



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

**A report on**

**Clocaenog Playgroup  
Church Hall  
Clocaenog  
Denbighshire  
LL15 2AT**

**Date of inspection: February 2016**

**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:

<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

Cylch Meithrin Clocaenog is a Welsh medium playgroup. It meets in the Church Hall in Clocaenog, Denbighshire local authority. The setting is open five afternoons a week. It has been registered since October 2015 to receive up to 22 children per session. There are 9 children on the register ranging from three to four years of age. Currently two children are financed from the early years budget.

The majority of children come from Welsh first language homes. At the time of the inspection no child had been identified with additional educational needs.

At present there are two members of staff including the setting leader and one practitioner. All members of staff are appropriately qualified. They are all experienced and qualified in the education and care of young children. The setting leader has been in post since September 2015.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2015. The setting has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- the practitioners are committed to the development of the children and the setting
- they create an inclusive ethos and a warm, supportive environment for the children
- they nurture the children's confidence and positive self image encouraging them to enjoy coming to the setting and to behave well
- the setting provides a suitable range of learning experiences including interesting visits by members of the local community
- the practitioners are very good language models, polished and lively
- there are very effective arrangements in place to promote children's health.
- the practitioners make very good use of the room available

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the practitioners work well as a team and deploy their strengths effectively to allocate responsibilities
- they are well focused on developing literacy and numeracy skills and improving the Welsh language
- they have a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement
- the leaders work very effectively with other agencies and welcome advice and assistance
- the partnership with the school and the support of the responsible person is a strength
- the management committee plays an active and supportive role
- they use funding effectively to support children's learning

## Recommendations

- R1. Ensure that introductions to focus group work are concise and that the pupils contribute to decisions about their own learning in order to develop their thinking and problem solving skills
- R2. Make consistent use of the outdoor area throughout the year
- R3. Develop opportunities for practitioners to learn from other settings and share good practice

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

Not applicable

#### Standards: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individuals.

#### Wellbeing: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individuals.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

#### Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners work together effectively to provide a range of learning experiences that engage the interest of the majority of children at the setting. They meet the needs of children at different stages of development appropriately.

They provide suitable opportunities for children to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live by following appropriate themes, such as autumn and ice and snow. They organise various visits in the local area to such events as 'Move and Dance' which involves characters out of Welsh books and to the local school to join in the celebrations. Members of the local community are also welcomed into the setting to read stories related to their themes. The visit from the local postman, for example, excited the children's interest in writing and posting cards. Practitioners help children understand that they should treat living things with care, for example, by choosing various foods for the birds in winter and examine which are most suitable for them. However, children have fewer opportunities to develop their thinking and problem solving skills.

Practitioners plan the development of children's communication, literacy and numeracy skills very effectively. They are very good models of lively and polished language that helps enrich the children's language daily. For example, they identify specific vocabulary to match each play area and theme to ensure that children's communication skills are developed systematically. They celebrate and learn about their own heritage and that of other cultures in a meaningful way. For example, by listening to stories about how others celebrate St David's Day, by discussing Welsh costume, and singing traditional Welsh songs.

## **Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. For example, they understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and first hand experiences. They have high expectations of children and encourage the more able children well when they are at work by asking challenging questions. Generally, they provide a good balance between the tasks chosen by the children and those led by practitioners, which meets the needs of individual children effectively. However, at times, focus group work presentations are too long at which point, the children do not have sufficient opportunity to express their opinions and make decisions about their own learning.

Practitioners manage the children's behaviour very well. They follow a consistent procedure securely based on respect and understanding the children. They use praise and encouragement very effectively in all aspects of their daily work. The practitioners themselves are very good language models, sharing a rich vocabulary with children through their speech, their choice of stories and their use of various songs and rhymes. They develop their questioning skills appropriately to support children's learning. The indoor environment is stimulating and practitioners make appropriate use of the outdoor area and the local community. As a result, children participate well and enjoy their time at the setting.

Practitioners use an appropriate system to assess and track children's progress across all areas of learning. They are beginning to use it effectively to plan the next steps in the children's learning. Practitioners report to parents about their children's progress regularly and provide an attractive record of children's work and progress when they leave the setting. There is an open invitation for parents to arrange to discuss their children's progress at any time during the year.

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

The setting has good structures in place to support the health and wellbeing of children, and encourage them to be more independent. Practitioners encourage children to fend for themselves when putting on their coats before going out and when washing their hands before eating. They give them water and fruit at snack time but there are few opportunities for children to choose what foods and drink they would prefer. Children enjoy regular time outdoors in the spring and summer terms, but do not spend regular spells out in the winter term.

Practitioners provide valuable learning experiences for the children, positively nurturing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, children develop strong social skills on a daily basis in response to instructions, such as sitting at a table to eat and say thanks for their food. They begin to learn effectively about other cultures when listening to stories and when they play with dolls of various origins.

Practitioners themselves are very good models by showing respect and affection for the children which boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence. They promote fundamental values such as fairness, respect and a sense of right and wrong well.

For example, in helping children to be fair when taking their turn on the bikes in the outside play area. Appropriate arrangements are in place to help children learn about the importance of recycling, such as waste food at snack time.

Suitable systems are in place to support children with additional educational needs and the setting takes advantage of additional support from specialist agencies when necessary. The setting has an appropriate range of policies in place to protect children and promote their welfare. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The environment inside the setting is safe and well maintained. It is colourful and welcoming and the practitioners use the available space very well. They prepare interesting displays that celebrate children's work and support their specific themes such as autumn, ice and snow.

Practitioners provide a good range of resources which are suitable for children use, which is organised well and of appropriate quality. Recently, they have renewed the resources in some areas, such as technology corner and the area outside. This has a positive effect on children's learning experiences.

Practitioners develop the outside area appropriately. However, they do not use it regularly all year round. They have a range of suitable resources for children to use and there is enough space for children to develop their physical skills. For example, the area is well-developed for observing birds after preparing a variety of foods to attract them.

The setting makes fitting use of the local environment to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, they take full advantage of their rural location to go out to observe the seasonal changes in the hedges and trees.

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

The leaders manage the setting well. The practitioners, registered person and management committee form a very committed team, sharing a strong sense of purpose and effective collaboration.

Practitioners create a happy and purposeful environment where children feel safe and appreciated. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, which leads to a good standard of care and education at the setting.

The registered person and management committee provide valuable assistance, which contributes to the effective running of the setting. The management committee meets regularly to discuss important issues such as the development plan's priorities, which resources to purchase making the most of local sources.



Appropriate processes are in place to manage the performance of practitioners. Leaders use these well to identify support needs, arrange discussion meetings and fund raising to purchase resources. As a result, children benefit from good quality learning experiences.

Leaders pay good attention to local and national priorities. They make a strong enough focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, as well as ensuring that they have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Practitioners have a positive commitment to continuous improvement. They identify strengths and areas for development in their practice, and act on them effectively.

Leaders make good use of the recent self-evaluation process to help identify strengths and areas for development. They have used this information very successfully to form a summary improvement plan that includes clear priorities and valuable opportunities to evaluate progress. The leaders are making very good progress towards achieving the targets, such as improving the children's technological skills and better use of the outdoor area.

They prioritise budget spending well. For example, leaders bought new resources to promote children's technological skills and to improve their physical skills as part of the plan to improve provision. As a result, children's technological skills have improved effectively and they enjoy using the outdoor area. Leaders share their self-evaluation document and improvement plan effectively with the management committee, ensuring their support in working towards specific priorities.

Leaders are working very well with other agencies such as the local authority advisory teacher and the 'Mudiad Meithrin's development officer. They are very open to new ideas and willing to act on recommendations. For example, acting on the advice of the local authority advisory teacher to ensure that they provide activities that meet the needs of children at different stages of their development. The leaders acted quickly on the recommendations of their recent inspection by CSSIW.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has developed a solid range of partnerships that contribute effectively to children's achievements and wellbeing.

Practitioners make many efforts to share useful information with parents. They share written information regularly about the themes pursued by the children. They offer an open-door invitation for parents so they can receive informal feedback about their children's progress. They also report more formally to parents on their children's progress at the end of each year.

The setting has a very good relationship with the local primary school. Children visit the school regularly during the year and in the summer term to help prepare for the next step in their education.

Practitioners use community relations suitably to support children's learning. They invite visitors to the setting on a regular basis to introduce a new theme. For example, they went out to gather leaves and autumn fruits and when recently the postman visited to help them understand the processes of posting and distributing letters.

The strong partnerships with the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad's development officer supports the setting's continuous improvement.

### **Resource management: Good**

All practitioners have extensive experience over many years of working with young children. They run the setting effectively. They make good use of their individual expertise to improve the learning experiences of children, such as in the use of i-Pad and CDs to improve the children's ICT skills.

Practitioners take advantage of a suitable range of training to develop their personal skills and ensure they are up to date. For example, recent training had improved their understanding of the assessment process which has led to regular recording of children's progress. However, practitioners have not yet had opportunities to learn from other settings or share good practice.

The management committee ensures that it reviews the budget in detail. It prioritise spending according to the setting's needs and uses funds efficiently to ensure the group remains sustainable and to support children's learning. Given the positive developments in teaching and learning, the setting provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

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

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.