



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Y Drenewydd
c/o Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd
Plantation Lane
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1JE**

Date of inspection: October 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:

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 Y Drenewydd is a Welsh-medium setting, which meets in a unit at Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd, Newtown, in Powys local authority. The setting is open five days a week and works with Flying Start, which provides for the two-year-old children.

The setting is registered to admit up to 40 children at any given time. Practitioners provide education for children who are three and four years old. Nearly all children at the setting are funded to receive early years education.

Nearly all children are from British white backgrounds and no children speak Welsh at home. There are currently very few children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs three members of staff. The leader took up the post in September 2017.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in December 2016 and by Estyn in March 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children make consistent progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Nearly all children show motivation and interest in their learning
- Nearly all children behave responsibly
- Practitioners work together conscientiously to provide interesting and fun activities that motivate children to learn practically
- Skilful teaching and questioning have a positive effect on children's outcomes
- Practitioners complete frequent assessments purposefully
- The setting has efficient arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing
- Practitioners use resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader and experienced practitioners use established procedures to ensure a clear direction for the setting's work in order to improve provision and children's outcomes
- The leader has a suitable awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement
- The management committee's rigour and detail are very supportive of the setting's leadership and management
- There are established systems to monitor the use and effect of funding
- Purposeful use of support services has a positive effect on provision
- Purposeful partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies support the next steps in children's learning successfully

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that targets in the improvement plan derive directly from the self-evaluation process
- R2 Ensure that the new leader uses effective self-evaluation procedures to monitor the quality of provision and children's outcomes
- R3 Ensure that the new leader and the management committee take advantage of relevant training purposefully

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

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children make consistent progress in their skills from starting points that are lower or close to the expected average. This progress is evident when they complete tasks through the medium of Welsh, for example when counting spots on tree trunks and singing songs and nursery rhymes about the days of the week.

Many children speak clearly and make sure that adults and other children understand them when responding to each other's views during activities. They conduct beneficial discussions with adults and each other when making hedgehogs out of dough and pieces of wood. They listen to instructions from others and act on them effectively. This can be seen when they paint sunflowers with colourful paint and look for dinosaurs in the straw and grass in the outdoor area. Many children express their feelings and emotions sensibly when agreeing on which roles to play in the kitchen.

Nearly all children show an interest in books when sitting and discussing the contents with each other and adults before snack time. They discuss characters and events confidently with adults and peers and handle books like natural readers. As a result, they respond with interest to the content of various stories. A minority of children express their opinions thoughtfully when playing spontaneously and under the guidance of an adult. This happens when they use glue, leaves, twigs and cylinders to make a tree and when making marks and zigzag lines in the gloop.

Many children make marks effectively. They enjoy early writing experiences and use a variety of media, such as paint, chalk, crayons, pencils and colourful pens. Many children recognise their own names correctly and a few try to form the letters of the alphabet and numbers independently. A majority of children explain the purpose of their writing clearly in the correct contexts, for example while making marks with their fingers on an electronic board.

Many children use mathematical language purposefully and in relevant contexts. Most children count, recognise and name numbers up to ten confidently. They choose equipment and relevant materials to solve mathematical problems effectively; for example, they use scales successfully to weigh pebbles in the outdoor area. They also order each other according to first, second, third and so on when lining up on different coloured shapes to wash their hands.

Many children understand how to group different types of objects correctly by size, shape and colour. Many children compare two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes confidently, such as a flat circle on paper and a cylinder in the craft corner. They also make a collage by gluing leaves and build blocks to make towers in the construction area.

Most children are beginning to use technology effectively by using electronic tablets and through tasks that include electronic toys and cameras. They also use educational software and apps on the tablets and the interactive board to develop their ICT skills and fine motor skills successfully.

Many children develop keen thinking skills through interesting activities, and this has a positive effect on their learning and the standards that they achieve. They work intelligently with others as they investigate the volume and capacity of different ingredients, and decide whether buckets and cups are 'full', 'empty' or 'half full' when building sandcastles.

Nearly all children enjoy listening to music and respond enthusiastically to familiar Welsh nursery rhymes and songs. Most use their physical skills successfully when riding around the outdoor area vigorously on bicycles, washing cars energetically outside and dancing enthusiastically to exciting music.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors when they arrive at and leave the setting. They behave responsibly and treat adults and each other with respect. They listen carefully to practitioners, for example when discussing acorns and where they grow, and looking at pumpkin seeds.

As a result, nearly all children show motivation and interest in their learning, and most concentrate eagerly during their tasks. They take an interest in group activities and enjoy the tasks that are provided, such as making shapes and patterns with car wheels in the gloop.

Most children share resources and work sensibly with other children. They show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as when they count pieces of wood to create spikes on a hedgehog's body.

Most children are beginning to understand that they can make sensible choices during free play. They express an opinion and make personal choices effectively, such as when they decide to move from one play area to another independently, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, most children are confident learners.

After using the toilet, creative free play and outdoor activities, nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly and without much prompting by adults. Therefore, they develop their awareness of hygiene and its importance in maintaining a healthy lifestyle successfully.

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

Practitioners provide a balanced curriculum that reflects the ethos of the foundation phase effectively. They provide learning experiences that target children's needs and interests purposefully. As a result, they provide beneficial opportunities for them to develop as independent learners.

Practitioners work together conscientiously to provide interesting and fun activities that motivate children to learn practically. They plan stimulating learning experiences efficiently by focusing on developing children's physical, thinking and creative skills sensibly. For example, children are given frequent opportunities to ride energetically on bicycles, play different roles in the kitchen and step from one log to another.

Although the leader is new to the role, she has adopted the setting's established planning procedures sensibly. As a result, daily and long-term planning systems have a positive effect on children's experiences and contribute positively to children's enthusiasm as they learn through play.

Practitioners plan methodically and intelligently to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Activities include challenges to solve problems with mathematical equipment, which correspond with numbers and use a till and money in the kitchen. Stimulating tasks can be seen in all areas of learning and they challenge many of the children to perform at their best consistently. Activities build effectively on children's current knowledge and understanding and challenge children purposefully from their starting points.

Practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to use ICT equipment, such as electronic toys and tablets, a compact disc player, and interactive board and cameras. As a result, children are given regular opportunities to develop their ICT skills successfully by using educational software and apps purposefully.

Practitioners recognise that most children's Welsh language skills are at a low level on entry to the setting. They address this immediately by modelling words, numbers, colours and simple phrases regularly. As a result, many children's understanding of the language develops quickly. The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. These activities include St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day celebrations, and opportunities to bake traditional cakes and make soup.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. This leads to children having a sound awareness of their local area and the roles of people in their community, such as the police, dental hygienists and the nurse.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development. They understand the requirements of the foundation phase and work together efficiently. Practitioners greet the children warmly when they arrive at the setting and they manage children's behaviour effectively. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment of the activities from the moment they step into the unit.

Practitioners show a sensible balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults. They provide a wide range of opportunities for children to learn through hands-on experiences and through play. Plenary presentations and explanations at the beginning of focus tasks are clear and probing, which maintain children's interest successfully.

Practitioners have high expectations and challenge children frequently in focus tasks. They question children skilfully and regularly, which has a positive effect on their thinking, numeracy and communication skills. This is evident when discussing the features of autumn and when children show their understanding of the season through their pictures and artwork.

Practitioners complete regular assessments efficiently. They also discuss purposefully with the children what they need to do to improve their work during practical tasks. They record evaluations and discussions effectively on record sheets and in the children's personal booklets, and use the steps in the foundation phase profile meaningfully to plan the way forward for specific children. This has a successful effect on planning for individual needs.

The setting informs parents and carers appropriately about their children's achievements and transfers this information to the school regularly.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has efficient arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. These arrangements contribute well to their development and support their learning successfully. The setting promotes eating and drinking healthily and, as a result, children understand that fruit, vegetables and keeping fit are an important part of a sensible diet and a healthy lifestyle.

The setting provides purposeful opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use group sessions sensibly to focus on children's feelings and the way that they treat other people. By doing so, practitioners nurture values such as honesty, fairness and respect effectively. These daily routines are beneficial to the setting's overall ethos and activities.

Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to reflect, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray each day. This creates calmness as children sit to listen to adults during plenary sessions, look at books before snack time and say thank you for their food and drink. Practitioners provide useful and practical opportunities for them to serve and help each other in order to develop their independence. As a result, children take turns politely when eating snacks around the dining table and take pride in their role as the helper or photographer of the day.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, plastic and card at the setting, and food through the school's systems. This develops their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any kind of disruption or unreasonable behaviour. As a result, children are happy and safe in the company of the adults. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take conscientious care of the children when they arrive and leave. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting records children's learning needs thoroughly on entry to the setting and during their time there. Practitioners review children's progress regularly and target children with additional learning needs effectively, when necessary, by using support and guidance from the local authority and specialist services.

Learning environment: Good

The setting promotes a caring ethos. The attitudes that are adopted by practitioners and the daily activities aim consistently to create a positive environment for the children. It is an inclusive community, in which each child has equal access to the areas of learning and the equipment that is available. As a result, practitioners recognise each child's individuality effectively.

All practitioners place a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting achieves this successfully by celebrating different festivals from around the world, such as the Chinese New Year, discussing fables from other countries and providing dolls from different ethnic backgrounds in the learning areas.

The setting uses resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. Practitioners provide a wide range of resources and they are available for all children to choose to use them and put them aside. This promotes their sense of responsibility successfully. Continuous activities, focus tasks and enhanced tasks make effective use of learning resources. This has a positive effect on children's learning, particularly as they make marks and use their mathematical skills practically in the setting's activities, such as the mud kitchen and the construction area.

The building is part of a brand new school, and therefore is of excellent quality and well-maintained. It is safe and follows the school's procedures in terms of the security of the site. The outdoor area includes beneficial opportunities for children to grow plants, in addition to role-play equipment in the mud kitchen. The school's extensive grounds are available to them, which include fields and a wooded area for active play, inquiring and investigating.

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

Since being appointed in September this year, the leader has taken the advice of the very experienced practitioners who work at the setting. She has continued with the established and robust provision that already existed. This has ensured that her leadership practices build appropriately on the success of past procedures, particularly when planning learning experiences and maintaining the children's good standards. The leader has followed the local authority's guidelines and advice on how to plan a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, daily activities have a positive direction.

The leader considers the advice of others carefully and motivates practitioners to make changes in positive ways. This is done by using relevant and regular information about the setting to ensure improvements to provision and children's outcomes. On the whole, the leader has used the setting's established leadership systems sensibly. However, her understanding of using self-evaluation processes as a strategic tool has not yet embedded firmly.

The leader ensures that provision for children is interesting and purposeful. She defines the practitioners' responsibilities clearly in order to promote successes at the setting. Practitioners receive relevant training, and this has a positive effect on the quality of provision. Effective supervision and evaluations of the practitioners are detailed and accurate. The stable and supportive management committee evaluate the work of the leader, practitioners and the setting in general very purposefully.

The management committee receives useful information about the setting's day-to-day routines from the leader and in regular meetings. They are very knowledgeable and methodical and are a sound element of the setting's life and successes. The

committee has created thorough practices to ensure quality and it focuses its voluntary work successfully on having an effect on provision and children's outcomes. The committee ensures sound financial management through independent audits each year. In addition, the committee's rigour in managing the setting's financial receipts and daily expenditure is efficient.

Improving quality: Adequate

The leader and practitioners consider each other's views, and those of parents and carers, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin successfully. As a result, clear improvements have derived from these considerations, which have improved daily assessments, use of the foundation phase profile and targeting the next steps in individual children's learning. However, the current procedures are appropriate at present. The leader has not yet had enough time to embed the procedures in the life of the setting, or to benefit from relevant training on how to monitor the quality of the setting.

Although there have been effective self-evaluation arrangements in the past, the processes do not target the setting's needs completely appropriately. The local authority's quantitative systems have begun to have a positive effect on procedures over recent months; for example, they have developed the process of planning focus tasks and activities that enrich children's learning effectively.

All practitioners are keen to accept new ideas from the local authority's advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. They act on their advice regularly. This is beginning to lead to beneficial improvements; for example, using the foundation phase profile to identify a baseline for the children, and arranging the indoor and outdoor learning areas.

The setting's improvement plan identifies suitable areas for improvement. However, targets in the improvement plan do not always derive directly from the setting's self-evaluation process. Although there are processes in place, the self-evaluation report does not include enough detail about why some areas need to be improved further and how they have set some specific targets.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works well with partners to improve children's standards and wellbeing, in addition to provision. These partnerships have a positive effect on the setting's daily practices, such as using the school grounds and outdoor equipment. The setting has appropriate links with staff at the school, and this facilitates transition arrangements efficiently. Arrangements for transferring assessments and personal information are effective and beneficial to the children as they settle at the school.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. They keep parents and carers informed about the setting's work through a useful noticeboard, newsletters and social media. They also encourage them to express their opinions on issues to improve the setting through questionnaires and regular discussions. The setting supports local and national charities. This helps to nurture kindness and care among the children.

The setting works sensibly with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. These positive relationships reinforce the setting's work and support it actively with documentation to improve the new management systems.

Practitioners work and liaise with a wide range of other partners, who make an important contribution towards improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with first aid training, food hygiene courses, risk assessments, foundation phase training and child protection training.

Resource management: Good

The leader is beginning to improve aspects of the setting's work by managing staff and resources purposefully. With robust training and guidance, and by listening to others sensibly, she succeeds in ensuring that the daily work of meeting children's needs is effective. Performance management systems are in place for practitioners. They enable them to develop and share their professional knowledge efficiently. As a result, there is a culture of effective co-operation between practitioners and other partners.

The setting manages resources successfully to support learning. The setting's daily routines and arrangements are consistent and ensure that children benefit from interesting and positive learning experiences. Practitioners ensure that children have ready access to plenty of interesting resources to support their learning effectively.

The management committee has a clear understanding of the budget, and prioritises expenditure sensibly. It makes regular improvements by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully. As a result, the setting ensures that use of funding has a direct effect on children's standards and wellbeing, in addition to provision of learning experiences.

Overall, although self-evaluation procedures need to be improved, the setting provides good value for money because of the positive effect on provision and children's outcomes.

Appendix 1

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 three to seven 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 that 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 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