



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 Betws yn Rhos
Village Hall
Betws Yn Rhos
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 8AP**

Date of inspection: May 2014

by

**Mr Eifion R Morgan
Reporting Inspector**

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

Cylch Meithrin Betws yn Rhos is based in the local village hall and has provided Welsh medium education for the children since 1970. Betws yn Rhos is a small rural village located some 3 miles south of Abergele in North Wales. It is a registered member of Mudiad Meithrin and is part of Conway's Early Years and Children's Care Partnership provision.

The setting is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate a maximum of 18 children. Currently there are 15 children on the register, of whom five are aged 2 years, six aged 4 years and the other four children aged 3 years are funded.

The setting operates on four mornings (9 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.) a week (not Wednesday), during school term time for the 3 year olds. Parents determine the number of sessions their children attend. The 4 year old children attend the local school's nursery class initially and come to the Cylch at 11 a.m.

Children attending the setting are from the immediate locality and surrounding villages – an area described as neither privileged nor economically or socially disadvantaged. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are welcomed to the setting although currently there are no children from a minority ethnic background or any recognised as having additional learning needs (ALN).

English is the home language of most of the children with many of the parents anxious for the children to learn the Welsh language. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh, although English is used when necessary.

The Cylch meets in a room at the back of the village hall which is adjacent to the school. It is of adequate size and incorporates the necessary facilities to provide practical activities in keeping with the needs of the Foundation Phase philosophy. Grassed and tarmaced areas behind the school are frequently used by the setting to enrich children's learning experiences.

The setting was previously inspected by CSSIW in 2013. There were no significant recommendations. The previous Estyn inspection was in 2008 and the recommendations have been addressed.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because of the

- planned learning experiences successfully engage the children and are well focused on ensuring their progress;
- relationships between children, and children and adults, encourage respect and tolerance;
- children have opportunities to experiment and to tackle new experiences;
- provision for developing the Welsh language;
- emphasis staff give to providing opportunities for children to work independently;
- provision for developing children's health and wellbeing;
- working environment provided for the children;
- strong sense of purpose evident in the setting;
- partnership with the local primary school.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospect for improvement is good because of the

- quality of leadership that is well focused on providing the best possible provision for the children;
- support of the management committee;
- active support of the parents;
- well-established track record of bringing about improvements;
- support provided by the Local Authority support teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin.

Recommendations

- R1. refine the planning for children's learning to ensure that children's key skills are developed systematically.
- R2. use the results of assessment to identify the next steps in children's learning.
- R3. inform parents of the next steps in children's learning so that they can be partners in children's learning.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skill 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 planned learning experiences are such as to successfully engage the children. Practitioners plan the activities collaboratively and the planning is sufficiently flexible to respond to children's interests. The planned learning experiences are well focused on ensuring children's progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. Planning, however, does not indicate clearly how children's skills are to be developed systematically.

Relationships are good and children are taught to respect each other and to be tolerant. A particular and good feature of the planning is that it provides opportunities for children to experiment and tackle new experiences. There are also good opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills as well as experiencing a broad curriculum including knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

The planned learning experiences are well designed to enable children to acquire the necessary literacy, communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Literacy and numeracy skills are well integrated into curricular activities. Planning, however, does not indicate clearly how these skills are to be developed progressively. Nevertheless the planning shows that more able children are challenged.

The provision for developing the Welsh language is good. Most children come from an English speaking background but become competent in the Welsh language, enabling them to proceed to the adjacent Welsh language primary school.

Both staff are fluent Welsh speakers and the children are immersed in the language. Whilst children understand more than they speak, they are using Welsh words and phrases in answer to adult's questions and commands.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of child development and long experience of working with young children. They understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-directed activities and meet children's needs flexibly. There is an emphasis on children learning through play and active involvement in activities. Behaviour is well managed and staff are good language models.

Children have regular access to the outside and the facilities both immediately outside the setting and visits further afield provide the children with exciting opportunities to participate.

Children are assessed regularly enabling their progress and wellbeing to be carefully tracked across all areas of learning. This information is used to plan future learning activities for the group. However, the next steps in individual children's learning are not specified, neither is information provided for parents so that they can be part of the process of children's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision for developing children's health and wellbeing and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for promoting healthy living. Children are well supported emotionally and educationally – a view fully endorsed by parents.

Children's sense of curiosity is enhanced by their activities out of doors and this also introduces the ideas of caring for plants and animals. Children learn to act sustainably. The setting's daily activities foster values such as honesty and fair play and promote an understanding of right and wrong. Children learn to take responsibility, to show initiative and to behave sensibly. The setting celebrates St. David's day and the children have good opportunities to be creative.

The setting is a safe environment for children. Doors are kept locked so no one can enter or leave unannounced. Children are accompanied to the adjacent garden when working outside. Being part of the local school this is a safe environment. Policies and procedures ensure that all children are well supported and staff have attended relevant courses. Arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are currently no children that have been identified with additional learning needs. However, policies and procedures are well established and the setting has supported such children in the past.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a warm, caring atmosphere where all children are respected and their individual needs understood. They have an equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum.

Relationships are good and the children are encouraged to be tolerant and to respect each other's needs. Behaviour is good with no anti-social or oppressive behaviour seen during the inspection.

The setting is generously staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners and it is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Resources are well used and particularly good use is made of the locality to support children's learning needs. The outside facilities are well used and provide children with a good range of activities which make a significant impact on children's learning.

The accommodation is suitable and benefits from being adjacent to the feeder primary school. Community resources, such as the library, are well used.

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

The setting displays a strong sense of purpose that promotes good quality provision. Learning and teaching are well managed with the major focus on children's achievement and progress. Practitioners have kept themselves well informed by attending courses and working closely with the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin. Staff co-operate well with each other and support each other effectively. A sense of community is evident.

Relationships with the children and parents are very good. The work of the management committee is supportive of the setting and this is affected through detailed knowledge of the workings of the setting. Officers regularly attend sessions and support work of the setting. Staff feel valued and a positive ethos is apparent in the setting.

The setting is well supported by an active management committee. Policies and initiatives are implemented consistently and monitored and outcomes evaluated. Staff are regularly appraised and targets agreed.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners have been in post for several years and know the setting's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation has been done consistently and is based on criteria set out in the Estyn documents. Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working. They have benefited substantially from the wide range of professional courses they have attended. Self-evaluation takes account of the perceived interest of children and the views of the management committee. Overall, the improvements have resulted in higher standards of children's achievement and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

Partnership activities make a strong and effective contribution to children's good achievement and wellbeing. Parents are well informed about aspects of the setting's work – notes of the weekly activities are displayed on a notice board in the corridor. Parents and carers have opportunities every day to meet with staff and discuss issues of any concern.

The setting makes regular use of the very good range of outside facilities of the local primary school. The setting makes regular use of the primary school designated garden and wildlife area. This enables children to explore and find minibeasts; to handle and learn to care for them. The setting also use a tarmaced tennis court which is used for activities including the use of moveable toys and ball games. All these facilities are within easy access of the setting.

The Local Authority support teacher has provided the setting with advice and critical judgements.

There are clear links in place with local organisations that can be contacted when necessary.

Community links, such as visits to the village and surrounding area, are used effectively to support children's learning.

Resource management: Good

The setting is adequately resourced and these are effectively deployed to support learning. The leader has a detailed understanding of the budget which is efficiently managed by the treasurer of the management committee. The treasurer has been in post for 3 years and this provides continuity in the role. Financial decisions are evaluated by the management committee and prioritised accordingly.

Overall, this is a well-established setting where staff share their professional knowledge and support each other well. The setting provides good quality provision resulting in children's good achievement and progress. It is fully supported by the parents.

The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (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.