



*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**

**Puddleducks Playgroup  
Ysgol Trefnant  
Henllan Road  
Trefnant  
LL16 5UF**

**Date of inspection: June 2015**

**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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**Publication date: 15/07/2015**

## Context

Puddleducks Playgroup is situated in Trefnant Primary School in the Denbighshire local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 16 children per session for five half-days per week, for 39 weeks per year. Children are admitted from the age of two and a half years. There are currently 15 children on roll, ranging in age from two and a half to four years of age. There are currently five three-year-olds receiving funded early years education in the setting, although not all were present during the inspection.

All children have English as their home language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

There are two permanent members of staff, including the playgroup leader. Both practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since 2011.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in July 2013 and by Estyn in July 2011.

## 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 setting's current performance is good because:

- Children enjoy their learning and talk about their learning experiences enthusiastically
- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting experiences that support the development of children's skills well
- The setting has well established routines and practitioners set consistent expectations of the children
- The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully
- Practitioners develop children's Welsh language skills well

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvements are good because:

- Effective teamwork and a positive ethos create a happy atmosphere for learning
- Working relationships with children, parents and carers and the primary school are strong and contribute well to the positive learning environment
- Practitioners are keen to develop their roles and attend a wide range of relevant training to improve the provision for the children
- The leader has a sound understanding of what the setting does well and what they need to do to improve the provision
- The leader works well with staff from the school to monitor the budget and to ensure that there is an appropriate range of relevant and good quality resources to support children's learning

## Recommendations

- R1 Make better use of visits to enhance children's learning experiences
- R2 Ensure more opportunities to develop children's mark making skills across all areas of learning
- R3 Ensure that self-evaluation processes focus clearly on how priorities will improve outcomes for children

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

#### Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

#### Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

#### Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners plan well together and provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences, across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Planning includes beneficial opportunities to use both the indoor and outdoor environment. There is a strong focus on providing children with good first hand, play and learning experiences. For example, children weigh, buy and sell fruit and vegetables in the farm shop role-play. As a result, children enjoy their learning and talk about their learning experiences enthusiastically. However, opportunities for visits to enrich children's learning experiences are limited. The setting has identified this as an area for development.

Planning provides children with worthwhile opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children talk about what they need to do in order to grow seeds successfully and count the scoops of compost and the number of seeds planted in the trays with confidence. Opportunities to develop children's reading and speaking skills are good, but opportunities to develop mark-making skills across all areas of learning are limited. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and practitioners provide a range of suitable opportunities that develop children's independence effectively. For example, children find and put on aprons before choosing the water play and painting activities, and tidy up before snack time. Children have relevant opportunities to use a suitable range of interactive programmes on the computer.

All practitioners use Welsh throughout the session to reinforce and develop children's Welsh language skills effectively. They provide children with appropriate opportunities to sing a range of songs and rhymes and to use Welsh words in their play. Examples include counting children as they line up outside and naming farm animals in the small world area. Children have suitable opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating St. David's Day.

## **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of the needs of individual children and the requirements of the Foundation Phase framework. They use a good range of strategies that engage and encourage all children to learn. The setting has well-established routines and practitioners set clear expectations. As a result, all children know what is expected of them and behaviour in the setting is good.

Practitioners are good language role models. They make effective use of open-ended questions to encourage children to think for themselves and to find solutions to problems, for example “what happens when you add water to the sand?” and “what do plants need to grow?”

Practitioners support the development of children’s literacy and mathematical skills well, and provide a good range of activities to develop these skills. Practitioners interact purposefully with children to develop their mathematical skills. For example, they encourage children to count and match numbered wheel toys to their parking spaces and with the numbers on the fence in the outdoor area. Practitioners intervene well to support, and to move children’s learning forward. There is a good balance between adult led activities and those chosen by the children.

The setting has detailed on-going records for each child. These booklets clearly identify key progress in all areas of learning and include a photographic record of activities that the child has enjoyed. The setting shares the booklet with the school and with parents and carers on a regular basis. This provides parents and carers with a useful record of their child’s progress and achievements.

The recently introduced skills assessment document enables practitioners to identify the progress individual children make in their literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills effectively. Practitioners observe children informally on a daily basis and make valuable use of these observations to inform the assessment records. Practitioners are beginning to make good use of the assessment information to inform their planning and to identify any future resource needs.

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

The setting promotes children’s health and wellbeing well. For example, children are encouraged to eat a good range of fruit and vegetables during healthy snack time. There are regular opportunities for children to access a valuable range of physical development activities. For example, outdoor sessions encourage children to use wheeled toys, to dig in the large sand pit and to throw a ball at skittles confidently. Indoors, the setting provides children with good opportunities to listen and respond to music and movement songs.

Through discussions, practitioners encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and take care of resources. Children are encouraged to share and take turns, for example when waiting to be served in the role-play farm shop and when the ‘helpwr heddiw’ serves the rest of group at snack time. As a result, everyone works well together.

Practitioners provide an appropriate range of learning experiences, which fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The setting celebrates Chinese New Year with the rest of the school. This promotes children's understanding of other customs and cultures well. Children learn about the importance of caring for living things in their immediate environment by looking for minibeasts, by planting seeds and by composting fruit and vegetable peelings. They visit the local church regularly and this supports their spiritual development successfully.

The setting understands what they need to do in order to support children who have additional learning needs. Although there are currently no children in the setting with additional learning needs, there are appropriate policies in place. Practitioners know how to access support and advice from a range of external agencies and professionals should they need to do so.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children feel valued and have equal access to the curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on celebrating diversity through stories and celebrations.

The setting operates in the school building and the indoor and outdoor spaces are secure and well maintained. Practitioners make effective use of the available shared space such as the outdoor classroom and wildlife area to enhance the learning opportunities for children. They set out and clear away learning activities daily in the hall. Despite this, practitioners succeed in creating a bright and engaging learning environment. A suitable range of attractive displays reflects recent themes and helps to create a welcoming environment.

The setting makes daily use of the outdoor area to support the development of children's skills effectively and to enhance their learning opportunities. For example, children count and sort pebbles and learn about the world around them by growing plants in the school's greenhouse. Learning resources are of good quality and are easily accessible to the children during the session, and meet their needs well.



<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 playgroup leader is enthusiastic and committed to fulfilling her role well. She works effectively with the other practitioner to ensure the best provision for the children. Working relationships with children, parents and carers and the primary school are strong and contribute well to a positive learning environment. The leader, with support from the local authority advisory teacher, monitors the setting's progress and areas for development appropriately, and communicates well with the management committee.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of staff on an annual basis. Practitioners have relevant development targets, based on their roles in the setting. They know their roles and responsibilities well and undertake them purposefully. They are keen to further develop through working closely with the advisory teacher and attend a wide range of relevant training in order to improve provision for the children.

The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives, for example in developing literacy and numeracy skills, and it has implemented the Foundation Phase philosophy successfully.

**Improving quality: Adequate**

All practitioners are clearly committed to improving quality. They work well together and have a clear focus on ensuring that learning experiences are interesting and motivating for children, and that children are happy and ready to learn.

The leader knows the setting well. She has a sound understanding of what the setting does well and what they need to do to improve the provision. The setting makes appropriate use of an annual self-evaluation process to identify suitable priorities for improvement. However, these generally focus too much on provision issues and not enough on how the priorities will raise outcomes for children.

Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement. They attend training events regularly, are beginning to visit other settings to share good practice and are open to new ideas. They respond positively to support from the local authority advisory staff. However, this does not always result in improved outcomes for children.

The setting has made good progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection.

**Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a strong partnership with parents. Parents value the quality of the learning experiences provided and the level of care and concern that the practitioners show their children. Practitioners provide parents with a broad range of information through daily personal contact, the setting's noticeboard, and a detailed information booklet. The setting seeks the views of parents regularly and makes appropriate use of feedback.

The partnership between the setting and its feeder primary school, which is in the same building, is effective and supports the children's transition from the setting to the school well. Children from the setting visit the school's nursery class, share the canteen at lunchtime and attend relevant school events, and staff from the school visit the setting regularly. As a result, the setting prepares children well for their next stage of education and they settle into school quickly and confidently.

Due to its relatively rural location, the setting has limited opportunities to engage with the community beyond the primary school and the church. The setting makes good use of the immediate locality to learn about the minibeasts that live there. The setting has sound partnership arrangements with the local authority, which supports the work of the setting well.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has enough appropriately trained staff and deploys them effectively.

Appropriate arrangements for staff appraisal and professional development are in place. Links with the local authority advisory teacher and the school enable practitioners to access a good range of relevant training. Practitioners make beneficial use of this training to develop and improve their practice and to improve provision for children.

There are valuable systems in place for keeping spending under review. The leader works closely with staff in the school to record and monitor the setting's budget successfully. They match spending to the setting's priorities and areas for development appropriately. The leader works well with staff from the school to ensure that there is a suitable range of relevant and good quality resources to support children's learning.

As a result, of the good levels of provision and the strengths in leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Janet Elizabeth Rowlands	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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## 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.