



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Machynlleth
Tŷ Melfed
Craigfryn
Machynlleth
Powys
SY20 8JB**

Date of inspection: March 2016

by

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for

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

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 Machynlleth is a Welsh medium setting, which is located in Tŷ Melfed, the integrated children's centre in Machynlleth, in the Powys local authority. The setting opens for five mornings a week and it has two full time staff. It shares the building with the after school club.

The setting's registration allows it to take up to 18 children in a session. It accepts children from two and a half to four years old. At the time of inspection, seven children attended funded by the local authority.

Nearly all children are of white British origin and a few speak Welsh as their first language. Currently, there are a few children with additional learning needs.

The leader began her post in January 2016. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in November 2015. Estyn last inspected the setting in June 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The leader and management committee are very new to their roles. The setting's current performance is adequate:

The strengths include:

- Children's positive progress from their start points
- Children are happy and confident learners
- Positive relationships between adults and children
- Stimulating and challenging teaching
- Diligent care provided by the staff
- The inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment
- The staff's effective modelling of the Welsh language
- Beneficial partnerships with outside agencies, which support the setting

The areas for improvement include:

- Developing effective planning to improve children's skills
- Using visitors and visits to help children understand what different people do within their own community
- Improving the assessment procedures to challenge children according to their abilities
- Recording assessments consistently to move children forward to the next steps in their learning
- Improving the use of the outdoors

Prospects for improvement

The leader and management committee have not had time to establish regular and effective practices. The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The leader's position is new and not fully established
- The management committee has not had enough time to set a clear strategic direction to the work of the setting
- The management committee and leader are beginning to self-evaluate appropriately and target the current needs of the setting more effectively
- Recent developments are beginning to show improvements in provision
- All the staff are enthusiastic and have positive and practical attitudes to developing their skills and roles at the setting
- The local authority and Mudiad Meithrin target improvements well

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the provision of information and communication technology (ICT)
- R2 Ensure that the planning of the curriculum provides continuity and progression to target the next steps in children's learning effectively
- R3 Provide better opportunities for children to learn about their local community and the wider world
- R4 Improve assessment practices and record keeping to monitor the progress of every child accurately
- R5 Improve the use of the outdoor environment
- R6 Ensure that the leader and management committee self-evaluate rigorously and plan strategically to improve the setting's leadership practices and provision

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children achieve good standards and make positive progress from their starting points by the end of their time in the setting. Most children make positive progress in developing their literacy skills. Very few children are reluctant to discuss ideas with other children and adults and nearly all children listen well to others. For example, children discuss shapes effectively, complete jigsaws confidently and talk sensibly about mixing water and sand during group activities. Nearly all children speak clearly and make sure that others understand them in tasks. Many children use appropriate language in spontaneous and structured play.

Nearly all children sit quietly and listen attentively to stories. They join in enthusiastically when discussing these stories or when singing songs and nursery rhymes. Many children follow instructions correctly when serving each other food from the café area. Most children are keen to answer questions about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Around half the children choose to look at books independently. They hold books correctly and study the pictures and words with interest. They recognise the main characters in a story and discuss the content of a story intelligently. They respond sensibly to the content of the story and discuss the characteristics of different animals with great enthusiasm.

Most children are developing their early writing skills appropriately and have a good understanding of the purpose of writing. A few children are forming recognisable letters and numbers. A minority recognise their own and other's names and share ideas meaningfully about what they are trying to explain or record on paper.

Most children develop good numeracy skills. They count to ten confidently and recognise and name numbers to five. Nearly all children use a good range of mathematical language naturally during their play. For example, they describe buckets and containers as 'small' and 'big' when filling them up with sand and beans. They also discuss 'fast' and 'slow' and 'heavy' and 'light' when rolling vehicles in the outside area, to see how far they travel. Nearly all children group objects of different types by shape and colour correctly, including two and three dimensional shapes.

Most children choose and use their own ideas, appropriate mathematical tools, apparatus and materials to solve practical problems effectively. They use mathematical language purposefully and in relevant contexts when constructing during role-play and when weighing flour during cooking activities.

Many children understand what to do when they are directed in Welsh. However, a minority of children use Welsh without prompting. Many children use electronic equipment appropriately. They use buttons skilfully to start a compact disc player to listen to familiar songs and nursery rhymes. However, the lack of technological provision does impair children's development.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all the children are happy and confident learners. Nearly all children, relative to their age, have a good understanding of how they can keep healthy. Nearly all children wash their hands appropriately before eating snacks and fruit and do so with little prompting. Nearly all children have a good understanding that a healthy diet incorporates fruit and vegetables and that physical exercise keeps you fit and makes your heart beat faster.

Most children's attitude to learning is good. They participate enthusiastically in all experiences provided for them, both indoors and outdoors. Most children listen well to each other and to the staff. The behaviour of nearly all children is good.

Most children are fully engaged in every activity and concentrate and persevere for significant periods of time. A few work diligently at all tasks and persevere until they are successfully completed. Most children make sensible decisions for themselves and work well independently.

Nearly all children relate very well to each other, to adults and to visitors. They are courteous and considerate of others' needs and share resources willingly. Nearly all children take their turn sensibly when they put on their coats to leave the building. Most children suggest ideas about what and how they want to learn. As a result, most children show high levels of motivation, engagement and concentration.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The planning process is new. The setting has not embedded the planning into its daily practices. Therefore, the setting provides a suitable range of activities for children across all areas of learning. The planning meets the philosophy of the Foundation Phase appropriately. The staff plan the curriculum together. However, the planning of the curriculum has not had time to build purposefully on children's previous knowledge and experiences. At the moment, it does not target the next steps in most children's learning effectively. It does not link efficiently with the setting's assessment procedures, which are currently at a development stage.

The provision for children's literacy, communication and numeracy skills is satisfactory. Early writing tasks and mathematical development activities, which use specific counting apparatus, stimulate children well. They impact on standards effectively in all areas of learning. The provision for ICT is adequate.

The staff use the indoor environment efficiently to encourage children to experience new activities, which develops their independent thinking skills well. For example, through playing with water and sand, experimenting with ingredients when cooking, preparing a picnic for teddies and role-playing in the café during snack time. The setting does not use the outdoor area effectively. The setting's provision for the outdoor areas of learning is not effective to support children's learning.

All adults communicate effectively with children in Welsh. The setting provides positive opportunities for children to develop their personal and cultural identity. They celebrate and learn successfully about Welsh festivals such as Saint David's day and Saint Dwynwen's day. The planning for learning about other cultures is not currently effective. Children do not visit places outside the setting often and visitors do not attend the setting to develop children's understanding of their own community.

Teaching: Adequate

Staff have a good practical knowledge of children's development and a firm understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a positive relationship between all staff and children. Staff are beginning to develop an active role in planning the curriculum and the best use is made of their expertise. All staff stimulate and interest children successfully during focus activities to ensure that individual children are challenged appropriately in line with their abilities.

Staff co-operate effectively. They are very positive as the children arrive and they continue with this enthusiasm throughout the session. The staff allow all children to choose sensibly between adult-led activities and child-led activities. Staff intervene purposefully during tasks and they allow children to develop their independent skills successfully.

Staff manage children's behaviour positively, safely and efficiently. Staff model Welsh well in order to develop children's communication skills. Staff encourage children to evaluate sensibly as they discuss the weather and recount the days of the week when seated together. Inside the building, staff provide an interesting environment, which ensures that all children take part and enjoy. However, the teaching in the open air is not stimulating and challenging.

The assessment practices are at a very early stage of development. Appropriate assessment procedures exist. However, they do not identify accurately what all children can do well and where they need support. Record keeping is at an early stage of development and as a result is inconsistent. The leader completes the initial assessments on individual children diligently. However, the assessments do not lead with enough detail to individual children's targets and the planning for the next stages in their learning. Even though improvements in the process are evident, it is an important shortcoming. The setting informs parents and carers well about their children's achievements. The information is available to them at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides positive opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, staff foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect sensibly, through consistent opportunities for children to reflect, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray.

Staff allow children to lay the table and serve each other fruit, toast and sandwiches at the café area prior to sitting at the dining table. A daily helper helps with the serving of the food. This encourages children to take turns politely during snack time. The setting has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and

drinking. Planting areas in tyres are part of the outdoor area, however, they are not utilised effectively at the moment. Children recycle food after snack time. This develops their understanding of sustainability appropriately.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any form of harassment or oppressive behaviour. Children are happy and safe in the company of adults at the setting and they often ask for help and support. All staff have suitable qualifications and experience and the ratio of adults to children is favourable. Staff expertise is used well when teaching and supervising activities.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The setting is safe. Staff lock the entry door. Only staff members open the door. No one can come in and a child cannot leave unaccompanied. The staff take care when children are collected from the foyer. The staff ensure that children are under the care of their parents or familiar carer at the end of each session.

The setting records children's learning needs effectively when they join and during their time at the setting. The setting reviews children's progress regularly. Therefore, the setting targets children well with additional support. The staff discuss these with parents and appropriate agencies when the need arises, which includes medical support and supervision. The leader is familiar with the procedures necessary to support children.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment. Staff know the children well and their individuality is recognised. Every child has equal access to an appropriate curriculum.

The setting promotes a positive ethos through daily activities and the approach adopted by the staff. Everyone places a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. Staff use different characters such as a magician and his dog to achieve this during circle time and story time.

The setting uses its resources successfully inside the building to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Children are encouraged constantly to move freely around the areas of learning and to participate in various activities. The resources are accessible to children, which promotes the children's sense of responsibility successfully. Continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enrich learning share resources effectively.

The setting arranges the outdoor area appropriately. Currently, the staff do not use the outdoor area effectively to target children's skills in all the areas of learning. There are limited opportunities available for children to grow plants in specific planting areas. The quality of the building is appropriate, safe and maintained well.

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

Leadership: Adequate

The recently appointed leader and the new management committee have begun to use relevant information about the setting efficiently, which is beginning to initiate improvements in the quality of provision and leadership practices. However, due to the recent changes and new appointments, the setting's strategic direction is satisfactory. The changes have not had enough time to impact fully on developing provision in key areas that need improvements.

The leader has begun to promote improvements. At the moment, she manages teaching and learning well. The management committee ensure that staff understand their roles fully and they work together diligently as a team. However, the management committee has not had enough time to appraise staff's roles appropriately and target their professional development effectively. The setting uses the guidance of outside agencies, such as the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin well. The leader motivates others towards improvements in a positive and supportive manner.

The management committee has a better focus by now on ensuring progress against the setting's priorities. The improvement plan is a working document, which targets the management committee's role as a key priority. There are now clear priorities for improvement, identified through realistic self-evaluation procedures. These developing processes are beginning to ensure that resources are available to meet the improvement objectives. This includes making the role of the management committee more rigorous and improving the provision of visits and visitors to the setting.

The staff access relevant and appropriate training from the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin, which is impacting positively on the quality of provision. Their support at the setting has guided the new leader sensibly throughout a period of significant changes. Policies are now operational and the setting meets local and national priorities suitably, such as implementing the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is new to the leader. The current members of the management committee have not yet had time to contribute to the process. The support of the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin is beginning to affect the process beneficially. However, the leader and management committee have not had enough time to show the effect of their work on improving provision and leadership practices through the adoption of new strategies and the valuable advice of others. The processes are satisfactory.

The leader and staff are more knowledgeable about the setting's current work by now. The leader and the management committee are developing more consistent procedures to monitor children's standards and the provision. Staff work together effectively on a daily basis, which promotes a better understanding of the setting's needs. The management committee uses funding effectively for resources and efficient staffing.

There are clear links between the setting's self-evaluation and the targets of the improvement plan, which focuses on improvements in children's mathematical development and ICT skills, improving the use of the outdoor area and developing a more effective management committee. Therefore, a positive culture of self-evaluation is beginning to influence the setting's work.

The leader and staff are open to new ideas and are willing to experiment with different ways of working. For example, they are using the local authority's planning and assessment systems more effectively. This is beginning to affect the quality of learning experiences beneficially.

Partnership working: Good

Staff take active steps to involve parents and carers in the life of the setting. For example, the setting invited parents recently to a successful open morning. Parents and carers, in the answers to the questionnaires and in discussions, express their satisfaction with the setting. They appreciate the standards of care and quality of adult support available. They delight in the open door policy and the opportunities to meet staff on a daily basis. Therefore, the relationships between children, parents and carers and the staff are positive.

Links with the local school are appropriate. There are effective arrangements for transferring information and the setting visits the school to use its equipment when necessary.

The support provided by the Mudiad Meithrin benefits the setting, through implementing policies and by giving advice to the management committee. The strong co-operation between the local authority and the setting is very beneficial to the development of the setting. A positive relationship exists with both agencies. By now, their advice and suggestions help move the setting forward and contribute well to the developing provision.

The staff work efficiently together and share information regularly about children orally. They know whom to contact if they need additional support for children. They use these contacts to support children's learning when needed and after discussions with parents and carers.

Resource management: Adequate

The recently appointed leader and the new management committee have not had enough time to secure improvements at the setting. The changes in staffing and in the management committee have caused inconsistencies in the development of the setting. Children's standards and wellbeing are good, however, this is not currently due to the setting's provision and leadership.

The setting uses staff expertise well and staff work effectively side-by-side with each other to improve children's achievements. Teaching is good. The support of outside agencies, such as the local authority ensures better consistency to the leadership. However, securing improvements through strategic planning and improvement priorities is not yet embedded.

The strategic planning is beginning to target the needs of the setting more effectively. Even though many complications over recent times have affected staffing, the new leader and the management committee have succeeded in ensuring that the setting has enough qualified staff with appropriate training to maintain the community provision.

The setting manages its resources satisfactorily to support learning and to create improvements. It has effective indoor resources. The setting uses them sensibly to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The resources are accessible to the children and this encourages independence. This has a positive impact on their learning. However, the setting does not use the outside area effectively.

The management committee has a sound understanding of its budget and it manages it well. It prioritises the spending in line with the targets for improvement purposefully.

The setting provides adequate value for money because of the important areas that need developing in its leadership and in the provision.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark – this is a total of all responses to date since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	10	8 80%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	18%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	10	9 90%	1 10%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	23%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	7	4 57%	3 43%	0 0%	0 0%	3	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	11	5 45%	5 45%	1 9%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	5%	1%		
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	11	8 73%	2 18%	1 9%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	9	4 44%	4 44%	1 11%	0 0%	2	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	31%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	10	7 70%	3 30%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		74%	25%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	10	4 40%	4 40%	2 20%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		64%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	11	7 64%	4 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The Reporting Inspector

Mr Nicholas Jones	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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.