



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 Llanarth
Y Caban
Ysgol Gynradd Llanarth
Llanarth
Ceredigion
SA47 0PA**

Date of inspection: 6-7 February, 2013

by

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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 Llanarth is located in a portacabin on the site of the primary school which is in the centre of the village on the main road between Cardigan and Aberaeron. Most of the children attending the setting come from the village itself. The area is judged to be economically and socially disadvantaged. The starting point of a minority of the children is lower than expected in terms of linguistic development and basic skills. Following their period at the setting, most of the children continue their education at the local primary school.

The setting provides for children between two and four years of age. It is open for five days a week between 9.00 and 11.30 a.m. during school terms. During the inspection, there were nine three year olds on the register and they were funded by the Ceredigion Children's Partnership. English is the main language spoken in the homes of most of the children. Currently, there are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds in attendance and neither are there any children with additional learning needs.

The leader and two experienced practitioners provide for the children's learning. Most hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. During the inspection, a trainee student was an additional member of the team. The leader has been in post for 10 years.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in March 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in January 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- most of the children make appropriate progress from their starting point;
- most of the children have good attitudes towards learning;
- all the children play an active part in their learning and enjoy the activities;
- the setting offers children a range of interesting experiences;
- the teaching is good; and
- the inclusive learning environment promotes equal opportunities for all the children.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the effective leadership of the lead practitioner;
- the commitment of all practitioners to children's educational and personal development;
- the lead practitioner's sound understanding of the setting's strengths and the areas for improvement;
- the appropriate improvement plan that is being implemented;
- the effective management of staff and resources; and
- the constructive partnership with parents, the primary school and other agencies.

Recommendations

In order to develop, the setting needs to:

- R1 extend children's skills further;
- R2 refine the planning to ensure that the skills are developed consistently across the areas of learning;
- R3 structure the activities further to offer the more able children greater challenge;
- R4 strengthen the practitioners and the management committee's knowledge of self-evaluation processes.

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

Nearly all the children have good listening skills. A few children are confident enough to hold a simple conversation in Welsh and they demonstrate a sound grasp of a range of appropriate vocabulary. The remainder have a good understanding of greetings, instructions and questions, but offer very brief oral responses. Most of the children show an interest in books and a few recognise their names in print. The children know a good number of songs and rhymes and they recall them correctly. The majority use a range of materials and marking equipment appropriately to practise their early writing skills.

Most of the children make appropriate use of their number skills in everyday activities. Nearly all the children count to ten correctly and have a good understanding of mathematical terms, such as large and small, in practical situations. Most of the children can create and follow patterns correctly. They recognise the characteristics of basic shapes and know that money is required to buy goods in the shop. With support, the majority of children use information and communications technology skills appropriately to move objects on the screen, enter instructions into the programmable toy, use a microphone and create patterns on the light board.

Most of the children make effective use of cutting, painting and pasting equipment in their creative activities. The majority make appropriate use of their problem solving skills in building activities with blocks and in completing jigsaws and board games.

The children's personal skills develop well. All the children are familiar with the structure of the session and they happily accept responsibilities such as tidying up after activities.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all the children exhibit positive attitudes towards learning. They work diligently on a task, enjoying the activities that are provided. They work together effectively in pairs and in small groups. The majority of the children are willing to take their turn and to share equipment and resources. Most are developing good independent skills and they move confidently from one activity to another.

All the children have settled in well at the setting. They are happy and safe in the company of the adults and are ready to ask for support and assistance.

The children have an increasing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and of healthy eating. They all play together happily and their behaviour is good. Most engage in new experiences with interest.

The children's social skills and awareness are developing well through the daily activities and through activities that stem from the partnership with the school. Attendance levels are good.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The practitioners make constructive use of planning frameworks that give good attention to the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The children receive regular opportunities to contribute to the planning. The activities are based on a series of themes that are well suited to the range of children's ages and development. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by practitioners and those initiated by the children themselves.

The planning offers appropriate opportunities to develop children's communication, numeracy and broader skills through the learning experiences provided. However, the provision does not always ensure that children's learning skills develop consistently across the areas of learning. For example, the opportunities for children to use a range of information and communications technology skills and aspects of number are more uneven.

The children receive constant encouragement to use Welsh language skills in their learning and play. During group sessions, there are regular opportunities for children to listen to stories, talk about their activities, join in singing songs and nursery rhymes and use their marking skills. The children are effectively introduced to Welsh traditions and celebrations through activities such as celebrating St David's Day and Dydd Santes Dwynwen.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about the cultures and traditions of other people through activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The children play an active part in the setting's recycling arrangements. As part of the theme 'People who help us', following the refuse trail develops the children's awareness of the importance of looking after the environment and all living things.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The use of different teaching methods and of suitable resources stimulates the children's interest and secures their involvement in their learning. The practitioners communicate effectively with the children during story sessions and small group sessions. There are enthusiastic presentations and good questioning that encourage the children to contribute and to enjoy. Activities are prepared in detail. However, they are not always structured sufficiently to extend the skills of the more able children.

The practitioners know the children well and are able to discuss their development knowledgeably. They regularly observe the children's responses and record any significant developments. The practitioners have a sound grasp of the content of the records kept and are developing the use of the information collected in planning the next steps in children's learning. Samples of the children's work are collected in individual folders and these are a useful record of their development. Parents are regularly informed of their children's development through daily discussions and detailed reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle in quickly at the setting. Children are encouraged to eat healthily, to look after their personal hygiene and to behave appropriately. The use of the 'cafe' for snack time sessions promotes children's independence effectively. The practitioners are caring and supportive of all the children.

There are suitable arrangements to support children with additional learning needs, and there are clear lines of communication with key agencies in order to address specific needs when required.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Staff have received training and they are aware of the requirements. They undertake regular risk assessments.

Good quality experiences promote children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The setting regularly promotes values such as fairness and an understanding of right and wrong through daily activities. The children are taught well to work and play together. They benefit from the opportunities to collaborate and to share. The opportunities to take part in concerts for parents further promote their social skills.

Learning environment: Good

The ethos of the setting creates a welcoming and happy atmosphere for every child. It is an inclusive community where all the children have equal access to the learning experiences provided. The practitioners consider and appreciate the children's varying backgrounds and they respond appropriately in accordance with this information.

The setting has an appropriate number of practitioners. They have extensive experience of working with young children. The building is in a good state of repair and offers suitable facilities. Effective use is made of the learning space that is available by arranging activity areas around the room. The learning environment is enhanced by the attractive displays of children's work.

There are sufficient resources that are used effectively to support the learning. However, the range and supply of mathematical and information and communications technology resources is more limited. The resources are

accessible to the children and this promotes independent learning. Full use is made of the small outdoor area alongside the portacabin for a range of investigative activities. Regular use is made of the primary school's playground for physical and creative activities.

How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Under the sound leadership of an experienced lead practitioner, all practitioners undertake their responsibilities effectively. Practitioners receive clear daily instructions and this ensures that sessions run smoothly. The weekly staff meetings offer suitable opportunities to discuss and plan the provision. The practitioners share common values about children's learning, behaviour and development and they are open to new ideas to improve the provision further. Suitable policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.

The management committee is developing its understanding of its responsibilities. Members have a real interest in what is happening and they work hard to raise funds. The management committee meets regularly and keeps minutes of its discussions that form the basis of further planning. The role of the committee in evaluating the overall provision and in forward planning continues to develop. The setting has an appropriate system for appraising the work of the practitioners.

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

Improving quality: Good

The lead practitioner has a secure knowledge of the setting's strengths and the main aspects for improvement. She has conducted a balanced evaluation of the provision. The resulting improvement plan identifies relevant areas for attention together with a timescale and a designation of responsibilities in order to achieve the targets set. The plan offers good guidance for the setting's further development.

Aspects of the provision are regularly monitored by the advisory teacher and areas to be addressed are agreed. Appropriate strategies are put in place that improve the provision. Aspects of the provision are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin officer.

The practitioners attend relevant courses on a range of aspects relating to children's education and care and they make effective use of the training, such as the interesting approaches used to promote the language skills of the young learners.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works productively with a range of partners, who contribute effectively to the quality of provision and to children's development. The setting's aims and objectives are shared with the partners.

The setting has a good partnership with parents and this was confirmed in conversations held during the inspection. Parents receive regular information about all aspects of the work of the setting through the notice board, posters and newsletters. Parents appreciate the setting's open door policy and the daily opportunities to meet with the practitioners.

The close partnership with the management committee, the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer is beneficial to the setting. A useful partnership has been established with the primary school and this promotes transfer arrangements.

Some use is made of the community for visits and of visitors, such as the policewoman and builder who contribute to particular themes. Extending the use of the community is an area that has been appropriately included for further development in the setting improvement plan.

Resource management: Good

Staffing levels are appropriate to present the curriculum and to provide for children's wellbeing and development. The practitioners are deployed and used effectively. On the whole, the setting has an adequate supply of resources and full use is made of them. The building and the outdoor space used by the setting are well maintained.

The leader and the treasurer have a clear understanding of the budget and the management committee prioritises expenditure according to the setting's needs. Regular use is made of fundraising initiatives and of grants in order to supplement the resources. The setting provides 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

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.)</p> <p>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.