



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pontrobert
The Community Hall
Pontrobert
Meifod
Powys
SY22 6JB**

Date of inspection: November 2015

by

**Nicholas Jones
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 Pontrobert is a Welsh medium setting in the village of Pontrobert, near Meifod, in the Powys local authority. It meets in the village's community hall. The setting is open for three mornings of the week. The setting has two members of full time staff.

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

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

The leader began her post in April 2010. The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in March 2014 and by Estyn in September 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because of the:

- Thorough planning of learning experiences
- Interesting curriculum, which supports all the children
- Effective teaching and assessment practices
- Diligent care of the children
- Broad range of resources available
- Positive relationship between adults and children
- Staff's willingness to co-operate effectively with outside agencies, which contributes purposefully to the setting's success.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because of the:

- Effective provision and clear direction to the setting's work by the leader and staff
- Positive and active attitudes towards staff development and training
- Purposeful self-evaluation practices and improvement plans
- Efficient use of effective support lines
- Active and supportive management committee

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that introductions to tasks are timed effectively in order to maintain children's interests
- R2 Improve the outdoor gardening areas

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?

Not applicable

Standards: Not applicable

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 individual children.

Wellbeing: Not applicable

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 individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is planned well. The planning meets the philosophy of the Foundation Phase effectively. The curriculum builds purposefully on children's previous knowledge and experiences. Interesting opportunities are available for all children to develop their skills across the curriculum. Valuable time is set on a weekly basis for staff to meet and plan the curriculum. These preparations provide children with useful and purposeful activities. The flexible curriculum is stimulating, resourced well and linked to children's interests.

Positive opportunities are included in the setting's daily work in order for the children to develop their self-confidence as independent learners. Although specific activities are planned, children are free to choose their own tasks and activities. Challenging activities are provided for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy, physical development and creativity. This is done through interesting activities when painting, experimenting with sand and bubbles and driving around boisterously on different types of large toys. Most adults communicate effectively with the children in Welsh.

Provision for developing children's information technology skills is good. The staff direct children regularly to use the information and communication technology (ICT) equipment such as a computer, a tablet, tills and calculators that challenge individuals sensibly. Children have many opportunities to develop their thinking skills through challenging activities, which involve role playing in the shop, experimenting with glue and glitter and mark making with pens, paints and pencils.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enhance children's learning experiences successfully. For example, visits to the local shop and the village's park add interest to the curriculum, which develops and extends the children's experiences effectively. Visitors, which include dental nurses and officials from wildlife organisations, affect children's learning experiences positively.

Suitable emphasis is placed on Welsh traditions and celebrations, such as celebrating Saint David's Day. There are many opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and traditions. For example, children participate in activities related to different foods and musical instruments from across the world. They celebrate the Chinese New year, Diwali and study stories from Africa, which develops their understanding of the wider world and their awareness of global citizenship well.

Teaching: Good

Staff have a firm practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a very positive relationship between all staff and children. Staff have an active role when planning the curriculum and the best use is made of their expertise. All staff teach purposefully, however, at times, introductions to tasks and explanations of activities are not timed effectively in order to maintain the children's interest.

The system of sharing duties is established well, which means that staff co-operate effectively and share information about children regularly. There is a good balance between activities that are chosen by children and those directed by adults. All children have the freedom to choose between activities that are led by adults or to work independently.

Staff model Welsh well and use questioning effectively to develop children's thinking and communication skills. Staff encourage children successfully to evaluate their work as they discuss a story, fill buckets and pots with sand, chase bubbles, decorate pine cones with glue and glitter and create a collage using different shapes. Staff provide an interesting environment that ensures that all children take part and enjoy themselves. They are very positive as children arrive and they continue with this enthusiasm throughout the sessions.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are completed effectively and efficiently. Daily assessments lead, in detail, directly to individual children's targets. This is a positive, well managed and diligent process. Parents and carers are informed very well about their children's achievements. Information is available to them at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting ensures that children's health and wellbeing is good. It provides positive opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. 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 politely when eating fruit and toast and having a drink of milk or water around the dining table. The setting has the appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

Good opportunities are available on site for the children to recycle food, paper and plastic bottles. This begins to develop their understanding of sustainability effectively. The setting grows flowers and vegetables in pots in the outdoor area. This practice is currently adequate, however a growing area is being developed in the nearby park, which is managed by an association related to the school. As a result, children are beginning to learn about how plants grow and how to care for the environment.

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

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The setting is safe, 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. The adults enter the building and the staff ensure that the children are in the care of their parents or a familiar carer before anyone leaves.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that individuals that are suspected of needing additional support are identified. Staff discuss these with appropriate agencies. The leader is the additional learning needs co-ordinator. She is very familiar with the necessary procedures in order to support children who have special needs.

Learning environment: Good

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

The setting uses its resources successfully both in the building and outdoors to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Children are encouraged to move freely around the hall and participate in activities in all the areas of learning. Resources are accessible to children, which promotes the children's sense of responsibility well. Resources are shared effectively between continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enrich the learning.

The outdoor area is organised well in a very confined area. The staff use the resources sensibly and make best use of the space available. The use of the school yard for boisterous activities, such as riding bikes, is effective. Although there are pots available, the opportunities for children to grow plants are not stimulating, however a growing area is currently being developed near the setting.

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

Staff understand their roles fully and co-operate well as a team. They use the guidance of external agencies such as the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin sensibly. This practice ensures the best use of their expertise. The leader, staff and management committee plan purposefully to provide interesting experiences for the children.

The improvement plan is a useful document. Clear priorities for improvement are identified through sound self-evaluation procedures. Good processes are in place to ensure that resources are available to meet the improvement objectives. Staff receive relevant and appropriate training that includes visits to observe good practice in other settings. This has a good effect on the quality of provision.

The management committee leads and monitors effectively. It gives good consideration to legislation and its management systems meet requirements. The setting gives good consideration to national priorities, such as implementing the Foundation Phase and the framework for literacy and numeracy.

Improving quality: Good

The leaders and staff know the setting well. They know what they are doing successfully and what they need to do to improve. The setting self-evaluates well. It ensures effective links between the self-evaluation and the improvement plan's targets.

Appropriate targets include improving number skills and the children's knowledge of shapes, improving children's ICT skills and roles of the management committee. The setting evaluates areas for improvement effectively against responsibilities and timescales in the improvement plan. There is sound evidence of helpful evaluations from all who are connected to the setting, such as parents and external agencies, which benefits the setting's development.

Staff are keen to accept new ideas and to experiment with different ways of working, suggested by the local authority's advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin. For example, the local authority's recommendations on how to improve the planning of literacy and numeracy, have affected the quality of the learning experiences and teaching well. This has a positive effect on children's learning and wellbeing.

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, parents feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Links with the school are very well established and the setting is involved in the daily life of the school, using the school yard and the nearby park for boisterous activities and nature walks to collect pine cones. Staff from the school also visit the setting on a weekly basis to use computer programs with the children and to read and act out stories with them. The school's headteacher is very supportive of the setting, which enhances the positive relationship between the setting's staff and the school.

The support provided by the Mudiad Meithrin benefits the setting well. The willing co-operation between the setting and the local authority is beneficial to the setting's development. The advice and suggestions help to move the setting forward and contribute to purposeful provision and effective leadership.

Resource management: Good

The leadership is challenging and it aims consistently to improve every aspect of the setting's work. Resources are managed sensibly to support learning and improvements at the setting. The leader and management committee ensure that the setting has sufficient staff with appropriate qualifications and training.

Staff are used effectively to present a broad and engaging curriculum, which support children's achievements successfully. Staff work together efficiently and diligently. They set up stimulating areas of learning for the children on a daily basis. The resources, which include effective ICT equipment, are of good quality and are accessible to the children.

In light of the effective provision, the diligent staff, the supportive management committee and the purposeful leadership, 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 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.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 child minders 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.