



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Awel y Mynydd
Ysgol Awel y Mynydd
Ronald Avenue
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9EU**

Date of inspection: January 2017

by

**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

Cylch Meithrin Awel y Mynydd is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets temporarily in a room on the site of Ysgol Awel y Mynydd in Llandudno Junction in Conwy local authority.

The setting provides education and care for children between two and four years old, five days a week. The setting is registered to admit up to 27 children in each session. During the inspection, 11 children were receiving funded early years education.

English is the main language spoken at home by nearly all children at the setting. No children with additional learning needs attended the setting during the inspection. Four experienced and qualified members of staff work at the setting, along with one volunteer. The leader has been in post since 2008.

The setting was opened on its current site in September 2016. Previously, the setting operated under the name Cylch Meithrin Maelgwn. Cylch Meithrin Awel y Mynydd was registered in August 2016 by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). This is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Good
The setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children make good progress from their starting points
- Most make sound progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills
- Nearly all children are well-behaved
- Nearly all children show high levels of motivation
- Practitioners provide a wide range of stimulating experiences
- Practitioners plan and provide an effective curriculum that builds successfully on children's previous knowledge and experiences
- Practitioners have thorough knowledge of each child's ability and needs
- Practitioners work well together as a team to create a happy environment that respects the child's voice

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader has a sound vision that is shared successfully with all staff and parents
- The leader provides an effective strategic direction
- The leader works very successfully with all practitioners to create a caring, encouraging ethos and place value on teamwork
- The management committee has good knowledge of the setting's performance and monitors the quality of provision thoroughly
- The leader has developed a positive culture of self-evaluation that is now an integral part of the setting's work
- Practitioners challenge themselves and their colleagues regularly in light of their transparent and positive commitment to continuous improvement
- The setting has a vision that includes skilful forward planning in order to move to the new site

Recommendations

- R1 Provide regular opportunities for children to use their reading and writing skills across the areas of learning
- R2 Ensure more opportunities for children to make decisions about their learning in order to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills
- R3 Monitor the effect of implementing the develop plan on children's standards

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children make good progress from their starting points when developing their skills across all areas of learning. A majority make sound progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

A majority of children do not have Welsh language skills on entry to the setting, and make progress that is relevant for their age in developing the language. A majority understand daily instructions and show increasing awareness of the language when responding to questions appropriately. A minority are able to name the ingredients of a pizza in Welsh when preparing food. A majority are beginning to listen to each other when following a story and when looking at photographs of visits. Many choose to read voluntarily and show that they know how to handle a book correctly. A majority use mark-making equipment independently with increasing control.

Many children develop numeracy skills well. Most count objects up to five correctly when decorating dough in the role-play area. A majority have a good awareness of shape and know the characteristics of a circle, a triangle and a square when singing and creating shapes. A majority use mathematical language correctly when handling a range of play equipment when comparing the size of characters in a story or when building a tower of bricks. A majority are able to group objects by colour correctly and around half are able to name colours in Welsh when fishing in the outdoor area.

Most children use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment effectively. A few can control a programmable toy purposefully when numbering movements on a map and choose to record their work independently on a camera. Most are able to follow simple instructions when using a tablet computer for short periods.

A few children are beginning to solve problems well, for example when preparing vegetables. However, children's thinking and problem-solving skills have not developed as well.

A majority of children develop good physical skills by taking part in a range of activities that are of interest to them. Around half are able to handle a ball with very good control when kicking, throwing and catching. A majority use their physical skills regularly to work on a large scale, for example when building the tower of Pisa or climbing. The ability of a majority of children to handle small equipment such as writing equipment, small world toys and messy play equipment is developing well.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy on arrival at the setting and eager to begin their activities independently. They are aware of the daily routine and respond positively to familiar activities, for example when tidying up and convening on the mat. A majority are able to concentrate and persevere for reasonable periods of time when cutting the ingredients of a pizza or experimenting with spaghetti.

Nearly all children are well-behaved and are polite with each other and adults. Nearly all children are beginning to share resources when playing together and strive to wait their turn. Nearly all children are keen to help others tidy up and understand that this is a way to earn praise from practitioners. Children's social skills are developing well as they eat together. With encouragement, a majority of children say please and thank you when accepting food and drink.

Most children make sensible decisions for themselves and work well independently. They are confident learners when choosing ingredients to make a pizza or when choosing when to work in the outdoor area.

Most children understand that they have a right as individuals to express an opinion, for example when deciding to pursue a personal interest or when choosing an indoor or outdoor activity. As a result, nearly all children show high levels of motivation. All children are given an opportunity to contribute to a mind map in order to make decisions about what they want to learn.

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

The setting provides a wide range of stimulating experiences that succeed in engaging most children's interest. Detailed planning is adapted to the setting's needs and ensures that the philosophy of the Foundation Phase is implemented successfully. Practitioners plan interesting experiences jointly, which targets children's needs effectively. There are suitable opportunities for children to contribute to planning by suggesting relevant activities, for example when buying a travel ticket at the train station. Practitioners plan effective provision that builds successfully on children's previous knowledge and experiences. Planning considers the setting's assessment procedures carefully and uses the information to provide the next steps in children's learning effectively.

The setting provides purposeful opportunities for children to use their literacy and numeracy skills. The setting's provision for developing language recognises that children's skills are at a low level on entry. Practitioners address this effectively by modelling words and sentences regularly. As a result, children's understanding is developing well and they are beginning to use familiar words. There are some opportunities to mark and read in a few areas across the curriculum. However, there are very few opportunities to develop these skills across the areas of learning, including the outdoor area. Provision to develop ICT provides beneficial opportunities to children to choose a wide range of equipment and use it purposefully in the learning areas. Provision provides opportunities for children to record their work and experiences spontaneously when using cameras.

The setting provides robust opportunities to learn about their local heritage when learning about Conwy Castle and the smallest house in Wales. They learn about Welsh traditions when celebrating St David's Day and making cards for St Dwynwen's Day.

There are interesting opportunities for children to develop their investigative skills by including experiences to study the lifecycle of a butterfly, growing flowers and cooking. They develop their thinking skills satisfactorily, for example when building a leaning tower like the tower of Pisa. Practitioners make good use of the indoor and outdoor areas to enrich children's learning experiences, for example when developing balancing skills on a plank. Visits by visitors such as a nurse and a variety of pets and their owners offer experiences to foster respect towards treating all living things with care.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a sound knowledge of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase. As a result, they ensure an appropriate balance between activities that are chosen by children and those that are led by adults. They understand the importance of providing opportunities that are of interest to the children and that promote first-hand experiences, for example when experimenting, weighing and measuring spaghetti. All practitioners work together effectively as a team and they have a positive relationship with the children. As a result, they have developed a supportive learning environment.

Practitioners manage behaviour positively and have created a supportive environment that praises and rewards positive behaviour. Practitioners model the Welsh language well in order to develop children's communication skills. Staff promote familiar sentences by introducing daily activities, such as describing the weather and naming the days of the week. However, practitioners do not challenge more able children effectively enough by providing enough opportunities for them to develop thinking skills and problem-solving skills.

All practitioners have comprehensive input into planning and implementing teaching. As a result, they have a particularly good understanding of the skills that need to be developed in the activities. The system of dividing the responsibilities of groups of children is effective, and they take advantage of practitioners' interests and expertise when sharing responsibilities for areas of learning. Daily assessments are used skilfully, in addition to the Foundation Phase profile, throughout the child's time in the setting, which highlights individuals' targets. The setting's procedures for tracking children's progress are robust, detailed and correct. They discuss and identify every child's achievements and targets regularly. As a result, assessments have an effective influence on planning the next step in the child's learning in order to raise standards.

Practitioners make regular use of encouragement to develop and improve children's efforts in their work, for example when developing skills in throwing and catching a ball. As a result, children are aware of what they have achieved and how they can develop further. Practitioners follow children's interests by listening to them discuss and describe their experiences, for example when studying Italy as a result of a child's visit and children's interest in Italian food.

The setting informs parents and carers about their children's achievements regularly throughout the year. It provides detailed reports and beneficial meetings for parents at the beginning and end of their children's time at the setting in order to share children's achievements and targets. In addition, practitioners share profile assessments and a 'treasure book' of the child's experiences.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting's arrangements to promote children's health and wellbeing are good. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of the importance of eating and drinking healthily. Nearly all children understand the importance of washing their hands before eating food. Snack time ensures valuable opportunities to foster social habits, such as courtesy and sharing.

The setting promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately by providing opportunities to reflect, say thank you and pray. Practitioners encourage and praise moral behaviour, for example when children are caring and kind towards each other. By promoting strategies to take turns in order to be fair and patient, practitioners support children skilfully to develop these skills. Practitioners take advantage of opportunities to develop an awareness of different cultures, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year.

Practitioners provide opportunities for children to recycle paper and food containers. This is beginning to develop children's understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting has robust processes to respond to the needs of children with additional learning needs. The leader works closely with external agencies to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented, where necessary. Practitioners have a close and constructive relationship with parents in order to discuss each child's achievements and needs regularly. As a result, practitioners provide support as soon as possible.

The setting is a safe environment and the procedure when children arrive at the setting and depart is good. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

There is a caring and inclusive atmosphere within the setting. All children have equal access to all resources and areas of learning. Practitioners work well as a team to create a happy environment in which the child's voice is respected. As a result, children settle quickly on arrival. Practitioners have a rigorous knowledge of all children and they respect and celebrate diversity. The setting achieves this effectively by recognising and wearing traditional clothing from countries around the world, such as Africa, India and Spain. Children gain an awareness of diversity by learning about different celebrations and the foods of different countries.

Practitioners provide an interesting environment that offers suitable opportunities for children to develop their skills. They work diligently to adapt the room temporarily for children's specific needs. There are a few relevant opportunities to display children's work in order to celebrate their achievements.

The setting uses its resources well to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase, and they are accessible to all children. This encourages children to accept responsibility for putting equipment away in the appropriate place independently. The setting has continuous access to the outdoor area, and practitioners provide a

variety of interesting and relevant activities for the children there. A wide range of physical resources are used creatively. As a result, children enjoy developing a wide range of specific skills. The building is of a suitable quality, is well-maintained and safe.

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

The leader has a robust vision that is shared successfully with all staff and parents. She guides the setting's activity skilfully and gives a strong sense of purpose to the practitioners' work. Although the setting currently meets on a temporary site, she provides a strong strategic direction. This has a positive effect on the standard of teaching, the quality of planning and assessment, in addition to the setting's daily routines. This vision includes skilful forward planning for moving to a new site.

The leader works very successfully with all practitioners to create a caring ethos, which encourages and values team work. They have roles and responsibilities that are defined clearly in purposeful job descriptions. Experienced practitioners support the leader effectively by taking a leading role in specific areas, such as developing assessment procedures and colleagues' Welsh language skills. This ensures robust guidance for new staff.

The leader has developed very rigorous and beneficial arrangements in order to evaluate and manage the performance of all practitioners. Following formal observations by the leader and a member of the management committee, useful feedback is given to practitioners, giving valuable consideration to teaching. This, in addition to regular staff meetings, develops practitioners' sound understanding of areas for improvement and leads to arranging purposeful training.

The leader provides useful support for delivering the Foundation Phase by monitoring and advising on planning. Leaders are aware of national priorities and focus well on the best ways to develop children's skills increasingly across the curriculum.

The management committee have good knowledge of the setting. They monitor the quality of provision effectively and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. They are very supportive and act as a critical friend by maintaining robust standards, setting priorities for improvement and monitoring expenditure effectively.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has developed a positive culture of self-evaluation that is now an integral part of the setting's work. With the willing co-operation of her colleagues, she has established and developed effective procedures for evaluating and monitoring children's standards, in addition to provision. These arrangements are based on an inclusive monitoring timetable that considers a wide variety of direct evidence from a range of stakeholders. For example, the leader gathers the views of parents effectively and analyses their responses carefully when producing the self-evaluation report. Practitioners challenge themselves and their colleagues regularly as a result of their transparent and positive commitment to continuous improvement. As a

result, the leader knows the setting very well, is knowledgeable about her strengths and areas for development, and works on them effectively. Staff meetings have a clear and honest focus on areas for development.

Practitioners discuss monitoring outcomes regularly in order to agree on priorities for the improvement plan. This includes improving children's use of the Welsh language. The plan defines relevant and measurable targets and actions, in addition to appropriate timescales and funding considerations. The plan focuses strongly on children's wellbeing and provision. However, the plan does not link with the plan's targets for children's standards in enough detail.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has fostered a wide range of partnerships that contribute positively to the quality of children's learning experiences and wellbeing. Parents appreciate the open door policy and daily opportunities to meet with practitioners in order to discuss progress or any concerns. This ensures that the relationship with parents is beneficial and that they are an important part of the fabric of the setting.

The setting's handbook provides useful information for parents in order to prepare their children well for starting there. In addition, comprehensive newsletters are distributed regularly in order to inform parents about the setting's work. Practitioners provide valuable experiences for children through regular visits to the community; for example, children speak enthusiastically about their trips to the train station and to Conwy Castle, in addition to a visit to the local shop to buy ingredients to make a pizza.

The setting benefits from the positive support that is provided by staff at the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. The advice and suggestions help to develop the setting and have contributed to raising standards and establishing robust teaching practices. The setting shares its good practice of planning focus activities, assessing children's achievement and cascading ideas following training, with other settings.

The setting has a valuable and productive link with the school that it feeds into. The effective arrangements that have been established for sharing assessment information ensure that all children transfer smoothly to the Foundation Phase class. The leader also discusses schemes of work informally with the nursery teacher. As a result, there is continuity and progression in developing the skills of children who come to the setting after attending morning sessions at the school.

Practitioners work together very effectively to support children with additional learning needs. They share information about their needs and know whom to approach if they need further help or support.

Resource management: Good

The leader manages all resources and funding efficiently. She has ensured that the setting has an appropriate level of staff with suitable qualifications to teach the curriculum effectively. In order to arrange useful training for practitioners, the leader makes successful use of observation outcomes. This ensures that they have a

sound understanding of recent developments when building on their skills and practice; for example, training on developing numeracy teaching skills is having a positive effect on children as they come to recognise groups and understand the value of numbers.

Practitioners know their strengths and expertise well, and work together effectively to enrich children's learning experiences in order to improve their achievements.

The setting has an appropriate range of resources, both inside and outside the building, that are within the children's reach purposefully. They are able to use them successfully in order to promote the objectives of the Foundation Phase and develop their independent skills.

The management committee ensures that they have a sound overview of the setting's budget. They prioritise expenditure according to the setting's needs and evaluate it carefully in order to ensure that the setting continues to be sustainable and in order to support teaching.

Considering the quality of teaching, care and guidance, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Ms Vanessa Bowen	Reporting Inspector
Mr Dyfrig Ellis	Team Inspector

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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 partnership's 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 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