



Childcare Inspection Report on

Puddleducks Playgroup @ Plas y Felin

**Plas-y-Felin Junior School
Lewis Drive
Churchill Park
Caerphilly
CF83 3FT**



Date Inspection Completed

06/03/2020

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Ratings	What the ratings mean
Excellent	These are services which are committed to ongoing improvement with many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice and innovation. These services deliver high quality care and support and are able to demonstrate that they make a strong contribution to improving children’s well-being
Good	These are services with strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. They consistently exceed basic requirements, delivering positive outcomes for children and actively promote their well-being.
Adequate	These are services where strengths outweigh areas for improvement. They are safe and meet basic requirements but improvements are required to promote well-being and improve outcomes for children.
Poor	These are services where important areas for improvement outweigh strengths and there are significant examples of non-compliance that impact negatively on children’s well-being. Where services are poor we will take enforcement action and issue a non-compliance notice

Description of the service

Isabel Easterbrook (RP) was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in 2008 to provide care at Puddleducks Playgroup @ Plas y Felin. It is based in purpose built premises on the site of the primary school and offers a Flying Start service from 8.45 to 11.15 each morning. Some children may then stay for a wraparound service until they join the school nursery after lunch. Children who attend the school nursery for a morning session may join the playgroup at 11.30 until 3.00 each afternoon. Individual children may stay for a maximum of four hours on any day. A person in charge (PiC) manages the service on a day to day basis. The service only operates during term time and the Welsh language is introduced and supported through daily activities.

Summary

Theme	Rating
<u>Well-being</u>	Good
<u>Care and Development</u>	Good
<u>Environment</u>	Good
<u>Leadership and Management</u>	Adequate

1. Overall assessment

Children are happy and well cared for at the playgroup and take part in stimulating activities both indoors and outside. Children relate well with the staff caring for them. The staff team is experienced and well qualified and use their skills and knowledge to plan for and effectively meet the children's individual needs. Children benefit from a warm, comfortable environment in a well-resourced playgroup. There are appropriate systems in place to support the staff and manage the service.

2. Improvements

Children's experiences are enhanced because staff have taken part in training about the 'Curiosity Approach' to learning. This gives children more opportunities to exploring creative play with natural materials. The entrance area now provides a more effective office space and children are collected at the rear door.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We made some recommendations to develop the service and improve outcomes for children which are noted within this report.

1. Well-being

Good

Summary

Children's views are valued and they are able to make lots of choices within their play and learning. They are made to feel welcome and have formed good relationships with the staff and each other. They are able to develop their self-help skills and take part in activities which build their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a good range of activities indoors and spend lots of time outside.

Our findings

Children chose their activities throughout the inspection, happily starting games with their friends or with staff. We saw children moving freely about the whole play space, choosing what they wanted to play with, such as the comfortable reading area, vehicles, construction, messy play and small world activities. They contributed to focused activities which were guided by staff, such as making daffodils from egg cartons within the current St David's Day theme. Children particularly enjoyed their outdoor play, collecting grasses and soil to make soup at the mud kitchen. "*Look at this*" one child said, picking up some grass. Their conversation with a member of staff developed into discussing the spikiness of the grass and then a stick, linking to their story about broomsticks on the previous day. A child helped to build a tower with foam blocks. As it toppled over, they were told "*Oh, mae wedi compo (it's fallen over)*" by an adult.

Children are relaxed in the care of the staff, who know them well. We observed children enjoying lots of praise and affectionate encouragement from staff. There were quiet one to one conversations with staff while working on a focused activity together. A child proudly showed us the two stickers they had earned for being helpful.

Children interact well in this service as appropriate for their individual ages and stages of development. We saw several children cooperating to make their grass soup, one child noting that "*I'm in this team*" as they compared the different bowls of soup. We saw a child playing happily alone, riding a wheeled toy and exploring their outside play space.

Children showed lots of independence during the session, such as fetching bowls of water from the play room to take outside to extend their play. They washed their paint covered hands at the sink in the play room and used the toilet facilities independently, or with non-intrusive support from staff as needed. Children were helped to pour milk on their cereals during snack time and they enjoyed a quiet, chatty time with staff who joined them to eat together. Children were confident and happy to share information with us, explaining which waste bin to use for recyclable materials.

2. Care and Development

Good

Summary

Staff at the service work well together. Children benefit from the experience and qualifications the staff have, and their knowledge and commitment to provide an effective and inclusive service. Staff are skilled, motivated and keen to continue their professional development to enhance children's experiences. They have a good understanding of safeguarding issues, are able to identify children at risk and have the confidence to follow appropriate procedures. They have realistic expectations of children and treat them with warmth and respect. They carry out good hygiene routines and promote healthy eating.

Our findings

The staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe and they promote a safe and healthy environment. There is an appropriate range of policies and procedures to support and manage a safe child care service, including e-safety. Staff are clear about their individual roles and shared responsibilities, working well as a team and as individuals. We observed them keeping a good over-view of children at all times, taking action to support them as needed. There is an effective recording system in place for medication, accidents and pre-existing injuries.

A healthy eating approach is followed and parents are encouraged to support it by providing healthy packed lunches for their children. We saw children enjoying a healthy snack of cereals and fruit which is provided by the service during the play session. Children receive care which is child centred and meets their individual needs in a cheerful and caring atmosphere. We saw no areas of tension between children, who all received a good level of staff attention, while being able to take a lead in their own play or take part in planned focused activities. Staff show high levels of encouraging children to be independent and make decisions for themselves.

Staff told us about the seasonal and themed activities they plan and prepare which follow the Flying Start and Foundation Phase frameworks for learning and development in Wales. They observe and record children's progress and plan for their next steps in play and learning. Individual records are shared with parents and the school nursery as appropriate. Some staff have attended training on the 'Curiosity Approach' to learning which includes removing plastic resources from the play group and replacing them with natural and sustainable materials with an emphasis on found, natural objects and experiential play. We saw that the process has begun and staff were considering how best to make the changes in a way that is measured and realistic.

3. Environment

Good

Summary

The provider and staff ensure that children receive care in a safe, secure and child friendly setting. Children are given a good range of resources and experiences that enhance their learning and development both indoors and outside. It is an environment in which children can play and learn and take on suitable challenges safely because practitioners minimise risks to children.

Our findings

The play group premises is purpose built to meet the needs of young children. The registered person, person in charge and staff take a measured and recorded approach to ensuring the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Safety checks are carried out on a daily basis at each session and within annual reviews and a visitors' book is kept. We saw safety certificates to confirm that electrical and fire safety matters were appropriately maintained. The first aid kit was easily accessible and insurance certificates are up to date. We found that risk assessments for activities and the play space are in place to maintain a safe service, and fire drills are logged and monitored for any areas of improvement. However, there was no fire blanket available in the kitchen area for use in case of an emergency. We noted that all areas were clean and free from hazards, although there was some clutter in the main entrance and staff/disability toilet. Staff explained that this is caused by a lack of appropriate storage for children's bags and spare clothes, and storage of additional resources and cleaning equipment. This was also noted at the last inspection 2016. We were told that the implementation of the Curiosity Approach will reduce the need for some resources. They stated that this and buying some low level storage units should ease the storage difficulties. The entrance to the child care area is locked and the outside play space is suitably fenced. It enables free flow play during suitable weather.

Staff are happy to work with parents to support children with their toilet training. There is easy access to child sized toilets and a nappy changing area, where children's privacy and dignity are maintained. We discussed the use and hygienic cleaning of potties and were told that potties are only used when parents provide them to meet specific needs. Kitchen facilities are in the main play space and a new fridge freezer has been recently bought in order to more fully monitor temperatures for food storage.

Children can reach many resources for themselves and there was a good, plentiful range to meet the needs of all children. Children's learning is facilitated by experiential, hands-on activities such as play dough, natural materials, sand, paint and water indoors and outside. Children can also choose to play in any of several comfortably furnished areas indoors, which support imaginative play and learning.

4. Leadership and Management

Adequate

Summary

This service is effectively run and organised, mostly meeting and in many areas exceeding National Minimum Standards (NMS) and relevant regulations. Good systems are in place to maintain records and support the well-qualified, experienced and competent staff. This is a service where practitioners reflect on their practice, take account of children's and parents' views and take action for improvement. However, we made some recommendations in this area.

Our findings

Leadership is satisfactory and there is a comprehensive range of policies and procedures in place. However, we found that the statement of purpose and paperwork shared with parents do not define clear operational distinctions between the Flying Start and the wrap around elements of the service. Staff files show that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificates and training are maintained. We saw that staff worked very well as a team and as individuals, supporting positive outcomes for the children who attend. They are well qualified and additional training opportunities are made available. Recent training includes manual handling, circle time and the curiosity approach. Staff are familiar with their responsibility in terms of data protection but it is not clear if the service is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Staff at the play group feel supported by managers and colleagues and they enjoy what they do. The PiC carries out one to one supervision of all staff every six to eight weeks, which contributes to their annual appraisals. The RP is also a member of staff and manages the PiC. Staff meet every week to discuss day to day plans and activities.

Children and their families benefit from a good working relationship between this service and the school and where appropriate, information is shared to support children and their families. Home links are supported and all children are invited to take items home to complete a piece of craft work with their parents. The results are displayed on the wall and provide an additional subject to encourage discussion. The service offers Welsh Government funding for three year olds. Parents' views about the service are invited within regular questionnaires, daily contact and a suggestions box. A parent stated in their questionnaire that the service *"Had definitely helped with speech; picking up new words, putting them together every week"*.

The latest review of quality of care was recently submitted to CIW on request. The service also takes part in the Caerphilly Quality Assurance scheme and evidence to support their current application is being gathered. We talked to parents as they collected their children and all gave positive comments about the service. One parent told us their older child had attended previously and both children *"Love it. Both parents are working, so it's really helpful"*.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

- Ensure all paperwork clearly defines the legal responsibility and lines of management for the whole service
- clarify if the service is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and state the outcome in the confidentiality policy and procedure
- provide a fire blanket fixed to a wall in the food preparation area.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This inspection was unannounced and undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. The inspector undertook one visit to the service of about five hours. We gave feedback of our findings to the registered person at the end of the visit. Evidence for the report was gathered using the following methodology:

- we looked at the range of paperwork kept about the service, including policies and procedures, risk assessments, contracts, children's records, accident records and safety certificates
- we observed the children interacting with the staff team and choosing their activities
- we spoke with children
- we spoke with the registered person, person in charge, staff and parents about the service.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

7. About the service

Type of care provided	Children's Day Care Sessional Day Care
Registered Person	Isabel Easterbrook
Persons in charge	Emma Fones Adele Pember
Registered maximum number of places	17
Age range of children	Two – four years
Opening hours	8.45 – 3.00 (separate sessions to provide Flying Start and wraparound services) five days a week in term time only
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	1,16 and 22 November 2016
Date of this inspection visit	06 March 2020
Is this a Flying Start service?	Yes (8.45 – 11.15 session only)
Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	No
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The service has been using the Road to Bilingualism Programme since October 2019
Additional Information: The RP is applying to change the legal status of the service to a charitable incorporated organisation with a nominated responsible individual.	

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