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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

Report on

**Cylch Meithrin Tywyn
Tŷ Mabon
Tywyn
Gwynedd
LL36 9ET**

Date of inspection: June 2014

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 school'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 Tywyn is a Welsh-medium nursery that is part of provision by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Gwynedd Children and Young People's Partnership. The nursery was established in 1975 and has been situated in a cabin in the grounds of the secondary school since 1986. All children who attend the setting come from Tywyn itself. English is the main home language of many children and very few come from Welsh-speaking households.

Twenty-two children attend the setting and, of these, four of them are funded by the Partnership. A three-hour session is held every morning of the week and a minority stay on for an additional hour. Not all pupils attend all sessions.

The setting is staffed by two joint leaders and one learning assistant. Children of all abilities and social backgrounds come to the setting and a very few have additional learning needs. At present, no children of ethnic descent attend the setting.

Children transfer to the local primary school in the term after they reach their fourth birthday and there they continue to receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in December 2013 and by Estyn in December 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is unsatisfactory. The setting's strengths include:

- practitioners make good use of visits to enrich children's experiences;
- there are good opportunities for children to learn about healthy eating;
- there are good, regular opportunities for children to learn about the importance of sustainability through recycling fruit leftovers and paper in the classroom; and
- effective strategies are in place to ensure that children settle in quickly and feel safe.

However, the areas that need to be improved outweigh the setting's strengths because:

- the setting does not give enough rich opportunities for children to develop early literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills;
- practitioners' planning is not thorough enough and is not differentiated;
- children are not challenged enough, especially the more able children;
- practitioners do not explain clearly enough or regularly enough what they expect children to do at the beginning of each activity;
- practitioners do not make regular enough use of purposeful questioning in order to stimulate children's natural curiosity and develop their oral skills in Welsh;
- practitioners do not model the Welsh language well enough;
- the new assessment processes have not had time to become embedded or have a positive effect on children's standards or provision; and
- the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements and are a cause of serious concern.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory. The setting's strengths are that:

- leaders have created a homely atmosphere in which children are happy, and in which practitioners generally co-operate well;
- the setting makes good use of social media to convey the latest information to parents about events; and
- transition arrangements with the cylch Ti a Fi and the local primary school are effective and ensure that children settle in quickly when transferring from one setting to the next.

However, the important areas that need to be improved outweigh the setting's

strengths because:

- leaders have not realised the setting's vision or promoted it effectively;
- leaders have not met many of the recommendations from the previous inspection;
- practitioners do not attend training regularly enough;
- the joint leaders do not submit reports to the management committee;
- leaders' understanding of the quality improvement process is not good enough;
- the setting does have a development plan to identify the nursery group's priorities for improvement; and
- leaders do not have effective processes for managing and reviewing expenditure.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure rich and regular opportunities for children to develop early literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the six areas of learning
- R2 Improve practitioners' assessment, planning and teaching in order to ensure good provision that leads to raising standards
- R3 Ensure that the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements
- R4 Ensure that all staff attend training in order to improve their understanding of provision, teaching and management
- R5 Form a management committee that is aware of its responsibilities and responds positively to them
- R6 Improve the setting's self-evaluation processes and create a plan that focuses clearly on priorities for improvement

What happens next?

I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector agrees, that there is a need for focused improvement in relation to this setting. The setting will produce an action plan, which will show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress every term.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant pupils present at the time of the inspection to report on them without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant pupils present at the time of the inspection to report on them without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Unsatisfactory

Learning experiences: Unsatisfactory

Practitioners' understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase is developing very gradually, and they seek to ensure that children have appropriate experiences within the six areas of learning. However, weekly planning is not thorough enough. As a result, children are not stretched enough. Nor is planning differentiated to show what is relevant to children from two to four years old, thus hindering children's development.

The setting does not give enough rich opportunities for children to develop early numeracy and literacy skills. By self-registering every morning, a few pupils are starting to recognise their names. However, most children do not have the opportunity to do this independently. All practitioners make good use of occasional Welsh by giving simple instructions and orders. However, they are not all confident enough when using the Welsh language outside these situations and they do not encourage children to make enough use of Welsh through responses. Practitioners ensure regular opportunities for children to sing a wide range of songs and rhymes but they do not get the vast majority of children to respond enthusiastically to this. There are few opportunities for children to listen and respond to stories that are read and, as a result, they do not have enough opportunities to hear the Welsh language. Children are not encouraged to count regularly enough and this hinders children's understanding of number.

Planning does not identify opportunities for children to develop early ICT skills nor to solve problems. As a result, this provision is very inconsistent. There are few opportunities for children to plant, observe and marvel at flowers or vegetables growing. In addition, there are few opportunities for children to experience continuous activities in the outdoor area throughout the year. Practitioners' understanding of the basic principles of outdoor teaching is not sound enough.

Practitioners are beginning to ensure that children take a more active part in their learning and have opportunities to make choices about what they would like to do in the free play sessions. This is beginning to develop increasing confidence and independence in the majority of children. However, planning for independent or guided play is not detailed enough to support learning. As a result, not all children continue on task for a reasonable period.

Practitioners make good use of visits to enrich children's experiences. The regular use of the gymnasium in the leisure centre, and the large equipment activities, have a positive effect on developing children's confidence, daring and physical skills. The setting also arranges useful visits to the town library to celebrate World Book Day and to collect story sacks or books involving the theme. This is beginning to gain children's interest in books.

Provision to promote children's knowledge and understanding of Welsh traditions is developing appropriately through celebrating St David's Day and Urdd activities. However, there is very little use of books by Welsh authors.

There are good, regular opportunities for children to learn about the importance of sustainability by recycling fruit leftovers and paper in the classroom. There are now opportunities for children to learn about other cultures.

Teaching: Unsatisfactory

Leaders have put effective strategies in place to ensure that children settle in quickly and feel safe. Practitioners create a positive relationship with children and, as a result, the children trust them. On the whole, practitioners control behaviour successfully, although a few children are disruptive and a very few have difficulty in sharing or waiting their turn.

However, practitioners' understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase is not sound enough. The range and quality of practitioners' teaching methods are too limited. Practitioners do not explain clearly enough what they expect the children to do. They do not make regular enough use of purposeful questioning in order to stimulate children's natural curiosity and develop their oral skills in Welsh when responding. Leaders provide useful written guidelines in all educational areas in order to help practitioners to develop children's skills. However, practitioners do not make regular use of them. In general, practitioners do not make enough use of the Welsh language and too many resort to speaking English to the children. As a result, practitioners do not model language robustly enough and children's oral standards in Welsh are not good enough.

Recently, the setting has adopted the local authority's assessment procedures. Practitioners now assess all children on entry, make daily observations and keep detailed records on the development of all children in the six areas of learning. However, this has not yet had time to become embedded or have a positive effect on standards. Leaders do not use assessment effectively enough to plan activities that reinforce and extend children's learning.

Information for parents at the end of the year conveys children's developments across the areas of the Foundation Phase appropriately, and parents have an opportunity to discuss their children's progress in an open day during the autumn term.

Care, support and guidance: Unsatisfactory

The setting has effective arrangements in place to help children to eat and drink healthily. Arrangements for encouraging them to take physical exercise regularly are a strength in the setting and have a positive effect on children's standards. Through this, children develop balancing skills and develop confidence and physical strength very well. The daily teeth-cleaning activity contributes effectively to increasing children's understanding of its importance.

Learning experiences encourage children's moral, cultural and social development appropriately. For example, practitioners use snack time to encourage children to learn to eat together, share and wait their turn. As a result, many children develop an appropriate understanding of how to relate to others' wishes. Celebrating St. David's Day and attending children's activities run by Coleg Ceredigion in the local leisure centre contribute to children's cultural and social development. However, practitioners do not make effective enough use of circle time to encourage children to listen to others or to talk and share feelings. Opportunities are also scarce for developing children's spiritual awareness by giving them opportunities to marvel at the world around them.

The setting is beginning to encourage children to think about sustainability. For example, children recycle fruit peelings and paper regularly. However, there are very few opportunities for children to learn about other cultures.

Practitioners display good care of children as they arrive and as they are collected. The setting has an appropriate range of policies to safeguard and promote children's wellbeing but they have not been accepted formally by the management committee. The policy on child protection has not been updated for several years. Practitioners have not received recent training on safeguarding children and, as a result, they are not able to explain correctly what steps they would take when responding to cases of safeguarding children. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements and they are a cause for serious concern.

Processes for supporting children who have additional learning needs are not robust enough as the setting does not plan appropriately in order to meet children's particular needs. The setting does not have individual plans for those children who have additional learning needs.

Learning environment: Unsatisfactory

The setting creates a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos. Boys and girls have the same opportunity to take advantage of resources and activities, and practitioners promote fair play appropriately. There are no opportunities to celebrate diversity and, as a result, practitioners miss opportunities to help children to develop tolerant attitudes.

The setting has enough practitioners who have appropriate qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Displays celebrate children's work successfully and colourful murals gain children's interest, for example on the theme of animals. The setting has a range of purposeful resources to stimulate children but these are not used well enough to meet all pupils' needs. The setting provides an interesting environment for children to play imaginatively, for example in the pet shop and the dressing-up area. However, practitioners do not make sufficient use of these, especially when fostering and developing children's oral skills.

The setting is maintained well and the building and the outdoor area are safe. However, the setting makes very inconsistent use of the outdoor area throughout the year and practitioners, for example, do not offer enough opportunities for children to garden and grow wild plants.

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

Leaders have created a homely atmosphere in which children are happy, and where practitioners on the whole co-operate well. They have a vision that is based on developing all children physically, emotionally and socially through the medium of Welsh. However, leaders have not realised this vision or promoted it successfully.

Sharing leadership among the practitioners at the setting is a very recent development. Leaders are beginning the process of co-operating and developing joint management skills in order to ensure good opportunities for children. This has not developed enough yet as the provision does not meet children's needs well enough.

Leaders are also beginning to ensure that all practitioners understand their responsibilities and work together purposefully. However, they do not include practitioners enough when planning. Their ability to set a strategic direction for the setting has not developed sufficiently yet and they are too dependent on support from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. In general, they do not respond quickly enough to recommendations by agencies and the majority of the recommendations from the previous inspection have not been met.

Practitioners do not attend training regularly enough in order to improve provision. The lack of training is reflected in the lack of provision and this has an adverse effect on standards.

There is no formal management committee to receive progress reports by leaders and there is no discussion on setting a strategic direction. The committee do not meet regularly and they do not have sound enough knowledge of the setting's performance. In addition, they do not have a copy of the setting's current budget, which has been audited formally.

Leaders give attention to local and national priorities such as developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. However, this focus has not had sufficient effect on provision.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Leaders' understanding of the quality improvement process is not good enough. Although they have received support and guidance from the local authority, the setting's self-evaluation processes remain ineffective. This is a great concern as this aspect of the setting's work is a recommendation following the previous inspection.

The current process includes some joint discussion among practitioners, in addition to collecting opinions through a questionnaire. However, the process is not thorough enough. It does not result in a report showing that leaders know the setting's strengths and weaknesses well. The current report is too descriptive and does not focus robustly enough on children's standards or on the standards of provision. The report does not identify specific areas to be developed well enough and the setting does not have a development plan that identifies its priorities for improvement.

Partnership working: Adequate

The setting has a range of supportive partnerships. Transition arrangements with the Ti a Fi setting and the local primary school are effective and ensure that children settle in quickly when transferring from one setting to the next.

Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. New parents receive a useful information pack that facilitates the step from home to the setting by giving necessary information to parents. Use is made of a notice board to share day-to-day information and parents receive a booklet at the end of their child's period at the setting, which shows their child's progress. The setting is beginning to use social media in order to give the latest information to parents about events and sharing information. Parents have done very little fundraising during the year and there is difficulty in getting parents to establish an effective management committee.

The setting has supportive partnerships with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. These partnerships support and try to challenge practitioners through regular visits but they have not had enough of an effect on the provision or leadership.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

Leaders ensure that the setting has enough practitioners who have suitable qualifications. They do not yet use practitioners purposefully enough to ensure that provision meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase and to challenge the children well enough.

Practitioners do not have access to an effective range of suitable training regularly enough. Only a very few practitioners have attended training during the last year. This is beginning to have a positive effect on improving the setting's assessment procedures. Not all practitioners are confident in speaking Welsh. This has a negative effect on their ability to develop children's oral skills and to control challenging behaviour.

Leaders do not have effective processes for managing and reviewing expenditure. They do not allocate funds appropriately in order to address priorities.

Considering the considerable weaknesses in the setting's provision and leadership, it provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

Reporting inspector

Mr Maldwyn Pryse	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	<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>

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.