



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 Garndolbenmaen
Ysgol Gynradd Gardolbenmaen
Garndolbenmaen
LL51 9SZ**

Date of inspection: March 2014

by

**Mr Eifion R Morgan
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

This Cylch Meithrin is based in the school hall of Ysgol Gynradd Garndolbenmaen. Garndolbenmaen is a rural village some 10 miles north of Porthmadog. The Cylch was established some 28 years ago as a Welsh medium setting serving this rural area. The children come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The setting describes the area as neither particularly prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

The setting is managed by a voluntary management committee and is supported by the Gwynedd Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership. It is also a registered member of the Mudiad Meithrin.

The setting is open for 5 mornings of the week, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon during school term time. Children attend from the age of 2½ years and leave for the next phase of their education in the September following their third birthday. Currently there are 8 children on the register of whom 3 are aged 3 years, 2 of whom are funded. The other 3 year olds attend school every afternoon. There is provision for children with additional learning needs but at the time of the inspection there were no such children present. Neither were there children from a minority ethnic background.

About half of the children come from homes where Welsh is the predominant language spoken. Virtually all children proceed to Garndolbenmaen village school, which is a Welsh medium school.

The setting occupies the school hall which is multi-purpose and requires the activity areas to be set out for each session. Previously the setting shared a room with the nursery class at the school but as the number of children at the school increased this proved to be inappropriate. The hall is a large room well lit and heated and is suitably set out each morning with activity areas in keeping with the Foundation Phase philosophy.

The setting uses the school toilets which are some way along a corridor, necessitating children to be accompanied. Children benefit from using the school playground where they can use large moveable toys and play ball games.

The setting is staffed by two adults both are well qualified and fluent Welsh speakers. A parentis available if necessary to assist.

The setting was inspected by the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in 2012 and by Estyn in 2007. The major recommendations have been addressed.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because of the:

- quality of leadership;
- learning opportunities provided for the children;
- care, support and guidance children enjoy;
- quality of relationships between children and between the staff and children;
- work of the management committee;
- children's behaviour and attitudes;
- way the staff work together as a team.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because of the:

- quality of leadership and management;
- track record of adapting to change and the willingness of the setting to seek ways to improve;
- support of the management committee;
- self-evaluative ethos present;
- the support provided by the LA support teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin.

Recommendations

The setting needs to:

- R1. review its provision for developing children's numerical skills.
- R2. maintain, and where possible improve, children's standards of achievement.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills 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: **Good**

The setting provides children with a wide range of stimulating and interesting experiences across all areas of learning. Planning is done collaboratively with good account taken of children's interests and past experiences. This goes a long way to ensuring their involvement. Planning shows that there is continuity and progression in children's learning and that the work is suitably differentiated to cater for children's differing ages and ability.

Children's communication and ICT skills are firmly embedded in the experiences of all children and they are suitably challenged. Good opportunities are planned to enable children of different ages and ability to develop their literacy skills. Story telling is well differentiated to allow more able children to listen to a story, answer questions and to predict likely outcomes. Children enjoy looking at books and do so independently. They hold books correctly and older children follow the stories. Older and more able children hold pencils and crayons correctly and follow the outlines of letters and numbers.

Planning to develop aspects of children's numeracy skills is less detailed. All children are developing their ability to count and to recognise number and name simple two-dimensional shapes, including circles, triangles and squares. Children's ability to solve simple problems and to use mathematical language is less well planned for.

Good opportunities are planned for children to develop their computer skills. Children have free access to a computer and the planning ensures that computer activities are an integral part of the activities that children undertake during their time in the setting.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their experimental and thinking skills. Planning during the inspection involved children making butter. This was

successfully undertaken by shaking cream in a small jar and sampling the results. The inspector had his own jar and participated in the tasting!

Planning to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world included a display by a parent of a cockerel hen, with discussion of different coloured eggs. Children showed their interest and fascination.

Planning shows good use of the local environment, including visits to the local part in autumn to collect leaves.

Planning gives prominence to development of the Welsh language and the culture and traditions of Wales. As a Welsh medium setting the children are totally immersed in the Welsh language. All communication is Welsh and children, whatever their background, acquire sufficient competence allowing them to attend the Welsh medium infant and junior school.

Planning also incorporates Welsh celebrations such as St. David's day when children dress appropriately and sample Welsh cooking.

Teaching: Good

The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase philosophy and a high expectation of children's learning. Learning experiences are stimulating and challenge children. Children of all abilities show their interest in the work selecting activities purposefully and working both individually and with other children as appropriate. Good use is made of the available resources, including information technology. Children, without prompting, choose to work on the computer and they show their competence handling the mouse confidently to move screen icons. Adult support is well focused on children's learning in that children are free to work on their own but given support when necessary. There is a good balance between adult led and child selected activities. Questioning is well used to develop children's thinking and discussion well used to develop children's language.

Children learn through play. Children are well managed and behaviour is very good. All children show a good attitude to learning. Children are assessed regularly and comprehensively and observations recorded in an individual child record booklet "My Story".

Staff know the children well and the outcomes of assessment are well used when planning future activities. This ensures that tasks meet children's needs and interests and are suitably challenging. Parents, in discussion, indicated their satisfaction with the reports they receive giving information about their child's progress. A sample of parents indicated their complete satisfaction with the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. These arrangements are effective and contribute well to children's personal development and wellbeing.

Children are happy and secure in the setting and this gives them the self-confidence to work individually knowing that they can seek help whenever needed. Staff are well aware of children's individual learning needs and these are suitably met.

The setting exudes a calm ethos where behaviour is very good with the total absence of any antisocial behaviour.

Induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into the setting and during the inspection all children were happy to attend. There are good opportunities for developing children's personal and social skills. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure child protection issues are met and the staff have attended recent courses.

The setting is a safe environment being within the school. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are no children identified as having additional learning needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a calm environment where children enjoy themselves and their enthusiasm is evident when they arrive in the morning. It is a happy community where all children are respected and valued as individuals. All have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Children's achievements are celebrated and all are part of this homely setting.

Practitioners enjoy being with the children and use their good understanding of the Foundation Phase philosophy to create a stimulating environment for learning.

Resources are well matched to children's needs and support their learning. The setting makes good use of visits and visitors to the nursery to enhance children's learning.

The accommodation is secure and used appropriately.

Key Question 3:How good are leadership and management?

Good

Leadership: Good

The leader has a very clear understanding of the philosophy of the Foundation Phase. This incorporates a view of how children should learn and how to match the activities to children's needs and interests. The leader's aims and strategic objectives are clearly focused on providing a high quality of provision for the children and maximising their potential. The leader successfully communicates her high expectations to her colleague and both work well together and the success of the setting reflects their total commitment. Overall, the setting is well managed and very well led.

The management committee is well informed about the setting's work and progress and fully support the staff. The chairperson is a frequent visitor to the setting and this enables her to be fully informed. Staff feel valued and confident in their roles.

A sense of purpose is evident in the setting and this promotes, and has sustained, improvements focused on providing the best possible environment for the children. A self-critical ethos is evident and new ideas are monitored and evaluated.

An effective system of practitioner appraisal set against targets is in place. This is done annually. Attendance at professional training courses is effective and the leader has assisted other settings with development of the Welsh language. The setting is effective in implementing national and local priorities.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know their setting well and have managed to maintain good provision during a time when the nursery moved to a new location. In the short space of time since moving into the school hall the children settled down into a routine and standards maintained.

A culture of self-evaluation pervades the work of the setting. Staff share their knowledge and the leader provides a clear leadership. Experience of other settings is well used. The views of the management committee and parents are incorporated into the work of the setting.

Priorities for improvement have been identified with a suitable timetable.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership activities make a good contribution to children's learning. Parents are actively involved in the setting's activities and their support is vital in sustaining the setting financially and in supporting their children's progress. Parents speak highly of the progress their children are making personally, socially and academically. Parents

are well informed about all aspects of the setting's activities and benefit from a useful and informative handbook when their child begins at the setting.

Strong links exist with the local infant and primary school, essentially since they share the building and the setting has use of the school's facilities. The Foundation Phase teacher visits the setting frequently and provides advice and support. Children from the setting attend school activities, several have lunch at the school and some attend afternoon classes.

The local authority support teacher is a regular visitor and her help and encouragement has been valuable and is valued. Similarly the setting has benefited from the support of the Mudiad Meithrin.

Practitioners work well together and share information about children and know who to contact when and if additional support is required for specific children.

Community links are used effectively to support children's learning.

Resource management: Good

Resources are managed and deployed effectively to support learning. Staff have attended relevant professional training courses and share their professional knowledge. The budget is carefully managed and spending prioritised.

Financial decisions are evaluated by the management committee.

Overall, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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.