



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pontllanfraith
Bryn Pavilion
Bryn Estate
Bryn Road
Pontllanfraith
Blackwood
NP12 2DA**

Date of inspection: February 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 Pontllanfraith meets in a small room in Pontllanfraith sports pavilion, near Blackwood in Caerphilly local authority. It provides five morning sessions and five afternoon sessions a week for children aged between two and four years. The setting also provides care for two-year-old children as part of the Flying Start care scheme.

The setting is registered for 14 children. There are currently 18 children on roll. Seven of them have reached their third birthday and, of these, four are funded by the local authority. At present, only a very few children have additional learning needs. English is the home language of nearly all the children.

There are three full-time members of staff at the setting. The leader has been in post since September 2015 and holds a Level 5 QCF Diploma qualification in leadership in the field of child care, education and child development. The two other members hold Level 3 NVQ qualifications and are working towards gaining Level 5.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in January 2016 and by Estyn in November 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- The majority of children make good progress from their starting point
- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences for the children
- The children have positive attitudes towards learning
- Pupils' standards of behaviour are very good
- There is good provision to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills
- There are many opportunities for children to make decisions about their learning

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader of the nursery group has a clear vision that is shared effectively among stakeholders
- Practitioners share common values and work well as a team
- Practitioners fulfil their roles conscientiously and effectively
- Practitioners receive regular and relevant opportunities to develop professionally
- There is consistent practice of self-evaluation
- The setting's improvement plan targets appropriate areas and earmarks sufficient resources to implement them

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that children apply their numeracy knowledge across the learning areas
- R2 Provide wide opportunities for children to use various media when developing their creative skills
- R3 Ensure that the self-evaluation report identifies clearly the areas for improvement that need to be included in the setting improvement plan

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During their time at the setting, the majority of children make good progress from their different starting points. They make good progress in their personal and social skills, which prepares them well for the next stage in their learning.

The children's literacy and communication skills are developing well, considering their low starting point as Welsh learners. Nearly all pupils' listening skills are developing well. They understand and are able to follow instructions that are given to them in Welsh correctly and show a thorough understanding of the language. They develop a useful understanding of words and phrases and they join in enthusiastically with Welsh songs. Most are able to recall previous learning during daily activities, such as naming colours and shapes in Welsh. They respond in a lively way, for example when listening to the story of the hungry caterpillar. The majority choose to visit the reading area occasionally and they know how to handle a book correctly. Most of them recognise their names in print form and a very few recognise the names of some of the other children. The majority use mark-making equipment to develop early writing skills with increasing control.

Most children develop appropriate numeracy skills. Nearly all join in number songs correctly and the majority count together correctly up to 15, for example when counting circles during greeting time. However, children do not use their knowledge of numeracy sufficiently across the learning areas.

Most children are developing their physical skills well. They climb and pedal bikes confidently and handle small detailed equipment such as scissors with increasing control.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children come to the setting happily and settle in quickly. They have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to take part in activities and most of them concentrate and persevere well, for example when completing a jigsaw. They play together diligently and share and take turns easily.

Nearly all of them behave well, and the majority remember to say 'thank you' during snack time. They are happy, feel safe in the company of the practitioners and are willing to ask for help and support when needed.

Nearly all children respect the resources and are willing to help to tidy up, with encouragement.

Nearly all children develop very good independence skills, for example when spreading butter on toast and pouring their own drink. They are aware of the need for good hygiene by washing their hands before having a snack and after going to the toilet. Many children are willing to try to put on their own coats and put on wellington boots with a little help.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The setting provides a wide range of exciting experiences inside and outside, in order to gain most children's interest. Practitioners plan interesting experiences across the areas of learning and place appropriate emphasis on play and learning through direct experience. There are daily opportunities for children to make choices, which enables most of them to make good progress towards being independent learners.

All practitioners plan and follow themes which link appropriately to the principles of the Foundation Phase. Planning is appropriate and flexible; for example, it is adapted when it snows in order to take advantage of a rare opportunity to learn about it. The setting provides for meeting the needs of all children effectively.

Daily provision for developing children's literacy and communication skills is good. Practitioners speak Welsh to each other and to the children regularly. As a result, children hear the language throughout the session and are immersed in it. There are good opportunities for children to take part in singing a range of songs throughout the session and these songs are used to reinforce the structure of the session well. There are good opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills meaningfully, for example writing their names in Christmas and St Dwynwen cards. Recently, the setting has invested in creating a comfortable reading area. As a result, the majority are attracted to use the area spontaneously.

There are few appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the other areas of learning. However, they have opportunities to count together regularly, for example when counting the number of boys and girls during snack time, and numbers are put in prominent places in the learning areas. The setting has an attractive mathematics area, with a wide range of polished resources that are within the reach of the children. As a result, many children choose to play in this area.

The setting makes good use of visitors to enrich provision and to contribute successfully to children's learning, for example fire-fighters to develop a link and the children's understanding of workers in the community.

There are good opportunities to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) and physical skills. There are appropriate opportunities to develop creative skills, for example painting, using glue and using felt pens to create a picture. However, there is not enough variety to extend children's creative skills further. As a result, opportunities for children to express themselves creatively are limited.

Children are introduced successfully to the traditions and celebrations of Wales by singing Welsh nursery rhymes and activities such as celebrating St Dwynwen's Day and wearing traditional dress and having experience of folk dancing on St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have comprehensive and robust knowledge of the principles of the Foundation Phase. They use a suitable range of effective learning strategies to encourage and motivate the children to learn; for example, they use circle time to encourage listening and reading skills well. Practitioners make imaginative use of resources, which gains children's interest and improves their learning. Practitioners play together and interact effectively with the children. They intervene purposefully to challenge and move the learning forward, for example giving plasters to children as they role play with doctors' equipment, which extends their fine motor skills and social skills. They are appropriate language models and speak Welsh to the children regularly to extend their vocabulary. They give praise effectively to manage children's behaviour positively, which contributes to a happy and homely atmosphere. However, practitioners do not always encourage the children enough to use numeracy in the various learning areas.

Practitioners work successfully as a team. All members know their role. They support each other effectively to ensure that activities proceed with ease. They allow children to make their own decisions, which contributes well to fostering their independent learning skills. Practitioners have a thorough knowledge of the children's personal needs, and up-to-date knowledge about their strengths. As a result, they respond successfully to each child's individual needs by providing appropriate activities for them according to their ability.

Practitioners share information with parents about their child effectively through informal meetings. Through end of year books, parents have a valuable record of their child's progress whilst at the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective induction procedures to ensure that children settle in quickly and easily there. Practitioners are very caring of all children and foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect through daily activities. Children have regular opportunities to discuss their feelings and are encouraged effectively to take turns.

Snack time is a sociable time and children are encouraged to be independent. The setting promotes the principle of eating healthily and the importance of drinking water, for example during snack time. The various opportunities that are provided for the children to take physical exercise are good. They have opportunities, for example, to run after a kite and move to musical accompaniment. All children brush their teeth every day, which encourages effective dental care.

The setting provides a valuable range of experiences that foster the children's spiritual, moral and social development well; for example, singing the prayer 'Iesu Tirion' (Gentle Jesus) before snack time and inviting a Sunday school teacher to speak to them.

The setting provides good opportunities for children to improve their understanding of the work of people who help them and there are suitable opportunities for them to take part in celebrations such as the Chinese New Year. This contributes significantly to raising the children's awareness of other cultures.

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

There are robust processes in place to support children who have additional learning needs. Effective use is made of the local authority's support services to support practitioners in identifying the needs of children who have additional learning needs and to provide appropriately for them.

Learning environment: Good

There is a homely and friendly ethos, which permeates throughout the setting. Practitioners consider the children's different backgrounds and appreciate them as individuals in line with that knowledge. As a result, the children are very happy in each other's company and are very willing to play together. Each one of the children is able to take equal advantage of all the setting's areas and provision.

Practitioners show respect for each other and show a good example to the children. They use positive behaviour strategies in order to manage behaviour effectively.

The setting and the outdoor area are very limited in size, but practitioners work hard to create a stimulating and attractive learning environment. The play areas are indicated clearly with purposeful displays of children's pictures about their activities. The good supply of resources are of a good standard in nearly all areas of learning and are within children's reach. As a result, the children are busy and have very good independence skills.

The outdoor area is safe, but it is not possible to allow the children to have access to it independently. However, practitioners compensate for this by planning effectively for daily outdoor activities. Occasionally, the playing field is used to enrich and reinforce physical activities further, such as conducting games and sports on a wider scale.

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

The setting's leader is enthusiastic about her work, and she has a clear vision, based on providing wide experiences for the children through the medium of Welsh. She shares this vision effectively with the management committee and the remainder of the staff and parents understand and appreciate what the nursery group achieves. As a result, she succeeds in creating an ethos at the setting in which pupils and staff feel that they are appreciated.

Staff share agreed values about learning, behaviour and relationships and make a considerable contribution to the quality of teaching and provision. They all co-operate very well as a team, which means that the nursery group runs smoothly from day to day, and everyone understands their roles fully. Staff meetings are held regularly, and they pay appropriate attention to the staff and the setting's continuous development, in addition to practical issues.

There are robust arrangements to evaluate staff, which includes self-evaluation by each practitioner. This leads to relevant and useful training for them according to need. This has a clear effect on the wellbeing and development of children at the setting.

Members of the management committee fulfil their duties effectively and support the vision and activities of the setting well. They act constitutionally and there is a good relationship between them and staff at the setting.

Improving quality: Good

There is an ethos of regular self-evaluation within the setting. The leader and practitioners know about the setting's strengths and they have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. They self-evaluate constantly and explore ways to improve provision and raise standards regularly. The self-evaluation procedure gives appropriate consideration to parents' views through the medium of regular questionnaires.

The leader and deputy leader co-operate easily to analyse and evaluate the strengths and shortcomings of the provision. The self-evaluation report that arises from these discussions is a fairly detailed document, which pays attention to a good range of areas. However, the document is too descriptive and focuses more on the strengths of the setting without paying enough attention to areas that need to be improved.

The setting's development plan is a useful document that identifies clearly which areas are the current priorities for improvement. There are sufficient resources and purposeful arrangements to monitor and evaluate it effectively, and the leader and staff address the priorities for improvement well. Priorities for improvement are appropriate and target suitable areas that need attention. However, there is no adequate link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation report and the priorities for improvement in the development plan.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good relationship with parents. They receive regular information about the work of the setting and the leader takes practical steps to include them in activities, for example by asking them to create a colourful butterfly with their children and sending them in to be displayed in the setting. A noticeboard for parents gives useful information about the setting's policies and procedures and the leader and staff provide useful guidance for parents about how they can help their children.

The setting has robust links with local schools, and there are clear arrangements for transferring pupils to the nursery class in a number of schools at the end of the educational year.

There is effective co-operation between the setting and the local authority, for example through relevant training sessions, which contribute very constructively to improving provisions and standards. The adviser visits the setting regularly and gives useful support and guidance to the leader and staff. In addition, the setting takes occasional advantage of other local specialist services, such as the health service, to meet some children's specific requirements.

There is a good professional relationship between the school and the Mudiad Meithrin and Flying Start, and beneficial links with people and employers in the community. Events in the community and visits from workers such as local builders, police and shopkeepers, enrich the children's experience of life in the surrounding community. Urdd Eisteddfod activities in 2015 were a means of providing exciting experiences for the children, and of enriching their Welshness.

The setting co-operates well with a local college to provide relevant training opportunities for students on childcare courses.

Resource management: Good

The setting is staffed appropriately, and the leader has allocated responsibilities effectively. The qualifications of all staff members are suitable for teaching all aspects and principles of the Foundation Phase. The leader makes very good use of the skills of individual practitioners to ensure that the needs of almost every child are met effectively.

Performance management arrangements identify practitioners' development needs appropriately and set relevant targets for their continuous professional development. As a result, staff benefit from training opportunities that are suitable to their needs and ensure that they have up-to-date information about recent educational developments.

The setting has sufficient resources to meet all the learning areas in the Foundation Phase. Although the outside area is not a natural extension of the learning space, it is safe and is managed well by staff. The leader has ensured a supply of suitable resources and effective use is made of them in order to give the children good experiences. Good use is also made of the nearby public park to enrich provision, for example to fly a kite and to hold a sports day in the summer.

The committee and leader allocate funding appropriately to respond to the setting's priorities. They evaluate expenditure carefully in order to consider the effect on pupils' standards and wellbeing. The Pupil Deprivation Grant is used purposefully to ensure resources to promote the literacy skills of pupils from vulnerable backgrounds.

In relation to children's standards and the quality of teaching, care and guidance, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data is shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Nerys Jones	Reporting Inspector
Terwyn Tomos	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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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.