



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 Hen Golwyn
Old Colwyn Community Centre
Green Hill
Old Colwyn
LL29 9RR**

Date of inspection: Chwefror 2015

by

**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 Hen Golwyn is in Greenhill Community Centre, Old Colwyn, in Conwy local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 26 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years. There are 20 children on roll, ranging in age from two to three years and four months. There are currently seven three-year-old children receiving funded early years education.

A majority of children come from homes where at least one parent speak Welsh. The remaining children have English as their home language. At the time of the inspection there were no children with additional learning needs.

There are currently four members of staff, including the setting leader and her deputy. All staff are suitably qualified and most are experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since September 2005.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in January 2014 and by Estyn in April 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Many children achieve good standards in line with their age and stage of development
- Nearly all children settle quickly and are happy in the setting
- The setting provides children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences across all areas of learning
- The setting places a strong emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills
- There is a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos
- The indoor accommodation is well laid out, attractive and secure

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader and her deputy manage the everyday running of the setting well
- The management committee shares a strong vision for providing good quality Welsh medium pre-school education in the area and provides effective support for the setting
- Practitioners work well together as a team
- Leaders are open to new ideas and respond positively to advice
- The setting has a good range of effective partnerships that contribute well to children's achievements and wellbeing
- The setting provides good value for money

Recommendations

- A1 Ensure that children have good opportunities for outdoor learning as part of their regular routine
- A2 Improve the way practitioners manage behaviour, especially during large group activities
- A3 Strengthen assessment systems and ensure that they feed into planning effectively in order to ensure that all children make progress across all areas of learning
- A4 Ensure that the impact of the improvement plan is monitored regularly in order to make good progress

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan, which 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?

Good

Standards: Good

Many children achieve good standards in line with their age and stage of development. They make consistent progress in what they can do and show good recall of things they have learned previously. For example, they know nursery rhymes well, such as 'Mi welais Jac y do', and can recall the story of 'Y dyn bach sinsir'.

Most children listen and carry out instructions well. Many speak confidently with each other and develop a good understanding of the Welsh language. Nearly all children enjoy listening to stories and maintain interest for a suitable length of time. For example, they listen well to the story of 'Y tri mochyn bach'. Nearly all children handle books carefully. They hold the book the right way up and turn the pages correctly. Many children talk confidently in their home language about what they can see in the pictures, for example naming the characters in the story. Many children recognise their own name in written form during register time and a very few are able to recognise other children's names. Most children use a range of mark-making tools independently with increasing control. For example, they draw pictures of themselves and their families.

Nearly all children participate enthusiastically in learning number songs and rhymes and many join in counting up to 15 during registration. A majority are able to count confidently to at least eight independently in Welsh and English. Many children accurately sort familiar objects in a variety of ways. For example, they sort jelly cubes into colour groups. They are able to compare objects by size when choosing pom-poms to go on a dragon card.

Most children are able to manipulate small objects well, for example picking up rice with their fingers. However, they are not given sufficient opportunity to develop their physical skills consistently. A few children solve problems efficiently. For example, they work out that they need another bag to hold the clothes they are packing to take on holiday. Many children demonstrate good thinking skills, for example when discussing a Chinese dragon.

Wellbeing: Good

Children arrive at the setting happily and settle quickly and willingly, choosing tasks independently. They follow the routines very well, responding to prompts indicating changeover times. Nearly all are confident and have positive attitudes to their learning. Many children are curious about new resources and experiences. Nearly all form positive working relationships with the adults in the group and are prepared to ask for help when needed. Most children are able to concentrate for suitable lengths of time and show perseverance to complete a task. For example, they work hard to pick up noodles with chopsticks.

Most children's behaviour is generally good. However, occasionally, a few children do not listen well during group times. Most children help to tidy up when asked and are proud to take on responsibilities, such as being 'helpwr heddiw'. During snack time, most children demonstrate good social skills. Many say thank you without prompting and are aware of the need for good hygiene.

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

The setting provides children with a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences across all areas of learning, often based on a theme or story. For example, the recent focus on Chinese New Year successfully inspired a variety of worthwhile activities. Practitioners offer variety and new challenges to extend children's knowledge and understanding. However planning for continuity and progression in children's learning is at an early stage of development.

The setting places a strong emphasis on developing children's communication, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, it makes consistent use of sung instructions and nursery rhymes to reinforce language patterns. In the best instances, practitioners identify specific vocabulary for children to learn. Practitioners provide an appropriate range of opportunities for children to learn and practise their skills regularly. They ensure that children have useful opportunities to develop simple information and communication technology (ICT) skills, such as controlling a programmable toy. They also plan interesting activities to develop children's thinking skills. For example, children put raisins into still and carbonated water and puzzle over the different reactions.

Practitioners work hard to ensure that children develop a good understanding of Welsh culture. Children learn about Santes Dwynwen, celebrate St David's Day and sing traditional nursery rhymes, ensuring that they learn about their national heritage. They also learn about other cultures meaningfully.

The setting organises valuable visits to the local authority's education centre in a nearby park as well as making suitable use of a local field. However, it does not make regular use of the outdoor area in the setting. As a result, children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have a good understanding of the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. They provide varied and interesting activities that develop children's curiosity and engage their interest well. Practitioners are good language role models, encouraging and supporting the children as they develop their language and communication skills. They are developing their questioning skills appropriately to support children's learning. Practitioners manage individual children's behaviour effectively. However, they do not have high enough expectations for children's behaviour during group activities. As a result, a few children do not behave appropriately.

Practitioners assess children regularly during adult-led tasks. They are beginning to collect information about children's achievements and identify possible next steps in their learning. Practitioners make increasingly effective use of individual assessment booklets to establish a starting point for each child and to record their progress. However, practitioners do not use the assessment information systematically to plan for progression in the children's learning.

The setting provides good opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. Practitioners share useful information informally at the end of each session.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective processes in place to promote children's personal and social development, including well-established routines and a set of agreed rules. Children have valuable opportunities to develop a sense of curiosity about their own and other people's lives and beliefs. For example, they learn about celebrations in other countries. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world, particularly during visits to the local field and to the local authority's education centre in the nearby park. They ensure that children develop their ability to work independently and take responsibility for their actions. For example, practitioners encourage children to tidy resources away carefully at the end of the session. Practitioners show awareness of the need to promote sustainable development and are beginning to plan appropriately for this. They provide worthwhile opportunities for children to learn about healthy living. For example, they ensure that children wash their hands before eating and provide healthy snacks.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There are suitable systems to support children with additional needs and the setting accesses additional support from specialist agencies as required.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos. Practitioners show care and concern towards all children and ensure that they have equal access to activities. They also encourage children to develop tolerant attitudes and to learn to co-operate with one another in their play. The setting has sufficient suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The indoor environment is secure and well maintained. It is bright and welcoming and the setting makes good use of the space available. Practitioners use portable and permanent boards well to celebrate children's work and to create attractive and stimulating displays to go with their themes. The setting provides a good variety of interesting and appropriate resources for the children to use, which are well organised and accessible, despite having to be packed away at the end of most sessions. However, they do not set out all areas of learning consistently. As a result, children do not always have the opportunity to build on prior learning appropriately. The setting is beginning to develop its secure outdoor area and has appropriate resources for children to use there.

The setting makes good use of the local environment to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, they visit the local shop and post office to learn about using money and they make good use of local outdoor facilities.

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

The management committee has a strong vision for providing good quality Welsh medium pre-school education in the area. As a result, the committee provides valuable support for the setting, working alongside the leader to ensure that everyone does their best. For example, the committee chairperson contributes actively to the setting's effective performance management system, which helps to raise standards and identify staff development needs. This has been successful in ensuring that new staff receive the support they need to improve their confidence in working through the medium of Welsh.

The leader and her deputy manage the setting well. They work together effectively, sharing responsibility for the day-to-day running of the setting. Together they ensure that all staff understand and fulfil their roles efficiently, communicating with them informally at the beginning of each day. The leader displays planning on a portable board and all practitioners consult this to confirm their responsibilities if needed. As a result, sessions run smoothly, with all adults deployed effectively.

The setting leader pays good attention to local and national priorities and ensures that there is a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

There is a strong culture of shared responsibility for achieving the best for the children in the setting. Through an appropriate process of self-evaluation, the leader and her deputy identify suitable priorities for improvement. These form the basis of a useful improvement plan, which includes appropriate timescales and success criteria. Officers from the committee receive a copy of the review and provide valuable comments. All practitioners at the setting have the opportunity to contribute to the self-evaluation process through regular informal discussions and the views of parents and carers are taken into account. As a result, planning for improvement is a regular part of the setting's working life.

A helpful evaluation of last year's plan shows that the process leads to worthwhile improvements. For example, the setting now makes better use of the local area and ensures that children have more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. However, the plans are not monitored regularly to make sure that timescales are met and to track progress in addressing actions.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and respond positively to advice from the local authority and from Mudiad Meithrin's development officer.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of effective partnerships that contribute well to children's standards and wellbeing.

Partnerships with parents are strong. The setting keeps parents well informed about activities and about what their children are learning through daily informal contact, a useful noticeboard and photographs displayed in books in the entrance hall. The leader also contacts parents via text messages and emails when appropriate. Parents appreciate the good level of communication and the positive relationships they have with the practitioners. This helps children to settle well in the setting.

The setting has well-established links with the local Welsh medium primary school. This promotes smooth transition for children from the setting to the next stage in their education. The setting also has a strong partnership with the 'Ti a Fi' group that contributes significantly to the wellbeing of children and their parents when children move to the playgroup.

The constructive partnership with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin's development officer helps with continuous improvement in the setting.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes effective use of staffing and resources to support teaching and learning well. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified staff. They deploy staff effectively to make best use of their experience and expertise. Practitioners access a suitable range of useful training and make the most of opportunities to keep up-to-date and build on their skills. The setting prioritises access to training effectively to ensure that practitioners are confident in working through the medium of Welsh

The setting leader and the officers of the committee ensure that they keep the budget under close review. They prioritise spending according to the setting's needs and use funds efficiently to ensure that the group remains sustainable. In view of the positive outcomes achieved by children, the setting provides 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

Sheila Margaret Birkhead	Arolygydd Cofnodol
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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>

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.