



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Rhostryfan
Rhostryfan Primary School Hall
Rhostryfan
Caernarfon
LL54 7LR**

Date of inspection: April 2016

by

**Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens
Reporting Inspector**

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 Rhostryfan is a Welsh-medium setting. It's located in Rhostryfan village hall which is situated on the local primary school site. The setting has been registered since 1983 to provide for up to 26 children at a time. There are 7 two to three year old children, 11 three year old children financed by the Education Authority and 10 three to four year olds who receive part time education at the school. The setting is open four mornings a week from Tuesday to Friday, 08.45am until 11.30am.

The majority of children come from homes where Welsh is the first language. There is no child registered in the current cohort as having additional educational needs or from an ethnic background.

There are 5 members of staff including a leader and two full time practitioners and two assistants in reserve. Every member of staff is suitably qualified and experienced to work with young children. The leader has been in post since 2003.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in November 2015 and by Estyn in March 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- nearly every child makes good progress across all learning areas
- children's social and physical development is very good
- nearly every child enjoys the lively, interesting learning experiences provided
- the learning environment is very stimulating
- the teaching is effective
- staff have high expectations which foster children's confidence and willingness to be adventurous
- the quality, variety use of both indoor and outdoor resources is very good
- very effective arrangements are place to encourage children to keep fit and healthy

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader has a clear vision and direction in ensuring an effective balance between child care and education
- leaders understand the setting's strengths and areas for improvement well
- the staff's positive and practical attitude towards staff development and training
- the detailed daily arrangements which result in effective teamwork
- prompt action is taken on external advice after skilfully adapting it to the setting's needs
- strong partnerships contribute positively to the setting's work
- the management committee is actively supportive
- the setting provides good value for money

Recommendations

- A1 Develop the language of the less fluent children
- A2 Ensure that children contribute to decisions about their own learning in order to develop their thinking skills and problem solving
- A3 Involve parents in decisions about the next steps in their children's 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

During their time in the setting many children make good progress across all areas of the Foundation Phase in accordance with their age and ability.

Many children develop language skills that are appropriate to their age, ability and linguistic background. Nearly all listen actively and respond enthusiastically to questions and directions from adults. They all enjoy listening to stories and join in avidly in a range of songs and nursery rhymes. The majority learn and use new words and phrases within the focus tasks and circle time. Nevertheless, some children are insufficiently fluent to be able to understand and to join in all the activities. The majority recognise their name when self-registering and fetching their coats. They respond to flash cards that instruct them to listen, sit or stand up. They enjoy choosing books independently and sharing their favourite books with adults.

The majority develop good early writing skills by creating patterns in sand and shaving foam and creating shapes with dough. Their understanding of the purposes of writing is developing naturally across all areas of learning, such as in creating various labels and producing a shopping list.

Many develop good numeracy skills. Most can count to five confidently and classify objects of different sizes or colour accurately. Many are adept at using these skills when playing and carrying out certain activities. For example, they returned four cars to their designated place in sequence when tidying up after play.

Most of the children's physical skills are excellent. Almost all venture confidently to engage in the very challenging activities in the outdoor area. They use small implements such as paintbrushes and scissors successfully. Most use magnifying glasses to study plants and leaves in detail and can identify similar pictures in simple reference books.

Wellbeing: Good

Almost all children settle in very well and quickly become familiar with the setting's procedures. They move confidently between activities. Most persevere for considerable periods of time to complete their tasks. A few of the more able children concentrate intently; for example when selecting and then placing appropriate furniture for all the rooms in the doll house.

Most children behave consistently well. They develop a satisfying relationship with each other, demonstrating self-discipline: for example while waiting their turn for their favourite pink car. Many of the children share and take turns patiently: for example, in anticipation of sharing a magnifying glass to study herbs. Consequently, they develop their social skills effectively, showing consideration for each other's feelings.

Almost all make very confident choices regarding where they want to play and what resources are appropriate and as such they develop well as independent learners. The enthusiasm, confidence and willingness of nearly all to venture onto the resources in the outside play area are excellent.

They almost all understand that they should wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They participate enthusiastically in dancing activities to keep fit, and enjoy healthy food at snack time. Almost every one demonstrates a mature responsibility when tidying up.

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

All practitioners work together very effectively to plan an interesting range of valuable learning experiences that engage the majority of children. Overall, they meet the needs of children at different stages of development well. They regularly provide challenging activities for more able children through extended tasks and extra vocabulary. On the other hand, there are examples of less effective support for children who are less fluent communicators.

The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to develop an understanding of the world in which they live by following appropriate themes, such as 'Autumn', 'Celebrations' and 'The Garden'. They organise interesting visits around the local vicinity in relation to the focus of their themes. For example, a visit to the nearby forest raising children's awareness of seasonal changes of trees and plants.

Practitioners help children realise that they should treat all living things with care and respect. They do this effectively by, for example, preparing food for the birds during the winter and growing flowers in the spring. This enables most children to enjoy the valuable experiences and opportunities to explore the properties of plants. However, children have fewer opportunities to develop their thinking and solve problems themselves.

Each practitioner is a very good model of refined language that helps enrich the children's language on a daily basis. Practitioners plan the development of children's communication, literacy and numeracy skills systematically. For example, they create banks of specific vocabulary and phrases that are relevant to specific activities and repeat them constantly.

They celebrate and learn about their heritage in a meaningful way. For example, they celebrate both St Dwynwen's festival and St David's Day by discussing costume, Welsh food and singing traditional songs.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. For example, they understand the importance of providing appropriate opportunities for children to learn through play and first hand experiences.

They ensure a very good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by practitioners.

They have high expectations of the children and present activities that support the more able children well. However, sometimes, children do not always have sufficient opportunity in the focus tasks to develop their thinking skills and problem solving by giving their opinions and making decisions about their own learning.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour very sensitively and effectively. They follow a consistent procedure and use praise and encouragement well to help children share, take turns and follow directions.

Practitioners are good language models, sharing a rich vocabulary with the children through their choice of themes and the use of stories, songs and diverse rhymes. However, often, their questioning skills are insufficient to challenge and promote children's thinking skills especially in the free activities.

They offer an interesting and stimulating indoor environment and make excellent use of their outdoor area and the local community. As a result, children participate well, make good progress and enjoy their time at the setting.

The setting uses a clear system to assess children's progress across all areas of learning. They are beginning to use it effectively to plan the next stages of learning and to create an overview of children's progress. There is an open invitation for parents to discuss their children's progress on an informal basis at any time during the year. An attractive record of the children's work is provided when the children leave the setting. However, parents are not included in the assessment process and as such are unaware of what they can do to help

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting's arrangements to support the health and wellbeing of children, and encourage them to look after themselves are good. For example, practitioners encourage children to wear their coats before going out and to wash their hands before eating. The children bring a snack for themselves to eat, and practitioners encourage them to eat healthily such as fresh fruit and yogurt. Every child has opportunities to enjoy vigorous daily exercise and spend significant time in the outdoors.

Practitioners provide valuable learning experiences that foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children well. For example, children learn important social skills as they respond to instructions, sit at the table to eat and say thank you for their food as part of their daily routine.

They are beginning to learn about other cultures effectively while celebrating Diwali and the Chinese New Year. All practitioners encourage important values such as fairness, respect for others and an awareness of what is right and wrong effectively. For example, they help children to recognise the importance fairness by waiting patiently and take turns on their favourite toys such as cars and mechanical lorries.

Suitable arrangements are in place for children to learn about the importance of recycling materials, such as paper, plastic and food waste.

There is an appropriate range of policies in place at the setting to protect children and promote their welfare and procedures and they are effectively implemented. Consequently, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are suitable systems to support children with additional learning needs and the setting takes advantage of assistance from specialised agencies as required.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a warm, homely and inclusive ethos. Practitioners demonstrate care and respect towards all children and ensure that they benefit equally from a range of activities.

The setting has enough suitably qualified and experienced practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They motivate children to develop tolerant attitudes and cooperate with each other to learn while playing.

The indoor environment is safe and well maintained. It is colourful and stimulating and the setting's use of the space available to them is highly effective. Practitioners prepare purposeful displays celebrating children's work and supporting the themes appropriately.

The setting provides a very good range of resources for children to use. They are appropriate, accessible and of high quality. Recently, according to the setting's priorities, they have purchased a supply of mechanical toys. This has had a very positive impact on children's learning experiences.

The setting has access to two outdoor areas, the school yard and the community play area. The two places are safe and well maintained. The setting has a new hut on the school yard to store resources and equipment to support their focus themes. There is plenty of room in the play area for children to be adventurous and develop their physical skills to the highest degree. They have various resources of a very high standard; for example, a slide, climbing wall, swing and seesaw.

The setting uses the local environment well to enrich the children's learning experiences. For example, they visit a family of ducks on the lake and a local forest nearby to observe seasonal changes.

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

The leader has clear vision and direction which ensures an effective balance between care and learning. The practitioners share a strong sense of purpose and work together as an effective team. They create a happy and inspiring environment which enhances children's confidence and willingness to venture and take risks. Each practitioner has high personal expectations of themselves and of the children which leads to a good standard of care and education at the setting.

The management committee is supportive and offers valuable support, they contribute to the smooth running of the setting effectively. The committee meets regularly to discuss important issues such as maintenance of the building and purchase of resources in accordance with the setting's priorities.

Effective processes are in place to manage practitioners' performance. Leaders use this process well to identify staff development needs; for example, when they include all practitioners in the implementation of the new assessment methods. As a result, children benefit from the consistency and good quality of learning experiences.

Leaders pay good attention to local and national priorities. They ensure a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, as well as ensuring that they have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating and keeping fit.

Improving quality: Da

The leaders have a positive commitment to continuous improvement and the self-evaluation process is an integral part of the life and work of the setting. They all have a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and areas of improvement and implement these very effectively.

Leaders identify strengths and areas for development clearly with purposeful support from the advisory teacher. They use this information successfully to create a useful improvement plan which includes specific targets and opportunities to evaluate progress. The leaders are making very good progress towards achieving the targets and prioritising funding. For example, the leaders bought new mechanical toys as part of the recent plan to improve provision. As a result of this, children enjoy interacting with the toys and thereby develop their technological skills very effectively across the areas of learning. Leaders share their self-evaluation and improvement plans regularly with the management committee, ensuring their support in working towards specific targets.

Leaders work very well with other agencies such as the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. They are open to new ideas and are always ready to apply them to improve the setting. For example, they follow the advice of the local authority advisory teacher to include all practitioners in the process of assessing children's progress and next steps. The leaders have acted swiftly on the recommendations of the last Estyn inspection; for example, by encouraging children to share their experiences and work with others effectively.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has developed a range of very beneficial partnerships that contribute constructively to the achievements and welfare of children.

Practitioners share information with parents regularly and all parents receive a comprehensive booklet when their children start at the setting. Leaders offer an open invitation to parents to discuss their children's progress and well-being informally. They present them with 'Dyma Fi' (This Is Me) at the end of the children's time at the setting. This is an attractive pictorial record of children at work to include

samples of work which they have produced during the year. However, the practitioners do not include the parents sufficiently when making decisions about their children's progress and the next steps in their learning.

The relationship between the setting and the local school is a strength. They share the same vision for the development of the children and of the setting. They work very effectively to schedule the use of the hall and the school yard and share resources. The children visit the school during the summer term as preparation for the next step in their education.

The collaboration with the Mudiad Meithrin development officer is effective. The partnership with the local authority advisory teacher supporting continuous improvement is very valuable. The leader is open to new ideas and recommendations and skilfully tailors these to the setting's needs prior to their implementation.

Resource management: Good

All practitioners are qualified and have extensive experience of working with young children throughout the years. They make good use of their strengths and interests to enhance children's learning experiences, such as promoting enjoyment of rhythm, percussion instruments and movement to lively music.

All practitioners take advantage of a good range of training and development to enable them to keep up to date and confident in their work. For example, a recent training on assessment has improved their understanding of the process and has led to consistency in their approach. They also benefit from learning sharing good practice with other settings through local authority arrangements.

The leaders prioritise spending according to the setting's needs, for example to secure various resources to support children's the development of children's ICT skills. They use funds efficiently to ensure the group remains sustainable.

Given the positive views of teaching and learning, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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.