



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Hywel Dda
Ysgol Gynradd Lllys Hywel
Whitland
Carmarthenshire
SA34 0QB**

Date of inspection: May 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 Hywel Dda meets in a cabin on the site of Ysgol Llys Hywel in the town of Whitland, Carmarthenshire. It is open for four mornings a week.

The setting is registered to take up to 19 children per session. Currently, there are 12 children aged two and a half and three years of age on roll. Nine children receive funded early years education. Nearly all the children come from homes where English is the main language. There are no children with additional learning needs in the setting at present.

There are two permanent members of staff. They are experienced and suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. One additional member of staff is a student trainee. The leader has been in post since 2006.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in February 2014 and by Estyn in July 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Most children make good progress from their starting point
- Most children develop an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy skills
- Most children make effective use of their physical and creative skills
- All children are well behaved
- All children are actively involved in their learning and become independent learners
- Stimulating activities ensure children's involvement and enjoyment in their learning
- The skilful use of circle time to promote children's language and numeracy skills is an outstanding feature of the teaching
- The inclusive ethos creates a warm and supportive environment for all children

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader provides strong direction to the setting's work and leads by example
- The constructive use of practitioners' skills leads to effective teamwork
- The management committee and officers carry out their duties conscientiously
- The leader has a sound understanding of the setting's strengths and the main areas for improvement
- The setting development plan sets appropriate priorities including developing children's literacy and numeracy skills further
- The close partnership with the primary school, parents and the community supports children's learning and wellbeing effectively

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen children's Welsh oral skills further
- R2 Refine planning to show the development of children's skills clearly
- R3 Develop the self-evaluation procedures by giving more attention to aspects of teaching and learning

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
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Standards: Good

Most children listen well and respond quickly and accurately to instructions. The Welsh learners show a good understanding of adults' questions and comments but offer brief responses orally. Children know a good number of songs and rhymes and perform them correctly. The majority of children use mark making equipment appropriately in a range of media. A few children are beginning to write their names independently and can record a brief comment to place on their pictures and paintings. Most children enjoy looking at books and handle them correctly. Nearly all children recognise their names in print. A few children make very good progress in identifying letters of the alphabet and can suggest words that begin with different letters with confidence.

Most children make effective use of their basic number skills in everyday activities. They sort and match objects by shape, size or colour well. Most children can count up to ten confidently, and a few can count further. A few children recognise numerals up to five and with assistance sequence them correctly. Most children understand the meaning of mathematical terms, such as big, small, heavy, full in practical activities. They recognise basic two dimensional shapes and begin to understand the purpose of money through experiences such as paying for goods during visits to the fruit shop. Most children make appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills to record comments about the weather, move objects on the screen and write their names, for example.

The majority of children make effective use of their problem-solving skills in activities such as using magnifying glasses to search for insects in the outside area. They show good awareness of the conditions necessary for sunflowers to grow. They recognise the changes that take place as they grow and can sequence pictures correctly to show each stage.

Most children develop good physical skills. They use cutting, painting and gluing tools with good control. They make good use of their creative skills when painting self-portraits or emulating the work of a famous artist. Examples of this work are of a very good standard

Wellbeing: Good

Most children have good attitudes to learning. They focus appropriately and persevere with their activities for suitable periods of time. They play together happily in the different areas, take turns and share equipment. They select their play activities confidently and make good progress in their ability to work independently. They behave well.

All the children have settled in well at the setting and have formed close relationships with other children and practitioners. Attendance levels are generally good.

Many children are aware of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. They know that fruits and vegetables are healthy foods and that we should eat only a little chocolate. They understand the importance of washing hands before eating snacks.

The children's skills and social awareness develop effectively through daily activities and through experiences such as visiting the village shops, participating in concerts for parents and joining in activities with the primary school.

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

Practitioners provide a range of stimulating experiences that engage children's interest and involvement in their learning. The activities are based on a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. The leader and the assistant prepare daily plans in some detail. They include appropriate objectives and outline the activities that will be available for the children. On occasion, planning does not demonstrate clearly how children's skills are promoted consistently. There are suitable opportunities for children to contribute their ideas to the planning.

There is effective provision to develop children's literacy, numeracy and wider skills across the curriculum. This has a positive effect on their learning. There is continuous encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. During group sessions, for example, there are appropriate opportunities for children to listen to stories, discuss different topics, join in songs and use their marking skills. There is constructive use of visits to the town library to promote children's interest in different types of books.

There are productive opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during group activities, visits, and play. During a visit to the fruit shop, for example, the children have appropriate opportunities to observe and discuss the numbers they see on the route. The opportunity to search for objects in the outdoor area which are then counted and classified by colour promote children's mathematical and thinking skills effectively. There are suitable opportunities for children to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills independently.

Well planned experiences, including celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day, develop children's awareness about the traditions and celebrations of Wales successfully.

There is effective use of visits and the contributions of members of the community to enhance children's learning experiences. By meeting and talking with a police officer, for example, and visiting the fire brigade centre and garage, children extend their knowledge about the world of work and the roles that people play in the community.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners are very experienced and are fully aware of the philosophy and requirements of the Foundation Phase. They maintain an appropriate balance between activities under adult guidance and activities the children choose. There is effective use of a range of teaching methods and suitable resources to support children's learning.

Practitioners interact purposefully with children. They speak with the children constantly, introduce new vocabulary and support the Welsh learners to become more confident in using the language in their play. The leader's skilful use of every opportunity to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills during circle time is an outstanding feature. The registration area, for example, is changed constantly to match the current theme with children's names and specific numbers attached to different pictures to reflect the theme. This attracts children's interest and provides additional challenges that strengthen their learning.

There are suitable procedures for assessing and recording children's progress and achievement. The practitioners know the children well and are able to discuss their overall development in detail. They observe the children's progress and record their observations clearly. There is appropriate use of assessment information to plan activities, mostly for small groups and individuals, and to set personal targets for children. Practitioners collect examples of children's work, which are annotated, in personal folders which are useful records of their development.

Parents and carers receive relevant information about their children's development through informal discussions and informative reports. The transfer arrangements include worthwhile visits by children to the primary school and discussions between staff.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are appropriate policies and procedures to support children's health and wellbeing. Practitioners are caring and supportive of all children. Children are encouraged successfully to eat healthily and to care for their personal hygiene.

Good quality experiences promote children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as being kind and caring, and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, are effectively promoted through daily activities. These experiences, as well as listening to Bible stories and participating in harvest and Christmas celebrations for example, contribute effectively to children's spiritual and moral development.

There is appropriate provision to develop children's knowledge of different cultures by celebrating festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. The opportunity to learn about animals that live in Africa contributes further to promoting children's awareness of the wider world.

The 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 effectively.

There are suitable arrangements to support children with additional learning needs, when necessary. The close links with specialist services, such as health services, ensure appropriate advice and support.

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

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners provide a warm environment where all children feel happy and safe. As a result, children settle quickly and are confident to join in the range of activities available. Practitioners consider and value children's diverse backgrounds and respond appropriately.

There is an appropriate number of experienced practitioners to implement Foundation Phase requirements. On the whole, there are sufficient resources to support learning across the areas of learning. The range of ICT resources is more limited.

The building provides suitable facilities and there is purposeful use of the primary school's hall and play area with large equipment to extend children's learning experiences. Activity areas are suitably arranged around the room and promote independent learning. The displays of samples of children's work contribute effectively to creating a colourful environment. The small outdoor area provides suitable opportunities for children to investigate and play and to listen to stories. The building and site are clean and safe.

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

The leader leads by example and shows a strong commitment to children's education and welfare. Practitioners understand their responsibilities and work effectively as a team. This succeeds in creating an organised and purposeful environment for children. Practitioners share clear aims and values which are reflected in the setting's ethos and work. Policies and procedures are implemented with care.

The setting's management committee provides effective support. It meets regularly and keeps minutes of members' discussions, which are the basis for further planning. Some members are regular visitors and this develops their understanding of the provision made for children. The setting has a suitable system for appraising the work of practitioners and identifying further professional needs.

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

Improving quality: Good

The leader has a secure knowledge of the setting's main strengths and areas for development. The established system of holding regular staff meetings to plan themes and activities collaboratively promotes improvements in aspects of the work. Children's progress is evaluated constructively by taking into account the practitioners' observations and children's records. At times, however, discussions do not give enough attention to aspects of teaching and learning.

The self-evaluation report provides a balanced view of provision. The development plan arising from this identifies a number of suitable areas for improvement. It gives appropriate attention to extending children's literacy and numeracy skills. The plan includes clear targets, a timetable, and outlines responsibilities. The plan is being implemented appropriately.

Practitioners give due consideration to the views of parents through daily discussions and by analysing the annual questionnaires, which are supportive. Aspects of provision are monitored constructively by the local authority link teacher. Practitioners are open to new ideas and try different ways of working. Aspects of provision are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin development officer.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a sound relationship with parents and this was confirmed during the inspection. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work through daily conversations, the notice board, posters and newsletters.

There is a very constructive partnership with the local primary school. Practitioners benefit from the close contact with the headteacher and staff of the school. This promotes a smooth transition for children to the next stage in their education. The use of school facilities is of great value to the setting.

The constructive working relationship with the management committee, the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Meithrin development officer contributes to improvements in the setting's work.

Links with the community impact effectively on children's learning. The productive use of visits and of the contribution of visitors extends children's experiences successfully. There is good support from the community for fund-raising activities, for example, and for helping with some improvements to the building. There is a warm welcome from local shops to display children's work, such as the Easter hats and cards.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and there is constructive use of practitioners' time and skills. There is effective use of individual interests for guiding and supporting children's learning experiences such as creative activities. Practitioners make productive use of resources to support children's learning.

The practitioners attend suitable courses on a range of aspects relating to the education and care of children. They make appropriate use of the training to promote children's language skills for example. There is constructive use of meetings for setting leaders to discuss common issues and new developments.

The leader and treasurer have a clear understanding of the budget, and expenditure is prioritised appropriately according to the setting's needs. There is good use of fundraising initiatives to supplement resources. The small outdoor cabin which is used for storytelling is a result of these efforts.

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

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.