



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 Cwmbran
Two Locks Church
Two Locks Road
Two Locks
Cwmbran
NP44 7HG**

Date of inspection: June 2015

by

**Mr Eifion R Morgan
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 Cwmbran is a Welsh medium setting established in 1973. It serves the locality and is presently based in a church hall. All children come from English speaking homes and none speak Welsh.

The setting is an educational provider and supported by the Torfaen Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership.

The setting provides care for children between the ages of two and four years and educational provision for children from age three years on five mornings a week and two afternoons during term time. At present there are 24 children on the register.

On the Wednesday morning of the inspection there were 12 children present. This included three, three year olds, one of whom is funded. During the Thursday morning of the inspection, there were 16 children present, including five three year olds, one being funded.

The setting provides educational provision for children with additional learning needs and those from an ethnic background.

The setting is managed by an experienced and well qualified leader who has been in post for 12 years. She is supported by two qualified assistants. Both are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The setting also benefits from the help provided by a voluntary helper. All staff are Welsh learners.

The setting is recognised by the Mudiad Meithrin as a “Cylch da iawn”.

The setting was previously inspected by Estyn in May 2009 and by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in July 2013.

Summary

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

Current performance

Cylch Meithrin Cwmbbran's current performance is good because:

- children enjoy coming to the setting and settle in quickly;
- there is a welcoming, happy ethos;
- practitioners know the children very well and are caring towards them;
- all children's social skills develop well;
- the setting provides children with a worthwhile range of high quality learning experiences;
- relationships between staff and children are very good and based on mutual affection and respect; and
- effective arrangements are in place to ensure children eat and drink healthily and take regular exercise.

Prospects for improvement

Cylch Meithrin Cwmbbran's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader provides a clear sense of purpose for the setting;
- practitioners work effectively as a team and are committed to children's development and wellbeing;
- there is a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills;
- the setting is committed to improvement and is well supported by the local authority advisory teacher; and
- partnerships with professional services support children with specific needs.

Recommendations

R1. Further develop assessment procedures so as to clearly identify children's skill development and the next steps in their learning.

R2. Provide suitably differentiated work well matched to children's ability and prior achievements.

R3. Ensure in the planning of learning experiences that there is continuity and progression in children's learning.

R4. Develop practitioners' Welsh language skills.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	N/A
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Standards: N/A

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

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report upon without identifying individual children.

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

Practitioners plan collaboratively and effectively. The needs and interests of the children are discussed and planning is done on a weekly basis with the leader co-ordinating the learning experiences.

Weekly plans are in line with the requirements of the Foundation Phase in that all aspects of learning are incorporated with emphasis on developing children's communication and numeracy skills within a broad curriculum. There is good emphasis in developing children's independence and thinking skills. However, the planning does not indicate sufficiently clearly continuity and progression in children's learning.

This is a Welsh medium setting in an Anglicised community and practitioners strive to converse with children in the language. There are suitable opportunities for children to answer in Welsh and good opportunities for children to sing Welsh rhymes and partake in action songs. Stories are read to children in Welsh in group sessions. This is an effective way of developing the language. However, practitioners' Welsh language is underdeveloped.

Children have effective opportunities to learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations through activities such as celebrating St. David's day and Santes Dwynwen.

Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about other cultures and traditions through studying, for example, the Chinese new year. Children learn about Chinese customs and foods.

The setting makes effective use of the local community. Regular visits are made to the immediate locality and further afield, including visits to St. Fagans Welsh folk museum when children experience school life in the past. People who support them in the community, including the local police, fire fighters and nurse, visit the setting.

Children's understanding of the need to protect the environment is enhanced by growing plants. This includes growing and harvesting potatoes and eating strawberries grown in the setting's garden area.

Teaching: Good

The quality of relationships between practitioners and children is very good and is based on mutual affection and respect. Practitioners have high expectations of the children and this is very largely realised in practice. Staff use a wide range of strategies to deliver stimulating learning experiences for the children based on the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those activities initiated by the children. Children are allowed worthwhile opportunities to work independently and to develop their thinking skills but are never left without meaningful activities. Practitioners use questioning well to probe children's understanding and to develop the English and Welsh language. This results in children developing a good vocabulary.

Teaching sessions proceed at a lively pace and this ensures that children are kept interested and motivated.

There are effective arrangements in place to assess children. At regular intervals children are assessed when undertaking a specific focused activity. Attractive individual child profiles also contain examples of work undertaken by each child. Overall, the assessment record provides a clear picture of each child's achievements over time. Practitioners know the children well and have a good understanding of their ability and achievement. However, records of children's work are not always annotated to indicate the skill level achieved. The next steps in children's learning are, in some instances, identified but these steps are not sufficiently detailed and planned activities are not sufficiently differentiated to take into account children's differing ages and ability.

Children are given opportunities to evaluate their work and this is highly effective in raising their confidence and awareness of their achievement. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through informal contact and reports.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting's arrangements for the care, support and guidance of children impact successfully on the standards achieved by the children and their wellbeing.

Learning experiences promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development positively. The setting uses snack time well to encourage children to take responsibility, to share and to respect each other's wishes. Children also realise that washing their hands is important before eating and after visiting the toilet. Children are beginning to learn the importance of healthy goods, know the importance of exercise and of brushing their teeth after eating. Overall, snack time also gives children excellent opportunities to develop their social skills.

Day-to-day activities successfully develop children's concept of honesty, fairness and an understanding of what is right and wrong. Overall, children have evolved a highly effective behaviour framework to which they invariably adhere.

Children's curiosity about the world is enhanced through studies of other countries that they visit on holiday.

Children's understanding of sustainability is developing appropriately. Paper and cardboard is collected for recycling or re-use. Children grow seeds and plants and care for them. Potatoes are grown from "seed" and strawberries grown in the setting's garden area. In due course these vegetables and fruit form part of the snack time diet.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for promoting and safeguarding children and to ensure their wellbeing. Policies and procedures are in place and all practitioners know their responsibilities and action to take if required. Overall, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Risk assessments are completed appropriately.

Highly effective arrangements are in place to support children with additional learning needs. The leader's experiences enable her to identify children with needs at a very early stage and she has contact with a wide range of local professional services so that such children receive specialist help very soon. Individual education plans are provided for such children in consultation with the specialist agencies and these are regularly reviewed. The setting keeps regular records of the child's achievements. Parents are fully involved at each stage and are very appreciate of the setting's support.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a welcoming, happy community where everyone, both staff and children are treated with respect. Children are well cared for and supported and individual needs recognised. It is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all learning experiences. Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies with the result that children accept good behaviour as the expected norm.

The setting has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced staff who, during the inspection, were well supported by a voluntary helper. All are well able to deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum successfully.

There is an ample supply of age appropriate resources of good quality. Activity areas are well defined and provide children with a comprehensive range of challenging activities. They are well used by the children. There is immediate access to a well resourced outside area which is used purposefully by the children.

The building and outside area are safe and activities are well integrated into the planned curriculum. Good use is made of children's work to enhance the learning environment and this is supplemented by Welsh words and phrases predominantly displayed. Practitioners made good use of the local community for visits and members of the community visit the setting.

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

The setting is effectively led and managed by an experienced practitioner. Her clear vision and commitment is evident and is conveyed to her staff and recognised by parents. Practitioners work successfully as a team showing a strong commitment to providing worthwhile education for the children. They all share common values and demonstrate a strong commitment to their roles. Clear direction and teamwork ensure that sessions run smoothly and children benefit from a purposeful learning environment.

Staff have regular and minuted staff meetings and together with informal discussion, enable priorities for improvement to be identified. Improvements are well focused on raising children's standards of achievement and addressing their needs.

The leader does not have the benefit of a management committee. Whilst parents are very satisfied with the setting and appreciate the progress their children are making, there is total reluctance to be involved in the management of the setting. Consequently the leader essentially undertakes all administrative arrangements and does not benefit from having a parental body that would provide her and the setting with a critical appraisal or help.

Overall, the working of the setting revolves around the leader and its current success is a testament to her commitment. Her colleagues give her good support and all are committed to provide the best possible provision for the children. Performance management processes are in place and specific training needs identified. Staff work effectively and professionally and are eager to take advantage of opportunities for professional development.

The leader pays good attention to local and national priorities and focuses strongly on developing children's literacy, numeracy and children's wellbeing.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has a clear understanding of the strengths of the setting and areas for development. Practitioners work closely together, sharing ideas and searching for ways to improve. Staff meetings are held regularly and the feedback from staff is used constructively by the leader. The views of parents are sought through a questionnaire. The setting has produced a detailed and comprehensive self-evaluation document based on the Estyn framework. This includes a statement on standards, the evidence base and the priorities for improvement.

Plans for improvements are costed and undertaken when funds allow. A recent grant for improving part of the outside play area has been beneficial in allowing an area for children to develop their gross motor skills.

The ongoing need to improve practitioners Welsh language competence is recognised and staff are anxious to improve their competence. Unfortunately, local Welsh language courses are no longer available in the locality.

Partnership working: Good

Partnerships established by the setting make an important and worthwhile contribution to the quality of provision and to children's achievement and wellbeing.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the setting. They are provided with relevant information about the setting before their child begins to attend, have easy access when bringing their child to the setting and receive regular reports. Children benefit from the close relationships between staff and parents and carers. Parents, during discussion with the inspector, highlighted worthwhile aspects including children's social development and language competence. Unfortunately however, parents are reluctant to become involved and this in spite of efforts by the staff and the Mudiad Meithrin development officer who met all the parents individually.

The setting has valuable links with Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbran. Children visit the school for concerts during Christmas time and make use of some school resources when required. The setting also provides "wrap around" care for four year olds attending the school on a part time basis. This has a beneficial effect in that younger children meet those who have gone ahead on a regular basis. This makes the transition experience less formidable for the children.

Partnership with the local authority advisory teacher is very effective and the setting appreciate greatly her advice and support. The Mudiad Meithrin has undertaken a review of staffing and the current development officer has only recently begun her

involvement. Prior to this the Mudiad Meithrin has been supportive. The need to improve practitioners Welsh language skills is recognised.

Very good links are in place with the local authority multi-disciplinary agencies to provide support for the setting. Links with the community are good and visitors include the police, fire service and a nurse.

The setting is based in a local church hall and enjoys a good relationship with the church management group.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and meets the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners are effective in providing for children's wellbeing and development. Staff are effectively deployed and perform well as a team taking responsibility for different aspects of the provision.

The setting is suitably resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase and to support the teaching. Resources are accessible to the children. The building and external area are well maintained.

The leader has a clear understanding of the budget and expenditure decisions are prioritised in line with the needs of the setting. Grant aid has been used to good effect. The accounts are audited annually.

Considering the efficient use of funds, the learning experiences provided for the children and the care and guidance provided, 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

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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.