



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

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Llangollen  
Pengwern  
Llangollen  
Denbighshire  
LL20 8AR**

**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:

| <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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Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Llangollen is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a room in Penllyn Church in the town centre, in Denbighshire local authority. The setting provides education and care for children from two and a half to four years old, between 8.30 and 11.00am, five days a week for 39 weeks of the year.

The setting provides sessions for two and a half hours, five mornings a week. The setting is registered to admit up to 20 children per session. There are currently 24 children on roll, 11 of whom receive early years education that is funded by the authority.

English is the main language spoken at home by all children at the setting.

Four experienced and qualified members of staff work at the setting, in addition to one volunteer. The leader has been in post since April 2013.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in January 2017 and by Estyn in July 2010.

## Summary

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| <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:

- Most children's literacy skills develop appropriately from their starting point
- Many children's number skills are developing successfully
- Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and are happy there
- Many children develop good independent learning skills
- Nearly all children are well-behaved, considerate of others and polite
- Practitioners offer a range of rich learning experiences that engage all children's interest successfully
- The setting supports children's health and wellbeing successfully

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have clear and purposeful aims and objectives, which place a strong emphasis on ensuring children's wellbeing and progress
- Practitioners work together effectively and there is a strong team spirit
- The setting has an industrious ethos in which children and practitioners feel that they are valued
- Practitioners use guidance and advice from external agencies skilfully in order to improve the quality of provision and raise standards
- The setting has successful partnerships, which have a positive effect on children's outcomes and learning experiences
- The setting makes effective use of the community to enrich children's experiences
- Practitioners take advantage of opportunities to attend training in order to develop their knowledge and teaching skills
- Good links between the setting and the local primary school prepare the children well for the next step in their education

## Recommendations

- R1 Provide regular opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology skills
- R2 Continue to develop the outdoor area in order to enrich children's learning experiences
- R3 Ensure that the self-evaluation process identifies important priorities for improvement

### What happens next?

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

## Main findings

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| <b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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### **Standards: Good**

Most children make sound progress from their starting point and develop effective independent learning skills. They apply their skills successfully in different contexts across all areas of learning.

Most children's literacy skills develop successfully from a low baseline. They listen carefully to stories and follow instructions correctly. Most children join in with familiar songs and rhymes successfully and do the appropriate actions. They respond appropriately to questions and greetings, and use familiar syntax and vocabulary, for example by responding to how they feel or what the weather is like today. Most find their names without help when they sit to eat their snack and they are able to identify colours correctly. Nearly all children make marks effectively and use a variety of media such as paint, chalk and coloured pencils. They show an interest in books and their content, and respond to stories enthusiastically.

Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability. Many recite numbers up to 10 and match numbers and objects successfully. They recognise familiar two-dimensional shapes well. Most follow simple patterns soundly by using a bead necklace to place colours in order.

A majority of children have appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are beginning to use a tablet computer suitably in the quiet corner in order to develop their literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills.

Many children have well-developed physical skills. They balance skilfully when stepping from one block to another, and control a bicycle in the outdoor area. Nearly all children take part in physical activities on 'Mercher Mwdlyd' ('Muddy Wednesday') confidently. Most use small equipment with robust control in a variety of different tasks, such as paintbrushes, chalk and crayons. Many children's problem-solving skills are developing successfully.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and are happy there. Most enjoy taking part in the range of activities, and many persevere for reasonable periods of time. Many discuss their work enthusiastically with each other and with adults, and show good attitudes towards learning. Nearly all choose activities independently, and undertake duties confidently, such as preparing snacks for their peers. Many develop good independent learning skills, for example when putting on and taking off their coats, and placing boxes in a row in order to step across the outdoor area.

Nearly all children are well behaved, considerate of others and polite. They learn to take turns, share and practice self-control well. Nearly all children help to tidy up when asked and they treat the setting's learning areas and resources with respect. They work well with their peers and choose activities maturely and independently.

During snack time, most children show good social skills. They are polite when sitting with their peers and learn to say 'thank you' when taking refreshments. Nearly all pupils show a good awareness of good hygiene by washing their hands before eating. Nearly all understand the importance of eating fruit in order to stay healthy, and they make healthy choices daily.

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| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

Practitioners offer a range of rich learning experiences that engage all pupils' interest successfully. They plan a broad curriculum jointly, in line with the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Learning activities are based on children's previous learning and experiences, and build on their skills and knowledge effectively. As a result, children are given valuable opportunities to investigate and discover for themselves, and to foster independent learning skills successfully. By acting on practitioners' observations on individuals' progress, the setting succeeds in meeting all children's needs effectively. Plans identify clear learning objectives for focus activities and enrichment activities. They include good use of purposeful indoor areas in addition to planning for activities in the outdoor area. Practitioners include children's ideas in plans appropriately at the beginning of each theme.

Practitioners plan to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills skilfully and ensure continuity and progression in these skills. A good example of this is the purposeful plans that develop children's spoken language through beneficial activities and exercises. They provide beneficial opportunities for children to develop their physical, thinking and creative skills, including painting and mark-making with different coloured ice blocks. Children are given a few opportunities to use ICT equipment; however, plans to develop children's skills are not effective enough. As a result, they do not develop their ICT skills systematically enough across the areas of learning.

The setting provides beneficial opportunities for children to learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations by celebrating St Dwynwen's Day and St David's Day. They make effective use of visits and visitors to enrich learning experiences, for example by visiting the fire station as part of their work about people who help us. Children visit the local shop each week to buy fruit. As a result, most develop a sound understanding of daily life in their community.

Practitioners provide interesting learning opportunities, which encourage children to treat people from different cultural backgrounds with respect and tolerance. A good example of this is the activities and learning experiences relating to celebrating Diwali and the Chinese New Year.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase and child development. They provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn through play, for example when they roll dough and play in the 'small world'. By ensuring a good balance between activities chosen by children and those that are led

by adults, practitioners meet children's needs successfully. They also make suitable use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources to support learning well. This holds children's interest for appropriate periods and encourages them to learn for themselves.

All practitioners work effectively as a team and support each other well for the benefit of the children. The strong working relationship between them and the children contributes to creating an atmosphere of co-operation and respect towards each other. They manage behaviour effectively and ensure that they praise the children for their efforts throughout the session. As a result, practitioners provide a stimulating and homely learning environment that encourages involvement and participation successfully. They model the Welsh language appropriately and ensure suitable opportunities to extend children's language by singing and speaking with them regularly.

The setting's arrangements for assessing children's progress are effective. Practitioners observe children daily and keep appropriate records on their development. As a result, practitioners have a good awareness of all children's needs. They use this information effectively to plan the next step in their education. Parents receive valuable information about their children's progress during their time at the setting through regular talks and an open evening in order to discuss their children's record books.

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

The setting supports children's health and wellbeing successfully. Practitioners promote the importance of eating healthily effectively through activities such as drink and fruit time. This enables children to learn how to prepare snacks in addition to developing their social and literacy skills effectively. The setting provides appropriate opportunities to promote children's spiritual and moral development, for example by encouraging children to discuss their feelings and show respect through a range of daily activities and practices.

The setting ensures that children are given regular opportunities to exercise both indoors and outdoor through beneficial activities. This includes making good use of the local park in order to conduct weekly activities, for example using the climbing equipment. This promotes children's health and fitness successfully. The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to recycle paper and cardboard. This develops their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners ensure that children are transferred safely to the care of their parents or a carer.

The setting has robust systems to respond to the needs of any child with additional learning needs. The leader works closely with external agencies to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented effectively, as necessary.



## **Learning environment: Good**

The setting has enough staff with appropriate knowledge and expertise to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum successfully. Practitioners work well together to ensure an inclusive ethos in which all children are respected, are given the same opportunities and are treated equally.

The committee and practitioners work diligently to ensure that the new building provides a caring, attractive and stimulating learning environment that meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase successfully. The setting is safe and kept clean. An appropriate supply of resources and purposeful learning areas provide rich opportunities for children to investigate and learn for themselves.

Although the outdoor area is limited in size, practitioners are developing the area appropriately in order to ensure valuable learning experiences outdoors. Children grow flowers in the outdoor area, which teaches them about nature and the needs of plants successfully. Practitioners make effective use of community resources, such as the nearby park, in order to plan activities to develop children's physical skills.

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

Leaders have clear and purposeful aims and objectives, which place a firm emphasis on ensuring children's wellbeing and progress. The leader shares her vision successfully with all practitioners and supports them well. She has high expectations of herself and all practitioners. She uses guidance and advice from external agencies skilfully in order to improve the quality of provision and raise standards. All members of staff understand their roles and responsibilities in full and work together effectively as a team. This contributes to an industrious ethos in which children and practitioners feel that they are valued. The setting has appropriate procedures to evaluate practitioners' work annually. This leads to purposeful training and support that meet practitioners' needs appropriately, for example when conducting training to develop children's oral skills.

The leader and committee work together effectively in order to ensure that statutory policies are effective. The committee receives relevant information from the leader regularly, which supports them in making sensible decisions about provision and funding. They attend meetings regularly and contribute directly to ensure that the new building is of a good quality and meets the requirements of staff and children. They play an active part in the leader's performance management process and visit the setting to discuss issues about provision regularly.

The setting gives valuable attention to local and national priorities. They focus effectively on promoting children's literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to promoting their wellbeing and fitness.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The setting has suitable arrangements for identifying the majority of its strengths, in addition to a few aspects that need improvement. They gather parents' views skilfully through regular questionnaires and use partners' monitoring reports as a basis for these arrangements. Practitioners' meetings and committee meetings focus on these issues regularly, and they act on any action points appropriately. This ensures that the setting addresses important aspects of provision that need to be developed quickly, for example introducing a language programme in order to improve children's oral skills. The committee receive up-to-date information about the setting's work from the leader and by visiting the setting. This ensures that they offer appropriate support, as necessary. However, neither the committee nor practitioners monitor the effect of provision in enough detail to measure the effect on children's outcomes. As a result, the setting's self-evaluation report is not evaluative and does not highlight strengths and areas for improvement in enough detail.

Practitioners work diligently to improve elements of provision; however, there is no direct link between the self-evaluation report and the targets in the improvement plan. The plan identifies a few areas for improvement appropriately, but there is not a clear enough focus on useful actions, clear deadlines or practical costs. The setting has not identified all important areas for improvement in order to improve provision and children's outcomes effectively enough.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has successful partnerships, which have a positive effect on children's outcomes and learning experiences. The strong relationship between practitioners and the home ensures that parents play an active part in most children's early education. Parents and carers appreciate the purposeful information that they receive about their children's achievements and progress. Practitioners also make effective use of contact books and social media in order to inform parents about all of the interesting learning experiences that children receive. The open door policy, together with good use of regular questionnaires, ensures that parents are given good opportunities to voice their opinion and discuss any concerns at a very early stage.

The setting has an effective link with the local school, which ensures valuable opportunities for practitioners to attend training, observe good practice and share information about the children. As a result, these robust transition arrangements ensure that children are prepared well for the next step in their education. Practitioners work effectively with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin, and act quickly on advice or guidance, which contributes towards improving provision and children's outcomes. They work appropriately with specialist agencies when children need additional support.

The setting makes effective use of the community to enrich children's experiences; for example, the local librarian visits the setting regularly to read stories and share books with the children. In addition, fundraising activities by the committee and parents offer fun social opportunities for families in the area.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has enough practitioners with appropriate qualifications and relevant experience to work with young children. The leader makes good use of their experience and expertise in order to support children successfully. Appropriate performance management systems support staff development successfully. As a result, practitioners take advantage of opportunities to attend training in order to develop their knowledge and teaching skills, for example by attending training on developing children's literacy skills.

The leader and the committee manage resources efficiently and ensure a good supply of learning equipment that responds effectively to the requirements of the Foundation Phase. The leader and committee officers have a good understanding of the setting's financial situation. They control expenditure carefully and work together to ensure sufficient funding for the setting.

The quality of provision and leadership ensures that 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 reporting inspector

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|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mr Kevin Davies | Reporting Inspector |
|-----------------|---------------------|

### 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

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| <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>  |

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| <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 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   |