



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 Beddgelert
Village Hall
Beddgelert
Ffordd Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 4UY**

Date of inspection: February 2013

by

**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 Beddgelert is a Welsh-medium playgroup that is situated upstairs in the Village Hall, Beddgelert, Gwynedd. All children who attend the playgroup come from the village and the nearby area. It is recognised that the area is neither privileged nor socially or economically disadvantaged.

The playgroup has been situated in the same room since 2005 and has complete use of it. There is no outdoor area. However, the playgroup makes extensive use of the village, the school garden and Snowdonia National Park. The playgroup is open between 9.45am and 1.05pm from Tuesday to Thursday.

The playgroup says that many children come from homes where English is spoken and children represent the full range of ability. No children in the current group have been identified as having additional learning needs. A very few children come from an ethnic minority background. There are no children who come from socially disadvantaged homes.

The playgroup is registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales for a maximum of 10 children and it admits children from the age of two and a half. At present, 12 children attend the playgroup at some time during the week. Seven of them are three years old.

The two co-leaders have been in their posts since 1996 and 2005. Parents support the playgroup when there is a need for the support of an additional adult. All staff have suitable qualifications.

A management committee supervises the playgroup's work. The playgroup was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in 2012. The playgroup was inspected by Estyn in 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

The playgroup's current performance is good because of:

- good planning of learning experiences;
- the wide, balanced and interesting curriculum, which supports all the children;
- effective teaching that focuses well on the outcomes of the Foundation Phase;
- the good resources that are available;
- good leadership and management;
- a good relationship and co-operation with the community; and
- effective co-operation with external agencies, which contribute appropriately to the playgroup's success.

Prospects for improvement

The playgroup's prospects for improvement are good because of:

- the provision and clear direction to the playgroup's work by the leaders;
- the effective self-evaluation systems that correspond effectively to the clear targets in the appropriate development plan;
- the positive and active attitude towards staff development and training;
- the effective use of effective support lines;
- the active and supportive management committee; and
- stimulating use of the learning environment, community and the local area.

Recommendations

R1 Ensure that introductions and stories are timed effectively in order to maintain children's interest

R2 Provide relevant opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, in order to improve their awareness of global citizenship

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is planned well. The planning meets the philosophy of the Foundation Phase effectively and fulfils the outcomes that are identified in the children's learning. The curriculum builds effectively on children's previous knowledge and experiences. Interesting opportunities are available for all children to develop their skills across the curriculum. Valuable time is set on a weekly basis for staff to meet and plan the curriculum. These preparations provide children with useful and purposeful activities. The flexible curriculum is appropriate and linked to children's interests.

Appropriate opportunities are included in the playgroup's daily work in order for the children to develop their self-confidence and to become independent learners. Although specific activities are planned, children are free to choose their own tasks and activities. Good activities are provided in order for children to develop their basic and key skills of literacy, numeracy, physical development and creativity. Welsh is the adults' natural language and they communicate very effectively with the children in Welsh.

Provision for developing children's information technology skills is good. The staff direct children regularly to use the technological equipment such as the computers and mobile toys that challenge individuals appropriately. Children have many opportunities to develop their thinking skills through challenging activities such as role playing in the fruit shop, experimenting with water and creating letters with chalk and coloured pencils.

Suitable emphasis is put on Welsh traditions and celebrations, such as celebrating St David's Day, St Dwynwen's day and the story of Gelert the dog. However, there are not many opportunities for children to learn about other cultures and traditions. Therefore, children do not develop their understanding of the wider world and their awareness of global citizenship.

There are good opportunities for all children to grow flowers and vegetables in the room and in flower-growing areas around the village. The playgroup has a vegetable-growing area in the village and in the school garden. There are good opportunities for all pupils to recycle waste paper and plastic bottles. This is beginning to develop their understanding of plant growth and sustainability effectively.

Teaching: Good

Staff have a good practical knowledge of children's development and a clear understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a very positive relationship between all staff and children. Staff have an active role when planning the curriculum and the best use is made of their expertise. They teach well; however, at times, introductions to tasks and explanations of activities are not timed effectively in order to maintain the children's interest.

The system of sharing duties is well-established, which means that staff co-operate effectively and share information about children regularly. There is a good balance between activities that are chosen by children and those directed by adults. All children have a sensible amount of freedom to choose between activities that are led by adults or work independently.

Staff model the Welsh language well for the children's level of development and use questioning effectively to develop children's thinking and communication skills. Staff encourage children well to evaluate their work as they discuss a story, fill buckets and pots with sand and create bubbles. Staff provide an interesting environment that ensures that all children take part and enjoy themselves. They are very positive as children arrive and they continue with this enthusiasm throughout the sessions.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are completed very effectively and efficiently. Daily assessments lead, in detail, directly to individual children's targets. Parents and carers are informed well about their children's achievements. Information is available to them at any time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The playgroup's provision for ensuring children's health and wellbeing is good. Visitors from the community, such as the dentist, chefs, business people and craftspeople extend children's experiences effectively. The playgroup visits the community regularly through trips to the riverside, Snowdonia National Park, the library, the railway, local shops, farms and nearby companies. Use of the village and the local area ensure stimulating outdoor opportunities for children. Visits to the community and visitors to the playgroup develop children's knowledge and understanding of their community effectively.

The playgroup has good provision for ensuring children's spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural elements is not as effective when considering other cultures. Values such as honesty, fairness and respect are fostered sensibly by staff. Children have good opportunities to reflect, discuss feelings and to say thank you. This is obvious as they share large toys and take turns well when eating sandwiches and having a drink around the dining table.

The playgroup's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern. The playgroup is safe, the doors are closed and only a member of staff opens them. No one can come in and no child can leave unaccompanied. Staff are careful as children are collected and ensure that they are in the care of their parents or a familiar carer.

Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that individuals who are suspected of needing additional support are identified and staff discuss these with appropriate agencies. One of the leaders is the additional learning needs co-ordinator and she is familiar with the necessary procedures in order to support children who have special needs.

Learning environment: Good

Through daily activities and the attitude that is adopted by the staff, the playgroup promotes a positive ethos. The staff know the children well and their individuality is identified effectively. All children have equal access to an interesting curriculum. The homely atmosphere and friendliness of the staff ensure that a tolerant attitude permeates the playgroup. The playgroup uses positive behaviour strategies that remove any form of disruption or aggressive behaviour. Staff have good qualifications and experience and the adult to child ratio is favourable. Staff expertise is used well when planning together and when supervising activities inside and outside.

The playgroup uses its resources well in order to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. Resources are accessible to children, which promotes their sense of independence and responsibility effectively. Resources have been shared well between the continuous and enriching activities and the focus tasks. Although space in the upstairs room is limited in size, it is organised well to ensure stimulating opportunities for children to extend their experiences. Children are cared for well as they climb and descend the stairs to use the hall downstairs and the large toys. The playgroup does not have an outdoor area. However, the local environment is used very effectively through regular visits to the local area and the community. This contributes well to the children's understanding of their village and their community.

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

Staff understand their roles and responsibilities fully and co-operate well as a team by sharing values, objectives and aims. Leaders are sensible in accepting advice from external agencies such as Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority. This practice ensures the best use of their expertise. The leaders share a clear vision, and their commitment leads to an effective sense of purpose for the playgroup's work.

The development plan identifies appropriately what needs to be done in order for the playgroup to improve. Strategic planning has a positive effect by creating improvements and targets that correspond appropriately with comments in the

self-evaluation report. The leadership and staff focus well on children's needs and the playgroup achieves this successfully and practically. Staff receive relevant and appropriate training, which has a good effect on the quality of provision.

The management committee leads effectively and gives good consideration to legislation. Its management systems meet requirements. The playgroup has given good consideration to national priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum. In addition, good use is made of opportunities to work with the local school, the community, Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority in order to ensure effective links.

Improving quality: Good

The playgroup self-evaluates well and ensures an effective match between the self-evaluation and the targets of the development plan. Targets identify appropriately the areas to be improved and implement them against time lines and definite responsibilities for children's wellbeing.

There is strong evidence of beneficial discussions and processes from all involved with the playgroup, such as parents, the community and external agencies. The appropriate targets include developing children's information technology skills, the food content in children's lunch boxes and promoting a healthy diet, improving staff training, considering the times of playgroup meetings and marketing the playgroup.

Areas for improvement are targeted effectively and concisely against success criteria in the playgroup's development plans. The development plans have effective priority in the playgroup's development from the staff, the local authority, Mudiad Meithrin and the management committee. Staff make good use of training opportunities and professional learning experiences. This has a positive effect on children's learning and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

In the answers to the questionnaires and during discussions, parents express their satisfaction with the playgroup and greatly appreciate the standards of care and quality of education that is available. They appreciate the open door policy and the daily opportunities to meet staff. There is a booklet that is full of information for parents and carers, which provides them with relevant details about the playgroup.

By the time children leave the playgroup, parents feel that they have been prepared well for the next stage in their education at the local school. Links between the playgroup and the school are good and there are regular visits throughout the year. Community partnerships are very good and the playgroup takes every opportunity to use the village and the nearby area to provide interesting experiences for the children.

The links and support that are provided by Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority are good and regular reports are available of beneficial visits and discussions. The advice and suggestions are of assistance in moving the playgroup forward and contribute to the good provision.

Resource management: Good

The playgroup's staff teach well and co-operate effectively. The management committee is supportive and earmarks money for important needs such as good human resources and useful equipment. The management committee is very supportive of the use of the village and the community as the playgroup's outdoor area.

The playgroup uses the building and the local area effectively and provides interesting experiences that are planned well. Leaders lead effectively and use support agencies and the management committee appropriately for the children's wellbeing. In considering provision for the children and the leadership's enthusiasm and high standards, the playgroup provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires because of the small number of responses that were received.

Responses to discussions with children

Nearly all children are happy at the playgroup. Their enthusiasm is obvious as they arrive and meet their friends. Nearly all of them are self-confident in knowing that they are supported well and that they have interesting tasks that are provided for them.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Nicholas Jones	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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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.