



**Estyn**

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

**A report on**

**Puddle Ducks Pre-School**

**Ysgol y Mynydd Du  
Talgarth  
Powys  
LD3 0AW**

**Date of inspection: June 2022**

**by**

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)**

**and**

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

## About Puddle Ducks Pre-School

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Name of setting   | Puddle Ducks Pre School     |
| Category of care provided   | Day Care                    |
| Registered person(s)  | Dawn Harris                 |
| Responsible individual (if applicable)  | N/A                         |
| Person in charge  | Dawn Harris<br>Rebecca Days |
| Number of places  | 30                          |
| Age range of children   | 2-4                         |
| Number of children funded for up to two terms   | 24                          |
| Number of children funded for up to five terms  | 15                          |
| Opening days / times  | 9.15-3.30 Monday-Friday     |
| Flying start service  | No                          |
| Language of the setting   | English                     |
| Is this setting implementing the Child Care Offer?  | Yes                         |
| Welsh Language Active Offer   | Yes                         |
| Date of previous CIW inspection   | 13th June 2018              |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection   | October 2014                |
| Dates of this inspection visit(s)   | 28/06/2022                  |
| <p>The number of children being cared for has increased significantly from the time of the last inspection from 15 to 33.</p> <p>Very few children speak English as an additional language.</p> |                             |

## **Non-compliance**

**No non-compliance was identified during this inspection.**

## **Recommendations**

R1 Provide further opportunities to develop younger children's independence

R2 Provide further opportunities to develop children's understanding of other cultures and beliefs

R3 Improve transition arrangements with the local school

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Well-being:

Most children settle in very quickly and form positive emotional attachments with practitioners and other children. They are enthusiastic when entering the setting and engage well in the wide range of activities and resources available to them

Children have a strong voice. They express their views and regularly contribute ideas to the planning. For example, they express that they want to learn about vehicles, so staff provide suitable resources and activities to further develop this interest. Many children communicate confidently, and staff consider children's wants, moods and needs appropriately. For example, when a child struggles to communicate they use the picture board to convey their need. This makes the children feel valued and included as they know they will be listened to.

Most children show a positive attitude to their play and learning. They concentrate for appropriate periods and are beginning to understand their skills in relation to risky play. Most children enjoy the stimulating activities provided for them. Many show enjoyment when using vehicles to make tracks in paint and sustain concentration while making tunnels for cars to travel down. They persevere on tasks, such as when making a tower and rebuilding it.

Children develop independence skills making appropriate use of real-life resources in the home corner and the outdoor area. Nearly all children move confidently from one area to another, selecting appropriate toys and equipment independently.

Most children know how to stay healthy. For example, they wash their hands thoroughly when arriving and before eating food. Nearly all recognise their coat, and many are able to put them on independently. Children develop social skills very well. They welcome friends when they arrive and they play together enthusiastically. Most children behave appropriately and learn to respect their environment.

Snack times and mealtimes are social occasions where chat purposefully, although a minority of children do not develop their independence sufficiently during these sessions. Nearly all children recycle materials and dispose of food at the end of mealtimes independently.

### **Learning (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):**

Nearly all children make strong progress from their starting points. Most children take advantage of regular opportunities to express themselves and as a result their communication skills develop well during their time at the setting. Most children know how to ask for things and do so politely. Many children show an interest in books, helping to turn pages and enjoying the content when practitioners read to them. They join in with familiar parts of the story with enthusiasm. Most children develop their mark making skills successfully in both the indoor and outdoor areas. For example, they enjoy using chalk and wet brushes to make marks on a large scale in the

outdoor area. Most children answer questions in Welsh appropriately and join in singing Welsh songs with enthusiasm.

Many children develop their numeracy skills well. They count during their play at a level suitable for their stage of development and understand mathematical concepts in real life contexts, for example when comparing the sizes of different types of birds' eggs. Nearly all children join in with rote counting along a number line in English and Welsh.

Many children show enjoyment and pleasure as they develop their creative and physical skills effectively. For example, they dress up and dance expressively when playing with a dressing up box. Most children develop co-ordination well as they use a range of tools such as hammers, large chalks brushes, and rolling pins during their exploration and play. Their fine motor skills develop well and they take advantage of valuable opportunities to apply skills as they play, for example when they screw in plastic nails at the woodwork bench or roll out play dough with a rolling pin. Nearly all children develop their gross motor skills well, for example when running outside in the open space, rolling in the tall grass and building a bridge with large loose parts. Many pedal confidently and manoeuvre a scooter well.

Nearly all children are curious and interested in the resources and activities prepared for them. Many persevere and solve problems when faced with challenges, such as when they attempt to refill the water butt using water from the water tray, and when they search for a vessel to carry their natural materials inside after collecting them. Nearly all children develop personal and social skills well. For example, they come inside to get their own coat when it starts to rain. They share, take turns and cooperate well for example when they negotiate turn taking over a favourite costume in the role play area.

### **Care and development:**

Practitioners prioritise children's health and safety. The arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern. All practitioners regularly attend bespoke safeguarding training, and leaders attend higher level training. Practitioners are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and the safeguarding policy is comprehensive.

Practitioners have attended a wide range of appropriate training, including risk assessments, first aid, allergies and food hygiene. They record accidents and administer first aid appropriately. Practitioners prepare suitable snacks that offer the children a good variety of healthy foods, reinforcing children's awareness of healthy eating habits.

Practitioners provide exciting physical activities regularly, including dancing, climbing, or throwing balls in the indoor and outdoor area. They make every effort to ensure good hygiene procedures. For example, they disinfect tables before and after snacks and teach the children about the importance of hand washing and tidying up.

Practitioners know the children and their families very well and as a result they plan suitable activities that meet their needs. They have a sound understanding of children's individual needs, abilities and interests. Practitioners receive useful

information about the children's background and individual needs before they start at the setting and key workers maintain close contact with the parents/carers. The provision for additional learning needs is particularly good.

Practitioners interact well with the children. They are kind and gentle when speaking to the children and create a relaxed atmosphere. Practitioners encourage the children to define and guide their own play. Nearly all practitioners extend children's understanding through sensitive questioning. They use positive behaviour management strategies and set clear boundaries in a fair way. They praise the children often and this has a positive effect on the children's self-confidence.

Practitioners promote opportunities for children to develop and learn effectively. They introduce Welsh rhymes and literacy activities at circle time appropriately and give the children valuable time to reflect and discuss their emotions. They encourage children to express their feelings and the reasons they feel that way.

**Teaching and assessment (only applies to three- or four-year-old children who do not receive education in a maintained setting):**

Practitioners' planning takes good account of the principles of the foundation learning and the Curriculum for Wales. They successfully provide a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor environments that support and develop children's learning and independence well. Practitioners respond well to children's interests for example getting the bird feed when the children noticed the feeders needed refilling.

Practitioners know the children very well. They allow children to take appropriate risks, such as building a bridge to balance on and rolling in the long grass. This allows them to become more confident explorers of their environment. Practitioners devise tasks that develop children's understanding of the world in which they live and encourage them to take care of it, such as planting flowers in the garden and growing carrots, sunflowers and strawberries. They encourage children to develop a sense of wonder and awe for example when they watch birds in the setting's garden and work together to build a nest from natural materials. Practitioners encourage children to speak Welsh and they provide opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills further in their play. For example, they share Welsh stories in the outdoor area and answer the question posed on the self-registration board.

Practitioners are good role models. They speak clearly, modelling correct language patterns, and use effective questioning to develop children's thinking skills very well. The practitioners value process over end product allowing children to explore and experiment, for example when making masks. Practitioners are flexible in their approach and provide children with valuable extended periods to lead their own play. This enables children to follow their own interests and develop their ideas successfully. Practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to explore Welsh culture and heritage. However, they do not always provide enough opportunity for children to develop their understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

New procedures for observing children are in the early stages and practitioners continue to develop these in order to progress children's learning. Practitioners assess the children's progress regularly and share information appropriately. As a result, key workers have a clear understanding of each child's stage of development in all areas.

## **Environment:**

Leaders provide a safe and clean environment where children can play and learn suitably. They ensure that practitioners carry out robust cleaning routines and follow current guidance on infection control. Most of the risk assessments and daily health and safety checks appropriately identify the potential hazards to children and what measures are in place to manage these risks. Information is available to everyone about how to deal with emergencies. Practitioners supervise children well during their activities.

Leaders make sure that the layout of the playroom promotes children's independence, enabling them to explore freely and make their own choices about what they want to play with. They provide a wide range of toys and resources for the ages cared for and children have access to appropriately sized furniture and cosy areas for quiet time and rest.

Leaders ensure that indoor storage of toys and resources are suitable and accessible to children. There is a designated area for children to store their personal items, which creates a sense of belonging. There are some resources that raise children's awareness of the world around them, for example dolls, colourful rugs and books. However, resources and activities to develop children's knowledge about their Welsh heritage and wider cultures are limited.

Leaders make sure that areas of learning are suitably organised and that there is a good selection of quality natural resources to develop children's sensory skills. There are ample resources both indoors and outdoors to aid children's play and curiosity including sand, soil and water. Leaders have organised the outdoor play area attractively with a suitable range of equipment for children to choose from and help develop their physical and fine motor skills. For example, there are climbing apparatus, recycled tyres, pedal vehicles, musical instruments and a variety of hand tools and utensils to use for gardening. Leaders make sure that children have the opportunity to learn about the natural world and have organised these areas effectively.

## **Leadership and management:**

Leaders have a clear vision for the setting based on children being happy, safe, independent with a focus on play-based learning. They convey this vision successfully and ensure that all practitioners work together in a happy environment. There is a positive ethos and everyone feels valued. Leaders meet the needs of children and practitioners understand what is expected of them. They organise the setting well. The setting has clear aims and objectives that focus on children's needs, and these are understood and implemented by all practitioners. The statement of purpose provides an accurate picture of the setting.

Leaders have suitable self-evaluation processes that feed into useful setting development plans. These plans identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders set appropriate actions that bring about the desired improvements. For example, the setting is in the process of developing an observation and planning system which involves parents. Suitable systems are in

place to carry out staff appraisals and the setting regularly accesses the training offered by the advisory team. Leaders respond readily to their advice and support.

Effective use is made of available grants. For example, leaders are developing parent packs to strengthen links with parents further support the development of children's skills. They have a clear spending plan, and allocate expenditure appropriately. For example, leaders have purchased a woodwork bench and resources to help support children to develop a range of skills. The setting makes good use of practitioners and resources to support children's play and learning well. Resources are of good quality, resulting in a well-equipped, learning environment. The leader prioritises areas for improvement that reflect the needs of the setting and impact on outcomes for children. For example, through discussion with the advisory teacher, the setting has started to develop the use of block play and open-ended resources which provide children with opportunities for more exploration and problem solving in their play.

The setting maintains a range of worthwhile partnerships. Practitioners keep parents/carers informed about what their children are learning and how well they are progressing through informal updates. They share photographs of children's activities and communicate with parents further through the use of a private social media group. Parents value this platform and find it useful to view what their children do at the setting. The setting engages in local authority training based on the Curriculum for Wales and has worked with the advisory teacher to articulate a vision which provides staff with an understanding of what they do and why. There are beneficial links with outside agencies such as the speech and language therapist, however the setting does not have robust enough transition arrangements to support children who are moving to the school.



## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from CIW and Estyn's websites (<http://careinspectorate.wales>) ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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