



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 Penygroes,
Safle Ysgol Bro Lleu,
Ffordd y Brenin
Penygroes
Gwynedd
LL54 6RE**

Date of inspection: January 2012

by

Mr W Williams

Reporting Inspector

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 Penygroes is part of the Gwynedd Children and Young People's Partnership provision. It provides pre-school Welsh medium education for the children of the village of Penygroes and the surrounding rural area. The setting meets in a demountable cabin which is situated in the grounds of Ysgol Bro Llew. There is also an enclosed play area outside which is shared with the school.

The area served by the setting is deemed to be economically and socially disadvantaged. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, there was a very small number of children with additional learning needs at the setting.

Two hour sessions are provided on five mornings a week for children from two and a half to three years of age, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental wishes. Currently there are eight three year old children registered at the setting who are funded by the partnership.

Every child speaks Welsh at home. No child is learning English as an additional language. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

Children's education is supported by three full time practitioners and one part time practitioner. All are appropriately qualified to teach the early years.

When children have finished their time at the setting, they continue with their education at Ysgol Gynradd Bro Llew.

The setting was last inspected by the Wales Care and Social Services Inspectorate in June 2010. This is the first inspection of the setting by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- children's progress in skills and learning is good;
- behaviour is good and children respond enthusiastically to new learning experiences;
- teaching is good and provides stimulating and challenging learning experiences;
- provision to promote children's health and welfare is good, and
- the setting provides good value for money.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- leadership is good and the setting's work has a strong sense of purpose;
- the management committee fulfils its responsibilities very thoroughly;
- there are firm arrangements to maintain good practice and implementing change;
- practitioners are very open to new ideas and willing to try different methods of working, and
- practitioners are strongly supported by a programme of continuous professional development.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

- R1. increase resources for information communications technology;
- R2. further develop self evaluation arrangements, and
- R3. refine its procedures for appraising practitioners.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Bearing in mind their age, their stage of developmental and starting point, all children make good progress in what they can do and in their knowledge and understanding. As they tackle the wide range of activities provided for them, most children work in line with their ability and achieve well. Most try their best and make appropriate progress in their ability to concentrate and persevere with one task.

All children make good progress in their Welsh communication skills. Many express their feelings confidently, make themselves understood and discuss their learning meaningfully. They recall a wide range of songs and rhymes and perform them very enthusiastically.

Most children show an avid interest in books listening intently to stories read to them by practitioners. They enjoy discussing what happens to the main characters and anticipate what is likely to happen to them next in the story. The more confident readers turn to their favourite book voluntarily and recognise an increasing range of letters and familiar words. Almost all children recognise their own name in print.

The early writing skills of many children develop well. They understand some of the functions of writing, such as making a shopping list, and enjoy experimenting with mark-making by using a variety of media such as chalk, paint and pencils.

By experiencing a wide range of activities such as problem solving and counting money in the class shop, children's number skills develop well. Although all children enjoy using information communications technology, a shortage of appropriate resources restricts opportunities for them to extend their skills.

Wellbeing: Good

All children display high levels of interest and motivation towards learning and responds enthusiastically to new learning experiences. They possess a sound understanding of how they can become healthy through what they eat and the physical activities they undertake. All have a close relationship with the practitioners and trust in their guidance. Children state that they feel safe in the setting and free from physical or verbal abuse.

A very prominent feature of the setting is the good behaviour and the care children show for each other. Many of them consider other children's feelings, and when they undertake specific tasks, or tasks of their own choice, they work together harmoniously and display increasing levels of independence. All the children enjoy their time at the setting.

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

High quality learning experiences satisfy the needs and interests of the full range of children and encourage them to learn effectively and make good progress across the areas of learning. Learning is based on detailed curricular plans which strongly reflect the principles of the Foundation Phase and build systematically on the children's current knowledge, understanding and skills. Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment imaginatively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences and to develop their skills effectively. Children are given frequent opportunities to direct their own learning and to develop into independent learners. They visit the local community frequently and learn much from the visitors who come to the setting to talk about their work.

Learning experiences provide valuable opportunities for children to develop close relationships at the setting and to begin to acquire the necessary thinking and problem solving skills for them to access the wider curriculum.

Plenty of good quality opportunities are provided for children to develop their literacy skills. These include role play situations, listening to stories and mark-making for different purposes. Numeracy skills are firmly incorporated into children's learning experiences. Due to the insufficient range of information and communications technology resources, children have limited opportunities to develop their skills to their full potential.

Opportunities for children to develop their personal identity and to raise their awareness of Welsh culture, festivals and traditions are of high quality. Through role play and tasting foods from different countries, children become more aware of their roles as global citizens. There are good opportunities for them to learn about sustainability and to take an active role in the setting's recycling arrangements.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a firm understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. They have high expectations of all children, including children with additional learning needs and more able and talented children. Through purposeful collaborative planning, practitioners succeed in providing stimulating and challenging learning experiences both inside and outside. By using a wide range of learning strategies, practitioners stimulate children's interests and ensure their engagement in their tasks. On the whole, tasks include appropriate challenge and satisfy the needs of individual children in a flexible manner. There is strong emphasis on learning through play and on solving practical problems, and a good balance is maintained between activities chosen by the child and those directed by practitioners. Adults know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and do so effectively through skilful questioning and suggesting ways of moving the learning forward. By joining in the play, they ensure that children have maximum benefit from every activity that is offered. Practitioners have a close working relationship with children, they know every individual well and are aware of their personal and educational needs. On the rare occasions when there is unacceptable

behaviour or disagreements arise between individuals, disputes are resolved firmly and sensitively by practitioners.

Practitioners assess children regularly and comprehensively and records observations and assessments carefully to measure the children's progress. On the whole, assessment outcomes are used purposefully to plan activities for the future which satisfy children's needs and interests. There are effective arrangements for including parents in their children's assessments and to ensuring that they are well-informed of their children's progress and what they can do to help them to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for promoting children's health and welfare, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The experience the children gain through working in the outdoor area every day has a beneficial effect on their spiritual and physical development and raises their awareness of the beauty of the world around them. During their daily contact with children, practitioners emphasise strongly the need for everyone to be kind to each other, to be honest and fair, and behave in a responsible way. This greatly helps children to differentiate between right and wrong. The regular opportunities for children to undertake responsibility and to take their own decisions about their learning make a significant contribution to their personal and social development.

Practitioners know the children well and provide clear guidance for them during sessions. They know how to access professional help such as that of an educational psychologist or a speech therapist.

Effective induction arrangements help children to settle down quickly and without difficulty at the setting. The setting has an appropriate policy and it has procedures for safeguarding.

The setting identifies children's learning needs in detail when they join and ensure that these needs are satisfied. The assistance and support provided for children with additional learning needs is very effective enabling these children to make significant progress in their learning and to develop key personal and social skills.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children are given equal access to all areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and on ensuring that every child and member of staff is free from any harassment. The setting has enough practitioners who possess sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They succeed in creating a stimulating environment where every child is able to take full advantage of his or her learning experiences and develop positive values and attitudes.

There is generally a good supply of good quality resources in almost all areas of learning and these are carefully matched to each individual's development and learning needs. Resources in the outside area and in the community are used purposefully to enrich the curriculum and to support learning in the classroom. The

building and the accommodation is of good quality and are used extensively. The buildings and accommodation are of good quality and are used extensively. Although there is a designated area for outdoor learning, it has not, as yet, been developed to its full potential.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader has a clear vision for the setting's development and, through team work, investigates how to fulfil this vision. There is a strong sense of purpose to the setting's work and it succeeds in creating an ethos which promotes and maintains improvement. The leader manages practitioners and children effectively and communicates high expectations. Clear aims and policies which concentrate on children's needs have been established. Practitioners collaborate closely, share agreed values about learning, behaviour and relationships and ensure that the Foundation Phase, as well as other local and national priorities, are implemented successfully. The extremely positive relationship with children and parents contributes substantially towards creating a sense of community.

Members of the management committee fulfil their responsibilities very thoroughly and provide very strong support for the setting's staff. They possess a very good understanding of their roles and are an influential voice in the setting's development. Any complaints are settled in an open and effective manner.

Although appropriate procedures are used to manage and appraise staff performance, these do not give rise to clear targets which help practitioners to improve their practice.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know the setting well and under the guidance of the leader, they self evaluate and look for ways of improving. Firm arrangements have been established to maintain good practice and to implement change in areas which need to be improved. Self evaluation pays careful attention to parental views and benefits substantially from the professional advice of the local authority advisory teacher. Practitioners can show how, through self evaluation, they have recently improved the provision and children's standards of achievement and welfare.

The setting's self evaluation report is of good quality and the information is used effectively to implement strategies for improvement. However, the development of self evaluation arrangements is at an early stage and the setting has noted this in its self evaluation.

Practitioners are strongly supported by a programme of continuous professional development provided mainly by the local authority. This has enabled them to acquire new knowledge and skills and to implement the Foundation Phase successfully. Training sessions also provide valuable opportunities for them to share their practice with practitioners from other settings.

The setting is developing well as a strong learning community. Through the leader's encouragement, the practitioners are very open to new ideas and are prepared to try different ways of working and to share information and ideas amongst themselves.

Partnership working: Good

There is a good range of partner activities which make a strong contribution to children's achievements and wellbeing. Parents are informed regularly about every aspect of the setting's work and active steps are taken to include them in all the activities arranged. The arrangements for the setting's children to join with the school's nursery class for a singing lesson once a week promotes the easy transfer from the setting to the school at the end of the year. This is good practice.

Although the setting makes full use of the resources of the village and the local environment, it does not take full advantage of the potential contribution by people from the local community in sharing their experiences with the children.

The productive co-operation between the setting and the local authority advisory teacher makes a very substantial contribution to improving the quality of the provision and raising standards. The practitioners work together effectively, share information about children and know whom to contact when and if children need additional assistance.

Resource management: Good

There are effective strategies for managing staff and resources. The setting is appropriately staffed and the comprehensive arrangements which exist to fulfil the practitioners' developmental needs, ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge about recent developments in the Foundation Phase. The leader and the management committee have a good understanding of their budget and they prioritise spending in line with the setting's development needs. Decisions about expenditure are carefully evaluated to ensure that they have a direct impact on the children's standards of achievement, progress and welfare. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholders' satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses 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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.

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	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 partnership's 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.