



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 Hermon
Community Resource Centre
The Old School
Hermon
Pembrokeshire
SA37 0DT**

Date of inspection: 1 October, 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:

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 Hermon is accommodated in a room in the Community Resource Centre in the village of Hermon near Crymych, Pembrokeshire. On completion of the building programme, the setting will move to another area in the centre with new facilities and outdoor play areas.

The setting was established in 1984 and the children who attend live in the village and the immediate area. It is judged that the area is neither affluent nor economically and socially disadvantaged. Following their time in the setting, the children continue with their education in local primary schools.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age for four mornings a week during term time. It is open between 9:00 and 11:30. During the inspection, there were five three year old children on the register in receipt of funding from Pembrokeshire Children's Partnership. Around half the children come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. There are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or children with additional learning needs in the current cohort.

The setting is staffed by a full time leader and three part-time practitioners. During the inspection, a temporary practitioner undertook one of the part-time posts. Most practitioners are experienced and hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. The setting leader was appointed to her post in January 2012 and the other practitioners in April 2012.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in November 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in May 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- most children make consistent progress from their starting points;
- most children have good attitudes to learning and take an active part in their learning;
- a range of interesting activities is provided;
- the teaching is good on the whole; and
- the children are supported effectively in an inclusive environment.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the lead practitioner's conscientious leadership;
- the good teamwork;
- evidence of development and improvement;
- the sound commitment of the new management committee; and
- the productive use of a range of partnerships which support children's learning.

Recommendations

In order to develop, the setting needs to:

- R1 structure tasks further to extend children's skills, particularly the older children's Welsh literacy skills and their information communications and technology skills;
- R2 amend the organisation of the session to offer a better balance between activities;
- R3 extend the opportunities for practitioners to develop their knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum;
- R4 build on the practitioners' knowledge of self-evaluation processes and of planning improvements; and

R5 continue to develop the management committee's role.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The progress made will be monitored by the local authority.

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.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

The practitioners offer children a range of activities across the areas of learning. The general planning follows the local authority framework and reflects the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Activities are based on a series of themes which are appropriate for the children's age range. Session activities run smoothly. Nevertheless, there is insufficient balance between the different activities provided during the session.

There is appropriate attention to promoting children's communication, number and broader learning skills through the daily provision. Activities are thoroughly prepared. They are not always structured sufficiently, however, to extend children's skills particularly the older children's Welsh communication skills and their information and communications technology skills.

Welsh is the natural medium of the setting's life and work. There are suitable opportunities for children to listen to stories, look at books, discuss topics, sing songs and rhymes and use their marking skills. The practitioners communicate constantly with the children during activities. Nevertheless, there is insufficient attention to reinforcing vocabulary and basic sentence patterns regularly.

Children are introduced effectively to the traditions and celebrations of Wales including celebrating St. David's Day. There are some opportunities for children to

learn about other people's cultures and traditions through activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year. The opportunities to taste and discuss foods from other countries and to learn about different clothes contribute appropriately to raising their awareness of the wider world.

The setting provides suitable opportunities for children to learn about the importance of caring for the environment and all living things. They include opportunities to grow and care for plants with the support of a local gardener and to participate in recycling and composting activities.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They make appropriate use of different teaching approaches and of resources to guide and support the learning. There is a good focus on providing opportunities for children to be actively involved in their learning. The practitioners participate in the activities enthusiastically and use questions consistently to encourage children to contribute. They establish a close working relationship with the children and use praise and encouragement effectively.

The practitioners know the children well and can discuss their development effectively. They observe children's responses consistently and record any significant features. The lead practitioner has a secure knowledge of the observations gathered but the use of this information in planning the next stages in the learning continues to develop. Parents are kept suitably informed about their children's progress through informal discussions at the beginning and end of sessions and through written reports. An information 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. Good attention is given to promoting their understanding of the importance of washing hands, using tools safely and behaving responsibly. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle well into the setting. The practitioners are caring and supportive of all the children.

There are suitable arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs when required, and there are clear lines of communication with key agencies.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The practitioners have received appropriate training. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly.

The learning experiences promote children's personal development consistently including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness and kindness, and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered effectively through the curriculum and day-to-day activities. Experiences, such as offering a prayer before snacks and thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, enhance children's spiritual development.

There is good use of visits, the contribution of visitors and activities in the community to extend children's social skills and to develop their knowledge of the community. As part of the current theme, 'people who help us', the children have visited a bakery, fire station and police station and have received visits from the nurse and postman to talk about their work.

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. They succeed in creating a warm and friendly environment for each child.

The setting has sufficient practitioners and most have appropriate qualifications and experience. The current accommodation and facilities are adequate. There is full use of the learning space available by locating a variety of activity areas around the classroom. There is effective use of the resources available to support the learning and teaching. The range of resources, in mathematics and language for example, is more limited. This is included appropriately as a target in the setting's improvement plan.

The outdoor play areas are used regularly to provide a wide range of physical and creative experiences. There is suitable use of the village playing field, which includes large apparatus, to extend children's skills.

How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

Under the conscientious leadership of the lead practitioner, the setting succeeds in creating a positive ethos for staff, children and parents. The practitioners understand their roles and work closely as a team. They share core values in relation to children's learning, behaviour and development, and are open to new ideas to improve the provision further. Policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.

The new management committee offers the setting ready support and is committed to its further development. The committee meets regularly and the minutes kept are used as a basis for further planning. Members are developing their understanding of their responsibilities but their role in evaluating the general provision and in forward planning is at an early stage of development. The officers undertake their duties effectively. 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 Welsh language skills and establishing effective links with the local primary schools.

Improving quality: Adequate

The lead practitioner has an appropriate understanding of the setting's main strengths and of some areas for development. Since her appointment, she has successfully introduced improvements in aspects of the provision such as essential documentation. The practitioners hold regular discussions but their knowledge of more structured self-evaluation and planning processes continues to develop. The process of completing the self-evaluation report has been a useful exercise. The report notes some of the setting's strengths but does not evaluate all aspects sufficiently. The improvement plan includes relevant targets but is limited in detail.

Aspects of provision are regularly monitored by the local authority link teachers and areas for development are agreed. Purposeful strategies are implemented which are improving provision. Aspects of provision are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin officer. The views of parents are sought appropriately through discussion and through questionnaires.

The practitioners have received training on the development and care of young children and more recently have attended suitable courses on the Foundation Phase curriculum. There is appropriate use of the training received. There are some opportunities for practitioners to discuss and share ideas with other settings including training days.

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 they are offered relevant information through the notice board, meetings and newsletters. Parents appreciate the setting's open door policy and the daily opportunities to meet the practitioners.

The close partnership with the management committee, the local authority link teachers and the Mudiad Meithrin officer supports the setting's work. A beneficial link is developing with a neighbouring setting in planning and sharing celebrations such as the recent Jubilee celebration. The positive links established with the primary schools promote a smooth transition for children to the next stage in their education. The links with the local community impact effectively on children's learning.

Resource management: Good

Resources are managed effectively. The setting is staffed appropriately and there is productive use of the practitioners' time and experience. There are sufficient basic learning resources. The building and current play areas are maintained appropriately.

The lead practitioner and treasurer have a secure understanding of the budget and the management committee prioritises 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.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dorothy Morris	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.)</p> <p>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	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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.
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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.
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.

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Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.
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