



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 Casmael
School Hall
Ysgol Casmael
Puncheston
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5RL**

Date of inspection: November 2014

by

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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 Casmael meets in Casmael School hall in the rural village of Puncheston, Pembrokeshire. The setting caters for children between two and four years of age for four sessions per week during the school term.

The setting is registered to take up to 24 children per session. Currently, there are 17 children on roll and nine have funded early years education. Most of the children attending the setting come from homes where English is the main language spoken. There are a very few children with additional learning needs.

There are three members of staff. Most are suitably qualified and experienced in the education and care of young children. The leader has been in post since March 2000.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2013 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 judged to be good because:

- practitioners provide a range of interesting learning experiences for children;
- effective teaching promotes children's involvement and enjoyment in learning;
- there are regular opportunities for children to experiment and to work independently;
- the good relationship between the practitioners and the children develop their confidence as learners;
- there is good provision for promoting children's spiritual, moral and social development;
- the colourful learning environment attracts and motivates children effectively; and
- the inclusive ethos offers children good care and support.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because:

- the leader's strong commitment provides positive direction to the setting's work;
- there is a close working partnership between the practitioners based on respect;
- the productive use of practitioners' skills promotes effective teamwork;
- the management committee's officers carry out their responsibilities efficiently;
- practitioners have an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and of some areas for development;
- practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try different ways of working; and
- partnerships contribute productively to the setting's work.

Recommendations

- R1. Structure the planning to develop children's skills more consistently, particularly their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2. Plan tasks that offer all children appropriate challenge consistently
- R3. Establish more detailed procedures to evaluate the quality of provision
- R4. Add to the supply of ICT equipment

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

Practitioners provide a range of activities that engage children's interest. Activities are based on a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. They include studies of topics such as jungle animals, colours and numbers, and seasonal topics. There are a few opportunities for children to offer their ideas for activities.

The content of the themes are discussed and documented carefully. However, short-term planning lacks a clear structure to promote children's skills consistently, especially their literacy and ICT skills. Activities are prepared thoroughly but tasks do not always offer children of different ages and ability an appropriate challenge.

Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to practise their literacy skills by listening to stories, discussing different topics, learning songs and rhymes, and using their marking skills. The experience of sending a letter to Santa helps the children to begin to understand some of the functions of writing.

There are productive opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during group activities, snack time and in their play. There is purposeful use of cooking and craft sessions to promote children's understanding of basic shapes and mathematical terms such as large and small, heavy and light. There are a few opportunities for children to use their basic ICT skills in their play such as using a cash machine in the cafe.

Children are offered appropriate experiences to practise their creative skills by, for example, emulating the work of a local artist, cooking foods to represent fireworks, and using magnifying glasses to study the characteristics of fruit and autumn leaves.

Children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales is developed effectively through activities such as celebrating St. David's Day and St. Dwynwen's Day. There is appropriate use of visits, such as to a local mansion, and the contribution of people like the dentist, postman and policeman to extend children's learning experiences.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of child development and of the Foundation Phase. They make appropriate use of a range of teaching methods and resources which secure the active engagement and enjoyment of children in their learning.

The programme of activities moves at a good pace. There is an appropriate balance between activities that are chosen by children and those that are led by practitioners. The practitioners succeed in creating a happy and positive learning environment. They intervene sensitively in children's play and encourage children to try new experiences. They take advantage of every opportunity to improve and expand their vocabulary. This includes the effective use of story-time, and of singing activities using different instruments.

Practitioners know the children well. They assess and record their progress carefully through observation and discussion. The information collected is recorded effectively in individual record sheets across the learning areas. The use of this information in planning the next steps in children's learning is more uneven. Parents and carers receive relevant information about their children's development through informal discussions and through receiving copies of their children's records including examples of their work. Completed transfer of information forms are forwarded appropriately to the primary school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a caring community and there is a close working relationship between the adults and children. The induction arrangements, along with daily contact with parents, ensure that children settle well in the setting. Policies and procedures to support the health and welfare of children are implemented appropriately. There are purposeful opportunities to promote children's awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. A healthy snack is available for the children daily.

There are effective arrangements to support children with additional learning needs. These include clear lines of communication with key agencies such as child support and speech therapy services.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Risk assessments are undertaken appropriately.

Learning experiences foster children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values such as kindness and the importance of sharing and taking turns are fostered effectively through daily activities. The practitioners are effective role models. They treat each child with respect. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about the culture and traditions of others through activities such as celebrating the festival of Divali and the Chinese New Year.

Experiences, such as saying a prayer of thanks before snack, holding a thanksgiving service and learning about the Nativity, contribute constructively to children's spiritual

development. In addition, participating in a concert for parents and carers contributes further to their social development.

The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to learn about the importance of caring for the environment and all living things. They recycle paper, grow vegetables and plants, visit a farm to observe animals, and prepare food for the birds.

Learning environment: Good

A strong family ethos permeates the setting. It is an inclusive community that provides equal access for children to the curriculum and all the activities provided. Practitioners consider and value the different backgrounds of the children and respond appropriately.

The setting has enough practitioners with appropriate qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There are sufficient resources of good quality in most areas of learning. The shortage of ICT resources significantly limits the experiences that can be provided in this particular area.

In general, the hall provides suitable facilities. The learning environment is enriched by creating attractive displays with a clear focus such as the colour of the week or the autumn theme. Resources and equipment are well organised and are within reach of the children. There is no outdoor play area, but the setting makes full use of the school's play areas and field for a range of activities. The building is clean and safe.

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

The leader's strong commitment provides positive direction to the setting's work. All the practitioners carry out their responsibilities effectively and work well as a team. They share common values and are committed to the development and wellbeing of the children. They establish positive relationships with children and their parents and carers, and this contributes well to the sense of community within the setting. Suitable policies are implemented appropriately.

The daily staff meetings to discuss the programme of activities and share responsibilities ensure that practitioners understand their roles. Sessions have a clear structure and run smoothly.

The management committee is very supportive and has established a good relationship with practitioners. They share the same goals and objectives for the further development of the setting. The officers carry out their responsibilities efficiently. An example is the successful campaign to advertise the setting which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of children attending.

There are appropriate procedures to appraise the work of practitioners and to promote their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The practitioners make appropriate use of the training opportunities available especially in aspects of the care of children.

The setting gives appropriate consideration to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's Welsh language skills and promoting healthy eating.

Improving quality: Adequate

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of the setting's strengths and of some of the key aspects that need improvement. They plan and discuss collaboratively. However, procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision are too informal in nature.

The self-evaluation report provides a general overview of the provision. The improvement plan derived from this identifies suitable areas for improvement. The implementation of the plan is at an early stage but is developing appropriately.

The practitioners give careful consideration to the views of parents through daily discussions and through questionnaires. New policies and guidelines are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin support officer. The practitioners draw extensively on the professional advice of the local authority link teachers. Appropriate strategies are implemented that improve provision. The recent attention to developing children's awareness of other cultures through a range of activities including craft and cooking activities is an example.

Most of the recommendations of the last inspection have been addressed appropriately but planning, including making greater use of assessment outcomes, remains an area for further attention.

Partnership working: Good

There are strong links with parents and carers and this was confirmed during the inspection. They are provided with relevant information about the setting through brochures, newsletters and the notice board. Practitioners are regularly available to meet with parents and carers at the beginning and end of each session.

The setting has a very good partnership with the primary school. Practitioners benefit from the good opportunities to discuss with school staff, and from the school's willingness to share facilities and resources. Children know the staff of the school and consequently they settle easily into the life and work of the primary school.

The constructive partnership with the local authority link teachers and Mudiad Meithrin support officer contributes productively to the work setting through the advice and guidance provided.

The setting has appropriate links with the community. Visitors from the community contribute to children's experiences and there is good support for fundraising

activities. There is a good opportunity for the children, parents and carers to participate in a carol service with other nursery groups in the area.

Resource management: Good

The setting is suitably staffed and there is productive use of practitioners' skills in enriching the curriculum. There is effective use of resources to support the teaching and learning.

The practitioners attend suitable courses on Foundation Phase requirements and on aspects of the care and development of children. They make appropriate use of the training received such as the promotion of children's language skills through play. There is purposeful use of meetings to share experiences and good practice with other settings.

The setting leader and management committee have a clear understanding of the budget and spending decisions are prioritised appropriately according to the setting's needs. There is effective use of fundraising initiatives and of grants to add to the supply of resources. In view of the quality of leadership, the teaching and the care and support for children, the setting offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

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 partnership's 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.

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.