



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

**Puddle Ducks @ Talgarth School
Talgarth Primary School
School Road
Talgarth
Powys
LD3 0BB
United Kingdom**

Date of inspection: October 2014

by

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for

**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:

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
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Context

Puddle Ducks @ Talgarth School is an English-medium setting in Talgarth, near Brecon in Powys. It is an independent provision run by a management committee and operates from a classroom within Talgarth Primary School.

The setting provides sessional day care and education for children aged between two and four years old. It is registered for 16 children and offers morning sessions on weekdays during school terms. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children on roll, including 10 three-year-olds that are funded up to 10 hours per week by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

Most children attending the setting have neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds and live in Talgarth or close by. All are English speaking and British born. None are from ethnic minorities. No families speak Welsh at home. None receive additional support for learning.

The Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales last inspected the setting in October 2013 and Estyn in October 2008. At the time it was registered as Talgarth Playcentre. In January 2014 the present setting leader was appointed. Talgarth Playcentre closed at the end of February and the present setting opened on 3rd March 2014. The setting is now registered as Puddle Ducks @ Talgarth School.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Adequate
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- many children achieve well;
- nearly all children are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning;
- teaching skilfully extends children's learning;
- practitioners and children have good relationships;
- partnerships with parents, the school and the local authority are good; and
- the setting has a friendly and inclusive ethos.

However,

- a minority of children insufficiently develop their skills in literacy and numeracy;
- most children's skills in Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT) are underdeveloped; and
- provision for spiritual and cultural development is limited.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the setting is well managed and organised on a day-to-day basis;
- recent improvements in the planning and organisation of learning have a positive impact;
- self-evaluation identifies clearly what the setting does well and the areas it needs to improve.

However,

- strategic leadership and forward planning to secure further improvement are insufficiently developed,
- taken overall, progress since the last inspection is slow; and
- recent improvements in provision are not embedded.

Recommendations

R1. raise standards in literacy, numeracy, Welsh and information communication technology (ICT);

R2. formalise the setting's policy and procedures for safeguarding;

R3. develop the management committee and ensure effective strategic leadership;

R4. embed procedures for self-evaluation and formulate plans to help achieve the setting's goals;

R5. integrate indoor and outdoor provision and support practitioners' professional development.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Children come to the setting with levels of achievement broadly in line with their age and stage of development. Most steadily become confident learners as they explore their surroundings and try out new experiences. Many make good progress from their starting points and achieve good standards in a narrow range of skills, but able children do not always achieve their best.

Many children have well developed speaking and listening skills. A minority spontaneously begin simple conversations, for example during role-play. They confidently make their needs known, ask sensible questions and express themselves clearly. A few use a wide vocabulary and confidently engage in extended conversations about what they are doing. However, very few spontaneously use subject specific vocabulary, such as to name shapes.

With few exceptions children enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastically recite familiar songs and rhymes. A few able children handle books appropriately as readers and show increasing awareness that the text and pictures 'tell' the story, but a minority has limited skills. In structured activities nearly all are beginning to recognise their name in response to sound and picture cues. Mark making skills steadily develop and a very few make simple writing patterns and form letters when copy writing.

Numeracy skills develop well as children count as part of daily routines, sing rhymes and engage in counting activities. Many have a good grasp of counting objects to at least five and show increasing awareness of one-to-one correspondence, such as when counting blocks. A few are beginning to use appropriate mathematical terms, for example when drawing shapes and comparing the height of their towers. However, able children seldom use a sufficient range of mathematical language, such as when investigating shape and capacity.

Children's competence in using a narrow range of skills in ICT is at an early stage.

Competence in Welsh is developing. A majority of children respond appropriately to the words and phrases used within everyday routines, but the spontaneous use of Welsh is not established.

Wellbeing: Good

Most children have positive attitudes and enjoy learning through play. Their enjoyment is particularly evident during 'messy' play, dancing and role-play. With few exceptions children engage in activities with enthusiasm and confidently make choices as they move between tasks. Levels of engagement are generally good and children remain busy, sustaining interest and concentration for appropriate periods of time. They are well motivated, happy and at ease in the setting.

Children have good relationships with practitioners and with each other. Many begin to show consideration and courtesy, such as when sharing resources and during snack time. Standards of behaviour are good. Most relate well to other children and play in a calm and settled manner. They respond well to daily routines and participate in whole group activities with enthusiasm.

Practitioners encourage children to express their preferences as they play. Many develop greater independence and self-confidence and they begin to help with simple tasks, such as tidying resources.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Good

A good range of learning experiences is well planned and this successfully promotes progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. Good account is taken of Foundation Phase principles in the organisation of learning. Planning is well structured, promotes progression and is in line with children's needs. The provision strongly promotes positive relationships and respect. All areas of learning are well represented through interesting and well-organised activities.

Planning provides a good framework for long and short-term provision. Broad themes are carefully chosen, such as the three bears. These provide relevant contexts for children to develop their skills. Planning is detailed and guides provision appropriately. Practitioners are flexible in implementing this planning. There is a good range of indoor activities and these build appropriately on children's prior knowledge and skills. Adult led tasks are well-defined and appropriate learning objectives identified. However, too few details of how tasks can be enhanced are recorded and the integration of outdoor learning is not embedded.

Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing skills in literacy, numeracy and communication. For example, a good variety of role-play activities are used effectively to promote speaking and listening skills. Similarly, children's counting skills are developed well, such as when building towers. The focus on ICT skills is developing, but too few opportunities to use a range of skills independently are planned.

The skills framework is used well to check that the activities planned promote relevant skills and that all areas of learning are covered. This helps to ensure appropriate progression in learning, but although weekly planning records learning objectives, too few details of how and what the children might learn are recorded to help maximise progress, especially for able children.

The provision for Welsh language development and to promote awareness of the history and culture of Wales is appropriate. Some Welsh is spoken incidentally within daily routines and activities are planned, such as to celebrate St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is well focused, fosters good relationships and successfully promotes incidental learning. Practitioners have high expectations and promote children's personal and social development well. Structured planning and routines help ensure an appropriate balance between child-selected and adult initiated tasks.

Practitioners manage children's learning and behaviour well; they provide good models of language and use a range of teaching strategies to good effect. However, their confidence in speaking Welsh incidentally is limited. Practitioners are developing their knowledge and understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase. They know well the tasks they are to lead or support and promote good levels of engagement. For example, when promoting early reading and counting skills they show an intuitive understanding of how children learn. Practitioners' understanding of the learning objectives for tasks and awareness of strategies to challenge children to extend their learning is steadily developing.

Practitioners are supportive and use questioning and praise well. Learning through play is strongly encouraged. Teaching often builds well on activities to extend learning. This is most evident in indoor activities. Opportunities for choice and independence are also well promoted; children are given plenty of time to complete tasks and practitioners intervene appropriately when needed. This was clearly evident, for example, when children made sandwiches for a picnic.

The setting has appropriate procedures for assessment and these are consistently implemented. Initial assessments on entry provide a clear baseline. Individual achievements are praised through an achievement chart and individual learning records are systematically maintained. Evidence of individual progress, includes records of focused assessments. Taken overall, the range of assessment information recorded provides a good basis to plan the next steps in learning.

Information about children's progress is exchanged informally with parents/carers on a day-to-day basis and when children transfer to the school individual learning records are discussed with the Foundation Phase teacher.

Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory

Good quality care and support impacts well on children's personal and social development. Arrangements to assure their health and wellbeing are implemented consistently. The emphasis placed on healthy development, including healthy eating and regular energetic exercise is appropriate.

Procedures for wellbeing are securely based on positive relationships, structured routines and clear expectations for behaviour. Good emphasis is placed on moral and social development. This fosters positive values including, honesty and fairness and successfully promotes good behaviour. However, provision for spiritual and cultural development is insufficiently developed.

There is little evidence of provision to promote awareness of sustainability.

The setting has appropriate links with agencies in the community to provide specialist support when required. However, a draft policy for additional learning needs has not been formally adopted and practitioners have limited awareness of referral procedures.

Procedures to ensure the setting is safe and secure are being established. Accident procedures are implemented appropriately. Risk assessments are undertaken, but their implementation lacks sufficient rigour.

The setting has an appropriate policy for safeguarding, but this has not been formally adopted. Furthermore, its statement of purpose does not include information for parents about safeguarding. No details are provided in either document of the services to contact in the event of a concern arising.

All practitioners have a valid criminal records disclosure and all have attended appropriate training about safeguarding. However, these details are not always readily accessible in staff files.

The absence of formalised procedures for safeguarding gives cause for concern.

Learning environment: Adequate

The setting is a friendly, happy learning environment. It has an inclusive ethos and children have equal access to all aspects of provision. Practitioners are supportive and skilfully foster good relationships. This helps ensure children feel safe and free from undue anxiety.

Practitioners sensitively manage occasional challenging behaviour and encourage tolerance. They know well children's needs and have a good understanding of their backgrounds and needs. Provision to raise awareness of diversity is limited. Policies do not include details of any steps to ensure that future children with disabilities do not suffer less favourable treatment in the setting.

There are sufficient appropriately qualified practitioners for the number of children. The provision of resources to address the requirements of the Foundation Phase is basic. The resources for literacy and numeracy are adequate, but the range is narrow. The provision for ICT is limited.

The accommodation is adequate and provides a safe and secure environment for learning. The outdoor provision is being developed, but the available resources are not fully utilised. The occasional use of resources within the community, such as the fire service, enriches children's learning experiences.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The setting is well led and managed on a day-to-day basis. Leadership is conscientious and reflective. High expectations for children's care and personal

development are well established. A happy teamwork ethos permeates the life and work of the setting. A clear sense of purpose and shared values are evident in pastoral aspects, but strategic direction to improve educational provision is not sufficiently formalised.

Practitioners work well as a team and have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Day-to-day routines are well established and the organisation of activities is good.

A statement of purpose and an appropriate range of draft policies are in place. The contribution of the management committee in helping establish clear strategic direction, monitor developments and ensure accountability is not developed. No records of meetings, following the committee's appointment, were available for scrutiny during the inspection.

There are procedures for appraisal, but these have yet to be implemented. Practitioners confirm training needs are discussed, but there is no recorded evidence of planning to promote their professional development.

The setting is working to embrace national and local priorities. The provision embraces well the Foundation Phase philosophy and approach; there is appropriate emphasis on equality and healthy eating, but the setting has been slow to promote awareness of diversity and sustainability.

Improving quality: Adequate

The recently implemented process of self-evaluation is successful in identifying what the setting does well and the areas it needs to improve. Practitioners confirm their involvement in the process and the issues identified provide a sound basis to improve provision. Informal account is taken of the views of parents, but the management committee is insufficiently involved.

The quality of self-evaluation is good, but the process is not embedded. The setting is beginning to develop forward planning to show how targets will be achieved, but arrangements for monitoring are not established.

Evidence of improvement in relation to the recommendations made in the last inspection is mixed. However, since March this year there is significant improvement in planning and procedures for assessment. Furthermore, good progress is evident in the organisation and provision of areas of learning.

Partnership working: Good

The impact of a range of partnerships on the setting's provision is good. Positive relationships with parents are well established. Friendly day-to-day contacts encourage the exchange of information about the child. Induction arrangements are flexible, parents receive a detailed statement of purpose and further information is posted on a noticeboard.

The setting has appropriate links with children's services in the community.

Links with the school are very positive. Working routines are well established and opportunities to share resources and facilities and to strengthen arrangements for transition are being developed.

Practitioners work closely and effectively with an advisory teacher from the local authority. This impacts particularly well on the quality of learning experiences. Opportunities to attend events to share good practice and receive training with practitioners from other settings are seldom taken. However, practitioners take advantage of a few training opportunities provided locally.

The setting benefits from advice available from agencies such as the Wales Pre-school Providers Association.

Resource management: Adequate

Practitioners are appropriately deployed and they generally use resources well. The organisation of areas of learning and the use made of resources continues to improve indoors. Daily routines are well organised. Outdoor provision is developing, but some opportunities are missed to integrate indoor and outdoor activities and to promote practitioners' professional development.

There is no evidence of formalised planning for future resource needs. For example, the improvement of outdoor provision is a target identified in self-evaluation, but there is no forward planning of expenditure.

Practitioners attend appropriate training opportunities, including updating their qualifications. Although no opportunities to share good practice with other settings are planned, the training provided by an advisory teacher is particularly beneficial.

There is little evidence of formalised financial procedures or oversight by the management committee. However, the setting leader conscientiously records and monitors income and expenditure. Good use is made of the funding received.

The setting's educational provision represents value for money and the impact on children's progress is good, but overall standards are adequate.

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

Mr Michael T. Ridout	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)

Glossary of terms

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
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<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>
Foundation Phase	<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>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.