



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 Tre Ficer Llanymddyfri
Y Caban
Victoria Crescent
Llanymddyfri
SA20 8YD**

Date of inspection: Mawrth 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 Tre Ficer is situated in a cabin in the grounds of Ysgol Rhys Prichard in Llanymddyfri, in the Carmarthenshire local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 18 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two and a half. There are currently 24 children on roll and thirteen of them receive funded early education in the setting in either a morning or afternoon session.

English is the main home language of the majority of the children with a minority coming from Welsh speaking homes. The main language of education in the setting is Welsh. There were no children with additional learning needs attending the group at the time of the inspection.

There are three full time and two part time members of staff, including the playgroup leader. Most are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since 1985.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in January 2014 and by Estyn in July 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Most children's literacy and numeracy skills are developing well
- Children make good progress with their Welsh language skills
- The setting provides good opportunities for children to develop their social skills
- There is a warm and welcoming ethos
- Practitioners plan a good range of learning experiences indoors and outside
- Practitioners make good use of available space and resources are of good quality

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting's leader and deputy are dedicated to providing good quality Welsh medium education within a nurturing environment
- Practitioners work together successfully as a team
- Practitioners have a good understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement
- The setting focusses well on developing children's early literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills
- Practitioners work effectively with a range of partners
- Finances are managed well by the leaders

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's investigation, problem solving and thinking skills
- R2 Ensure that assessment and tracking information are used more effectively to plan to meet the needs of all children
- R3 Improve the way that practitioners manage behaviour, especially during large group activities

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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
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Standards: Good

During their time in the setting, many children achieve good standards in line with their age and stage of development. They make worthwhile 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'.

Many children communicate confidently with each other in their home language and talk about their interests with enthusiasm, such as describing what they are cooking in the mud kitchen. Most children are developing a good understanding of the Welsh language. They follow instructions and questions in Welsh and respond appropriately using single words and simple phrases. A few children from Welsh speaking homes speak confidently at greater length in Welsh. Nearly all children show an interest in books and handle them carefully. They hold the book the right way and turn the pages correctly. They talk enthusiastically about what they can see in the pictures, for example pointing out different dinosaurs. Many children recognise their own name in written form during register time. Most children use a range of mark-making tools independently with increasing control. For example, they draw pictures of sheep for their wall display. Many show that they understand the function of writing, such as when they take orders in the café role-play.

Nearly all children join in singing number songs and rhymes appropriately and many count accurately by rote up to thirteen during registration. Many children count independently to at least eight in Welsh. They recognise and name shapes correctly during their play, for example noticing the triangle shaped toast. Many children are able to sort objects by colour and size. However, a few children that are more able do not develop their numeracy skills fully.

Many children have well developed physical skills. They pedal bikes and balance on logs with increasing expertise. They thread cotton reels skilfully and a majority are developing good scissor control. A few children are beginning to solve problems, such as when completing jigsaws. However, children's thinking and problem solving skills are less well developed.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children arrive at the setting happily and settle quickly and willingly, choosing tasks independently. They have good working relationships with practitioners and are prepared to ask for help when needed. Most children are confident and enthusiastic about their learning and many concentrate on their tasks for a worthwhile length of time. For example, they persevere to cut through dough with scissors.

Most children's behaviour is generally good. However, a minority of children do not listen well during group sessions. Nearly all children relate well to each other. Many children share and take turns appropriately. For example, they share toast and apple slices carefully during snack time. Many children make confident choices about where they want to play when they are given the opportunity and use resources appropriately.

Nearly all children understand that they should wash their hands before eating. They participate enthusiastically in activities to help keep them keep fit and they enjoy healthy snacks.

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

Practitioners plan a useful range of learning experiences that are successful in engaging most children. They base their plans on worthwhile themes that interest the children, such as 'transport' and 'Noah's Ark'. Practitioners involve children suitably in choosing some of the activities. For example, children chose the focus on trains while studying transport. The setting has recently developed their planning for experiences across all areas of learning in the outdoor area. This has been successful in meeting the needs of nearly all children and engaging them well.

The setting places a strong emphasis on developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills. They use songs, rhymes and planned activities to introduce Welsh language patterns and vocabulary appropriately. Practitioners provide many useful opportunities for children to look at books and magazines during their free play and they identify suitable books to go with themes. There are many worthwhile opportunities for children to develop early writing skills, such as taking orders in the café and drawing in the mark-making area. Practitioners provide a wealth of opportunities indoors and outside for children to count and to recognise numbers. However, they are not always successful in planning activities that are appropriate to individual children's stage of development. As a result, a few children occasionally lose interest in adult led activities.

Practitioners promote children's physical development well, making good use of their outdoor space and the nearby schoolyard. However, opportunities to develop children's thinking and problem solving and investigation skills are less well developed.

Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their local heritage as they take part in the Llandoverly Sheep Festival and celebrate St David's Day. They learn about celebrations in other cultures appropriately, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of Foundation Phase practice. For example, they understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. They offer an interesting and stimulating learning environment both inside and outside to help children make progress.

The setting's practitioners are all good language role models, encouraging and supporting the children as they develop their language and communication skills. However, they are less skilful in using questions appropriately to promote children's learning. Practitioners manage individual children's behaviour well most of the time, and use praise and encouragement to help children to share and take turns. However, they do not have high enough expectations for children's behaviour during group activities, such as registration, story time and tidy up times. As a result, a minority of children do not engage well during these activities.

Practitioners assess children regularly and record observations and assessments to measure children's progress in a number of different ways. They have also recently started identifying individual targets to ensure that all children progress. Although these systems are having some impact, there are too many different documents in use at the same time. As a result, practitioners do not work efficiently to track children's progress, identify what they need to do next and feed this into their planning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes healthy living effectively. Children have many worthwhile opportunities to learn about keeping healthy, through eating well and taking regular exercise. For example, children learn to keep fit by joining in a regular music and movement session.

The setting promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, practitioners ensure that snack time is a social occasion where children are encouraged to share fruit and toast with one another. Practitioners give children valuable opportunities to learn to be independent and take responsibility. For example, they encourage children to put food waste in the bin and plates in the bowl at the end of snack time. Children have worthwhile opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder through growing vegetables and feeding the birds in their outdoor area. The setting is developing children's understanding of sustainable development appropriately.

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 use praise to 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. The setting provides a good variety of interesting and appropriate resources for the children to use, which are well organised and accessible. 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 has recently extended its use of the outdoor learning environment, which is attractive and stimulating. For example, the children enjoy pretending to cook in the mud kitchen role-play.

The setting makes good use of the adjacent school's outdoor facilities to enhance children's physical development. They make appropriate use of the local environment to extend children's learning. For example, children learn about travelling by train when they visit the station.

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

The setting's leader and deputy are dedicated to providing good quality Welsh medium education within a nurturing environment. They work together successfully to create a positive ethos and involve all staff in this effectively. The setting has built very positive relationships with parents and carers, who value the provision greatly. Leaders communicate high expectations and ensure that all practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities well. As a result, practitioners and children feel valued. The leader involves all practitioners in planning and assessment and respects their contributions. Most sessions run smoothly. However, occasionally leaders do not manage some aspects of the routine well enough to achieve the best outcomes for children.

The leader and deputy share management responsibility with the committee successfully. They communicate appropriately with the registered person ensuring that the playgroup operates effectively. A helpful appraisal system enables practitioners and committee members to reflect on their performance and plan appropriate training and support.

The setting has implemented national and local priorities appropriately. For example, there is a strong focus on developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills well, and the leader ensures that children have good opportunities to learn about healthy living.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders know the setting well and have a strong commitment to constant improvement. They make good use of a new self-evaluation process to help them to identify strengths and areas for development. They have used this information successfully to form a helpful improvement plan that includes appropriate targets and opportunities to evaluate progress. Practitioners are making suitable progress towards achieving the targets, such as using information from recent training to improve practitioners' Welsh language skills.

Leaders work well with other agencies. They are open to new ideas and are willing to try out new ways of working. For example, they have recently adopted a new planning format in consultation with the local authority link teacher. As a result, they focus more strongly on developing children's skills and are able to identify individual

improvement targets. They have used opportunities to visit nearby settings to improve their understanding of outdoor learning. This has led to improved opportunities for children to develop across all areas of learning outdoors. Leaders have shared their good practice and wide experience of running a playgroup successfully with other settings.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has very strong, long-standing partnerships with parents, carers and the local school. It has also established worthwhile links with the community. For example, it contributes to fundraising for local causes and supports local events. As a result, the playgroup provision is valued and respected in the locality.

Practitioners keep parents well informed about activities and their children's progress through daily informal contact and the setting's noticeboard. 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 playgroup makes good use of its location next to the school to enhance children's learning experiences and prepare them effectively for moving on to the next stage of their education. For example, children become familiar with the school building through regular use of the schoolyard and outdoor area.

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

Resource management: Good

The setting manages and uses resources well. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified staff. They deploy staff effectively to make best use of their experience and expertise, and provide new practitioners with valuable opportunities to develop their confidence. Practitioners access a suitable range of useful training and put the information to good use in the setting. They attend networking events that are effective in helping them to implement strategies such as the new planning format.

Leaders, and the management committee, manage the budget well. They are pro-active in seeking out additional funding and prioritise spending efficiently according to the setting's needs. For example, they have made good use of recent funding to improve the fabric of the building.

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 partnerships 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.