



*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 Penybontfawr  
Canolfan Pennant  
Penybontfawr  
Powys  
SY10 0NT**

**Date of inspection: October 2012**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Penybontfawr was established approximately forty years ago to provide Welsh medium pre-school education for the children of Penybontfawr village and the surrounding wide rural area. It meets in the community hall on Ysgol Gynradd Pennant's premises. The setting is part of the Powys Children and Young People's Partnership. In the setting's view, the area it serves is neither prosperous nor socially nor economically disadvantaged. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are accepted at the setting. No children with additional learning needs nor for who English is an additional language, currently attends the setting.

Sessions of three hour and twenty minutes duration are provided on three mornings a week for children from two and a half to three years of age, although the number of sessions attended by individuals varies according to parental wishes. At present, seven three year old children are registered at the setting of whom four are funded by the Partnership.

Welsh is spoken at home by just under half the children. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

Two full time practitioners and two other part-time, temporary practitioners support the children's learning. All are appropriately qualified to teach the early years.

When children have completed their time at the setting, almost all continue their education at Ysgol Gynradd Pennant.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales during October 2011 and by Estyn in November 2006.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- the curriculum is broad and balanced and gives appropriate attention to all areas of learning;
- provision for developing literacy, number and information communications technology skills is appropriate;
- learning sessions encourage every child's involvement and pleasure;
- provision for promoting care, support and guidance is good;
- children's thinking and problem solving skills are not sufficiently developed;
- little use is made of assessment information for planning future activities; and that
- the outdoor area is not used to its full potential.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- practitioners work closely as a team and fulfil their teaching responsibilities well;
- self evaluation is used effectively for identifying the setting's strengths and areas for development;
- sessions are managed effectively;
- there is no clear vision for developing and creating a sense of purpose for the setting's work; and
- steps taken for implementing the priorities of the development plan are not sufficiently robust.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

- R1 create a stronger sense of purpose for the setting's work;
- R2 implement the setting's development plan more robustly;
- R3 improve provision for developing children's thinking and problem solving skills;
- R4 make better use of assessment information in order to plan for the future; and
- R5 further develop the use of the outdoor learning area.

### What happens next?

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

**Adequate**

#### Learning experiences: Adequate

Foundation Phase principles are appropriately reflected in the quality of the learning experiences provided for children. The quality of planning is generally good and based on the Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales. As a result, the curriculum planned is broad and balanced and deals appropriately with all areas of learning. The broad range of activities planned fulfil the needs of almost every child and encourage them to make appropriate progress in knowledge and understanding and in most of the skills.

On the whole, the curriculum provided indoors and outside arouses the interest of almost every child and ensures that children are active learners. All are encouraged to take risks, to experiment with new experiences and to form close relationships with adults and other children. The regular opportunities they have to make decisions and to investigate their environment enable most children to make appropriate progress towards becoming independent learners.

Through appropriate planning, practitioners ensure that children acquire communication, numeracy and information communications technology skills across the areas of learning. When they assemble during circle time, children are encouraged to listen intently to the contributions of other children, to ask questions and to share their experiences with the rest of the group. Regular opportunities are provided for children to join in rhymes and songs and to listen to stories which are read to them by practitioners. Practitioners have recently started to provide more opportunities for children to experiment with mark making, however, the writing tasks do not always have a sufficiently clear purpose.

Despite a strong emphasis on active learning, little attention is given to developing thinking and problem solving skills.

There is a strong focus at the setting on oral Welsh work and on encouraging those who are learning the language to use Welsh as much as possible. By celebrating Welsh holidays and traditions, children increasingly develop their personal and cultural identity.

Children play an active role in the setting's recycling arrangements. The setting takes every opportunity to re-use materials and to compost food waste. Few opportunities are provided for developing children's awareness of other cultures.

## **Teaching: Adequate**

Through close collaboration and effective teamwork, the leader and staff successfully provide learning sessions which are carefully planned and which encourage every child's involvement and enjoyment. All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and use their expertise and experience effectively to meet every child's needs. Although a stimulating and exciting environment which offers children a good number of learning choices is created indoors, the outside area has not been developed to the same extent.

The opportunities children have to learn through play and to make their own decisions about which activities they wish to pursue are a strong feature in every session. When directed towards a practitioner led task, there is a clear focus on developing specific skills. This is effective practice.

Children's behaviour is managed positively and effectively by practitioners. All adults are themselves good language models and intervene purposefully in children's play. However, practitioners do not always sufficiently use questioning techniques neither to challenge children's ideas nor to encourage them to express views about what they are doing.

The setting has appropriate procedures for assessing progress. Children are assessed when they enter the setting and detailed records kept of every individual's progress in the seven areas of learning. There are effective arrangements to include parents when assessing their children and to ensure that they know how they can help their children to improve. However, children are not given sufficient encouragement to assess their own strengths and weaknesses so that they gradually develop their understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Recently, the setting has established a more effective system for observing and recording the progress of groups of children but, at present, practitioners make little use of assessment information to plan activities for the future.

## **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting promotes every child's health and wellbeing successfully. Children have complete trust in the practitioners and they are confident enough to go to any one of them to seek help and guidance or to discuss their worries. The daily practice of eating fruit during snack time and of playing in the outside area, reinforce the high priority given to healthy eating and physical exercise at the setting.

The regular opportunities children have to observe wild life in their locality make a good contribution towards creating a sense of awe and wonder about the world they live in. There is good provision for promoting children's spiritual, moral and social development. Values such as honesty, fairness and respect towards adults and other children are regularly and effectively reinforced through every aspect of the setting's life and work. As they become more mature, children are encouraged to become more aware of their behaviour and to differentiate between right and wrong. Activities such as 'Helpwr Heddiw,' give every child regular opportunities to assume responsibility. Strong emphasis is placed in every session on teaching children to take turn and to share with others.

When there are children with additional learning needs at the setting, practitioners work in close conjunction with the local authority and other specialist agencies to ensure appropriate provision.

The thorough induction arrangements, as well as the close relationship with the parents, ensure that new children settle down quickly at the setting. Practitioners take great care of every child and ensure their safety at all times.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Strong emphasis is placed on promoting, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting has enough practitioners who possess sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach every aspect of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There is an ample supply of resources of good quality to support children's learning across all areas of learning and the skills. They are used effectively by children and practitioners to support learning. Practitioners ensure that all resources are within children's reach and are easily accessed and put away. Resources in the local community, and particularly the local environment, are used well to supplement classroom resources and to enrich the curriculum.

Although a secure and interesting outdoor area has been established, at present, it has not been developed to its full potential as a resource for teaching and learning.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

Practitioners collaborate very closely as a team, fulfilling their teaching responsibilities well. They are supported by a conscientious leader who succeeds in creating an ethos where children and staff feel appreciated. All members of staff understand and fulfil their role effectively and share agreed values about learning, behaviour and relationships. The leader manages sessions effectively and makes good use of the staff's time and expertise. However, there is no clear vision for developing the setting and the approach to implementing improvement priorities is not sufficiently decisive.

Appropriate systems are in place for staff performance management. The previous year's performance is reviewed with the leader and targets for improvement agreed for the following year. Staff professional development needs are identified and ways of fulfilling them are investigated.

The management committee fulfils its responsibilities very conscientiously. Committee's members are appropriately informed of some of the setting's main priorities and they carefully consider legal requirements and relevant guidance. Their role in making the setting accountable for its standards and the quality it achieves has not been fully developed.



The setting satisfies a small number of national priorities, such as the Foundation Phase, successfully. However, there is a lack of rigour in tackling the local authority's main priorities of implementing assessment for learning methods and developing children's thinking skills.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

With guidance from local authority support teacher, the setting undertakes self evaluation annually and uses the process effectively to find out the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. Parents, practitioners and committee members are given appropriate opportunities to contribute to the process. However, the outcomes of self evaluation tend to be too superficial and to concentrate almost solely on improving the provision.

Priorities which have come to the fore through self assessment are incorporated in an appropriate development plan. However, there is a lack of rigour in the manner in which the plan is implemented and this lessens its impact on the setting's development.

The setting has made good progress in two out of the three recommendations identified in the last inspection report. Making better use of assessment outcomes continues to require further attention.

The regular training sessions held by the education authority and the 'Mudiad Meithrin' provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to update their knowledge and skills and to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge of developments in the Foundation Phase. By sharing training feedback and observing each other at the setting, practitioners share good practice regularly and learn much from one another. These practices give rise to better learning and teaching.

### **Partnership working: Good**

A wide range of partnership activities contribute strongly to the children's achievements and wellbeing.

There is a strong partnership between the home and the school. The parents are regularly informed about every aspect of the setting's work and active steps are taken to include them in all the activities arranged. The productive partnership with the primary school eases the transition arrangements substantially and enables the children to settle down without any bother in the nursery class. The setting derives great benefit from using the local community's facilities and resources in order to enrich the children's learning experiences. It also makes occasional use of contributions from local people who share their experiences with children.

The local authority support teacher's regular visits, reports and professional advice have a positive impact on the setting's development. In spite of this, the setting, at times, is slow to implement the recommendations made by the teacher. The leader also receives regular valuable support from the 'Mudiad Meithrin' development officer.

## **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum effectively. The leader makes effective use of the staff's time and experience in order to ensure that good care and support is available for every child. On the whole, finance is used effectively to tackle some of the setting's priorities.

The management committee's treasurer keeps a very detailed record of the setting's finances and ensures that spending is carefully managed. However, the levels of expenditure are not reflected in the quality of the provision and in the leadership. The setting provides adequate value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholders' satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on parental questionnaires as only a small number of responses (fewer than 10) 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>
<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality</p>

	home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.