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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pontsian
Neuadd D.H. Evans
Pontsian
Llandysul
Ceredigion
SA44 4UB**

Date of inspection: 13-14 March 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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

The setting was established in 1989 and is based in the community hall, Pontsian near Llandysul. The majority of the children who attend live in the village. The area is described as neither advantaged nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and a half and four years of age for four sessions a week during term time. It is open between 9:00 and 11:30 in the morning. During the inspection there were five three year olds on the register. The majority of children come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. At present, there are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds and no places have been allocated for children with additional learning needs.

There are two members of staff and they hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. The setting is in the care of an experienced lead practitioner and there is one other full time member of staff who took up her post in November 2011.

The setting was last inspected by Estyn in March 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in October 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- the children are happy and participate fully in the learning experiences provided;
- the activities are carefully prepared;
- the children are offered good quality care in an inclusive environment;
- there is a very good relationship between the children and the practitioners; and
- there are committed practitioners who undertake their responsibilities effectively.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of the:

- lead practitioner's effective leadership;
- good teamwork;
- the focus on improving the provision further; and
- the effective collaboration with parents, the primary school and the community.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, the setting needs to:

R1 amend the planning to ensure balance and consistent progression in children's learning skills across the areas of learning; and

R2 extend the practitioners' knowledge of self-evaluation and forward planning processes.

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
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Standards:

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.

Wellbeing:

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: Good

The curriculum is planned appropriately to meet the general requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. There is purposeful use of planning frameworks to provide a range of activities based on themes which are suitable for the children's age range. Nevertheless, there is not always sufficient attention to ensuring balance and consistent progression in children's skills across the areas of learning.

The provision offers suitable opportunities for children to develop thinking, communication, number and information and communications technology skills. A range of activities and purposeful resources are provided in each learning area around the room. This promotes children's independence and confidence as learners and offers them practical opportunities to practise their skills.

There is consistent encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. The practitioners communicate consistently with the children and introduce new vocabulary effectively. They offer children a good model of accurate expression. The practitioners develop children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales appropriately through activities which include celebrating St. David's day, learning about the life of St David and cooking Welsh dishes. They also provide suitable opportunities for the children to learn about the culture and traditions of other people by celebrating the Chinese New Year and the festival of Divali.

The opportunities to grow and care for plants and involvement in recycling activities promote children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and offer children learning experiences that consistently gain their interest. They make suitable use of a range of teaching approaches and appropriate resources to support the learning. They offer children consistent support and participate enthusiastically in the activities.

The practitioners know the children well and use appropriate processes to assess and record their progress. They observe and record children's responses consistently during activities. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress through informal discussion at the beginning and end of sessions and through a suitable written report. Transfer forms are completed appropriately and forwarded to the primary school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The children are happy in the setting and are ready to ask for help and support. Suitable policies are implemented which contribute appropriately to their general development and wellbeing. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle well into the setting. Practitioners are caring and supportive of all 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. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well and include their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness and kindness, and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered consistently through day-to-day activities. Experiences, such as offering a prayer before a snack, thanksgiving celebrations, and the work on the Christmas story, contribute effectively children's spiritual development. The opportunities to participate in some celebrations with the primary school children also contribute 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 warm and welcoming environment. They consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately. There is a favourable ratio of practitioners to children.

The practitioners make full use of the space available by creating purposeful activity areas around the room. Samples of children's work and displays linked to current themes enhance the learning environment. There is regular use of the outside play area which offers children suitable opportunities to investigate and play. The setting also makes use of the hall for movement activities. There are sufficient resources which are used effectively to support the learning. Toilet and hand washing facilities are adequate at best.

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

Under the conscientious and enthusiastic leadership of the lead practitioner, the setting offers children a purposeful learning environment. The practitioners understand their roles and work well as a team. Their personal values are evident in their commitment to their work with the children.

The management committee offers the practitioners appropriate support. The registered person is a regular visitor. She takes a keen interest in the setting and works closely with the lead practitioner. Suitable processes are implemented to appraise the work of the practitioners and to identify their further professional development needs.

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 primary school.

Improving quality: Good

The practitioners have a secure understanding of the setting's main strengths. They discuss regularly and are open to new ideas to improve provision further. Their knowledge of self-evaluation and forward planning processes is continuing to develop.

The provision is regularly monitored by the local authority link teacher. Areas for development are agreed and relevant strategies implemented. Aspects of provision are discussed regularly with the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin support officer.

The self-evaluation report prepared collaboratively by the setting leader and the local authority link teacher offers a balanced view of the setting. The improvement plan arising from this identifies appropriate areas for the further development of the setting. The registered person undertakes an annual review of the setting and the report compiled contains relevant information about the provision made.

Suitable procedures are in place to promote the practitioners' professional development. The lead practitioner attends suitable courses on aspects of the education and care of young children and makes effective use of the training received. There are some opportunities to discuss and share ideas with other settings and practitioners during training days. The regular discussions with the primary school staff promote the practitioners' understanding of the Foundation Phase.

Partnership working: Good

The setting makes effective use of a range of partnerships. There is a good partnership with parents and this was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection. They are offered relevant information through the handbook and the notice board. Practitioners are regularly available to meet parents at the beginning and end of each session.

Beneficial links have been established with the local primary school which supports transition arrangements. Resources are shared and arrangements are made for the children to participate in activities such as the school's Christmas concert. The close

partnership with the registered person, the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin officer leads to improvements in the setting's work.

The setting has close links with the community. There is successful use of the links with local agencies and organisations to support fund raising activities. At times, people from the community, such as a farmer and postman, contribute to the theme being studied.

Resource management: Good

Resources are used and managed effectively. The setting is appropriately staffed and regular training opportunities are provided.

The setting leader and management committee have a thorough understanding of the budget and prioritise spending according to the setting's needs. There is appropriate use of grants and fund raising initiatives. Through the effective support of the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin officer, a supply of information and communications technology equipment of very good quality has been acquired. There is good use of this equipment to support children's learning. The setting offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

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 are happy and at ease in the setting. They all join in the activities enthusiastically. In discussion, they can name their favourite activities.

Appendix 2

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.) 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 partnership's 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 2013.
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 child minders 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.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.

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