



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 Chwilog
Neuadd Goffa Chwilog
Chwilog
Gwynedd
LL53 6SH**

Date of inspection: May 2013

by

Wil Williams

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

The Cylch Meithrin was established forty years ago to provide Welsh medium, pre-school education for children of the village of Chwillog and the surrounding area. It meets in the village Memorial Hall and holds two and a half hour sessions on four mornings a week for three and four year old children, although the sessions attended by individuals vary according to parental wishes. Currently, there are seven three year old children registered at the setting and they are funded by the local authority.

According to the setting, the area it serves is neither prosperous nor socially or economically disadvantaged. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, a few children with additional learning needs attended the setting. There were no children of ethnic origin registered at the setting.

Most of the children speak Welsh at home. There are no children who learn English as an additional language. Welsh is the setting's main medium of teaching and learning.

Two full time and one part time practitioner support children's education as well as another practitioner who provides specific support for children with additional learning needs. All practitioners are appropriately qualified to teach the early years.

The setting has one large room, a kitchen and toilets at its disposal. Although there is no designated learning area outside, during most of the sessions the school playground is available for the setting's children. When they have completed their time at the setting, children transfer to either the local primary school or other schools in the locality.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in November 2012 and by Estyn in June 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- almost all children make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills;
- most children have very secure oral skills;
- all children have very positive attitudes towards keeping healthy and safe;
- most children work together harmoniously and are considerate of the feelings of other children around them;
- interesting experiences fulfil the needs of the full range of children well;
- practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and expect much from every child; and
- accommodation is of good quality and there is an appropriate supply of resources for almost all areas of learning.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader has a clear vision for the setting and a thorough knowledge of its strengths and areas it needs to develop;
- members of the management committee fulfil their duties very effectively;
- the setting has responded positively to local and national priorities;
- the leader has thorough knowledge of the setting's strengths and areas to be developed; and
- a good number of partners have a positive impact on children's standards and welfare.

Recommendations

- R1 Increase children's abilities to use computer programs for different purposes.
- R2 Delegate more responsibilities to practitioners.
- R3 Strengthen the links between the setting and the primary school.
- R4 Ensure that the management committee has an active role in self-evaluation processes.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children's communication skills, particularly their oral skills, in Welsh are very secure. When contributing to group sessions or communicating with adults, many children express their feelings and ideas clearly and ask thoughtful questions. In the role-play area, many children use language that is appropriate to the person they are portraying. Most children have an interest in books; they hold a book properly and can discuss their favourite stories in an interesting manner. During story sessions, almost the whole group becomes excited about the book's content and respond orally very enthusiastically. By experimenting with different media for mark making, many children have an appropriate understanding of the different purposes of writing and a minority have started writing familiar letters independently.

The few children who are learning Welsh make appropriate progress in their ability to learn and use the language and use it. Everyone understands far more than he or she uses.

When they sit on the mat at the beginning of sessions, most children count very confidently together up to ten and beyond, and can state that there are more boys than girls in the group. Most make good progress in using mathematical language to compare the size and weight of objects and have an elementary understanding of shape and form.

Most children make appropriate use of buttons and switches when using a camera to take photographs of objects in class or to control a toy, which works on batteries. However, many of them have not developed their creative skills by using a computer program to draw a picture or to move objects around the screen.

Wellbeing: Good

All children have very positive attitudes towards keeping healthy and safe. They understand that eating healthily, such as when having snacks, and having regular physical exercise on the school playground is beneficial to their health. Individuals say that they feel safe at the setting and know who to turn to if they are physically or verbally harassed by other children.

Almost every child participates positively and enjoys learning. Considering children's age and personal needs, the behaviour of almost all of them is of a high standard. Many are polite and considerate of other children's feelings and behave in a caring way towards each other. Without exception, children implicitly trust the adults' care and concern for them.

In the main, children have a positive attitude towards learning experiences. Most are interested in the activities they are offered or choose for themselves, and persevere until the task is completed.

During sessions indoors and outside, most of the children work together harmoniously. They enjoy undertaking the responsibilities of 'helpwr y dosbarth' and most of them take their responsibilities seriously.

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

Interesting and stimulating learning experiences fulfil the needs of the whole range of children well and encourage them to learn effectively and to make good progress across almost all areas of learning. Learning is based on detailed curricular plans which strongly reflect the principles of the Foundation Phase and build systematically on children's current knowledge, understanding and skills. Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor areas effectively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences and develop their skills effectively. Children are given regular opportunities to lead their own learning and to develop into independent learners. Children visit the local community regularly and learn much from visitors to the setting.

Provision for communication, numeracy, thinking and problem solving skills is cohesive and firmly embedded in children's learning experiences. However, because of a shortage of appropriate resources, provision for information communications technology is only adequate.

Children are given an active role in the setting's activities to recycle materials and save energy. Good quality opportunities are provided for them to develop their personal and cultural identity. The setting successfully promotes children's awareness of the culture, festivals and traditions of Wales and provides good opportunities for them to learn about their role as global citizens.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a detailed understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. They expect much from children of all abilities and provide a variety of valuable opportunities for them to be active in their own learning. Through the leader's detailed planning, practitioners succeed in creating a good balance between activities chosen by the child and adult led or adult instigated activities. The wide range of teaching strategies used, as well as the substantial emphasis on learning through play, ensure the engagement of every individual in the task at hand. During sessions, there is a clear focus on practitioner help and intervention. Practitioners are good language role models themselves and use questioning skilfully to challenge children's ideas and to move learning on.

The leader assesses children regularly and records observations and assessments carefully to measure children's progress. Assessment outcomes are used effectively to plan activities for the future which correspond to children's needs. There are good arrangements to include parents in their children's assessments and to ensure that they have good knowledge about their children's progress and what they can do to help them to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for promoting children's health and welfare, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The daily experience children have of working in the area outdoors, and occasionally in the local area, has a beneficial effect on their spiritual and physical development and raises their awareness of the beauty of the world around them. During their daily contact with children, practitioners strongly emphasise the need for everyone to be kind to each other, to be honest and fair and to behave in a responsible manner. This greatly assists children in differentiating between right and wrong. Regular opportunities for children to undertake responsibilities such as 'helpwr y dydd' and to make their own choices about learning contribute significantly towards their personal and social development.

Effective induction arrangements help children to settle down quickly and effortlessly at the setting. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners know the children well and provide them with clear guidance during sessions. They have a good understanding of how to gain access to professional support for children and parents.

Detailed notes are made of children's learning needs when they join the setting and practitioners ensure that they use the information effectively to plan future activities which meet children's needs. The help and support provided for children with additional learning needs is very effective and enables these children to make good progress in their personal and social skills and to develop as independent learners.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child has equal access to all areas of learning and activities provided. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and members of staff are free from harassment. The setting has a sufficient number of practitioners who have the knowledge and expertise to teach every aspect of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

With the exception of information communications technology, there is a good supply of good quality resources in all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of every individual. Practitioners make the best possible use of the school playground to enrich children's learning experiences and for promoting their physical skills. The setting uses people and resources from the local community purposefully to support learning in the classroom. The accommodation is of good quality and is extensively used.

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

The leader has a clear vision for the setting and is constantly seeking ways of raising standards and improving the quality of the provision. She has high expectations and challenges her fellow practitioners to do their utmost to ensure that there is a good quality provision for the children in their care. Every session is organised thoughtfully and there is a clear purpose for every activity so that time and staff are used effectively. There is a good understanding between the leader and practitioners who share the common values and expectations about learning, behaviour and relationships. Although practitioner's roles are clearly defined during sessions, there are no suitable arrangements for delegating specific management duties to individual members of staff. As a result, the leader's burden of responsibility is too heavy.

An effective system for appraising the performance of the leader and the practitioners has been established. This gives rise to agreed targets and to improvements in teaching and provision.

The productive links forged with parents and other county and local partners make a significant contribution towards the setting's development.

Members of the management committee fulfil their roles conscientiously and very effectively. They function in a constitutional manner and there is a close working relationship between them and the setting. They ensure that the setting meets statutory requirements and that they are available to support and help the leader. However, they do not have an active role in self evaluation and planning for improvement processes and this detracts from their ability to influence the setting's development.

The setting has responded positively to local and national initiatives such as the Foundation Phase and assessment for learning which has led to improvements in standards and provision.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has of good understanding of the settings' strengths and areas which need to be developed. She is constantly self-evaluating and consults with staff and parents in deciding on areas which need to be developed. Secure arrangements have been established to maintain good practice and for implementing change in areas which need improvement. The views of parents are considered and the setting also benefits substantially from the professional advice of the local authority support teacher.

The self-evaluation report and the improvement plan are of good quality and set a clear direction for the setting's development. The leader implements priorities identified systematically and thoroughly. However, there are insufficient opportunities for practitioners to contribute to self-evaluation.

Practitioners receive strong support from the continuous professional development programme provided mainly by the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin. This has

enabled them to acquire new knowledge and skills and to introduce the Foundation Phase successfully. Training sessions also give them valuable opportunities to share their practice with practitioners from other settings.

The setting is developing well as a strong learning community. Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try different ways of working and share information and ideas amongst themselves. The practice of visiting other settings to observe good practice has led to improvements in standards and provision.

Partnership working: Good

The productive relationship, which the setting has with a good number of partners, has a positive impact on children's standards and welfare. There is trust and clear communication between the setting and the parents. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to express views about the setting's work. Practitioners are available for them at the beginning and end of every session and the setting ensures that they have current information about its organisation and their children's development.

The setting has recently successfully strengthened its partnership with the nearby primary school. This has eased transition arrangements for children and has started to lead to better co-operation between the two establishments. However, these arrangements are at the early stage of development.

The setting collaborates effectively with a good number of the local authority's support services which co-ordinates and delivers learning experiences well and ensure that there is appropriate assistance available for children and parents. The support teacher's regular visits and professional advice enable the leader to update the setting's knowledge and professional understanding and to try out new ventures.

Resource management: Good

The setting is well staffed to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum effectively. Members of staff are used effectively to make the best possible use of their time, their expertise and experience. The leader and the management committee have a detailed understanding of their budget and prioritise spending according to the setting's development needs. The leader evaluates expenditure decisions extremely carefully to ensure that they have a positive impact on children's standards, progress and welfare.

The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholders' satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parent questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say that they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Wil Williams	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	<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 partnership's 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>

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.