



*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**

**Mrs Tiggywinkles  
Stone Lodge  
Merthyr Road  
Princetown  
Tredegar  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP22 3AE**

**Date of inspection: February 2011**

**by**

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

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 school'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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## Context

Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery is a non-maintained setting. It provides education and care in an adapted, self-contained area of a private dwelling in the village of Princetown, near Tredegar, Blaenau Gwent. It is open Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 5.15 pm for 50 weeks of the year. The setting was first registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in 2001 to provide care for a maximum of 16 children. Children are admitted from three months to five years old. During the inspection a total of 12 children were present in the setting.

Four of the youngest children are cared for on the upper floor of the property with the older ones receiving their education in a well-organised small room on the ground floor, which has good access to an appropriate outdoor learning area. The ground floor also has a kitchen where children's meals and snacks are prepared.

Currently, six children of three and four years of age have funded places from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and receive education for two and a half hours every weekday morning from 9.00 am to 11.30 am. A few of these children stay on after the morning session as part of the extended arrangements provided by the setting. Currently three additional children who are not funded arrive at the setting at the end of the morning session.

Children come from nearby towns and villages situated in the Heads of the Valley area. This is designated a Communities First area by the Welsh Assembly Government on the basis of its high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Children come from homes the setting regards as neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. None of the children have English as an additional language and all come from homes where English is the main language spoken. The setting is inclusive and welcomes children with additional learning needs (ALN). Currently, none are recognised as having ALN.

The setting employs three full-time, five part-time and two casual supply staff. The proprietor is also the manager and a member of the setting's teaching staff.

The setting was last inspected by CSSIW in September 2010, and a report published in November. This is the setting's first Estyn inspection.

## Summary

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Good</b> |

### Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- all children achieve well and make rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding across most areas of learning in relation to their starting points;
- all children are enthusiastic, courteous and well-behaved learners who have very good listening skills. They feel safe and secure, co-operate well with other children and adults and enjoy their learning;
- children develop good skills of enquiry and investigation. They show signs of increasing confidence and independence in their learning and have a say in how and what they learn; and
- the outcomes from the parents' questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the progress their children make.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- play and active learning underpins the high quality teaching and learning;
- the positive ethos and effective team work create a happy environment where the contribution of all children and adults is valued and celebrated;
- there is an appropriate emphasis on planning, assessment and recording of children's progressive skill development in language and numeracy across most areas of learning which are used to identify next steps in the learning; and
- there is a culture of continuous improvement and honest self-evaluation, in which leaders identify the strengths of the setting and the areas that need improvement, and link these to an action plan.

## **Recommendations**

In order to build on the existing strengths the setting needs to:

- R1 improve children's Welsh language development;
- R2 improve planning and provision for the progressive development of children's information and communications technology skills (ICT);
- R3 form partnerships with other providers to promote further good practice in all aspects of the Foundation Phase;
- R4 refine its self-evaluation arrangements to focus on children's progress and standards in Key Question 1 and quality of provision in Key Question 2; and
- R5 improve action planning to include an evaluation of improvements in children's outcomes.

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

All children achieve well in relation to their stage of development and ability. They make rapid progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding across most areas of learning in relation to their starting points. Children gain confidence and cope well with new challenges.

All children apply their skills well in a wide range of play activities. Their speaking skills are good. They listen attentively and contribute well in discussions and in role play situations. Children sing enthusiastically and enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. Their pre-writing skills are well developed and children take opportunities to mark-make in the role play area and in the outdoor learning area. All match objects according to shape and colour match and sequence objects correctly, while the older children recognise individual words from flashcards. Some form letters for their names and label their work for display and for taking home.

Children have good pre-number skills. Most sort, match and sequence numbers accurately. Older children recognise numbers and count and form numbers accurately to 10. Most use an appropriate range of mathematical terms accurately in their play, for example using words such as underneath or on top of when describing the position of objects.

Children's creative skills, skills of enquiry, investigation and independent learning are developing appropriately through a very good range of stimulating and interesting play and active learning activities. They have free choice to access many of these activities in the learning areas every day. Children's skills in using information and communications technology (ICT), such as computers, programmable toys and educational games, are less well developed to reinforce and enrich their learning across the seven areas of learning.

All children are enthusiastic learners of Welsh. They understand and respond to simple greetings and incidental instructions and use one or two words to describe weather conditions and the effect on their feelings. A few recognise colours and numbers in Welsh. They enjoy some of the customs and traditions of Wales as they take part, for example, in celebrations for St David's Day. Overall, children's Welsh language development is adequate. Although they respond appropriately to the use of Welsh during circle time, children are not confident enough to use the language spontaneously in their play.

#### Wellbeing: Good

All children have an appropriate understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of the benefits of keeping active. They use the outside learning area in spring and summer to grow their own fruit and vegetables which are cooked on the premises for them to eat. All children benefit from regular exercise in the outdoor

learning area through role play and other creative activities that involve movement. They feel safe and secure in the setting.

The harmonious relations with the setting's practitioners along with stimulating learning activities promote children's positive attitudes and enjoyment for learning, good behaviour, confidence and self-esteem.

All children co-operate and work well together and with adults. Their decision-making skills are appropriate to their stage of development. They have a say in what and how they learn. For example, children are asked what they already know about a topic such as 'pets', from being given a picture of a domestic animal. They then explore and record with practitioners what more they would like to find out about the topic. This discussion becomes the initial planning web that practitioners use to develop the learning in more detail. Visits in the community to places such as local parks and a forest school, and participation in local community projects such as litter picking, develop children's understanding of their community and their role as good citizens.

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| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners provide a wide range of stimulating, high quality experiences. There is an appropriate emphasis on a play and active learning approach that engages and holds children's interest and enthusiasm. Practitioners know the children very well and respond to their varying needs and abilities spontaneously and appropriately during activities. They plan carefully and systematically to meet the specific needs of individuals.

Planning for the progressive development of children's language and numeracy skills is appropriate and is integrated into lesson plans. Effective organisation of the indoor and outside learning areas enables children to experience a wide range of activities that develop and reinforce their communication and numeracy skills across most areas of learning on a daily basis. Organisation and planning for the development of children's ICT skills are less effective.

Practitioners use Welsh throughout the day and encourage children to use the language, especially during circle time. Planned opportunities for children to use Welsh in other activities such as role play and to learn about the traditions and celebrations of the cultures of Wales are adequate overall. Welsh language development is identified in the setting's current action plan as an area for improvement.

Staff make very good use of the setting's outdoor areas and of visits in the locality to develop children's respect for the environment and understanding of sustainability. For example, children take care of the plants and vegetables grown in the garden, visit a forest school and take part in litter picking activities.

## **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the effectiveness of a play and active learning approach in stimulating and developing children's enthusiasm for learning. Planning is appropriate in most areas of learning and enables children to achieve the Foundation Phase outcomes in relation to their stage of development and ability. Provision for children's Welsh language development and ICT is adequate overall. The Welsh language competence of the practitioners is identified in the setting's action plan as an area for training and development.

There is an appropriate balance between child initiated and practitioner led activities. Practitioners use open-ended questioning effectively to extend and challenge children's thinking. Practitioners intervene sensitively with individuals and groups when appropriate to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Each child is given individual attention on a daily basis in developing their pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Progress is monitored, assessed and recorded each day and the information used effectively to plan for the next steps in learning. Each child makes good progress throughout the year as a result of the effective targeting and support provided by the practitioners.

Parents are well-informed about their children's wellbeing and their educational progress through a diary that records daily events and suggests how parents might want to support their child's learning at home. End of year reports for parents are appropriate in evaluating and summarising children's progress and achievements. Additionally, evaluative reports accompany every child when transferring from the setting to the local primary school.

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

Effective arrangements are in place to support children's health, wellbeing and learning. Children are happy and feel safe and secure in the calm atmosphere and in the company of the adults in the setting. Children's learning needs are identified when they join and practitioners ensure that these needs are met. Children settle in quickly to the routines and stimulating activities on offer. Behaviour is excellent as children are focused on their learning.

Daily circle time sessions provide suitable opportunities for practitioners and children to talk about personal and social issues. These include the importance of being honest, sharing with others, having a loving family and good friends, respecting others and caring about and giving thanks for their world.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding. All practitioners are trained and understand their roles and responsibilities within the statutory framework. Risk assessments are carried out regularly. The setting has a wide range of other relevant and useful policies which meet legal requirements where necessary.

The setting has good arrangements for providing children with personal and specialist support. Membership of the local authority's Early Years education providers' forum is effective in developing and promoting the setting's awareness of



the importance of adhering to the Early Years referral protocol for children with ALN. Practitioners are aware of the requirement for having an individual education plan to support the learning when and where necessary. Consequently, early identification of possible issues is effective, immediate advice is sought and support given if required. Parents are involved throughout the process and actions taken are reviewed regularly. Links with various support agencies are available if needed.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides a stimulating, inclusive and welcoming environment for all children. Practitioners actively promote equality and diversity appropriately through careful selection and use of resources.

There are sufficient practitioners who have relevant and appropriate qualifications and many years' experience of working together as a team with young children.

Internal accommodation, though small, is very well organised. Excellent use is made of an outside learning area. Both areas are used effectively to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and to provide children with plenty of free choice of activities within a rich and stimulating learning environment. Some recent investment has been made to improve the setting's limited ICT resources, but this area remains under-resourced. Resources in the community are used to supplement some of the setting's own. Partnership working is in hand with a local primary school to develop aspects of the curriculum that require more specialist equipment and to overcome the constraints of space within the setting's own accommodation.

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| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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### **Leadership: Good**

The proprietor and other practitioners provide a clear strategic direction for the work of the setting. They effectively manage their own time and prioritise activities responsively. They work well as a management committee, focusing on children's needs. Practitioners' training needs are identified, prioritised and delivered according to areas that will bring about the improvements required. Currently, training opportunities for practitioners to improve their skills in Welsh are being identified.

Practitioners respond positively to relevant national and local priorities. They are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase. The setting is currently aiming for the bronze eco award to show how it is acting in an increasingly sustainable way.

### **Improving quality: Good**

A culture of continuous improvement and honest self-evaluation identifies the strengths of the setting and the areas that need improvement, and links these to an action plan. The self-evaluation report is generally of good quality, though there is not always enough clarity between standards and provision. The outcomes of the actions undertaken in the action plan are not currently monitored to measure the

success of these improvements in terms of outcomes for children. Stakeholders such as parents and their children have opportunities to contribute their views on the work of the setting. Children's views are also taken into account by involving them in planning the theme and activities at the start of each new topic.

Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement and lifelong learning. They undertake an appropriate range of vocational and degree courses in aspects of education and business management and administration that will further improve provision within the setting.

Involvement in networks of professional practice is developing well. Links with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) is of mutual benefit to the setting and the local authority. Practitioners have shared their experiences with colleagues in other settings and schools. Discussions have included the organisation and use of the outside learning area and individual children's profiles which the local authority has adopted for use in other non-maintained settings within Blaenau Gwent. The setting has participated in the piloting of the All Wales Foundation Phase Assessment Project for a new baseline profile to assess children's skills when they first enter a non-maintained setting or a school. Feedback was given to Liverpool University on the usefulness of the proposals and materials.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Partnership working contributes effectively to children's progress and wellbeing. Practitioners have good relationships with parents. The outcomes from the parents' questionnaire indicate a high level of satisfaction with the progress that their children are making and the standards they achieve.

Links with the EYDCP are very beneficial to the work of the setting. Evaluative reports from the advisory teacher and from the Foundation Phase training and support officer are very useful. They focus, where appropriate, on standards, provision and leadership and make recommendations for improvement. This partnership provides good guidance and support to help the setting in aiming for excellence in all areas.

Plans are being explored through the EYDCP and through links to local primary schools to attend joint training sessions and to visit classrooms to see models of good practice, for example in Welsh and in other areas of the Foundation Phase. This is seen as a way of maximising partnership working by overcoming the fewer training opportunities normally available to settings compared to schools.

Practitioners know whom to contact and when, if additional specialist support is required for children.

Practitioners use community links appropriately to support children's learning. Visits to places of work and recreation in the locality, as well as visitors to the setting such as an artist in residence, enhance children's learning experiences.

**Resource management: Good**

Good use is made of the available staffing and resources. Practitioners are deployed effectively to make best use of their time, expertise and experience. The budget and all financial matters are dealt with efficiently and effectively by the designated member of staff. Resources are sufficient overall to enable the children to meet most of the Foundation Phase outcomes. The setting has identified ICT and Welsh as areas that require further resourcing and improvement.

Overall, the setting achieves good outcomes for children and provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Analysis of all of the six questionnaires indicated a high level of satisfaction with the service provided by the setting. Parents regard the teaching as good. They are particularly pleased with the calm atmosphere of the setting and of the harmonious relationships that exist between practitioners and children. They state that their children are treated with respect, and are happy and content, with good levels of wellbeing. All parents are very pleased with their child's progress and in the way in which the setting encourages parents to support their child's learning at home. All state that the setting is well organised and managed. They are kept well informed of daily events and of their child's progress during the year. They are confident to approach the setting if they wish to discuss anything.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

All children enjoy the daily activities on offer, including the outdoor activities. They have many friends with whom they enjoy working. They also enjoy co-operating with each other in the learning areas and in group activities such as the dragon dance, music making and finger painting of a mural to celebrate the Chinese New Year. They say that their helpers are kind and they go to them if they are unhappy or unsure what to do. They are confident when undertaking role play and when speaking to adults and visitors. They know they should always try to be kind to others and to behave well. With support from their parents they have an opportunity to indicate what they like best in their learning.

## Appendix 2

The reporting inspector was Jeff Jones, HMI

### **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))