



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Little Rascals Day Nursery
133 Victoria Road
Prestatyn
Denbighshire
LL19 7SS**

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Peter Roach

for

**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

Little Rascals day nursery is a private English medium setting providing nursery education in the town of Prestatyn in the county of Denbighshire, North Wales. It is based in a converted spacious private house on the main coast road through Prestatyn and provides care for children from birth until they move on to the next stage of their education at the age of 11.

The setting has been operating since the early 1990s but the current owners have only been in post since February 2008. The setting is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to provide full time care for 67 children and is inspected annually by CSSIW. The last inspection report was published in October 2010. This is the first Estyn Inspection.

It is judged that the area served by the setting is neither privileged nor economically and socially disadvantaged. It welcomes children of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with additional needs (ALN) or from ethnic communities. Nearly all children who attend the setting come from homes where English is the principal language.

The playgroup is staffed by an experienced leader who is supported by two other assistants. There are seven other staff available throughout the setting. All are either appropriately qualified with NNEB or equivalent qualifications or are in the process of gaining the relevant qualifications. There are currently nine pupils on roll in the preschool room with six being present during the inspection.

Little Rascals is a member of the Denbighshire Early Years and Child Care Partnership and receive regular support in the form of specialist advice from an early year's teacher.

Summary

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

Current performance

Overall judgement is good because:

- Children are happy and enjoy coming to the setting;
- Practitioners carry out their roles and responsibilities conscientiously;
- Nearly all the children make steady progress in their knowledge and skills across most areas of the curriculum;
- Nearly all children apply their early language and mathematical skills appropriately; and
- Of the quality of care, support and guidance provided.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Of the performance of the lead practitioner in delivering a range of different teaching strategies effectively;
- Staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Phase;
- There is a positive attitude towards improvement; and
- The setting is self evaluative.

Recommendations

- R1 Greater balance between teacher led and child led activities
- R2 Ensure staff are deployed more effectively
- R3 Further develop the children's knowledge of global citizenship and sustainability
- R4 Continue to ensure that all processes have been fully implemented and evaluated to assess the impact on standards and well being.

What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan which indicates how it will address the above recommendations

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Nearly all children achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. They demonstrate good levels of knowledge and understanding and cope well with challenging activities. They gradually acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills and are beginning to apply these across other areas of learning. Most are able to confidently recall their previous learning and develop their thinking skills to an appropriate level. Regardless of their background or academic ability children's communication skills are developing well. Nearly all children are confident to talk with a visitor and express themselves clearly using a good vocabulary. They listen well and carry out instructions in an orderly manner.

Children's Welsh language skills are progressing well as nearly all are confident to order numbers to five and accurately name the more popular colours. The majority of children are able to understand and answer basic questions on how they feel.

All children show an interest in books as emergent readers and understand that print conveys meaning. They hold books in the correct way turning the pages appropriately. Children experiment with mark making on cut out teddies with paint and cotton buds enabling them to shape letters of the alphabet accurately. They understand the purpose of writing and extend the skills learnt by using chalk and paint brushes effectively in the creative outdoor area.

Mathematical skills are developing well. Nearly all children are confident to count up to five in either Welsh or English and are able to recognise and name basic two dimensional shapes. Many show a good understanding of matching the colours of shapes found in the sand to the colour chart on the wall.

Children's information control technology (ICT) skills are good. Many children enjoy using the battery operated and programmable toys using the buttons and switches to operate them successfully. A few are able to predict accurately what happens to images when a light source is moved closer or further away from the wall.

Wellbeing: Good

Children settle well on arrival at the setting and enjoy their learning. They show positive attitudes to keeping healthy and safe. They also show appropriate respect and care for each other and respond well to the positive role models for relationships set by adults.

Most children cooperate well during activities and are happy to share equipment and toys and take turns. Overall the standard of behaviour is very good as nearly all the children are polite and courteous. They are beginning to make informed group

decisions based on experience especially when they chose their own book to be read at circle time. Children take care of resources and develop responsibility by enthusiastically joining in tidy up sessions.

Children are conscious of their personal hygiene and are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Children understand the need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and prior to eating food.

Children's self confidence enables them to be independent but to seek help when necessary. They take the opportunity to engage in all kinds of play activities outside the classroom.

Insert text paragraphs.

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

Practitioners work well together and all have a sound knowledge of the children in their care. They provide good opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase in well planned activities which succeed in engaging their interest and curiosity both inside and outside the setting. These planned activities enable the children to make good progress in communication, numeracy, ICT and the wider creative skills. Although the setting evaluates the activities on a regular basis there is no direct link to outcomes (what the children can or can't do).

Effective use of open ended questioning develops children's thinking skills well. Practitioners take every opportunity to build on children's previous knowledge and encourage children to use new vocabulary such as 'shallow running water' or 'thick white cold snow' when they went on a bear hunt around the grounds.

Good opportunities exist for the children to experiment with new experiences, to experience 'risk' and become independent learners. However there needs to be a greater balance between teacher led and child led activities as there is a tendency for children to spend most of the sessions accessing the same areas.

Planning for the development of Welsh and the Welsh dimension is good. Children embrace the activities which are planned with enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoy learning about Wales and the Welsh language especially the activities associated with St. David's day. Children are beginning to appreciate the needs of cultures in different parts of the world as they study the Chinese new year. However these activities are at an early stage of development and need to be developed further.

Although there are good opportunities for the children to grow their own vegetables in the outside garden the understanding of sustainability and the need to recycle is underdeveloped.

Children's learning experiences are further enriched by regular visits to places outside the setting and by local visitors.

Teaching: Good

Nearly all practitioners have up to date knowledge of child development and have an understanding of the Foundation Phase. Adult support is well focused and makes a good contribution to the quality of children's learning. The teaching is stimulating and successfully engages all children and the good quality resources are well used to support learning.

There is a strong emphasis on learning through play and practitioners know when to intervene and use questioning well to develop children's understanding. There are a number of child centered and adult centered activities but there isn't an equal balance. At certain times during the session there has to be adult led focused tasks.

There are good procedures in place to report on children's progress and development. Practitioners provide good oral feedback to children as they learn. Practitioners know their children well and make regular and helpful evaluative observational assessments in the form of post it notes which are then pasted into the children's record of achievement book. This provides a useful record of what the children have achieved and helps, in many cases, to plan children's next steps of learning.

Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners take great care to ensure that the safety of the children in their care is of paramount importance. The setting has appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding, for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. All staff know who the designated child protection officer is and have received the relevant training. The setting is totally secure with a safe entry system in place ensuring the children's safety at all times. There are appropriate risk assessments in place for all activities. The setting succeeds in helping every child to take advantage of the learning experiences provided for them and to participate fully in the life of the setting.

Children are happy in the setting, they are comfortable in the company of the adults and are confident in asking for support and guidance. Practitioners encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and to understand the importance of sharing with others. Learning experiences which promote and foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Good induction arrangements ensure that the children settle well into the setting. The setting also has good induction arrangements with the local schools ensuring that the children move on to their next stage of education with the minimum of disruption.

Children's learning needs are well catered for and there are good arrangements in place to support children with additional needs. During the inspection there were no children needing extra support, but the setting fully understands the work of the outside agencies, if it needs to access this support.

Practitioners know their children very well and as a result encourage them to work together cooperatively. There are good systems operating which ensures that any behavioural issues are dealt with firmly and fairly.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to the Foundation Phase curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners have succeeded in providing a supportive environment for learning both inside and out. However the recently decorated room would benefit from a few colourful displays which would stimulate the children's learning further.

There are enough practitioners at the setting to meet the needs of all the children. Nearly all practitioners are generally well trained and experienced with working with young children. Their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase curriculum is developing well which is evident in their day to day work with the children.

There is an appropriate supply of good quality resources for almost all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each child. The curriculum is further enriched with the use of good resources in the outside area. The children enjoy being able to move freely from one activity to the other either inside or outside the setting.

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

The setting is well led by a manager and proprietor who work effectively as a management team. They share the same vision which is regularly communicated to the staff and parents alike. The management team meet formally on a regular basis to discuss the way forward and to review past performance. All room supervisors have devolved powers to run their areas as they see fit under the supervision of the management team. This enables staff to work together more effectively as team units. The formal monitoring of children's standards in order to inform priorities is at an early stage of development. The setting has an appropriate appraisal system in place to support and improve staff.

The preschool room supervisor is extremely conscientious and is very knowledgeable about child development. She provides strategic direction and

ensures all staff, under her care, has a role to play in providing meaningful experiences for all the children.

Relationships with children, parents and the local schools are positive, contributing to a strong sense of community. Newsletters are sent to parents on a regular basis with a recent introduction of messages posted to the door. This ensures that information is shared more efficiently.

Practitioners respond appropriately to local and National priorities and nearly all have been involved in training and development opportunities related to the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

There are good processes in place to evaluate the settings strengths and areas for improvement. It regularly consults children and parents about aspects of the provision through the use of questionnaires. These are sent out to parents and the analysis of the results is used effectively as part of the setting's self evaluation process. This ensures a strong sense of continual improvement throughout the setting.

Staff's views are sought first of all in 'room meetings' then in whole staff meetings held every few months. As part of the monitoring process the leadership team meet the room leader on a regular basis to discuss the effectiveness of the provision.

There is a direct link between the shortcomings identified in the setting's self evaluation report and areas for development in the generic development plan. The plan contains appropriate targets for improvement together with worthwhile success criteria within realistic time scales. The plan would improve with the introduction of outcomes for children as part of the success criteria.

Effective support is provided by the local authority (LA) to support the practitioners through the continuous professional development programme. Through well established performance management arrangements practitioners have opportunities to reflect upon the effectiveness of their work.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works closely with a number of partners in order to support the children's achievements and wellbeing. The strong links with parents ensures a steady exchange of information which ensures continuity in the children's education. The effective links with the local feeder schools ensures that the transition from one stage of education to the other is smooth together with the transferring of information.

Practitioners respond well to the advice and guidance they receive from the LA Foundation Phase teacher and also respond well when they observe the activities she delivers.

There are good partnership arrangements within the preschool room where all the staff work together effectively. They share information, ideas and expertise in order to offer children appropriate learning experiences.

The setting makes good use of the local community, particularly the beach, to support the children's learning. They also make good use of visitors from the local community to the setting.

Resource management: Good

There are a number of good quality resources which are well managed and used well to support children's learning. The recent purchase of ICT equipment has had a positive impact on standards achieved. The outside area is continually developing and provides a rich stimulus which enhances children's learning.

The setting is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. However because of the nature in which the staff have been deployed opportunities to plan and evaluate outcomes effectively are difficult to achieve.

In view of the fact that standards of achievement are good the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Only one response was received from parents. Parent / carer reported that he / she was very happy with the standard of care received by the children.

Responses to discussions with children

Children enjoy coming to the setting as learning is fun. They enjoy the activities and welcome the supportive ethos provided by the staff.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Peter Roach	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.uk)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

