



*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 Nursery  
Station Road  
Raglan  
Monmouthshire  
NP15 2EP**

**Date of inspection: November 2013**

**by**

**Mary Dyas  
Reporting Inspector**

**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:

<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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## About the setting

Puddle Ducks Nursery is conveniently situated on the edge of the village of Raglan and serves a large rural area of Monmouthshire. It is open for 52 weeks of the year and is registered for 150 places at any one session for children aged 0 – 8 years. The nursery also offers holiday provision. There are currently 47 children registered in the pre-school room, all aged three and four years. Twenty seven three-year-olds and 14 four-year-olds are in receipt of funded educational provision.

The setting opened in Raglan in September 2000 and moved to its present purpose-built premises in September 2005. Children attending the nursery come from a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds and all speak English as their main language at home.

The accommodation for the three to five year old children comprises a large, bright room with direct access to the outdoor provision and the use of a space shared with other age groups, used for physical activities and as a dining room. The room and corridors are decorated with brightly coloured displays of children's current work. The extensive, secure outdoor area is surfaced with a variety of textures. The space includes the full range of areas of learning to reflect those indoors and includes a mud kitchen, a sensory music garden and growing areas for fruit and vegetables. There are many opportunities for children to take physical exercise such as climbing and balancing on outdoor equipment or riding a range of wheeled vehicles on the hard surfaces or around the path that encircles a small hill for climbing and rolling. The five-acre site includes a grassy field and a corner with a log circle set up for outdoor learning.

The facilities are fully accessible to all. A very few children have been identified as having additional learning needs and they are well supported in the setting.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales last inspected the setting in July 2013.

Estyn last inspected the setting in February 2008.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### Current performance

The overall judgement on the current performance of the setting is judged to be excellent because:

- Management of the setting is of a very high standard;
- The management team and staff share high expectations of themselves and of the children;
- All children make very good progress during their time in the setting;
- All children behave very well;
- The setting has established high quality partnerships with individuals and organisations that provide outstanding levels of support ; and
- Teaching is excellent

Good features:

- Relationships between children and between adults and children are warm and caring; and
- All children are happy at the setting and enjoy their learning.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement of the setting are excellent because:

- Leadership is highly effective;
- The setting has an excellent track record for addressing identified areas for improvement;
- The setting has made exceptional progress since the last inspection; and
- Partnerships with individuals, other agencies and organisations are highly effective.

Good features:

- Staff work together as a strong team with shared goals for providing high quality care and education; and
- Self-evaluation clear and realistic and identifies appropriate areas for improvement.

## Recommendations

R1. Further develop the planning process to ensure that the very good start that has been made to identify the needs of individual children is fully embedded.

R2. Build on the current good practice in the teaching of the Welsh language to support children in becoming confident in independently using the words and phrases they have learned.

R3. Further develop the use of data to identify the learning needs of individual children and to track their progress.

### What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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### **Standards: Excellent**

All children make very good progress in all areas of learning. They achieve high standards for their age and apply the skills that they have learned to other contexts. All children are independent and confidently make choices about their learning. They are fully involved in the activities they choose and maintain high levels of concentration.

Nearly all children are highly articulate and convey their thoughts and feelings to adults and to one another clearly using a developing vocabulary and complex sentence patterns. They talk about their favourite characters in the stories they hear and comment on what is happening and what might happen next. Many are interested in books and choose to read to themselves or to share books with their friends during free play. Nearly all join in with familiar rhymes and songs in both English and Welsh and enjoy actions and signing, which enhance the experience. All children are developing their mark making skills and many try to write their name. Older and more able children are beginning to recognise letters of the alphabet and to write them independently. Children often contribute labels they have written themselves to displays in the room.

Progress in numeracy is of a very high standard. All children show a good understanding of numbers. Many are able to count objects accurately to at least five while older and more able children can do so to ten and are beginning to understand the concepts of addition and subtraction.

Most children show exceptional knowledge and understanding of the need to act sustainably in the world and can explain global warming and the need to conserve water in simple terms.

All children use a range of electronic equipment confidently. They use telephones to communicate in their role-play and are able to program a toy to move around a grid. Many use a computer to play age appropriate games and to watch simple videos. They are able to manipulate a mouse to select or move objects on the screen.

Nearly all children make good progress in developing their Welsh language. They count to ten and most are able to recognise and name primary colours in Welsh. They understand the questions and phrases to which they have been introduced and reply confidently and eagerly to simple questions in Welsh, for example when asked their name or how they feel.

## **Wellbeing: Excellent**

All children are happy during their time in the setting. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning and make clear choices about what and how they learn. The levels of independence and responsibility they show during the sessions are exceptional. All children decide for themselves when they want to go outdoors and nearly all independently put on wellingtons and protective clothing themselves. They choose when they visit the snack cafe and follow the routines of checking if there is room, washing their hands and recording their visit by selecting their name card.

All children understand the rules of the group and respond to cues to gather as a group or to tidy up with exceptional calmness and orderliness. Nearly all achieve excellent levels of concentration and sustained interest in their chosen activities. All children are encouraged to make suggestions regarding which activities they would like to have in the setting and many are beginning to evaluate how much they enjoyed an activity and why.

All children get on well with one another, take turns and share equipment sensibly. Most children have known one another since they were babies and their relationships are excellent. Practitioners provide strong and positive role models which supports the children in developing high levels of confidence and self-esteem.

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

Practitioners plan together a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning activities based on themes that interest and engage all children. Wherever possible these include suggestions from both parents and children. Planning takes into account the use of skills ladders to ensure coverage of the range of skills based on the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Planned activities succeed in engaging children's interest and curiosity both indoors and outdoors and enable children to make good progress in communication, numeracy, ICT and the wider creative skills.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills and to learn about the world around them. Children learn to care about living things by sowing seeds and looking after the plants that grow and by caring for the nursery's pets. Learning activities encourage children to form good relationships and to show respect and tolerance to one another.

Welsh is used well during group times and practitioners use Welsh words incidentally during the sessions. Children count in Welsh when prompted and all know some colours in Welsh when asked but they are not yet using the words and phrases they know spontaneously. All children celebrate and learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate St David's Day. There are good opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and communities through the range of multicultural resources in the setting and through celebration of a range of festivals.

All children have the opportunity to widen their learning experiences through belonging to one of the clubs within the setting. They are free to choose which club they would like to be in and benefit from additional activities and the opportunity to be part of a specific group. These clubs include – French Club, Clwb Cymru, Little Planters, Healthy Living Gang and Eco-club

### **Teaching: Excellent**

The proprietor, manager and setting staff all have very good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and excellent first-hand experience and knowledge of child development. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-selected activities across the curriculum and all staff have high expectations of themselves and of the children whatever their age or stage of development. Through the exemplary use of open questioning, adults encourage children to think for themselves, to experiment with new experiences and to be independent. There is a good balance between adult intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas to develop their decision making skills.

Practitioners provide a highly creative, interesting and exciting environment both indoors and outdoors that stimulates children to want to investigate and to learn. Teaching sessions have good pace. Practitioners engage children's interest very effectively and keep them moving on in their practice and thinking. All staff show an infectious enthusiasm for the activities they have planned which involves and inspires the children to take part and to find out for themselves.

Practitioners assess by observing the children while they are engaged in their learning experiences. The information gathered informs the next steps in planning and contributes to the local authority's assessment document, which builds on an entry assessment. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress. They are invited to the setting once a month when they are able to spend some time in the classroom experiencing the activities with their children before going to another room to read through their child's 'Splash' book. These books contain detailed observations of a child's learning activity against the relevant learning intention and, over time, give a clear picture children's progress. Parents value this opportunity and those not able to attend the 'parents session' are able to borrow their child's book overnight. These books are offered to the children's receiving school together with the transition record before being given to the parents as a permanent record of their child's time in the setting.



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

The nursery's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. Children have many opportunities to experience awe and wonder at the world around them. The celebration of festivals and the making and tasting of different foods promotes positive awareness of different cultural traditions. The nursery places high value on celebrating individual success and there are a number of displays around the communal areas and corridors where this is evident. Induction and transition arrangements for children joining or leaving the setting are effective.

All children show an exceptional understanding of the reasons why it is important to act sustainably. They take part in the many activities that promote recycling and saving energy and talk confidently about the need to cut down on the CO2 levels that are making holes in the ozone layer. Parents and carers report that their children are ensuring that they promote sustainable living at home.

The nursery provides very good opportunities for children to eat healthily and to take exercise and all children show a good understanding of which foods are healthy and which are better kept for special treats. In addition to the extensive outdoor area, which offers many opportunities for taking physical exercise, children thoroughly enjoy their zumba and yoga sessions and weekly exercise with a fitness instructor. Daily routines foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect for others. Children are encouraged to take on responsibility, show initiative and be independent in their everyday activities. All children are well aware of the difference between right and wrong and behaviour is exemplary.

Children who have been identified as having additional learning needs have full access to all areas of learning. The setting has worked well with representatives from outside agencies to ensure that the needs of such children are suitably met.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

## **Learning environment: Good**

The nursery is an inclusive community and respects and celebrates diversity. All children have equal access to the full range of activities. The purpose-built and well-maintained building is bright and welcoming. Emphasis has been placed on the provision of natural daylight in line with the nursery's focus on sustainability. The space available to the pre-school group is well organised and a wide range of natural and man-made resources are easily accessible to the children. Displays of examples of recent children's work enhance the area and support the children's learning.

Practitioners are well qualified and experienced in working with young children. They work hard to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The excellent outdoor area is safe and secure and offers an abundance of opportunities that enhance children's learning and skills development. . Visits to the locality help children develop a sense of curiosity about the world and the impressive range of visitors from the community help them appreciate differences in the way we live.

The setting employs sufficient well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training.

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

The nursery is very strongly led by the proprietor who is supported by a highly competent team of practitioners. Staff have well-defined job descriptions and they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. There are excellent procedures in place to ensure the management and development of staff performance and the high expectations of the management team are shared by all staff.

The team is very close and all practitioners work well together create a very positive culture where staff and children are valued and respected. They are keen to give the children the best experiences they can and to ensure that they themselves are doing their best. The proprietor has recently implemented life coaching sessions to promote good relationships and staff wellbeing throughout the nursery. This has had a beneficial impact on the life of the nursery which has strengthened the positive ethos to enable children to thrive. Staff meet together weekly to evaluate and to plan for the week ahead.

Practitioners respond well to local and national priorities. They are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase and also with the Welsh Assembly Government's Designed to Smile initiative..

### **Improving quality: Good**

The setting's self-evaluation is an effective document which successfully reflects the setting's strengths, identifies appropriate targets for improvement and is shared by all practitioners. Leaders take into account comments from parents and carers during the parent sessions and have made changes to the provision as a result. The proprietor and her senior assistants routinely monitor teaching and learning. The current self-evaluation document is honest and realistic. Managers identify strengths and areas for improvement and the setting is working positively towards meeting its targets. The setting has made outstanding progress in meeting the recommendation from the last inspection to continue to develop the programme of sustainable development.

The setting identified the need to find a way to meet the needs of individual children and also to specific areas of learning that need to be addressed. They have created a database using information from the on entry assessment of the children and are now in a position to identify specific needs for improvement and to review future progress. This is sector leading practice.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The setting has developed a broad range of effective partnerships that widen the educational experiences available to the children. These have a very positive impact on pupil outcomes.

The nursery has built up close relationships with parents and carers through daily contact, often since the children were small babies. This is enhanced by regular newsletters that give helpful information about planned activities in the different areas of learning. The setting takes good account of the advice given by the local authority and is quick to act on advice and implement new ideas.

The proprietor has taken the initiative to establish excellent, mutually beneficial partnerships with other day nurseries in the local authority in order to seek advice and to share good practice. This is highly innovative practice as is the wide range of partners that the setting has built up to form the Friends of Puddle Ducks. These individuals are highly qualified in their own fields and they have provided the nursery with training and advice that has made very effective contributions to the quality of provision and to the children's development.

Children's learning and their experiences of the world around them have been enhanced by visits into the local community and by visitors who have come to share their knowledge and expertise.

**Resource management: Excellent**

The nursery is exceptionally well resourced and spacious and provides children with many opportunities to explore and to extend their learning experiences. The extensive outdoor area is an outstanding resource that stimulates children's play and learning.

There are sufficient experienced and qualified practitioners to meet the needs of the children. Practitioners are effectively deployed during the sessions and support one another well.

The proprietor closely monitors the budget and ensures that expenditure is prioritised according to the setting's needs. Financial decisions are evaluated to ensure that they have a direct impact on children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides very 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

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas

Reporting Inspector

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

<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</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 (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.