



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Llanilar
Ysgol Gynradd Llanilar
Llanilar
Aberystwyth
SY23 4PA**

Date of inspection: 18 September, 2012

by

Dorothy Morris

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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Publication date: 17/10/2012

Context

Cylch Meithrin Llanilar is accommodated in a purpose built building on the site of the local primary school. The setting was established almost thirty years ago and the children who attend live in the village and the local area. It is judged that the area is neither affluent nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age. It is open for five mornings a week during term time for children aged three, and for three afternoons for children between two and three years of age. During the inspection, there were twelve three year old children in receipt of funding. The majority of children come from homes where English is the main language spoken. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or children with additional learning needs in the current cohort.

The setting leader and two full time practitioners cater for children's learning. Two are experienced practitioners and hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. The third is a student in training. The setting leader was appointed to her current post in January 2007.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in November 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in May 2011.

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 children make consistent progress from their starting points;
- the children have good attitudes to learning and are actively involved in their learning;
- a range of interesting activities is provided;
- the teaching is good overall;
- all the children are well supported; and
- there is a very positive relationship between the children and the practitioners.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the senior practitioner's conscientious leadership;
- good teamwork;
- the practitioners' readiness to embrace new ideas;
- a detailed improvement plan which is being implemented; and
- the constructive use of a range of partnerships which support children's learning.

Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

- R1 extend children's skills further particularly their Welsh literacy skills and their information and communications technology skills;
- R2 develop the planning to ensure that children's skills are promoted consistently across the areas of learning;
- R4 develop the practitioners' knowledge of the processes of evaluating provision and implementing improvements; and
- R5 develop the role of the management committee further.

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

Most children make consistent progress in their learning from their starting points. Their listening skills develop well. Around half the children demonstrate a secure grasp of a range of vocabulary and can maintain a simple conversation confidently. The remainder respond accurately to instructions and greetings but offer very brief

responses when answering questions. Most children can recall familiar songs and rhymes and repeat them accurately overall. The majority of children take an interest in books and understand that words and pictures convey meaning. Nearly all the children can recognise their names in print. They use a range of materials and marking tools appropriately to practise their early writing skills.

The majority of children make consistent use of their number skills in daily activities. Nearly all the children count accurately to ten and use mathematical language, such as big and small, full and empty, correctly in practical situations. They can create and follow a pattern correctly. Most children recognise basic shapes and understand that money is required to buy goods in a shop. The children use basic information and communications technology skills appropriately. They use the mouse to move objects on the screen, a digital camera to take photographs and, with support, they can input instructions to programmable toys.

Most children make appropriate use of their thinking and decision-making skills in mathematical, physical and creative activities. They demonstrate good use of their fine motor skills when using cutting, painting and pasting equipment.

Wellbeing: Good

The children demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Most persevere with their tasks and enjoy the activities provided. They all settle well at the setting. They are happy in the company of the adults and are ready to ask for help and support. Levels of attendance are good.

Many of the children have a developing awareness of the importance of healthy eating and of physical exercise. They understand the importance of washing their hands before eating their snacks. They all play happily together and behave well. Most children undertake new experiences confidently.

Children's social skills and awareness develop effectively through daily activities and through the range of experiences that emanate from the setting's close partnership with the school and the community.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The practitioners collaborate effectively to plan relevant activities across the areas of learning. Activities are based on a series of themes which are suitable to the children's age range. There is appropriate use of curricular frameworks to plan the general provision and of the new local authority framework to plan specific tasks. This new planning approach has not been embedded sufficiently to ensure that children's skills develop consistently across the areas of learning.

The provision to promote children's communication, number and broader skills is incorporated appropriately into the daily experiences provided. Nevertheless, tasks do not always extend children's Welsh literacy skills and their information and communications skills.

There is continuous encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. During group activities, children are encouraged to listen to stories, discuss different topics, sing songs and rhymes, and use marking skills. There is effective use of children's ideas and photographs to create personal reading books of good quality for their use. There is good attention to developing children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales through suitable activities which include celebrating St. David's Day. Opportunities to develop their awareness of the wider world, including other people and cultures, are less consistent.

There is suitable use of visits, visitors and activities in the community to support children's learning. The visits to the local shop, post office and doctor's surgery, and the setting's involvement in activities such as the carnival and 'cawl and song' evenings develop children's knowledge of their community.

The practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment effectively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. The opportunities to grow and care for plants, the visit to a farm and involvement in recycling activities promote children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and offer children learning experiences that gain their interest. They use a range of teaching approaches and suitable resources to support the learning. There is an appropriate balance between activities which are led by the practitioners and those chosen by the children themselves. Practitioners communicate effectively with the children during story time and small group sessions and use questioning purposefully to encourage children to contribute. They use their specialisms or interests effectively when planning and supporting activities.

The practitioners know the children well and have a clear understanding of their progress and general development. They observe children's responses during activities and record any significant features. Relevant comments are collected and recorded across the six areas of learning. The use of this information in the planning is developing. A transfer form is completed appropriately and forwarded to the primary school. Parents are kept regularly informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development through informal discussions, written reports and the parents' evenings which are held twice a year.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. The practitioners are caring and supportive of all the children.

There are appropriate processes to support children with additional learning needs, when required. There are clear communication links with specialist services in order to address any specific needs.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The practitioners have received relevant training and are aware of the requirements. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development appropriately, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness, kindness and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, are promoted effectively through the curriculum and daily activities.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to all the learning experiences provided. The practitioners consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately. They succeed in creating a warm and welcoming environment for all the children.

The setting has sufficient practitioners with relevant experience. The building is of good quality and offers suitable facilities. There are sufficient resources which are used fully to support the learning and teaching. Nevertheless, the supply of information and communications technology equipment is more limited. The resources in the outdoor learning areas are used effectively to offer purposeful activities to develop children's physical skills and their observation and investigation skills. There is increasing use of the community as a resource to support the learning in the classroom.

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

The setting is led conscientiously by an experienced leader. The practitioners understand their responsibilities and work well as a team. They share common values about learning, behaviour and child development. They have a very positive relationship with children and parents. Policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.

The management committee is developing its understanding of its responsibilities. Members take a keen interest in the setting and work hard to raise additional funding. The committee meets regularly and the minutes kept are used as a basis for further planning. The committee's role in evaluating the general provision and in forward planning continues to develop. There is an appropriate system in place to appraise the work of the practitioners.

The setting gives suitable attention to national and local priorities including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum, promoting children's Welsh language skills and establishing effective links with the primary school.

Improving quality: Good

The practitioners have an appropriate understanding of the setting's main strengths and of some areas for improvement. They hold regular discussions and are developing their knowledge of self-evaluation processes and of implementing improvements.

With the support of the local authority advisory teacher, the leader has completed a balanced evaluation of the provision. The improvement plan produced as a result notes appropriate areas for improvement. It includes a timetable and lists individual responsibilities to achieve the targets set. The practitioners have begun to implement the plan and note appropriate observations on the progress made.

Aspects of provision are regularly monitored by the advisory teacher and areas for development are agreed. Relevant strategies are implemented which are improving provision. Aspects of provision are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin support officer. The views of parents are sought appropriately through discussion and through questionnaires.

The practitioners attend suitable courses on aspects of the education and care of young children and gain new skills and understanding. They make appropriate use of the training received particularly in developing aspects of the curriculum such as children's mathematical skills. There are some opportunities for practitioners to discuss and share ideas during training days.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a number of strategic partnerships that make an effective contribution to the quality of provision and to children's development. The setting's aims and objectives are shared with their partners.

There is a good partnership with parents and they receive relevant information through the notice board, meetings and newsletters. Parents appreciate the setting's open door policy and the daily opportunities to meet with the practitioners.

There is close collaboration with the management committee, the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. There are productive links with the

local primary school which promote a smooth transition for children to the next stage in their education. The links with the local community impact effectively on children's learning experiences.

Resource management: Good

Resources are managed effectively. The setting is staffed appropriately and suitable training opportunities are provided for the practitioners. With the exception of information and communications technology equipment, there is a sufficient supply of resources overall. The building and grounds are well maintained.

The setting leader and management committee have a good understanding of the budget and prioritise spending according to the setting's needs. There is regular use of fundraising events and of grants to supplement resources. The setting offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

Responses to discussions with the children

The children state that they are happy in the setting and enjoy playing with their friends and taking part in all the activities.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dorothy Morris	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.uk)

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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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.
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.

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