



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Cylch Garden City
Sealand Youth Centre
Sandy Lane
Garden City
CH5 2JH

Date of inspection: January 2016

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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Context

Cylch Meithrin Garden City is a Welsh-medium setting, which meets in Sealand Youth Centre, in Flintshire local authority. The setting has been in operation since 2013 and provides morning and afternoon sessions, Monday to Friday. It is registered to take up to 19 children per session. There are currently 16 children on roll, ranging in age from two to three years old. There are currently two three-year-old children receiving funded early years education in the setting. The session also works in partnership with Flying Start and Mudiad Meithrin.

Nearly all children have English as their home language. At the time of the inspection there were no children identified with additional learning needs. The setting employs two members of staff, including the leader. Both are experienced in working with young children and are suitably qualified. The leader has been in post since September 2015.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in July 2015. This is the first time it has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is adequate because:

- practitioners create a welcoming and calm atmosphere and children enjoy their time at the setting
- they know the children well and manage their behaviour positively
- practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to learn to eat healthily and to enjoy fresh air and exercise
- good-quality resources are plentiful and the learning environment is attractive

However

- planning is insufficiently focused to match individual needs and abilities closely
- there is not enough structure to support children's Welsh language development
- the safety of the small grassed area outside needs swift attention

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- practitioners are committed to the well-being of the children
- they have a positive attitude towards professional development and training
- leaders ensure a wide variety of resources are available to support teaching and learning
- parents are supportive of the setting

However:

- strategic partnerships are not wholly effective in providing the setting with a clear sense of direction
- the self-evaluation plan does not outline clear targets and processes for ongoing improvement
- monitoring day-to-day practice in the setting is at an early stage of development and staff appraisal is not well established

Recommendations

- R1 plan learning experiences systematically to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning
- R2 improve planning to develop children's Welsh language skills
- R3 use assessment information more effectively to plan activities that meet the needs of individual's better
- R4 ensure that self-evaluation procedures are systematic, robust and based on monitoring of first hand evidence of teaching and learning
- R5 establish rigorous plans for improvement that focus on specific areas for development
- R6 work more effectively with key strategic partners to improve outcomes for children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress towards meeting these recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

No judgement

Standards: No judgement

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

Wellbeing: No judgement

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

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

Practitioners generally provide children with a variety of interesting experiences around themes such as autumn leaves or jungle animals. These activities contribute positively to children's happiness in the setting and their desire to learn.

The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Practitioners read stories to them regularly to help develop their listening and early reading skills and encourage them to practise their early writing skills by drawing shapes and using chalk outside. They provide suitable opportunities to count objects, for instance the animals in the sand tray and the number of large and small elephants they have cut out of magazines.

Practitioners provide children with suitable opportunities to learn about the world around them. For example, they encourage children to look at books and magazines about different kinds of elephants. However, practitioners do not ensure that activities are planned well enough to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning across the Foundation Phase curriculum. This is particularly the case in planning for children's language acquisition where practitioners are not confident in identifying what they need to do to extend and reinforce children's vocabulary and language patterns.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, for instance when identifying shapes and colours. Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their creative skills when painting, mark making and singing. They encourage children successfully to take part in role-play activities by planning valuable opportunities that focus on situations that are familiar to them. For example, children use oven gloves to remove hot meals out of the oven in the home corner.

The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to develop their cultural identity when they celebrate various festivals and enjoy stories written by well-known Welsh authors. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to learn about the world in which they live from visitors to the setting or from educational visits.

Teaching: Adequate

All practitioners have a suitable knowledge and understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. They interact warmly with children and show genuine care and affection for them. This builds children's self-confidence and nurtures a positive attitude to learning. Practitioners manage behaviour calmly and sensitively and as a result children enjoy their time at the setting.

Practitioners provide a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and ensure that both the indoor and outdoor environment is inviting and stimulating. All children have daily access to the outdoor area and are encouraged to enjoy the open air and dress appropriately for the cold weather. These experiences support and extend their physical development well. Activities are generally interesting and motivating. For example, children look for jungle animals in the sand and take turns in choosing the name of a song out of the Wizard's hat. However, a few activities lack purpose, and do not have enough focus on developing children's skills.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills when they are at work and play and practitioners ask suitably open-ended questions. However, activities do not always challenge individual children well enough or meet the needs of children who are sometimes working below expected levels.

Practitioners assess and track children's progress regularly. They record outcomes appropriately following their observations, which provides a useful profile of each child's development. Procedures are not always effective in identifying children's next steps in learning.

Practitioners, at the request of parents, report to parents and carers on children's development informally through daily discussions

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting makes good provision for children's health and wellbeing and implements good practice in terms of cleanliness after toileting and before eating. Practitioners encourage children to eat and drink healthy snacks and they have plenty of opportunities to be physically active and enjoy outdoor activities. They promote children's awareness of sustainability through recycling food after snack time.

Practitioners implement the setting's policy to promote positive behaviour consistently and effectively. All practitioners show respect and warmth towards the children and demonstrate care and sensitive support to boost their wellbeing and confidence.

There are appropriate opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development. For instance, during snack time children are encouraged to say 'thank you' and take turns to be 'Helpwr Heddiw' (Today's Helper). Practitioners enhance children's cultural awareness appropriately through storybooks and a variety of learning resources from different countries. Children's attendance at Christmas celebrations in one of its feeder primary schools, contributes positively to children's spiritual development.

There are currently no children with special educational needs. However, the setting has in place suitable policies that support children with additional learning needs. Practitioners have strategies in place to identify children's additional needs at an early stage and make appropriate use of the available specialist services to support them. However, these do not clarify how they will monitor children's development to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Practitioners carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that the setting is safe and secure for the children, however there are aspects of safety relating to the safety of the small open grassed area that have not been resolved. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet most requirements. However, one small grassed area remains to cause some concern.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners create a welcoming and family atmosphere, which enables all children to settle in quickly. All practitioners know each child well; show respect towards them and ensure that all children have equal access to all learning experiences. The setting has enough practitioners who are appropriately qualified to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The setting is secure and well maintained. The indoor space is appropriate and practitioners make the best possible use of the available space. Designated learning areas are attractive and appealing. A quiet carpeted area encourages children to listen to stories and look at books. A suitable mark making and painting areas supports children's writing skills well. The snack area is well organised and encourages children to socialise and enjoy their snacks.

The outdoor area has good variety of resources to promote children's physical development, such as climbing frames, water and sand troughs. Practitioners encourage children to use the outdoor area daily and this impacts positively on children's enjoyment in attending the playgroup. The setting does not plan enough opportunities for children to grow and care for their own plants.

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

The setting's leader and her team are dedicated to support and care for all children so that they feel safe, loved and happy. The new leader encourages and values teamwork, and ensures that all practitioners work together appropriately to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. She ensures that all practitioners understand the setting's objectives and support the clear focus on providing a caring ethos in which children are happy and enjoy their time at the setting.

The responsible person ensures that the statutory policies are in place and together with the leader manages the setting finances efficiently. However, monitoring day-to-day practice in the setting is at an early stage of development and staff appraisal is not well established. The management committee, is kept well informed about the setting's progress from its support officer.

Leaders pay suitable attention to local and national priorities. For example, they are beginning to focus on developing aspects of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and they place importance on children eating and drinking healthily. They have recently introduced many useful initiatives. For example, the leader has established a clear expectation on good behaviour, which is implemented sensitively. She has also introduced daily outdoor activities to improve children's physical skills and their wellbeing. However, many of these initiatives are relatively new and have not had time to impact on the quality of provision and children's overall standards.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

Formal self-evaluation is at a very early stage of development. The setting has taken on board many new ideas and ways of working in the short time that the new staffing arrangements came into effect. It is less successful, however, in identifying its own agenda for improvement. This is because formal self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement are new and practitioners have not had time to develop their understanding of their importance in making lasting and worthwhile improvements. The setting became affiliated to Y Mudiad Meithrin in January, 2015 and has not yet completed its first cycle of self-evaluation.

The current self-evaluation report lacks rigour and detail and focuses insufficiently on monitoring children's standards of achievement and the quality of provision and teaching. Although there is some link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation and the targets in the improvement plan, the priorities do not focus clearly on areas for improvement, particularly standards. Targets are not clearly identified and opportunities to review and evaluate what has been achieved are poor.

The setting actively seeks the views of parents about the quality of provision but does not involve all stakeholders in identifying what it does well and what it needs to do to improve.

Practitioners work hard and make a suitable effort to respond positively to the support and advice of the local authority and Y Mudiad Meithrin. They are keen to learn and develop professionally.

Partnership working: Adequate

The setting generally works successfully with a range of partners to enrich children's learning and wellbeing, such as, Flying Start and parents. The setting's ability to work purposefully with key partners such as Y Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority is developing appropriately. For example, it is beginning to work with the link teacher to improve planning and assessment and to engage parents in their children's learning. However, key strategic partners are not wholly effective in providing the setting with a clear sense of direction.

The partnership with parents and carers is developing well. Parents value the setting's open door policy and the opportunity to speak to staff regularly and appreciate their availability to discuss any concerns they may have. The prospectus is a concise document, which provides them with practical information about the setting before their children start. Practitioners ensure daily face-to-face communication with parents and carers and create a pleasant atmosphere, which visitors appreciate. The setting is beginning to create clear, precise ways of planning and assessing children's stages of development that involve parents in their children's learning.

Transition arrangements from home to setting are developing well. Partnership arrangements with feeder schools are developing acceptably although they are so inconsistencies and in some instances this is confined to a transfer of records. As a result, not all children are well prepared for their next step in education.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting has a good variety of relevant indoor and outdoor resources. Overall, the setting uses these appropriately to promote teaching and learning in line with the Foundation Phase curriculum. Resources are attractive, plentiful and accessible to the children. As a result, practitioners foster children's independence and interest in learning well.

Changes in staffing and leadership roles have led to inconsistencies in the quality of provision. However, staffing, resources and funding are now stable and practitioners are more aware of their roles and responsibilities. Practitioners have appropriate access to training, which ensures their skills and knowledge are up-to-date. The expertise of the staff is beginning to be used well and practitioners are working together efficiently as a team.

Appropriate systems are in place to manage the budget and to keep spending under review.

Practitioners have worked hard in a relatively short time to provide appropriate learning experiences and to ensure that children are happy and settled. However, many developments are new and are not embedded fully. As a result, there are shortcomings in planning, assessment and overall provision. Consequently, the setting provides adequate 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

Reporting inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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.wales)

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.