



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Gwenog
Ysgol Gynradd Llanwenog
Llanwenog
Ceredigion
SA40 9UU**

Date of inspection: November 2015

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

Cylch Meithrin Gwenog meets in a classroom in Ysgol Llanwenog, in the village of Llanwenog, Ceredigion. It provides five morning sessions a week for children aged three to five and five afternoon sessions for children aged two.

The setting is registered to take up to 16 children per session. Currently, there are 13 children aged three and four years of age on the register and all are funded by the local authority. English is the home language of about half of the children. According to the setting, there are no children with additional learning needs in the current cohort.

There are three members of staff including a full-time leader and two practitioners who work part-time. They are all experienced and most are suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. The leader has been in post since April 2012.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in December 2014 and by Estyn in June 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Most children make appropriate progress from their starting point
- Most children develop a suitable range of literacy skills
- Children have positive attitudes to learning
- Children's standard of behaviour is very good
- Practitioners provide children with a range of interesting experiences
- There is purposeful use of a range of teaching methods
- The constant encouragement to children to use their Welsh skills in their learning is a strong feature
- The very good relationship between children and practitioners promotes their confidence as learners
- There is effective provision to develop children's creative skills
- The learning environment is colourful, attractive and warm.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader provides positive direction to the setting's work
- Practitioners fulfil their roles conscientiously and work effectively as a team
- The self-evaluation report identifies appropriate areas for development
- There is evidence that improvements are introduced successfully
- Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try different ways of working
- Resources are used productively to support learning
- The chair and officers of the management committee provide constructive support
- Links with the primary school, parents and the community support children's learning and wellbeing effectively

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen the provision to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2 Extend the use of assessment outcomes to plan the next steps in children's learning, particularly their oral and number skills
- R3 Structure self-evaluation procedures further
- R4 Implement the staff appraisal schedule fully

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Children's listening skills are good. A minority speak confidently and demonstrate a secure grasp of a range of extended vocabulary. They are ready to ask questions, share experiences and offer their own ideas. The Welsh learners understand greetings, instructions and questions in Welsh but offer very brief responses orally. Most children understand the stories read to them and the majority can refer correctly to the main characters and events in the story. Nearly all children can recall a range of rhymes and songs and sing them accurately overall. They recognise their names in print form and most children have an increasing awareness of the sounds of many letters of the alphabet. The majority use marking equipment purposefully to register attendance, draw pictures, and copy letters and words. A few write their names independently.

The majority of children make appropriate use of their number skills in everyday activities. Most children can count to ten and a minority can count beyond that correctly. The majority understand the value of numbers up to four. A very few children use their mental mathematical skills confidently to complete addition and subtraction activities. However, a few children's understanding of basic number work is insecure. The majority of children understand mathematical terms, such as big and small, full and empty, in practical situations. They recognise basic shapes and begin to understand the purpose of money through role-play activities. The majority of children apply their thinking and number skills purposefully in activities such as collecting leaves, sorting them according to colour and counting totals. They contribute effectively to creating a simple graph of the results.

The majority of children's ICT skills develop appropriately, though unevenly. Most children use a range of media effectively to draw, paint, print and model. Their skills in handling small tools, such as pencils, scissors and paint brushes, develop appropriately.

Wellbeing: Good

Children have positive attitudes to learning. They work diligently on their tasks and enjoy the range of activities available. They play together harmoniously and are willing to share and take turns. They are very well behaved. Most are happy to make choices and to participate in new activities.

All children settle well in the setting. They are happy and feel safe in the company of practitioners. They are ready to ask for help and support. Attendance levels and punctuality are generally good.

Most children have a developing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. They understand the importance of washing hands regularly and especially before eating snacks.

Children's social skills and awareness develop effectively through daily activities and through experiences such as participating in the Christmas service organised for parents and the wider community.

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

Practitioners provide interesting learning experiences across the areas of learning. The curriculum is organised around a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. There is appropriate use of frameworks, linked to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, for planning provision. There are suitable opportunities for children to contribute their ideas for activities.

Daily provision provides constructive opportunities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is constant encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. During group activities, for example, there are appropriate opportunities for children to listen to stories, join in songs and rhymes, and to use their marking skills. There are examples of productive experiences led by practitioners to cater for the learning needs of specific groups of children. For example, the opportunity for the older children who are fluent in Welsh to sequence a story, discuss the characters, create their own illustrations and suggest captions for their work reinforces their skills effectively.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during group activities, circle time and in their play. There is effective use of activities in the outdoor area, such as cooking in the mud kitchen, to promote children's understanding of mathematical terms. There are relevant opportunities for children to use ICT skills in their activities, but planning lacks sufficient structure to develop their skills consistently.

There are purposeful opportunities for children to develop their investigative, creative and physical skills. The experience of experimenting with different media and materials to create colourful patterns on their T-shirts is an example. Activities, such as discussing and recording the different characteristics of night and day, promote children's thinking skills effectively.

Children are introduced successfully to the traditions and celebrations of Wales through activities such as celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day. There is appropriate use of visits and the contribution of a few visitors to support the learning. For example, visits by members of the police and an electrician develop children's awareness of the role different people play in the community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the Foundation Phase. They provide relevant learning experiences that engage children's interest and ensure their active involvement in their learning. There is a suitable balance between activities that are selected by the children and activities that are led by practitioners. There is effective use of a range of teaching methods and resources to support learning. For example, the task of creating a character out of their story book using sticks of various sizes in the outdoor area is used effectively to promote children's thinking, oral, mathematical and creative skills in a meaningful way.

All practitioners interact effectively with children. They talk to the children consistently and offer positive verbal feedback to consolidate their learning. There is good use of questioning to encourage children to think and to extend and enrich their Welsh vocabulary.

Practitioners know the children well and assess and record their progress closely. Records of children's development across the areas of learning are regularly updated. They are used appropriately to support overall planning. The use of assessment information to plan the next steps in each child's learning, including extending the more able and helping those children in need of further support, is an element that is developing positively in aspects of the work.

The collection of photographs of children involved in different activities is a useful record of their experiences. Parents and carers receive relevant information about their children's development through informal discussions, detailed written reports and opportunities to receive and discuss samples of their children's work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly in the setting. Practitioners are caring and supportive of all children. A range of appropriate policies and daily routines promote children's health and wellbeing effectively. There are suitable opportunities to develop children's awareness of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. They include providing healthy snacks and organising games sessions in the outdoor area.

Practitioners work together effectively to promote important values, such as the importance of sharing and caring for others, through daily activities. Experiences, such as Christmas and Easter celebrations and saying a prayer before snack, contribute appropriately to children's spiritual development. There is good attention to developing children's awareness of the need to help those less fortunate by collecting money for good causes. There are a few appropriate opportunities to develop children's awareness of different cultures through, for example, celebrating the Chinese New Year.

There are suitable arrangements to support children with additional learning needs, when required. They include clear lines of communication with key agencies such as speech and language support services.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Opportunities to grow plants and participate in recycling activities develop children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things appropriately.

Learning environment: Good

A family ethos permeates the setting. It is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to the curriculum and to all activities. Practitioners consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately.

The setting has enough suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There are sufficient resources in most areas of learning. The range of ICT resources is more limited.

The building provides adequate facilities. Although space is limited, the classroom is used purposefully by practitioners. The learning environment is enhanced by attractive displays including children's work. There is no outdoor play area but the setting makes constructive use of the school's outdoor play areas and field for a range of activities. The building is clean and safe.

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

The setting is led effectively by a conscientious leader. Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. This contributes to an organised and purposeful environment for children. Practitioners establish a positive relationship with children, parents and carers, and other partners. Relevant policies are implemented appropriately.

The management committee is very supportive and has established an effective working relationship with practitioners and parents. The committee meets regularly and gives appropriate attention to the setting's current and longer term needs. The chair has a good knowledge of the general management of the setting through visits and regular discussions with the leader.

There are appropriate procedures in place to evaluate the work of practitioners and identify future professional development needs. The most recent schedule of evaluations, however, has not been completed fully.

The setting gives appropriate attention to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's Welsh language skills and promoting healthy living.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has a secure understanding of the setting's strengths and the main areas for improvement. This is based on observing children's responses, staff discussion and monitoring assessment profiles. Evaluating specific aspects of provision in a more structured way is an element that is less developed.

The self-evaluation report provides a balanced view of provision. The development plan arising from this identifies suitable areas for improvement. The plan includes appropriate targets, sets out a timetable and outlines the resources required. There is evidence of improvements in implementing the plan in aspects such as the development of children's literacy skills.

Aspects of provision are monitored effectively by the local authority link officer and Mudiad Meithrin development officer. The officers share their views with the leader and the management committee. This contributes positively to further planning.

There are suitable opportunities for children to express an opinion simply about the activities they like or dislike. Practitioners give due consideration to the views of parents and carers through daily discussions, parents' meetings and by analysing the annual parent questionnaires.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a sound partnership with parents and this was confirmed during the inspection. Staff provide parents with relevant information through the notice board, modern technology, brochures and newsletters. Practitioners are regularly available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each session.

The productive partnership with the primary school provides good opportunities for practitioners and children to use the facilities and learning resources on the school site. This also promotes a smooth transition for children to the next stage of their education. The close links with the local day nursery benefit children and practitioners.

The constructive partnership with the management committee, the local authority link officer and Mudiad Meithrin development officer contributes to improvements in the setting's work through the practical advice provided.

The setting has beneficial links with the community. Practitioners co-operate constructively with local organisations by, for example, having a stall at the local show and organising a fun day for the setting's families and friends. There is good support for fund-raising activities.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and there is productive use of practitioners' time and experience. Overall, there is effective use of resources to support the teaching and learning.

Practitioners attend relevant training opportunities that develop their knowledge and skills appropriately. They have received suitable training on the requirements of the Foundation Phase and on aspects of the care and development of young children. There is effective use of the training, for example, in the range of teaching approaches adopted. The leader makes relevant use of the opportunities to visit other settings to share experiences and observe good practice.

Both the chair of the management committee and setting leader have a sound understanding of the budget and prioritise spending in line with the setting's needs. There is effective use of grants and fundraising events to supplement resources.

Given the quality of leadership, learning experiences and care and support for children, the setting offers 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 –

Dorothy Morris	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.