



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 Criccieth
Ysgol Treferthyr
Criccieth
Gwynedd
LL52 0DS**

Date of inspection: January 2013

by

Wil Williams

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 Criccieth has been providing Welsh medium pre-school education for the town of Criccieth itself and the surrounding rural area for over thirty years. In the setting's view, the area it serves is neither prosperous nor economically or socially disadvantaged.

The setting meets in the nursery children's classroom at Ysgol Trefferthyr, Criccieth. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, no child with additional learning needs nor of ethnic origin was attending the setting.

Two and a half hour sessions are provided on five afternoons a week for children between two and four years old, although the number of sessions attended by individuals varies according to parental wishes. Currently, sixteen children are registered at the setting of whom one is funded by the local authority.

Welsh is spoken at home by around a quarter of the children although the majority have one Welsh speaking parent. No child is learning English as an additional language. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

Two full-time practitioners support the children's education as well as another practitioner who is available when the need arises. All practitioners are appropriately qualified to teach the early years.

When they have completed their time at the setting, almost all children continue with their education at the Ysgol GynraddTrefferthyr.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in 2011 and by Estyn in 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- stimulating learning experiences successfully meet the needs and interests of all children;
- provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is comprehensive;
- of the strong focus on developing the Welsh language;
- a variety of interesting activities ensure that all children are active in their learning;
- manageable and effective assessment arrangements are used purposefully to plan the next steps in learning; and
- the setting is a comfortable, homely and safe place for children.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader has a clear vision and high expectations;
- there are sound arrangements for maintaining good practice and implementing change;
- self evaluation and planning for improvement are generally of good quality;
- practitioners are open to new ideas and different ways of working;
- a wide range of partnership activities make a strong contribution towards children's achievements and wellbeing; and
- staff's time and expertise are used effectively.

Recommendations

R1 Further develop self evaluation arrangements.

R2 Strengthen the arrangements for staff appraisal.

R3 Provide more opportunities for children to learn about sustainability.

R4 Establish an outdoor learning area.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

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

Stimulating learning experiences successfully meet the needs and interests of the whole range of children and enable them to learn effectively and make appropriate progress across all areas of learning. Learning is based on useful curricular plans which strongly reflect the principles of the Foundation Phase and build systematically on children's current knowledge, understanding and skills. When following the theme about 'Space', the indoor environment is used imaginatively by practitioners to stimulate children's interest and to encourage them to experiment with new experiences. Frequent opportunities for children to follow their own learning pathways and to make personal choices contribute substantially towards the development of individuals as independent learners.

Provision for literacy is cohesive and firmly embedded in every child's learning experiences. Through a wide range of activities such as role play, listening to stories and mark making, children have valuable opportunities to develop their literacy skills across all curricular areas. There is also comprehensive provision for developing number and information communications technology skills. There is a clear focus in the learning areas on counting, handling and sorting objects and the good variety of information communications technology equipment provided offers children a number of exciting possibilities. The investigative nature of a great number of activities provides children with very valuable opportunities to develop their thinking and problem solving skills.

The strong focus placed on developing the Welsh language as well as the additional support provided for Welsh learners, increases learners' confidence and expertise in Welsh substantially.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh culture, festivals and traditions successfully and provides them with good opportunities to learn about their role as global citizens. However, little attention is paid to sustainability, recycling and energy saving in the setting's day to day activities

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have current knowledge about child development and have a thorough understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. All practitioners interact with children with great ease and expect much from each one of them, whatever their age or ability. Through detailed collaborative planning, practitioners succeed in providing a variety of interesting activities which ensure that all children have opportunities to participate actively in their learning. Appropriate balance is maintained between child

led and adult directed activities. The wide variety of teaching strategies used as well as the substantial emphasis placed on learning through play, ensure the involvement of every individual with the task being undertaken. During sessions, there is a clear focus for the practitioners help and intervention. Adults are themselves good language models and use questioning skilfully to challenge children's ideas and to move their learning forward.

Assessment arrangements are manageable and effective. Practitioners know the children well and have a thorough understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do in order to improve. Useful continuous records of children's progress in every area of learning are kept and the information used purposefully to plan the next steps in learning. There are appropriate arrangements for including parents in their children's assessments and ensuring they are well informed about their children's progress and what they can do to help them to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners take great care of children and ensure that the setting is a comfortable, homely and safe place for them. Children are encouraged to look at the setting as a community where people learn to live together in harmony. Practitioners know the children well and provide clear guidance for them during sessions. Healthy eating habits, as well as hygiene and physical activity, are successfully promoted and well supported by parents.

During their daily involvement with children, practitioners strongly emphasise the need for everyone to be kind to each other, to be honest and fair and to behave in a responsible manner. This greatly helps the children to learn to differentiate between right and wrong. Regular opportunities for children to undertake responsibilities and to make their own decisions about their learning contributes substantially towards their personal and social development.

Effective induction arrangements help children to settle down quickly at the setting. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Practitioners have a good understanding of how to access professional help for children and parents. Children's learning needs, and particularly those of children with additional learning needs, are noted in detail when they join the setting. Practitioners ensure that those needs are met.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children are afforded equal access to all areas of learning and the activities provided for them. There is strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and on ensuring that children and members of staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners who possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to teach every aspect of the Foundation Phase. The setting succeeds in creating a homely and stimulating environment where children can take full advantage of their learning experiences and develop positive values and attitudes.

The setting derives substantial benefit from being allowed to use the school's nursery classroom in the afternoons. There is a plentiful supply of good quality resources in

every area of learning, including information communications technology. These are carefully matched to every individual's development and learning needs. By using the school's playground and hall, the setting adds substantially to children's physical development. Practitioners make effective use of the local park to enrich the curriculum and to support learning in the classroom. The building and accommodation are of good quality and are fully utilised.

However, the lack of an enclosed play area outside restricts the breadth of learning experiences available to children.

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

The leader has a clear vision for the setting's development. She conveys high expectations and supports and challenges everyone to do their best. A positive ethos permeates through the setting with children and staff feeling that they are appreciated. Practitioners work very closely as a team, they have shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships and ensure that the Foundation Phase is successfully implemented. Their willingness to undertake national priorities and new ventures, such as assessment for learning, is a strength. Clear aims and policies have been established which concentrate on children's needs and are implemented conscientiously. There is a positive relationship with children and parents and this contributes substantially towards creating a sense of community. Although staff appraisal procedures have been established, at present, they do not include an evaluation of the leader's performance.

The management committee undertakes its responsibilities very conscientiously despite the fact that it has few members. The committee shares Information with parents through newsletters and meetings and supports the leader in her work. Committee members ensure that any complaints are resolved without delay and that the setting complies with legal requirements. However, the committee does not take a sufficiently active role in the setting's self evaluation arrangements.

Improving quality: Good

Although self evaluation is still in its early stages of development, it has already given rise to improvements in standards and provision. The leader is aware of the setting's strengths and the areas to be developed and encourages staff to evaluate their work continually and to look for ways of improving. Secure arrangements have been established for maintaining good practice and implementing changes in areas which need to be improved. When self evaluating, the setting pays careful consideration to parents' opinions and the setting derives substantial benefit from the professional advice of the local authority support teacher. Through informal discussions, children are also given opportunities to express views about their learning experiences at the setting. Practitioners can show clearly how they, through self evaluation, have improved provision and raised children's standards of achievement and welfare. Improvement in the quality of planning and in children's progress in Welsh are good examples of recent developments.

The self evaluation report, along with the improvement plan, are generally of good quality and provide a clear direction for the setting's development. The priorities identified are implemented systematically and thoroughly by the leader and practitioners. However, insufficient attention is given to evaluating the success and impact of the priorities.

Practitioners receive strong support through a programme of continuous professional development provided mainly by the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin. This has enabled them to acquire new knowledge and skills and to implement the Foundation Phase successfully. Training sessions also provide valuable opportunities for practitioners to share their practice with practitioners from other settings.

The setting is developing well as a strong learning community. Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try different ways of working and to share knowledge and ideas with each other.

Partnership working: Good

A wide range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievements and welfare. The very productive partnership with the primary school eases transition arrangements substantially. The setting benefits greatly from using the school's resources and facilities, for example, the hall and playground, and from opportunities to share experiences with Foundation Phase teachers. There are appropriate links with a limited number of local community establishments. Practitioners take active steps to include parents in every aspect of the setting's work by informing them regularly about all events and encouraging them to participate in their children's education.

The local authority support teacher's regular visits, reports and professional advice have a very positive impact on the setting's development. The leader also receives useful managerial support from the Mudiad Meithrin's development officer.

The practitioners work together well, share information about children and know whom to contact and when if children need additional support.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum. Members of staff are used effectively to make the best use of their time, expertise and experience. The leader and the management committee treasurer have a detailed understanding of their budget and prioritise spending in line with the setting's development needs. Expenditure decisions are evaluated very carefully by the leader to ensure that they have a positive impact on children's standards, progress and welfare.

Appendix 1

Stakeholders' satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on parental questionnaires as only a small number of responses were received

Responses to discussions with children

Children say that they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Wil Williams	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	<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 partnership's 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>

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