



*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 Aberbanc  
Ysgol Gymunedol Aberbanc  
Aberbanc  
Llandysul  
Ceredigion  
SA14 5NP**

**Date of inspection: 25 September, 2012**

**by**

**Dorothy Morris**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Aberbanc is accommodated in a classroom in the local primary school. It relocated to its current base in 2009. The children who attend the setting come from a wide area and transfer to primary schools in the locality. It is judged that the area is neither affluent nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age for five mornings a week during term time. It is open between 9:00 and 12:00 in the mornings. During the inspection, there were five three year old children on the register in receipt of funding from Ceredigion Children's Partnership. Most children come from homes where English is the main language spoken. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or children with additional learning needs in the current cohort.

A full time leader and two part time practitioners cater for children's learning. They are all experienced practitioners and hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. At present, they are supported by a student in training. The setting leader was appointed to her post in 2007.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in October 2005 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in May 2011.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- the children make good progress from their starting points;
- the children are actively involved in their learning;
- the teaching is good;
- a wide range of valuable activities is provided with a few examples of very good quality;
- the learning environment is stimulating, interesting and colourful; and
- the children are well supported in a warm, inclusive atmosphere.

## Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the lead practitioner's effective leadership which offers the setting purposeful direction;
- good teamwork;
- the practitioners' commitment to children's educational and personal development;
- evidence of development and improvement over many years; and
- the productive use of a range of partnerships which support the learning.

## Recommendations

In order to develop, the setting needs to:

R1 build on the good practice to extend children's Welsh literacy skills further;

R2 develop the planning framework and make greater use of assessment information to plan the next stages in the learning; and

R3 develop the management committee's role further.

## What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

The practitioners plan a wide range of valuable activities which consistently engage children's interest. Activities are based on a series of themes which are suitable to the children's age range. Children are offered regular opportunities to contribute to the planning. There is constructive use of curricular frameworks to plan the general provision, and the listing of opportunities to develop specific skills linked to the current theme is an effective feature. The practitioners make increasing use of the new local authority framework to plan particular tasks across the areas of learning.

The provision offers good opportunities to develop children's communication, number and broader skills through the daily experiences provided. There is very effective use of stimuli, such as the story of the Three Little Pigs, to promote children's personal and social skills, early communication skills and their mathematical skills. There is good attention to developing children's investigative and creative skills through practical experiences including those in the outdoor areas. This includes the good opportunities to study the features of autumn by investigating the colours and patterns in the trees and plants around them. There is very good use of art to develop children's skills and understanding across the curriculum.

Welsh is the natural medium of the setting's life and work. The practitioners communicate effectively with the children during activities and utilise all opportunities to introduce new vocabulary. Children are encouraged to contribute fully to the activities but their use of their Welsh communication skills is uneven. Children are introduced effectively to the traditions and celebrations of Wales including celebrating St. David's Day. There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about other people's cultures and traditions through activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment very effectively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. The opportunities to grow and care for plants, feed the birds, visit a fruit shop and involvement in recycling and composting activities promote children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things.

There is good use of visits and activities in the community to support children's learning. They include visits to a train station, wool museum, cafe and library.

**Teaching: Good**

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and they offer experiences which ensure children's active involvement in their learning. There is effective use of a range of teaching methods, and a good balance

between individual and group work. Activities are prepared in detail and there is good use of resources to support the teaching and learning. The lead practitioner supplements the resources by creating purposeful booklets for the children such as the booklet 'Come and build.' The practitioners offer children consistent support and they participate eagerly in the activities. Session routines operate smoothly.

The practitioners know the children well and use suitable processes to assess and record their progress. They observe children's responses during activities and record any significant features. Nevertheless, the information collected is not used fully to plan the next stages in the learning. Parents are kept appropriately informed about their children's progress through informal discussions at the beginning and end of sessions and through suitable written reports. The lead practitioner discusses their child's report with the parents. A transfer form is completed appropriately and forwarded to the relevant primary school.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

There are effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. The setting is a caring community with a family atmosphere which contributes significantly to children's wellbeing. The induction arrangements, together with the daily contact with parents, ensure that children settle quickly into the setting.

There are appropriate processes to support children with additional learning needs, when required, and clear communication links with specialist services. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The practitioners have received training and are aware of the requirements. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly.

Learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness, kindness and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, are promoted effectively through the curriculum and daily activities. Experiences, such as celebrating thanksgiving and Christmas, contribute towards children's spiritual development. Opportunities to participate in small concerts for parents and members of the community contribute further to their social development.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to the curriculum and to all the learning experiences provided. The practitioners consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately.

The setting has sufficient experienced practitioners to deliver the curriculum. There is effective use of individual skills and interests in leading and supporting activities.

The indoor and outdoor environment motivates and supports the teaching and learning very effectively. There is very good use of the learning space available by locating a variety of activity areas around the classroom. Practitioners succeed in

creating a warm, stimulating environment by displaying children's work and creating colourful displays to reflect the themes being studied. There is purposeful use of the outdoor areas which offer good opportunities for children to investigate and play. The good supply of resources in the setting, and resources in the community, are used fully to support the learning.

<b>How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The sound and enthusiastic leadership of the lead practitioner succeeds in creating a purposeful and organised environment for children. Practitioners understand their roles, which leads to good teamwork. Their core aims and values are based on promoting children's all round development. Policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.

The management committee offers the setting ready support. Members take a keen interest in the setting and work hard to raise funds. The committee meets regularly and the minutes kept are used as a basis for further planning. The committee's role in evaluating the general provision and in forward planning continues to develop. There is an appropriate system in place to appraise the work of the practitioners.

The practitioners give suitable attention to national and local priorities including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum, promoting children's language skills and establishing effective links with the primary school.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The lead practitioner has a good understanding of the setting's main strengths and of some areas for development. The practitioners hold regular discussions and are open to new ideas to develop the provision further.

With the support of the local authority advisory teacher, the lead practitioner has undertaken a balanced evaluation of the provision. The improvement plan produced as a result notes suitable areas for improvement. The practitioners have begun to implement the plan and note appropriate observations on the progress made.

Aspects of provision are regularly monitored by the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. Areas for development are agreed and effective strategies are implemented which are improving provision. The views of parents are sought appropriately through discussion and through questionnaires.

The lead practitioner has extensive experience of working with young children and during this period has received training on a wide range of aspects on the education and care of young children. There is effective use of the training received. The

other practitioners attend appropriate courses and a further training programme is in place. Training days offer practitioners relevant opportunities to discuss and share ideas with others.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a number of strategic partnerships that make an effective contribution to the quality of the provision and to children's development. The setting's aims and objectives are shared with their partners.

There is a good partnership with parents and this was confirmed during the inspection. Parents are offered relevant information through pamphlets, newsletters and the notice board in the foyer. Practitioners are regularly available for discussion at the beginning and end of sessions.

The close partnership with the registered person, the management committee, the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer support the setting's work.

The links with the local community impact effectively on children's learning. There is beneficial use of visits to extend children's experiences and of the links with local agencies and organisations to support fund raising activities. The positive links with the primary school offer good opportunities for practitioners and children to access the educational resources available on the school site.

### **Resource management: Good**

Resources are managed effectively. The setting is staffed appropriately and there is productive use of the practitioners' time and skills. The good range of learning resources is used fully. The building and grounds are well maintained.

The lead practitioner and treasurer have a good understanding of the budget and prioritise spending according to the setting's needs. There is regular use of fundraising events and of grants to supplement resources. The setting offers good value for money.



## Appendix 1

### Responses to parent questionnaires

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

### Responses to discussions with the children

The children state that they are happy in the setting and enjoy playing with their friends and taking part in all the activities.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Dorothy Morris

Reporting Inspector

### Copies of the report:

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.
<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.

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September 2012