



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales



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

A report on

**Sam's Learning Tree
159 Vale Road
Rhyl
LL18 2PH**

Date of inspection: February 2016

by

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

and

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

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, and the setting complies with relevant regulations
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement and/or examples of non-compliance
Poor	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and/or significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children

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Publication date: 14/04/2016

About the setting

Name of setting	Sam's Learning Tree
Category of care provided	Full Day Care as defined in the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care
Registered Person(s)	Not Applicable
Responsible Individual (if applicable)	Michelle Gowing
Person in charge	Gemma Wadsworth
Number of places	84
Age range of children	3 months to 11 years
Number of children funded for education	12
Opening days / times	07.00 – 18.00 hours Monday to Friday
Language of the setting	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	December 2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection	April 2011
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	09/02/2016 and 10/02/2016

Additional information

The setting provides care in exceptional circumstances for young people up to the age of 18 years. It provides overnight care from Friday at 6.00pm to Saturday at 11.00am by request.

Most children speak English as their home language. A very few children are learning English as an additional language. No children have Welsh as their home language. There were six children with additional learning needs attending the setting at the time of the inspection. The setting is located in a converted house and includes three staircases leading to upstairs provision. The setting employs 20 permanent and eight temporary members of staff. The responsible individual is the proprietor and the person in charge took up her post in August 2003.

Report summary

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing	Good
Learning	Good
Care and development	Adequate
Teaching and assessment	Adequate
Environment	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate

Non-compliance

We notified the provider that the service was not compliant with the following regulations, which must be addressed.

Regulation 28(2)(b)(ii) – suitability of workers; there is full and satisfactory information or documentation available in relation to the person in respect of the matters specified in paragraph 34 (e) to (g) and (j) to (l) of Part 2 of Schedule 2

Regulation 31(2)(a) and (b) – Provision of information. Notification relating to changes in the persons caring for children must be made where it is reasonably practicable to do so, in advance of the event occurring; and in all other cases as soon as reasonably practicable, but not later than 14 days after the event occurred.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's understanding and use of everyday Welsh
- R2 Pay due attention to the revised areas of learning in planning to ensure that children develop their skills systematically over time
- R3 Use information from observations and assessments to plan effectively to meet children's individual needs
- R4 Ensure that children have independent access to the full range of continuous provision in order to develop and embed their skills effectively
- R5 Ensure that the setting's improvement plan focuses effectively on priorities for improvement

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan showing how it is going to address the non-compliance and recommendations identified. Estyn and CSSIW will monitor progress.

Main findings

Wellbeing

Good

Nearly all children communicate well throughout their time at the setting. They decide what they want to do and whom they want to play with. They know that practitioners understand their needs and respond appropriately to any requests. For example, most children show when they want to wash or wipe their hands after painting. Most children discuss their play and share ideas about what they are doing and what they would like to do next.

Nearly all children cope well with separation from their parents and settle quickly into the daily routine. They are content and have good relationships with practitioners whom they approach confidently for reassurance and comfort. Nearly all children are relaxed and have good interaction with their peers. A few children are beginning to form beneficial friendships, sitting alongside each other and chatting amicably.

Nearly all children interact and co-operate well with their peers and practitioners. They follow the daily routine with little prompting and respond positively when it is time to clear things away. They are content to work together or play alongside each other whilst sharing resources appropriately. Older children sit together as a group successfully and listen well to information about the activities that are available during the session. They clearly know what to expect, often joining in with the activities they particularly like, both indoors and outside.

Most children show interest and engagement in their play. They particularly enjoy their time outdoors responding with interest and excitement when they find mini beasts, and persevering well while learning to balance on the wooden train. They generally move around their areas freely and confidently. Many children persevere with a task on their own, such as threading buttons or fitting shapes. They ask for help appropriately, when it is needed. Most children concentrate well during adult-led activities such as group time. They sustain interest in what practitioners say and respond appropriately to questions as well as talking about things they like or are going to do. For example, they talk about what they are going to do during their half term break. Most children are keen to learn new skills and show pleasure in completing tasks well, such as successfully pegging out wet socks and finishing jigsaw puzzles.

Most children demonstrate a suitable level of independence for their age and stage of development, for example when they brush their teeth and wash their own hands. Older children try to put on their aprons before painting as well as their coats and hats before going out to play. Most children show good self-esteem, such as when they display good manners or succeed in completing a task. Most children participate effectively in a wide range of play and learning that promotes their all-round development well.

Learning (only applies to funded children)	Good
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Most children make appropriate progress in their time in the setting and recall previous learning well. For example, they talk confidently about 'big' and 'small' objects following their recent focus on size. Most children develop good communication skills. Nearly all children make themselves understood effectively. Most children listen well during circle time and follow instructions with understanding, such as collecting their mats to sit on. They talk confidently to each other and to adults, using appropriate language to describe the pancakes they make out of playdough. Nearly all children enjoy mark making and are beginning to understand that writing has a purpose, such as when they pretend to record measurements on clipboards. More able children are beginning to write a few of the letters in their name with increasing control. Many children enjoy looking at books, turning the pages carefully and beginning to behave as readers.

Most children's numeracy skills are developing well. They sort and match different coloured fruit successfully when playing a game and recognise simple shapes correctly. Most children count confidently to at least five and use simple mathematical language to talk about size appropriately.

Most children make good progress with their personal and social skills. They understand the need to share and take turns, and join in with group activities appropriately. For example, they take part in a game of 'What's the time Mr Wolf' enthusiastically and effectively. Most children's thinking and problem solving skills are developing appropriately for their age and stage of development, such as when they work out how to complete jigsaw puzzles and consider what will happen if they add water to soil.

Many children develop their physical skills well. For example, they use the slide confidently and handle tweezers with increasing control. Many children develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well when they direct remote control cars and select games on the computer.

Most children make suitable progress with their Welsh language skills from their starting point. For example, many children join in singing the 'bore da' song and most name colours confidently. However, in general, children's understanding and use of everyday Welsh are underdeveloped.

Care and development	Adequate
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The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing effectively. Practitioners ensure that children learn good health and hygiene practices, for example through regular tooth brushing and hand washing. The snacks and meals offered to the children are prepared daily, using fresh fruit and vegetables. Practitioners offer children milk or water to drink regularly to encourage good hydration. Children have regular opportunities to play outside twice a day, supporting their physical development effectively. When possible, practitioners arrange for children to go for walks giving plenty of beneficial opportunities for exercise. The setting has appropriate procedures for administering medication. However, not all practitioners follow these procedures consistently in relation to recording the last dosage administered to the child before the child arrives at the setting. Most practitioners hold an up-to-date first aid certificate.

Practitioners work closely with parents to meet their child's individual needs. They arrange home visits before many of the children start at the setting and invite parents and children to attend settling in sessions. This helps to ensure that practitioners know the children well and provide them with the care they need effectively. For example, practitioners ensure that babies follow their normal daily routines of feed and sleep patterns. Practitioners record children's progress within the setting regularly and plan a weekly timetable of activities that enable children to thrive, making good use of their key worker system.

The setting has good procedures in place to support children with additional needs. Practitioners plan effectively to help individual children make progress, working closely with parents and keeping them well informed. The setting makes beneficial use of information from specialist services to support individual children and improve their practice generally.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour well and are good role models. They manage incidents of unacceptable behaviour calmly and sensitively, praising children and re-directing them effectively, without interrupting the flow of the daily routine. Practitioners encourage good manners successfully by gently reminding children to say please and thank you. The setting has an appropriate policy in place to promote equality and practitioners ensure that all children have equal access to resources. There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about their own and other cultures, such as when they celebrate Chinese New Year and learn about Santes Dwynwen.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet most regulations and give minor cause for concern. The majority of practitioners have attended relevant and recent safeguarding training.

Teaching and assessment (only applies to funded children)	Adequate
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The setting plans a suitable range of learning experiences that engage children's interest and cover most areas of learning well over time. In general, planning supports children's development appropriately and practitioners give suitable attention to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. However, practitioners do not identify the skills they want children to develop specifically enough to ensure that they develop these skills systematically. Although practitioners are beginning to adapt activities for different abilities, they have not developed this well enough to meet the individual needs of all children's effectively.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities to develop children's physical skills both indoors and outside through interesting activities and resources. They plan well for children to develop their ICT, thinking and creative skills, and to practise mark-making in their free play. They plan meaningful activities to support children's understanding of sustainability, such as the recent focus on recycling. There are worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about the world around them, including visits to a nearby shop and post office. Practitioners help children to learn about their Welsh culture when they celebrate St David's Day and decorate love spoons for St Dwynwen's Day. They plan suitable opportunities for children to learn simple Welsh words and songs during circle time. However, in general, provision to develop children's Welsh language skills is underdeveloped.

In general, the setting provides beneficial experiences to support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, children have good opportunities to learn to take turns, play co-operatively and understand simple rules of behaviour, such as when they share measuring tapes and digging equipment in the outdoors.

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and of the principles of the Foundation Phase. As a result, they provide worthwhile experiences to help children to learn through play and active involvement. In general, there is an appropriate balance between child-selected and practitioner led activities. However, the recently adopted layout in the setting restricts children's access to the full range of continuous provision. This limits children's opportunities to make independent choices and to follow their own interests.

Practitioners work well together as a team and have high expectations of the children. They use effective strategies to promote good behaviour and encourage children to develop their self-help skills appropriately, such as expecting them to wash their own plates after eating their snacks. Practitioners are good language role models and question children constructively, helping them to develop their thinking skills well. They develop warm relationships with the children and intervene sensitively in their play, ensuring that the children feel safe and secure in the setting.

Practitioners assess children regularly, recording helpful observations and assessments. This builds up a clear picture of what children can do in a useful individual profile. However, practitioners do not yet use information from assessments systematically to help plan the next steps in children's learning effectively. The setting keeps parents well informed about their children's progress, sharing information on a daily basis.

Environment	Good
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The premises are welcoming, warm and comfortable and provide a good environment for play. Practitioners display a few examples of the children's work on the playroom walls along with colourful displays of their birthdays, using brightly coloured and fairy cakes to highlight these effectively. The layout of most of the playrooms enables children to move around freely and to make their own choices during play. However, the provision for older children spreads across two floors, limiting their independent access to all areas of learning. The setting's arrangements for sleeping are appropriate. Babies sleep in buggies whilst younger toddlers use an allocated room upstairs where mattresses and their own bedding are set out for sleeping after lunch.

Leaders ensure that the setting is safe and secure. Visitors can only access the setting when a practitioner admits them. The setting has established effective procedures to ensure that children only leave the premises with a recognised parent or carer. Leaders and practitioners understand their responsibilities for ensuring that children are safe. For example, they supervise children carefully when using the stairs. Practitioners complete risk assessments for both indoors and outdoors and act promptly to address any hazards that they identify to children's safety.

Overall, the setting is clean and well maintained. Practitioners have established effective daily cleaning routines, taking responsibility for specific tasks in their respective playrooms. Practitioners practise effective hygiene procedures in line with the setting's completed infection control audit tool.

The nappy changing and toilet areas are conveniently located and provide children with an appropriate level of privacy. Low-level paper tissue and paper towel dispensers enable children to dry their hands or wipe their noses without having to ask for help, supporting their developing independence successfully.

Equipment within the playrooms is well set out, enabling children to access what they want freely. Labelled toy storage boxes and individually named drawers give children good opportunities to learn to recognise their own names and to know where to find different resources. There are sufficient resources to promote cultural awareness, such as dressing up clothes and reading material.

The outdoor play area provides a safe and exciting area where children play and explore freely. It consists of fixed play equipment such as the wooden train, mud kitchen and a large sheltered sand pit and is completely enclosed to ensure children's safety.

Leadership and management	Adequate
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The responsible individual has a strong vision for the setting, which contributes effectively to its warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos. She develops good working relationships with the staff through her energetic and active daily involvement in the setting. This enables her to challenge everyone to do their best, setting high standards for the quality of care offered. The responsible individual reinforces standards and shares values and expectations effectively through regular staff meetings. These give leaders and practitioners worthwhile opportunities to share suggestions for improvement. As a result, practitioners feel valued and work together effectively and flexibly as a team. The responsible individual updates all relevant policies regularly, ensuring that they focus appropriately on children's needs. However, a few policies are too detailed to understand and implement easily. The setting meets all the minimum standards successfully. However, it does not comply fully with all CSSIW regulations, such as ensuring that all staff files are complete and notifying CSSIW in a timely manner of any changes to persons caring for children.

There is a well-established culture of continuous improvement in the setting, with all practitioners regularly contributing to helpful changes in the learning environment. The responsible individual and room leaders and managers welcome advice and support from other agencies such as the local authority and flying start link teachers, acting on their suggestions promptly. The setting's self-evaluation report covers all aspects of the nursery's work effectively. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement appropriately and honestly. The responsible individual takes suitable account of the views of parents, children and staff in preparing the report. However, she does not consult parents and practitioners formally as part of the self-evaluation process. This limits their opportunity to contribute their views. The setting's self-evaluation feeds into a comprehensive setting improvement plan, logging a rolling programme of improvements over the past two years. However, the plan does

not identify the main strategic priorities for improvement well enough because it is too detailed. As a result, the setting does not always address the most important issues quickly enough, such as ensuring that it develops older children's literacy and numeracy skills systematically. Although the setting initially made good progress towards meeting the recommendations from the previous Estyn inspection, leaders have not built on these improvements effectively.

The responsible individual ensures that there are sufficient practitioners with relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience of working with young children in the setting. She deploys practitioners flexibly to ensure continuity and to meet children's needs. All practitioners have clearly defined roles and most leaders carry out their responsibilities effectively. Very occasionally, room leaders are unclear about the full extent of their responsibility for standards of work. As a result, on a very few occasions they do not ensure that practitioners are fully responsive to children's needs. There is a suitable system for carrying out appraisal and supervision. This gives practitioners regular, valuable opportunities to evaluate and improve their practice. The registered individual provides good opportunities for practitioners to attend training, such as recent training supporting children's speech and language development provided on-site. However, processes to ensure that the setting is fully compliant with regulations are not robust enough. The setting is outward looking, developing useful partnerships that contribute positively to children's wellbeing. It has strong links with parents, sharing information with them well. There is an informative and easy to access bilingual website, setting out information about the setting's aims, policies and practices very clearly. Practitioners keep parents well informed through regular daily contact and by sharing information on a whiteboard or through daily diary sheets. The responsible individual welcomes feedback from parents and responds quickly to this.

The setting makes good use of the local community to extend children's learning experiences, particularly during the school holidays, with regular trips to the park and the beach. With the help of the local authority's family support officer, the setting has developed appropriate links with local primary schools to support children as they move to the next stage of their education. Leaders and managers welcome visitors from other nurseries to the setting, sharing good practice and developing a useful professional network.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark – denotes N/A.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Cytuno'n gryf Strongly Agree	Cytuno Agree	Anghytuno Disagree	Anghytuno'n gryf Strongly disagree	Ddim yn gwybod Don't know	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	21	13 62%	8 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		-	-	-	-	-	
My child likes this setting.	21	15 71%	6 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		-	-	-	-	-	
I received information about the setting that enabled me to make an informed choice about whether to use the setting.	21	16 76%	4 19%	1 5%	0 0%	0	Derbyniais wybodaeth am y lleoliad a wnaeth fy ngalluogi i wneud dewis gwybodus ynghylch p'un ai i ddefnyddio'r lleoliad.
		-	-	-	-	-	
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	21	16 76%	5 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		-	-	-	-	-	
My child has a keyworker who ensures that his or her needs are met.	17	10 59%	6 35%	1 6%	0 0%	3	Mae gweithiwr allweddol gan fy mhlentyn, sy'n sicrhau bod ei anghenion / ei hanghenion yn cael eu bodloni.
		-	-	-	-	-	
My child is making good progress at the setting.	20	16 80%	4 20%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		-	-	-	-	-	
Children behave well in the setting.	21	13 62%	8 38%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		-	-	-	-	-	
Care is good.	21	14 67%	7 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r gofal yn dda.
		-	-	-	-	-	
Teaching is good.	20	14 70%	6 30%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		-	-	-	-	-	
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	19	15 79%	4 21%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		-	-	-	-	-	
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	20	13 65%	7 35%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		-	-	-	-	-	

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Cytuno'n gryf Strongly Agree	Cytuno Agree	Anghytuno Disagree	Anghytuno'n gryf Strongly disagree	Ddim yn gwybod Don't know	
My child is safe at the setting.	21	16 76%	5 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	18	13 72%	5 28%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	20	13 65%	5 25%	2 10%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	21	14 67%	7 33%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	18	10 56%	7 39%	0 0%	1 6%	2	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	19	14 74%	5 26%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	21	15 71%	6 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
The setting is well run.	21	16 76%	5 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.

Appendix 2

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from Estyn and CSSIW's websites (www.estyn.gov.wales) (www.cssiw.org.uk)

Appendix 3

Glossary

Additional learning needs (ALN)	This term covers a very wide range of needs. We use the term additional learning needs in relation to children who have needs besides those of most of other children in the setting, for a number of different reasons.
Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity• language, literacy and communications skills• mathematical development• Welsh language development• knowledge and understanding of the world• physical development• creative development
Care Council for Wales	This is the Sector Skills Council for Social Care, Early Years and Child Care in Wales.
Foundation Phase	The statutory curriculum for all three to seven-year-olds in Wales, in both maintained schools and non-maintained settings
Flying Start	Services that deliver free, part-time childcare for eligible two-year-olds to help give them the best start in life and prepare them for school. They also provide increased levels of support from health visitors and parenting programmes to give young children the best possible start in life. These programmes have been running since January 2007.
Funded non-maintained settings	Settings funded by the Welsh Government to provide part-time education for three and four-year-olds. They include playgroups, private day care providers and independent schools.
Key person or key worker system	This is a practitioner who is assigned to each child so they always have a trusted, familiar person available to them so that they feel safe and comfortable. They build positive relationships and regularly talk to parents.

Leaders	<p>This can include the Registered Person, Responsible Individual or Person in Charge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered person – the person who is registered by CSSIW to provide the service. This may be an individual or an organisation • Responsible individual – where the registered person is an organisation, this is a person who is nominated by that organisation to act on their behalf • Person in charge – the individual appointed by the registered person to be in full day-to-day charge of the service
Practitioners	All persons working directly with children in a setting
Safeguarding	Statutory duty to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing