



# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Irfon Valley Rainbow Tots Playgroup**

**Irfon Valley CP School  
Garth  
Llangammarch Wells  
LD4 4AT**



**Date of Publication**

**Tuesday, 12 March 2019**

**Welsh Government © Crown copyright 2019.**

*You may use and re-use the information featured in this publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. You can view the Open Government License, on the National Archives website or you can write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)*  
*You must reproduce our material accurately and not use it in a misleading context.*

## **Description of the service**

Irfon Valley Rainbow Tots pre-school is within the premises of Irfon Valley County Primary School. The registered person is Clare Anthony and the person in charge is Katie Jones. The pre-school operates within its own dedicated classroom and it has access to a fully enclosed outside play area. The service operates from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Monday to Friday during term time only. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 14 children from 3 years of age until the term before their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. Funded places are available for children as part of the government's Early Entitlement. English is the main language used and the service does not currently provide the Welsh Language 'active offer'. However, basic Welsh language words, phrases rhymes and stories are very well promoted.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children are thriving and developing very well; their welfare and well being is central and at the heart of this service. Children are settled, happy and feel valued. They enjoy their play and learning with an environment that is stimulating, interesting warm and child friendly. The children are cared for by staff who respond effectively and appropriately to their individual needs as well as having a clear focus on developing the children's social and emotional growth. Children enjoy learning through thoughtfully planned activities designed to develop a range of skills. Staffs are very well qualified and exceptionally experienced and they demonstrated an excellent knowledge of how children learn and grow. They provide a range of rich, varied and imaginative educational activities with precise assessment and planning for individual children which ensures they make excellent progress in their learning. The environment is very good providing children with high quality spaces and resources where they are inspired to play and learn. Leadership is very effective. Staff are encouraged and supported to develop their skills and experience and there are very good partnerships with parents and other child care professionals.

### **2. Improvements**

The service has moved from the school hall into a purposely designed early years class room within the early years' department of the school. This has enabled staff to create

areas of learning that do not need to be removed at the end of the session and has improved opportunities for continuous provision. However, it has had an impact on children's ability to freely access the outside play area.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

We have made a few recommendations and there are detailed at the back of this report.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children have a very strong voice and their needs and preferences are listened to. They feel safe, secure and comfortable with the staff. Children are familiar with routines and are confident to move around freely. Children have formed friendships and they have warm and affectionate relationships with their carers. Children interact well and are confident to communicate effectively. All children understand or are beginning to understand the importance of sharing, taking turns, waiting and co operation. They are highly active; participating in vibrant and stimulating play based learning activities and they have ownership of basic routines such as snack time. Children are flourishing and developing their independence well within this child care environment.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children make decisions and are confident communicators.

Children voiced their opinions about what they were doing or wanted to do with enthusiasm. For example, the children put artificial trees together for their 'Arctic' scene role play area. Children asked how they were going to make the trees white, and discussed the ice cubes that had been made 'they are star fish shaped' they exclaimed. 'Are we going to decoration the tree' asked another. When the children made snowmen they asked for scissors and made decisions about what they wanted to use to make the snowmen's noses and scarfs. The children approached staff and us with ease to tell and show us what they had made. During circle time the children sang songs with gusto and they chatted excitedly about what they had had for breakfast. The children engaged in talking about the weather, they quickly pointed out when the leader's mistakes when she deliberately held up the wrong weather pictures. The children helped decide who was going to be the 'helper heddiw' (helper of the day). We saw that during snack time children participated fully, the 'helper heddiw' placed glasses, bowls and cutlery on the table, carried milk in jugs to the table for the other children to pour over their choice of cereal. Children chose their cereal, poured their own milk and helped clear things away at the end of the snack time. We heard children talk about their siblings and what they were going to do after snack time. Outside children asked to play with the mud kitchen or to ride on the tractor or bikes.

Children are able to make decisions over what they do, they express themselves with confidence and they know they will be listened to.

## **1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?**

Children are safe, secure and happy. They are familiar with their surroundings.

Children displayed high levels of confidence with their day to day routines and they showed that they understood the procedures in place to ensure they were kept safe. For example, when carrying scissors from the tool box to the table they reminded themselves 'not to run and hold the handles together'. We observed the children 'self registering' on arrival; they selected their name and stuck their name to the registration board 'I am here' they exclaimed. We saw that the children were able to move freely from one activity to another and the children used space effectively. They were aware of what happened when they gathered for circle time and at snack time as well as when it was time to go home, for example they washed their hands without prompting at snack time and they collected their bags as soon as it was time to go outside to play, in readiness to go home. This showed us that the children had a very well developed sense of security. Children eagerly welcomed other staff members when they visited their room and it was very evident that the children have formed strong and trusting relationships with the adults caring for them.

Children feel very safe, happy, relaxed and valued within this child care setting.

## **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children interact positively and are learning to share, be kind, and take turns.

Children were very well behaved throughout the visits. They showed concern for others, for example at one point whilst playing with 'corn flour' children were heard asking where their friends were and how could they play if they were not at pre-school. We saw children chatting away to each other during snack time which was a very social occasion. Children helped to tidy up their toys and co-operated well with one another and staff. Children throughout the day were seen happily sharing resources and cooperating during group activities, games as well as problem solving when carrying out activities, for example how to put the artificial trees together or how to make the green branches 'white with snow'.

Children interact very well and are mindful of each other.

#### **1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?**

Children participate enthusiastically in their play and learning.

We saw that the children engaged with an excellent range of stimulating and interesting activities. The children played with 'corn flour' and pebbles with letters on so they could recognise the letters of their name and make their name out of the small pebbles. They engaged in creating an 'artic' landscape for role play, using artificial trees, playing with ice cubes and discussing how the ice melted. They made snowmen and showed much defined ideas of how their snow man was going to look. Children were excited about their play and they showed sustained levels of interest. The children explored the outdoor area and they especially enjoyed the mud kitchen. They collected logs with a sit and ride 'digger' and proceeded to construct a house.

Children thoroughly enjoy their play and learning.

#### **1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?**

Children are learning and developing their independence very well.

Children were confident to move around their play environment and they were able to select an activity of their choice. We saw children accessing the toilets independently and washing and drying their hands without prompting by staff. They joined in all routines eagerly. The children confidently 'signed' themselves in, which showed that they understood the self-registration system. They showed great levels of responsibility as they set the table for snack time, poured their own milk and help tidy away at the end of snack time. Children choose tools and materials confidently, for example when deciding what materials to use for their snowmen. Children put their coats on with little help from staff and they showed that their self help skills were developing well.

Children have very well developed self help skills and are confidently expanding their skills.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are committed to ensuring children are kept safe and healthy and they have a sound understanding of the need for robust safeguarding procedures. They manage interactions very well, supporting children to effectively communicate and behave appropriately. Staff are exceptionally dedicated and motivated to provide care and educational activities designed to promote children's learning and play.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and keep children safe and healthy by following their processes and procedures consistently.

Staff promoted healthy practices and although children used the toilet facilities independently, they asked the children if they had washed their hands. Staff also made sure children washed their hands before snack time. Staff were very well qualified and their safeguarding training and paediatric first aid was current. Staff were also aware of the 'Prevent Duty' and had completed the Welsh Government E-learning module. Discussion with staff showed that they understood the importance of giving children opportunities to be active both indoors and outside. Staff consistently reminded children about carrying equipment safely, for example, they reminded the children to 'hold the scissors point side down, handles together' and 'don't run carrying pencils'. The staff made sure children had a range of healthy snacks across the week, for example sometimes the children had fruit, raisins or, on the day of the visit, they had a choice of healthy cereals with milk. Regular fire drills had been conducted in conjunction with the school to help children and staff to know what to do in an emergency and all necessary safety checks relating to electrical equipment had been carried out by the local authority.

Staff keep children safe and promote healthy practices.

#### **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff manage children's interactions exceptionally well.

Staff knew the children well and they were aware of any individual or additional needs. They used quiet gentle voices and their body language was positive. We heard staff use



praise to good effect and they explained why they were praising the children, for example, 'well done, that's where the top of the tree goes' as they praised the children for their assistance in putting together the artificial trees for the 'Arctic' role play area. Staff explained what was happening when they gathered the children together for circle time and we saw that the children understood and were not confused about what was expected of them. Staff were good role models and promoted good manners and we observed that the staff encouraged the children to take ownership over everything they did at the service.

Staff manage interactions in a positive and constructive manner that creates a progressive and rich environment for the children.

### **2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?**

Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and the individual needs of the children they care for.

Staff planned activities cohesively, they worked to a theme and provided activities and play experiences to support specific learning outcomes for the children, as well as making sure that the children had fun. Staff implemented the principles of the Foundation Phase curriculum and provided interesting and stimulating learning experiences across all areas. For example, staff encouraged the children to learn and use new words related to their activity of the day. We heard staff ask children about the animals that lived in the Arctic, what creatures lived in the trees and under the ice. Staff encouraged the children to discuss the ice cubes they had made to create a 'polar' experience and they carefully explained what happens to ice when it isn't kept in a freezer or somewhere 'very very cold'. We saw that staff tracked children's developmental progress and we noted that this information supported future planning. Staff tailored activities to children's individual needs.

Staff effectively promote learning and development through well planned, thoughtful and stimulating activities.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Leaders ensure the premises are safe and secure. The indoor and outdoor play areas are exceptionally child-centred and contain interesting areas for play. The environment is purpose designed as it forms part of the schools early years department. The indoor play area is set up to support delivery of the Foundation Phase curriculum and it offers a wide range of opportunities for children to be active, inquisitive, reflective and creative. However, although the move to a classroom has improved some opportunities it has taken away the 'free flow' access to the outdoor play area. Leaders ensure toys and resources are of a good quality and offer children an opportunity to practice using their senses and learn about the world around them, but the out door toys need cleaning and the area generally tidied up.

#### **Our findings**

##### **3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?**

Leaders ensure the premises are safe and secure.

Leaders ensure children were cared for in a safe, clean and secure environment. We noted that leaders had a secure entry system to the class room which could only be accessed by a code. We saw that leaders ensured that everyone was fully aware of their their responsibilities in relation to the safety and welfare of children. Discussion with staff demonstrated that they understood the policies and procedures for the service. All visitors to the service were authorised, given a visitors pass, signed in on arrival and out on departure. Risk assessments were comprehensive, regularly undertaken, reviewed and acted on to ensure children's safety. We observed leaders carrying out routine cleaning, for example before and after snack, tables were wiped down appropriately. Before going outside leader's checked for any hazards and removed anything they found. At the end of the day leaders made sure children were handed over to a known adult.

Leaders provide a safe and secure environment where risks are assessed and changes are made, as required, to eliminate or reduce potential hazards.

### **3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?**

Leaders ensure the indoor and outdoor play areas are child centred and offer wide-ranging opportunities for children to be active, inquisitive, reflective and creative.

Leaders had ensured the indoor premises were secure, welcoming, and friendly. They had made sure that the areas used by the children were rich, vibrant and stimulating. Leaders had made sure that 'environment text' was consistent in the use of upper and lower case lettering and that number lines showed the number with the correct symbol and quantity. Leaders had created a child centred environment within which children could access their own belongings with ease from their own coat pegs. Likewise, leaders had made sure that games, play equipment and toys were also easily accessible for the children. Outside, leaders had created an interesting and child friendly play area which they had equipped with lots of interesting equipment, for example, number lines, chalk boards, alphabet friezes, mud kitchen, sit and ride toys and natural material such as logs. However, the learning equipment outside needed attention as the number lines did not have the correct symbols or equipment to reinforce the concept of quantity for the children. In addition, a change of base room had impacted on children's ability to freely access the outside play area. Children did go outside but it was now a scheduled 'after snack' activity rather than a 'free flow' time where children could choose to play outdoors or inside. Nevertheless, we saw the outdoor space was used on the day of the visit.

Leaders ensure that the indoor play environment is suitable, child friendly and inspiring and need to apply the same level of attention to the outside play area.

### **3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?**

Leaders ensure toys, resources and equipment are of a good quality.

Leaders provided children attending the service with a good range of age appropriate resources and equipment. Leaders had made sure that the indoor play area had set up to encourage children to be as independent as possible; they had made sure children could freely access equipment, tools and toys easily. Leaders had made sure that the outside play area was equipped with suitable resources such as sit on toys, wheeled toys, mud kitchen and natural materials. However, leaders had not made sure that all of the outdoor equipment was in good, clean order.

Leaders generally ensure the resources and equipment are of a good quality.

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

The service is managed effectively with all policies and procedures up to date. Leaders ensure staff are suitably qualified and receive regular supervision as well as support in their daily practice. Partnerships with parents are strong and there are links with other child care professionals which helps them provide excellent support and care for children.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Leaders ensure policies and procedures are implemented effectively.

Leaders had communicated high expectations for staff and they were delivering the service in line with their statement of purpose. Leaders had ensured the service complied with relevant regulations. Effective policies were in place and we observed that these were fully implemented in practice. Leaders modelled behaviours, such as a calm, consistent approach which created an ethos of respect. It was clear that leaders had made sure all staff was aware of their individual roles and responsibilities.

Leaders have a clear vision and a sense of purpose that promotes and sustains improvement and good outcomes for children.

#### **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Leaders have an effective system in place to self-evaluate the service and plan for improvement.

Leaders had systems in place to identify what they do well and the areas they needed to improve. Leaders had a 'setting improvement plan' which they were implementing and continually adding to and that clearly set out their priorities. We noted that leaders promoted a positive culture of continuous self-evaluation which was embedded in their daily practice. They had good systems in place for gaining the views of children, staff and parents.

Leaders were open to new ideas and embraced the need to look at increasing out door play opportunities for the children.

Leaders ensure they gain the opinions of staff, parents and children to make positive improvements that enhance the children's care and experiences.

#### **4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?**

Leaders ensure staff are suitably qualified and supported in their daily practice.

Leaders demonstrated that they support their staff well. We saw that leaders provide regular supervision for staff and that annual appraisals are carried out. We saw evidence that leaders follow robust recruitment procedures and that they had all relevant information in place for each member of staff.

Leaders effectively manage staff ensuring they receive regular training opportunities.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Leaders effectively share information with parents.

Leaders had positive partnerships with parents and information was shared in a number of ways such as verbally as parents drop off and collect their child, in writing and electronically. Parents spoken with at the end of the day were extremely complimentary about the care their children received. They gave us a range of positive views such as the service *"is excellent at developing speech and confidence"*, another said *"ready for school without doubt"*

Leaders told us how they work closely with the registered person who was also a teacher at the school. They have positive relationships with other child care professionals and they stated that they have excellent links with the local community.

Leaders develop positive partnerships with parents and other professionals which ensures they provide effective care for the children.

### **5 Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

## **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

## **5.2 Recommendations for improvement**

We made the following recommendations to the provider:

- to consider ways to increase outside play for the children so that they are able to choose to play indoors or outside and
- to make sure the outside play area is tidied up and equipment no longer needed is removed.

## 6 How we undertook this inspection

This was a full, unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 18 January 2019 from 8:30am to 12:15 pm.

We: Inspected a sample of documents, policies and procedures, including information about staff, children's records, planning, quality of care review and risk assessments;

- observed practice and completed observations using the SOFI (Short observational Framework for Inspection) 2 tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- spoke to the children, the registered person and staff;
- spoke with parents and
- inspected all areas used by the children

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:  
[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## 7 About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Sessional Day Care
Registered Person	Clare Anthony
Person in charge	Katie Jones
Registered maximum number of places	14
Age range of children	3 to 4 years of age
Opening hours	9:00 am to 11:30 am Monday to Friday (School Term Time)
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	7 December 2015
Dates of this inspection visit	18 January 2019
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	No: This service does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. It does not anticipate, identify or meet the Welsh language needs of children who use or intend to use their service. We recommend that the child minder considers Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words' strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.
Additional Information:	