beneficially. The setting promotes the Welsh language appropriately. Practitioners use Welsh well at whole-group times and introduce a few words and phrases incidentally when the children are working at other activities. They encourage the children to sing and to count in Welsh effectively. Although the setting celebrates St David's Day, in general, children do not have enough opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations for children's learning. They create an exciting sense of anticipation at the start of the session and engage children's interest well. There are well-established daily routines, which mean that children know what to expect and feel happy and safe at the setting.

Relationships between children and adults are strong and positive. All practitioners know when to intervene to move children's learning forward and when to stand back and enable a child to explore and experiment for themselves. They know the children very well and adapt their questioning appropriately to the age and level of understanding of individual children.

Practitioners are developing a clear understanding of how well individual children are progressing. They observe children's achievements regularly and use this information well to measure and record children's progress. This helps them to plan appropriately to develop children's skills systematically.

Practitioners share useful information informally with parents and carers on a daily basis. They also provide more formal opportunities for parents to view their child's personal profile and discuss their progress before the children move on to the next stage of their education.

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

The setting provides a calm and happy environment where all children are valued. Practitioners support children well in developing their social, moral and cultural skills through a range of effective activities and routines. They foster values such as kindness and fairness by encouraging children to share and take turns when they help themselves to fruit at snack time and butter their toast independently. The setting supports children's spiritual development appropriately through worthwhile opportunities to experience awe and wonder at the world around. These include noticing the changing seasons during visits outdoors and watching tadpoles grow. However, there are limited opportunities for children to develop a sense of curiosity about their own and other people's lives and beliefs. Practitioners are beginning to help children to develop an understanding of the importance of taking care of the world by encouraging them to turn off lights and taps when they are not needed. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

At the time of the inspection, the setting identified that there were no children with additional learning needs. However, there are clear procedures in place to support children with additional learning needs. The setting has well-established links to an effective network of external agencies providing helpful support and advice if required.

### **Learning environment: Judgement Good**

The setting is a warm and caring community where all children have access to all activities. Most children have been in the nursery since they were babies and there is strong sense of family where children are valued and treated with respect as individuals. As a result, all children are confident and happy and enjoy talking to visitors.

Practitioners make effective use of the space both indoors and outdoors. They create a bright and stimulating environment that supports children's learning well. Examples of children's recent work enhance the physical environment. All areas of learning are well equipped with plentiful and good quality resources that meet the needs of the children successfully. Practitioners are beginning to use the recently developed outdoor area well to extend children's learning experiences. They provide worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their skills and understanding independently while growing, digging, mark making and exploring the muddy puddles. Despite its location near a busy road, the setting makes appropriate use of

visits to the local area to extend children's experiences. For example, practitioners take the children on the local bus to visit the library and borrow books for their current topic.

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

The nursery director, who is also the day to day manager of the setting, provides worthwhile support for the pre-school staff, enabling them to develop their practice progressively. The pre-school room supervisor has a strong vision for improving the setting. She has introduced clear practices and procedures that have led to improvements in standards in teaching and learning. In particular, she has strengthened the daily routines and has ensured that children have daily access to the outdoors. The supervisor briefs all staff working in the room well, ensuring that they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. She ensures that additional staff who usually work in other areas of the nursery understand their duties. This enables practitioners to support one another to meet the children's needs.

All staff have up-to-date job descriptions. The setting operates an effective system of staff appraisal that supports and challenges practitioners. Personal targets link to appropriate training needs and the manager reviews progress towards meeting the targets regularly. The setting has addressed local and national initiatives successfully. Recently, it has improved and extended children's opportunities to develop their skills regularly outdoors and there are well-established procedures for helping children learn how to live healthy lives.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Although the self-evaluation process is relatively new to the room supervisor, she is using it effectively to bring about improvements in teaching and learning. The current self-evaluation document reflects the setting's practice accurately and there is a clear link to the targets in the action plan. The setting takes into account the views of all practitioners, including the nursery director, to evaluate the provision. It also appropriately includes suggestions and comments from parents. As a result, the self-evaluation process successfully identifies the setting's strengths and areas for development.

The setting's action plan includes appropriate targets and clearly identifies success criteria, time scales and the persons responsible. Practitioners work consistently towards meeting these targets. For example, following recent ICT training, the setting has improved planning for developing children's ICT skills and made good use of new resources, including a digital photograph frame. Practitioners are keen to accept advice and support from the local authority's advisory teacher. This is having a significant impact on the setting's practice, including developing self-evaluation processes, outdoor learning and improving effective systems for observing and assessing the children's progress.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting communicates effectively with parents and carers. Practitioners share information through the setting's noticeboard, newsletters, and social media and through daily personal contact. This keeps parents well informed about what their children are doing and how they are progressing. Parents appreciate the daily sharing of information when they bring and collect their children.

Children from the setting move on to a number of different schools. Practitioners work hard to establish links with the schools such as by inviting teachers to visit the pre-school and by sharing assessment information appropriately. This supports opportunities for preparing children for the next stage in their education effectively.

Practitioners make effective use of support from the local authority advisory teacher to strengthen their understanding and help improve the quality of the provision. They make good use of training provided by the local authority, including recent training on planning to implement the revised Foundation Phase framework and to improve ICT provision in the setting. The nursery director benefits from opportunities to share advice and good practice through links with the National Day Nursery Association. Practitioners make the most of advice and support from local agencies to help children learn about healthy eating and good hygiene.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting has enough well-qualified and experienced staff and deploys them effectively. Staff in the pre-school room work closely together and additional staff provide worthwhile support when there are higher numbers of children.

Practitioners make effective use of training opportunities to improve provision and to raise outcomes for children. For example, they made good use of ideas from the local authority's forest school awareness training to improve its outdoor provision.

The nursery director manages the budget efficiently. She conducts regular reviews to ensure the most appropriate use of funds. This ensures that spending decisions are in line with the targets for development identified in the setting's action plan, for example the recent purchase of ICT equipment for the children.

In view of the positive outcomes achieved by the children, and the quality of the learning experiences, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	12	11 92%	1 8%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	14%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	12	7 58%	5 42%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	28%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		83%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	11	6 55%	5 45%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	24%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	12	9 75%	3 25%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	12	5 42%	7 58%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	31%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	12	8 67%	4 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	19%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	12	3 25%	7 58%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	12	5 42%	7 58%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	11	4 36%	5 45%	2 18%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	18%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mary 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## 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>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<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 which 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.