



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

**Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up activity: focused improvement**

**Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog
St John's Vestry
Penamser Road
Porthmadog
LL49 9PA**

Date of visit: May 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Maldwyn Pryse	Reporting Inspector
Sheila Birkhead	Team Inspector

Outcome of visit

It is judged that Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog has made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog from the list of settings that are in need of focused improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Develop children's problem-solving skills, especially the most able children

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Practitioners have begun to pay attention to using ideas for simple activities to develop all the children's problem-solving skills regularly. A good example of this is guessing how to build a house for Jac y Jwc.

Practitioners' weekly meetings pay appropriate attention to discussing effective methods of questioning children, and giving them suitable opportunities for them to think. Although developing children's problem-solving skills is included regularly as a focus in the provision's enrichment plan at the beginning of each term, it does not receive enough attention in the weekly plans and there is a tendency for staff to over-direct sessions. This reduces opportunities for children to solve their own problems.

The setting has received a number of appropriate support visits in order to give guidance to practitioners on how to plan activities in order to extend more able children. This has raised practitioners' awareness of what they need to do to improve this. On the whole, practitioners know children's needs well and, as a result of the support visits, they are beginning to identify the next steps for them instinctively. For example, they extend children by giving them opportunities to begin to identify numbers and letters appropriately.

Recommendation 2: Improve planning by including all practitioners in the process and ensure that focus tasks are clear and have been developed thoroughly

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Following intensive support from the local authority, practitioners have an appropriate understanding of how to plan effectively. By adhering to that guidance, practitioners co-operate and focus appropriately on effective collective tasks that lead to developing children's personal and social skills successfully. These tasks lead to planning beneficial activities for focus tasks, such as matching pictures and painting with flowers in order to encourage the children to identify colours.

As a result, planning is more thorough and identifies which provision is continuous, what is the focus activity and who is responsible for specific tasks in each session. The leader and the committee now hold regular staff meetings to discuss the short-term planning, which includes the main objectives of the activities. As a result, staff are more aware of the purpose of activities and share this effectively with the children at the beginning of sessions.

A recent development is planning purposeful work for different abilities. As a result, practitioners are beginning to ensure that the most able pupils are extended appropriately.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen the assessment process by including the whole staff and use the information collected to feed into planning in order to move children forward

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The setting has responded positively to purposeful guidance that they have received from the local authority on improving the assessment system and, in particular, on how to identify the next steps in each child's development. By completing initial assessments during the first six weeks in September, practitioners are now beginning to identify the children's strengths and the aspects that need to be developed further. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the setting's assessment processes.

The assessment process now includes all practitioners. They all make beneficial comments in a specific book on a daily basis. They identify the significant things that a child has done or said, share this in the weekly meetings and are beginning to identify how to build on this. Staff are developing an increasing understanding of analysing observations and identifying the next steps for the children.

The leader sets the specific areas in which each child needs to develop every half term. This ensures that all children receive constructive attention to enable them to develop appropriately in a particular area such as, for example, social or linguistic development.

Recommendation 4: Ensure regular use of the outdoor area in order to ensure suitable opportunities for children to develop physically and to enrich their experiences

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The setting has co-operated effectively with members of the church in order to develop the outdoor area to extend and enrich the children's experiences. They have invested in storage equipment and a safety fence in order to ensure that the provision is safe and within the children's reach. Practitioners have developed the provision to include beneficial opportunities to extend pupils' skills, for example when creating marks with chalk, controlling a bike and planting plants.

Practitioners have begun to plan purposefully for learning outdoors, by providing a weekly timetable that identifies daily opportunities to use this area. Although planning practices have not yet been embedded fully in the setting's work, children

receive relevant opportunities to develop physically and experience activities to support thematic work. Opportunities for pupils to go out and use the local area to support theme work such as the autumn, the weather and Christmas are developing successfully.

Recommendation 5: Develop the management committee's strategic role in order that they are completely aware of their duties

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Members of the management committee have received effective support from the local authority to enable them to act more strategically. They have also received beneficial training to understand the responsibilities that they have as a committee and this has equipped them well for the work. As a result, the management committee's ability to give a strategic direction to the setting has improved and they are beginning to have a positive effect on the running of the setting and its procedures. A good example of this is the regular visits to monitor provision.

Members of the committee now visit the setting regularly, conduct discussions with staff and receive direct information in order to monitor the setting's progress against the recommendations in the core inspection. The committee has ensured non-contact time for the leader to plan and assess. There are now purposeful arrangements in place for the leader and all practitioners to be a part of suitable performance management arrangements in order to set objectives for improvement. As a result, practitioners' understanding of their roles and responsibilities is strengthening. However, the role of the responsible individual has not developed in full.

Members of the committee have responded successfully to the latest report from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales on the setting. This shows the committee's ability to act strategically and to respond to its responsibilities. Leaders have also ensured a new permanent location for the group.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that the self-evaluation process is more inclusive and identifies aspects to be improved more thoroughly

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the leader has attended county training on self-evaluation. This has improved her understanding of quality improvement processes. As a result, she has developed a specific timetable in order to ensure that every aspect receives attention. The effect of the training is beginning to bear fruit and the management committee is part of the self-evaluation process. Leaders are now developing an appropriate understanding of the main characteristics of self-evaluation. They respond more evaluatively and identify the issues that need to be developed further, for example improving provision for numeracy and including more opportunities for the children to role play.

The self-evaluation process is now thorough and the management committee receives appropriate reports regularly from the leader. They discuss progress against recommendations with the leader during weekly visits. As a result, members

of the management committee have a sound understanding of progress or lack of progress made. As the improvement in the self-evaluation process is a comparatively recent development, it has not yet had enough time to embed fully in the setting's work.

The committee has responded to the important issues that have been identified in the recent report by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. This strengthens the committee's ability to identify the aspects to be improved thoroughly and monitor them.

Recommendations

In order to maintain this progress and improve on it, Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog should continue to maintain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations for which more progress is needed.