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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Y Groeslon
The Village Hall
Groeslon
Gwynedd
LL54 2RG**

Date of inspection: May 2015

by

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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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Publication date: 11/06/2015

Context

Cylch Meithrin Y Groeslon is a setting in the village of Groeslon, in the Gwynedd local authority. It meets in the village hall. The setting is open for five days of the week. The setting has four members of staff.

The setting is registered to take up to 24 children. It admits children from two to three years of age. At the time of the inspection, 15 children attended, seven of them funded by the local authority.

Nearly all the children are of white British origin and they speak Welsh as their first language. No children have additional learning needs.

The temporary leader has been in post since December 2014. The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in November 2014 and by Estyn in March 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

Even though the outcomes and the provision are good, the current performance of the setting is adequate, because of the uncertainty regarding the setting's leadership and management.

The strengths are:

- the children's good progress and positive attitudes towards learning;
- the learning experiences, which are generally planned well;
- the good support and effective teaching during tasks;
- the purposeful use of Welsh, which has a positive effect on how the children learn the language; and
- the good relationship between adults and children.

The areas for improvement are:

- create certainty in the management systems to ensure that children's standards and the provision of the setting are maintained;
- to ensure that assessments are recorded consistently, noting specific targets to move the children forward;
- to develop the understanding of the wider world and the children's awareness of global citizenship; and
- to improve the provision and use of the outdoor area.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate.

The strengths are:

- the positive and active attitude towards staff development and training;
- the effective use of support lines;
- the positive relationship amongst the staff;
- the use of the community to support the setting; and
- the good indoor resources.

The areas for improvement are:

- reduce the instability of the management and leadership roles within the setting;
- establish the strategic planning and development priorities to secure improvements;
- develop the management committee's robustness when allocating important roles and responsibilities to staff; and
- respond to the recommendations of the last inspection.

Recommendations

- R1 Develop children's understanding of the wider world and their awareness of global citizenship
- R2 Complete regular assessments to record children's progress from their start points
- R3 Develop and enrich the resources and experiences in the outdoor area
- R4 Develop the role of the management committee and ensure that they allocate roles and responsibilities robustly
- R5 Improve the effectiveness and understanding of the self-evaluation processes and development planning

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children make good progress from their starting points by the end of their time at the setting. They make positive improvements in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Many children discuss ideas with other children and adults sensibly. They listen carefully to each other when discussing stories and the days of the week together on the carpet.

Most children discuss colours sensibly when using dough and paint. They also talk confidently and accurately about how they would buy and sell flowers in the flower shop. They use money meaningfully and make purposeful marks when recording the sales in the shop.

Most children sit quietly when listening to the introduction of a task. They join in enthusiastically when discussing the different tasks or while singing songs and nursery rhymes. Many are very eager to answer questions about what they are doing. A minority of children choose to look at books independently and a few of them hold books correctly and discuss the content confidently with each other and adults.

Most children develop their early writing skills effectively through mark making and painting. They have a basic understanding of the purpose of writing and they use mark making meaningfully, for example in the shop when role-playing. Very few children are beginning to form the letters of the alphabet and numbers with support in fairly recognisable forms, when handling pencils and crayons.

Many children are developing early numeracy skills well. Most can count objects to five with confidence and a few children identify and name numbers up to five accurately. Around half the children use an appropriate range of mathematical language together whilst playing. For example, they describe different pieces of dough as 'small' and 'big' when creating beetles. They also use numbers practically when discussing 'tall' and 'short', and when comparing the differences in shapes like a rectangle, square, circle and triangle.

Most children group different types of objects correctly by colour, size and shape. They use money in the correct context when buying flowers in the shop.

Nearly all children know what to do when they are given instructions in Welsh and they use Welsh naturally without being prompted. Many use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment successfully and use computer programs purposefully.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy and confident learners. Nearly all of them have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, in relation to their age. Nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly before eating their fruit and drinking milk. They do this independently and effectively, which includes drying their hands without much prompting. Nearly all children have a good understanding that a healthy diet includes fruit and vegetables and that playing outdoors on large toys and running around the outdoor area keeps you fit.

Many children have a good attitude towards learning. They participate enthusiastically in all experiences that are offered to them. Most children listen attentively to one another and to staff. They behave well. They participate fully in all activities and concentrate and persevere for appropriate periods. Most children make sensible decisions for themselves, for example when asking to go to the toilet, putting on their coats and taking their turn to use equipment.

Most children relate well to each other and with adults and visitors. They are polite and considerate of other people's needs and share resources voluntarily. Most children show sound levels of motivation, engagement and concentration.

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

Planning satisfies the philosophy of the Foundation Phase appropriately and achieves the outcomes that are identified in children's learning. The curriculum builds effectively on children's previous and current knowledge and experiences. There are interesting opportunities available for all children to develop their skills across the curriculum within the building. The temporary leader prepares the planning for the staff and they discuss the theme's activities daily. The curriculum is flexible and linked to children's interests.

Specific activities and tasks are planned thoroughly and children have freedom to choose their own tasks and activities. Skills and learning objectives are planned and delivered well to challenge individual children. Good activities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills in literacy, numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. All adults communicate effectively with children in Welsh.

Provision for developing children's ICT skills is suitable. The staff direct children regularly to use technological equipment such as the computer and the till in the shop. Children have many opportunities to develop their thinking skills through interesting activities such as role-playing in the shop and kitchen, experimenting with sand, discussing the weather, building blocks and sharing teddy's experiences on a picnic.

Suitable emphasis is placed on Welsh traditions and celebrations, such as celebrating St David's Day. The children are not provided with good opportunities to learn information and gain an understanding of other cultures and traditions. Therefore, there are not enough opportunities for the children to develop a good

understanding of the wider world and develop their awareness of global citizenship effectively.

Teaching: Good

Staff have good practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a positive relationship between all staff and children. The planning makes the best use of the staff's expertise. Generally, the teaching is stimulating. The staff set clear learning objectives at the start of every focus activity to ensure that the children understand the purpose of the activity. However, at times, introductions are not matched appropriately to the ages of the children and the responses of the two-year-old children affect the concentration of the older children.

Staff co-operate effectively, which ensures that individual children have good opportunities to share experiences in all of the available activities. All children are free to choose from activities that are led by adults or to work independently. Staff are sensible when intervening and they allow the children to develop their independent skills successfully. The staff model good language to develop children's thinking and communication skills. Staff encourage children to evaluate sensibly as they discuss a story and role-play.

In the building, staff provide an interesting environment that ensures successfully that all children take part and enjoy. The teaching in the open air is not stimulating and the outdoor area is not used purposefully.

Suitable assessment procedures exist. The records of children's achievements are completed adequately. Staff do not complete regular assessments with enough detail that record children's progress from their start points. Parents and carers are informed appropriately about their children's achievements and the information is available to them at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting ensures that children's daily care and health is good. Visitors and visits extend children's experiences effectively. The setting visits the community through trips around the village, to Mudiad Meithrin festivals and occasional journeys on the train. The use of the local area develops the children's knowledge and understanding of their community effectively.

The setting has good provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The staff foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect sensibly. Children have good opportunities to reflect, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray. This is evident as they take turns well when eating fruit and drinking milk around the dining table. The setting has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Good opportunities are available for the children to recycle paper, plastic and food. The setting plants vegetables, flowers and fruit in pots in the outdoor area, which begins to develop their understanding of sustainability appropriately.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which removes any form of disruption or aggressive behaviour. The setting's staff have suitable qualifications and good experience and the adult to child ratio is favourable. Staff's expertise is used appropriately in planning and in supervising activities.

The doors are locked and only a member of staff opens them. No one can come in and no child can leave unaccompanied. Staff are careful as children are collected and ensure that they are in the care of their parents, a familiar carer or the bus driver, who transports a few children to the local school.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children do not meet requirements with enough rigour and are therefore a cause for concern. Due to the significant and recent changes with regards to staff responsibilities, there is no member amongst the current staff with specific responsibility for child protection. This is an important shortcoming.

There is no additional learning needs co-ordinator amongst the present staff. However, the current staff are aware of the support available and familiar with the necessary procedures to support children with special needs.

Learning environment: Good

Through daily activities and the attitude that is adopted by staff, the setting promotes a positive ethos. Staff know children well and their individuality is recognised. All children have equal access to an interesting curriculum.

The setting uses its resources successfully in the building to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Resources are accessible to children, which promotes the children's sense of responsibility well. Resources are shared effectively between continuous activities and opportunities to enrich the learning.

The outdoor area is not used effectively. However, there are appropriate opportunities available for the children to grow plants in pots. This extends their understanding adequately of how plants develop.

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

The temporary leader is energetic and she works closely with the rest of the staff to create a positive ethos, which encourages and values teamwork. Development plans are very new to all the current staff. The setting has created an appropriate development plan in order to improve the setting further. However, the developments have not had enough time to establish and affect the setting's practices sufficiently. The setting relies significantly on the support of external agencies like the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin to lead and guide the staff on how to improve.

The staff contribute practically through sharing clear instructions with each other. They also accept advice from outside agencies to improve in order to promote the best possible experiences for the children. The support from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin is effective.

The appropriate training provided by the local authority is very supportive to the professional development of the temporary leader and the staff. By now, the knowledge developed is beginning to be used purposefully. However, the strategic direction of the setting and the roles of the leaders and managers are unclear when planning ahead, due to sudden changes in the management structure.

The management committee does not play a purposeful role in the life of the setting. It does not monitor and direct the current staff robustly to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clarified, allocated and supported through effective training.

The setting has taken good account of national priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Improving quality: Adequate

The self-evaluation process is new, however, the procedures have not yet led to improving quality and provision further. By now, the self-evaluation procedures are more systematic and clear. All of the staff are more aware of the purpose and impact of effective self-evaluation. The temporary leader and staff are developing a better understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. They now focus appropriately on developing provision further and focus well on developing the children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The development plan, which arises from the recent self-evaluation, is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the setting further. The staff have been included in a series of good training and development opportunities. These include working in partnership with the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin.

Inconsistent progress has been made in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection; concerning the assessment systems to move children on to the next steps in their learning and the setting's self-evaluation processes.

Partnership working: Good

The parents and carers, in the questionnaire replies and during discussions, express their satisfaction with the setting. They appreciate the standards of care and the quality of education available. They value the open door policy and the opportunities to meet staff on a daily basis. By the time the children leave the setting, the parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The links with the parents, the community in general, the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority are good.

The support provided by the staff of the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin benefits the setting greatly. The advice and suggestions have helped in moving the setting forward and have contributed to good standards and better provision.

Resource management: Adequate

Recently, the changes in staffing have caused inconsistencies in the development of the setting. The staff's knowledge is developing through appropriate training to present a well balanced curriculum. The staff's expertise is used well and they work effectively side-by-side with each other to improve children's achievements.

The setting has good indoor resources and they are used effectively to further the aims of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The resources are accessible to the children and this encourages independence. This has a positive impact on their learning. However, the setting does not use the outside area effectively.

The support of outside agencies has ensured better consistency, good standards and better provision. However, securing improvements through strategic planning and development priorities is not established. The setting requires significant support from outside agencies to develop further. The management committee is not successful in developing the staff, allocating important roles and responsibilities and ensuring that the strategies to improve are effective.

While the children achieve positive outcomes, the setting provides adequate value for money, because of the important areas for improvement that relate to the leadership and management.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Nicholas Jones	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>

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.