



*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 Llansteffan  
Y Caban  
Llanstephan Primary School  
Llanstephan  
Carmarthenshire  
SA33 5LN**

**Date of inspection: 5 December, 2011**

**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 school'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

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2012: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.**

## Context

Cylch Meithrin Llansteffan is based in a portacabin on the primary school site. Most of the children who attend the setting live in the village and the surrounding areas. The area is described as neither advantaged nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children aged two and three years old for four sessions a week during school terms. It meets between 9:15 and 11:45 in the mornings. During the inspection, there were three three year olds in attendance. English is the main language spoken in the homes of most children. There are currently no children from ethnic minority backgrounds or children with additional learning needs in the cohort. The setting admits children with additional learning needs and appropriate support arrangements are in place.

There are two members of staff. The setting is in the care of a very experienced lead practitioner and there is one other full time member of staff. They hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. The setting received its most recent inspection by Estyn in March 2004 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in July 2011.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- the children are happy and enjoy the learning experiences provided;
- activities are carefully planned and prepared;
- the children receive good care within an inclusive learning environment;
- there is a very good relationship between the children and the practitioners;
- there are committed practitioners who fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

## Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the lead practitioner's effective management;
- the good team work;
- the successful focus on improving provision;
- the practitioners' commitment to children's educational and personal development;
- the good support provided by the management committee and parents;
- the effective collaboration with the primary school.

## Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

- R1 refine the planning to extend the older children's learning skills progressively;
- R2 introduce Welsh sentence patterns more consistently to strengthen children's communication skills;
- R3 extend the opportunities for children to work more independently;
- R4 extend the practitioners' knowledge of self-evaluation processes and skills.

### ***What happens next?***

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to 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>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

**Learning experiences: Good**

The practitioners provide a range of relevant activities which gain children's interest. Activities are carefully planned across the six areas of learning. There is a consistent focus on promoting children's learning skills, which are integrated effectively within the planned themes and experiences. Nevertheless, there is not always sufficient attention to ensuring that the older children's skills are extended progressively.

The practitioners make good use of the indoor and outdoor environment to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. The experience of growing and caring for plants, and visits to a pet shop develop children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about the wider world by discussing photographs of people from other countries and some of their celebrations such as the Chinese New Year.

There is consistent encouragement for children to develop and use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. Nevertheless, there is not a sufficient focus on regularly introducing basic sentence patterns. The practitioners develop children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales through appropriate activities which include celebrating St. David's day, St. Dwynwen's day and cooking Welsh dishes. They are also introduced to the celebrations of other cultures such as the festival of Divali.

**Teaching: Good**

The practitioners succeed in creating a happy and supportive learning environment for all the children. They have a developing knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They plan the provision together effectively which ensures that activities are prepared and organised in detail. A range of teaching approaches is used appropriately and includes individual, small group and whole group activities. There is good attention to ensuring relevant resources to promote the learning. Nevertheless, the opportunities for children to work independently are more limited. Practitioners communicate effectively with children. They succeed in creating a close relationship which encourages children to contribute and enjoy.

The practitioners know the children very well and regularly assess and record their progress. Parents are kept informed about their children's achievements, wellbeing

and development through informal discussion at the beginning and end of sessions and through an appropriate written report. In addition, parents have the opportunity to attend one session a term to observe the provision, speak with the practitioners and discuss their children's work. Samples of each child's work are compiled into a booklet which is a useful record of their development. Transfer forms are completed appropriately and forwarded to the primary school.

During activities, the practitioners observe well and offer children of all ability suitable support. The children's early assessment skills are developed through daily opportunities to offer a simple opinion about the activities they enjoy. Children have short term targets which are reviewed appropriately.

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

The setting is a caring community. Appropriate policies and arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing are implemented. The induction arrangements, alongside the daily contact with parents, ensure that children settle well into the setting. The children are happy in the setting and comfortable in the adults' company. There are clear expectations which promote good behaviour.

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. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken of the site.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Experiences, such as offering a prayer before snack, thanksgiving celebrations and the work on the Christmas story, contribute effectively to children's spiritual development. The opportunities to perform in concerts alongside the primary school pupils contribute further to their social development.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where children receive equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners succeed in creating a homely and welcoming atmosphere for children and their parents. They consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond effectively in line with this information. There is an appropriate ratio of practitioners to children.

The space within the portacabin is used fully to provide a range of purposeful activity areas. The learning environment is enhanced by displaying children's work and creating colourful displays to reflect current themes. There is regular use of the outdoor areas which include a small garden and an area which provides suitable opportunities for children to investigate and play. This area is shared with the primary school. There is a sufficient supply of resources and there is good use of the local environment, such as the beach, to support the learning. Storage facilities are limited, and the quality of hand washing facilities for children is adequate.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
--

<b>Good</b>
-------------

### **Leadership: Good**

There are very good features to the daily management of the setting. The secure 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.

The management committee offers the setting effective support. The officers take a keen interest in the setting and work closely with the lead practitioner. They are regular visitors and demonstrate a secure knowledge of the provision made.

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. Suitable procedures to appraise their work and identify further professional development needs are implemented.

### **Improving quality: Good**

The practitioners have a secure understanding of the setting's main strengths. They discuss and are open to new ideas to improve the provision further. Overall, the evaluation processes used are more informal in nature. The self-evaluation report and improvement plan completed prior to the inspection are an important development. They identify suitable areas for attention. The views of parents are sought on aspects of provision and appropriate attention is given to the observations made.

The practitioners have extensive experience of working in the setting and during this period they have attended suitable courses on aspects of the education and care of children. They make effective use of the training received. This is evident, for example, in the setting's curriculum planning processes.

### **Partnership working: Good**

There is a good partnership between the practitioners. The partnership with parents is also good. This was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection. Practitioners are regularly available to meet parents at the beginning and end of each session. Relevant information is also provided in the form of regular newsletters. Initiatives, such as offering children 'story sacks' to take home to enjoy, further promote parental involvement in their children's education.

A very beneficial relationship has been established with the local primary school which supports transfer arrangements. The productive relationship with the local

authority link teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin officer leads to improvements in the setting's work. The close links with the community support children's learning. This is evident in the successful initiatives to raise funds to purchase additional resources. There is effective use of other community links, such as those with the fire service and the library, to extend children's learning.

### **Resource management: Good**

Resources are used and managed effectively. The setting is suitably staffed and there are regular opportunities for staff to access further training.

The lead practitioner and officers have a clear understanding of the budget and prioritise spending appropriately according to the setting's needs. The setting offers good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

One questionnaire was received from parents. The comments expressed together with those made during the discussions with parents demonstrate strong support for the setting. Parents state that the children enjoy attending the setting, they settle well and make consistent progress. They emphasise the care and attention provided for all children and the welcome extended to them as parents at all times. They believe that their children are prepared well for moving on to the primary school.

#### **Responses to discussions with the children**

The children are happy in the setting and join in the activities enthusiastically. They are happy to speak simply about their favourite activities and state that they enjoy playing with their friends.

## **Appendix 2**

Dorothy Morris

Reporting Inspector

### **Copies of the report**

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