



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Gwynfryn a Meinciau
Ysgol Gynradd Meinciau
Pontyates
Llanelli
SA15 5SN**

Date of inspection: November 2016

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 Gwynfryn a Meinciau is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets in a suitable room at Ysgol Gwynfryn in the village of Pontyates, Carmarthenshire.

The setting is registered to admit up to 16 children a session, and children from two to four years old are admitted. There are currently 14 children on roll, and four children are funded by the local authority. Three-hour sessions are held five mornings a week.

English is the main home language of nearly all of the children, and the remainder come from homes in which at least one parent speaks Welsh. A very few children who attend the setting have additional learning needs.

There have been considerable changes in staffing over the last 12 months. The new leader has been in post since mid-September 2016, and leads three members of qualified staff.

The setting was opened on its current site under the name Cylch Meithrin Gwynfryn a Meinciau towards the end of 2011. Previously, the setting operated under the name Cylch Meithrin Meinciau and was inspected by Estyn in May 2011. Cylch Meithrin Gwynfryn a Meinciau was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in May 2015. This is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- The children are very happy and feel safe
- There is a very good relationship between adults and children
- In a few weeks, the children have begun to learn the importance of being considerate towards each other and showing courtesy
- Many children listen appropriately to stories and follow instructions suitably
- Most children handle a range of small tools and writing equipment confidently
- Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability
- Many children are well-behaved
- Learning experiences are broad and balanced
- Practitioners focus well on encouraging the children to eat healthily and undertake regular exercise

However:

- Most children do not use the Welsh language confidently
- Planning for the children's free play is not detailed enough to develop their literacy or numeracy skills
- Planning and assessment procedures have not had enough time to become embedded and have an effect on standards

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- In a very short period of time, the leader has established a clear vision whereby everyone works together to ensure the best possible for the children in their care
- The leader has succeeded in fostering a spirit of close co-operation among the staff so that practitioners understand their responsibilities
- Detailed planning and assessment procedures are beginning to have a positive effect on children's standards
- The management committee's officers have useful information about what happens in the setting from day to day
- The management committee has developed its role to hold the leader to account effectively for children's standards and provision
- The self-evaluation report has identified many of the setting's strengths

- The development plan focuses correctly on raising the standards of children's skills, particularly their literacy skills
- The setting has a range of effective partnerships
- The setting makes purposeful use of external support

However:

- The changes have not had enough time to have a full effect on developing provision or raising standards
- The current self-evaluation process is very new, is too dependent on the leader and there are no formal processes to consult with parents
- In general, the report is too positive and does not recognise sufficiently that many of the setting's procedures have only just been implemented
- The report does not always recognise all areas for improvement, particularly within the setting's leadership
- The development plan does not include enough detail to be wholly effective
- The management committee's arrangements for keeping the setting's accounts are not formal enough

Recommendations

- R1 Raise the children's standards of literacy, particularly their oral skills
- R2 Embed the new planning and assessment procedures so that early literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed across the six areas of learning
- R3 Ensure that the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes are more inclusive and effective
- R4 Establish a more formal system for keeping an eye on the setting's accounts

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

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

During sessions, many of the children make reasonable progress in developing positive attitudes towards learning, and in their knowledge and understanding.

Many children listen appropriately to stories and begin to join in purposefully with the class's songs. They follow instructions competently, for example when painting during a focus task or playing instruments outside. Many children find their names on pegs without assistance when they arrive and when registering themselves. A minority choose to get books, but they are able to hold and turn pages correctly, for example when reading to a dolly. Most children handle a range of small tools and writing equipment confidently, and some of them understand that writing has a purpose when working in the shop. However, only a few children use the Welsh language independently and spontaneously while playing. Many children do not use the Welsh language confidently, and their vocabulary and range of sentence patterns are limited.

Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability. Most recite numbers up to three. A minority are beginning to identify numbers up to five and pairing numbers on mathematical equipment with the number on the seat on which they are sitting. Many recognise two-dimensional shapes well in the classroom and outside when following instructions to hit equipment with a particular coloured shape on it.

A majority of children are beginning to gain confidence when using ICT equipment. They use electronic pegs to receive instructions during focus activities and a painting program on an electronic tablet purposefully. They control the movements of an electronic toy from shape to shape correctly and use a keyboard to move the page on an electronic book.

Many children have well-developed physical skills and are developing their balancing skills skilfully. They move bicycles purposefully along a particular path, and the most confident children are beginning to use the pedals. Many use small equipment, such as paint brushes, with good control when painting and emulating the artist's picture. Many children's problem-solving skills are beginning to develop well, for example when guessing how to steer an electronic toy. Many children are beginning to develop as independent learners while playing an active part in their learning. They develop this by making choices about what they like during snack time and during free play, and when taking off clothing and hanging coats.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enjoy coming to the setting and begin to settle into an established routine well. Many children are keen to take part in activities and persevere for a reasonable period of time, for example when putting mathematical equipment together to match numbers, or role-play in the mud kitchen.

Many of the children are well-behaved, particularly during focus activities. In a few weeks, they have begun to learn the importance of being considerate towards each other and showing courtesy. Many children are beginning to make sensible choices about what they would like to do during free play. They are learning to take turns, share and practice self-control well. Many are beginning to help tidy up when they are asked, and they use equipment carefully.

During snack time, most children show good social skills. They are beginning to learn to say 'thank you' and are aware that good hygiene is needed by washing their hands before snack time.

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

Practitioners develop plans that provide a range of interesting experiences across all areas of learning, that meet the principles of the Foundation Phase in full. Plans identify learning objectives for focus activities clearly, in addition to suitable activities that meet many of the children's needs. Practitioners have recently introduced a few opportunities for the children to offer their ideas for the plans, for example offering ideas to develop areas of continuous provision. Planning for focus activities and activities in the learning areas are developing appropriately. However, planning procedures have not been established effectively enough to ensure that children's skills develop systematically across all areas of learning.

In general, daily activities are beginning to provide suitable opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills; for example, opportunities to count different coloured blocks in the construction area are beginning to have a positive effect on the children's number skills. However, there is not enough focus on developing children's oral skills. This limits their ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh.

Children are given regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture and traditions. Effective example of this are emulating the work of Welsh artists and through celebrations such as St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day.

Very recently, the setting has begun to make beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences; for example, visits to the launderette develop their awareness of the world around them and the local area suitably. Appropriate use is made of visitors to enrich children's learning experiences, for example visits by the nurse to enrich the 'people who help us' theme.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have sound knowledge of the principles of the Foundation Phase. They make suitable use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources to guide learning. On the whole, they plan activities that ensure a suitable balance between activities led by adults and activities that the children choose themselves. However, the order of the sessions does not always enable children to make their

own choices effectively enough. This is most obvious during focus activities, when all children are expected to undertake the activity at the same time. In general, activities hold the interest of many of the children well. This enables them to persevere with their tasks. However, at times, over-direction by adults limits children's ability to work independently.

One of the setting's strengths is the lovely relationship between the staff and children. They manage behaviour sensitively and understand the children's needs well. As a result, many of the children are well-behaved and are beginning to treat their friends with respect by sharing resources and playing together successfully.

Practitioners model the Welsh language well. However, there are not enough opportunities to extend the children's language by introducing new vocabulary and sentence patterns regularly. During carpet sessions and activities, practitioners are beginning to question the children appropriately. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for children to respond to questions.

The setting's assessment procedures are developing effectively and all practitioners contribute effectively to the process. Assessments during focus tasks are useful and contribute valuably to planning the next steps in learning. Recently, the setting has introduced beneficial assessment procedures in order to assess all children on entry. In addition, they use literacy assessments in order to identify individual children's needs and plan relevant activities for them. However, these activities are in their early stages, and it is not yet possible to measure their effect on children's standards.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting's arrangements promote healthy living effectively. Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities to develop children's understanding of the importance of eating healthily, for example through the 'active life' ('bywyd bywiog') initiative. The setting ensures suitable opportunities for children to brush their teeth daily. As a result, most children have a good awareness of the importance of looking after their teeth.

Provision to ensure the children's wellbeing and moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is developing successfully. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop awareness of different cultures, for example when studying the Diwali festival. They provide robust opportunities for children to recycle paper, cardboard and plastic. This develops their understanding of sustainability appropriately.

Practitioners develop the children's social skills well during snack time. Practitioners encourage the children to shoulder responsibility when acting as the helper of the day.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting has begun to establish appropriate processes recently to identify children with additional learning needs. Although the processes are new, practitioners are

beginning to use assessments suitably to provide valid activities for children with additional learning needs. They are beginning to work with external agencies, such as the speech therapist, to provide for children appropriately.

Learning environment: Good

There is a caring and homely atmosphere within the setting. Staff work very well together as a team to create an inclusive ethos in which a high priority is given to children's wellbeing. As a result, children settle quickly at the setting.

Practitioners provide an attractive and stimulating environment. In general, areas of continuous provision offer suitable opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They make effective use of colourful and attractive displays in order to reinforce learning and celebrate children's work successfully.

The setting has daily access to the school's outdoor area. The outdoor area is stimulating with a variety of resources to stimulate learning. Practitioners plan suitable activities to enrich children's experiences in this area, for example by introducing new vocabulary when using the sound wall. However, in general, activities do not always focus enough on developing a wide enough range of skills.

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

In a very short period of time, the new leader has established a clear vision whereby everyone works together to ensure valuable experiences for the children in their care. She has succeeded in fostering a spirit of close co-operation among the staff, who are also relatively new to the setting. Job descriptions are comprehensive and the leader ensures that practitioners understand their responsibilities. The leader has begun to conduct regular staff meetings in order to work together purposefully to provide an appropriate standard of care and education. Purposeful new performance management arrangements set relevant targets in order to develop staff further and support pupils. However, the recent changes have not yet had enough time to establish a sufficiently robust strategic direction in order to have a full effect on provision and standards.

Appropriate procedures have been planned recently in order to raise standards of learning and teaching. The leader has also begun to formalise procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. However, it is only recently that practitioners have taken an active part in planning and assessing children's attainment. The range of activities has not yet had enough time to become embedded and have a significant effect.

Members of the committee have dedicated a great deal of energy and attention over the last year to ensure stable leadership and staff. Recently, they have co-operated successfully with the wider committee and the headteacher of the primary school in order to ensure that they have staff with a clear vision for the setting. As a result of the firm focus on ensuring stable leadership and staffing, the management committee have a clear strategic direction and take their responsibilities seriously. They have

developed their role to hold the leader to account for standards, provision, safeguarding children and leadership effectively. As a result, the setting's safeguarding processes are robust and there is a clear emphasis on identifying the children's linguistic needs, and leadership that responds to challenge. The committee's officers have good knowledge of what happens in the setting from day to day.

The setting meets national and local priorities appropriately, including developing the outdoor area and encouraging eating and drinking healthily.

Improving quality: Adequate

Following her recent appointment, the leader has begun to get to know the setting well. The current self-evaluation process is relatively new and the new procedures have not had time to become embedded or to include the remainder of the staff in the process. Although the setting listens to the views of practitioners and parents informally, there are no formal processes to consult with them.

The leader has worked diligently with members of the management committee, in addition to officers from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin to gain appropriate information about the setting. She has built on this information and produced a report that gives a fairly accurate picture of the setting's current work. The report identifies many of the strengths and some of the areas for improvement. However, in general, the report is too positive and does not recognise sufficiently that many of the setting's procedures are only in their early stages.

On the whole, there is an appropriate link between the self-evaluation report and the development plan. The plan has a clear focus on raising the standards of children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. However, it does not include enough detail to be wholly effective. The leader and management committee have not had enough time to show the effect of their work on raising standards, provision and leadership practices.

Partnership working: Good

The setting builds purposefully on a range of very beneficial partnerships. These partnerships are beginning to have a positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing, and on the quality of provision and leadership.

Partnerships with parents are developing robustly. New parents receive an information pack that facilitates the step from the home to the setting by providing necessary information. Beneficial use is made of a noticeboard to share information from day to day, and parents receive information newsletters regularly. Parents are very supportive of the setting and raise money each year in order to improve provision. An example of this was the recent sponsored walk to Penyfan, which raised a significant amount of money. The money raised is used appropriately to improve facilities, for example role-play equipment and multicultural dolls.

The setting has very supportive partnerships with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. These partnerships work closely with the management

committee and the headteacher of the school to try to improve and develop the setting's leadership and staffing. A new leader and relatively new staff have now been appointed, who receive support in order to set firm foundations for the future. There are very encouraging signs that this is already having a positive effect.

The partnership with the local school, with which the setting shares a building, is a clear strength. This enables the setting to make use of a wide range of resources, and enriches practitioners' professional understanding. Children benefit greatly from the partnership and, as a result of regular visits to the school, they are very familiar with the school's procedures before they begin to attend.

Resource management: Adequate

Leaders have recently ensured that the setting has permanent staff with suitable qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They have focused successfully on ensuring that the new staff work effectively as a team.

The setting is putting firm foundations in place to make the best use of practitioners and resources to support teaching and learning. There are plenty of good quality resources within the setting to meet the requirements of the six areas of learning. Practitioners make effective use of resources to enrich children's experiences and stimulate them. These include interesting, good quality books and extensive resources to help them to learn outdoors. Practitioners make appropriate use of resources in the learning and play areas both indoors and outdoors.

The development plan identifies the need for staff to receive purposeful training. The leader has already benefitted from training on using equipment to enrich the teaching of numeracy, and uses it regularly. However, the development plan has not identified in enough detail the cost of courses or which members of staff will attend. The leader has ensured that performance management procedures are ready to be put in place.

The leader keeps detailed records of daily admissions. However, over time, leaders do not have effective enough processes to keep expenditure under review or to be audited externally.

In light of the outcomes that are achieved by the children and the recent procedures that have been established by the leader, the setting provides adequate 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 / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

Maldwyn Ellis Pryse	Reporting Inspector
Jonathan Cooper	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 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.