



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 Dolybont
Y Caban
Ysgol Gynradd Dinas Mawddwy
Dinas Mawddwy
Gwynedd
SY29 9LN**

Date of inspection: May 2012

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 Dolybont was established approximately forty years ago to provide Welsh medium pre-school education for the children of the village of Dinas Mawddwy and the surrounding rural area. At present, it is located in a demountable cabin on the primary school site. The setting is part of the Gwynedd Children and Young People's Partnership provision. In the setting's view, the area it serves is neither prosperous nor economically and socially deprived. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are admitted at the setting. There were no children with additional learning needs or who were learning English as an additional language attending the setting during the inspection.

Three hour sessions are provided on three mornings a week for children aged two and a half to four years of age, although the number of sessions attended by individuals varies according to parental wishes. Currently, four three year old children are registered at the setting and are funded by the Partnership.

Almost every child speaks Welsh at home. The main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

Two full time practitioners who are appropriately qualified to teach the early years support children's education.

When they have completed their period at the setting, almost all children continue their education at Ysgol Gynradd Dinas Mawddwy.

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

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- interesting and motivating learning experiences encourage children to learn effectively;
- planning for developing literacy, communication and number skills is thorough;
- there is strong emphasis on learning through play and solving practical problems;
- practitioners have high expectations from every individual;
- values such as honesty, fairness and respect are constantly reinforced, and
- there are appropriate policies and arrangements for promoting children's health and wellbeing.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the strong sense of purpose provided by the leader promotes and sustains improvement effectively;
- the leader knows the setting well and is continually exploring ways of improving;
- the management committee fulfills its responsibility conscientiously and effectively, and
- practitioners are open to new ideas and willing to try different ways of working.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

R1 make more use of assessment information to plan future activities:

R2 increase the resources for information communications technology;

R3 strengthen links with the primary school and the community, and

R4 provide more opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and recycling.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

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

Through purposeful collaborative planning, practitioners successfully provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities which encourage children's progress towards satisfying the outcomes of the Foundation Phase. The curriculum builds systematically on current knowledge, understanding and skills with all children being challenged by relevant activities which provide progression and continuation in their learning.

The wide range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors provide regular opportunities for children to form a close relationship with adults and other children, to take risks and to experiment with new experiences. The daily opportunities children have to choose which activities appeal to their interests make a significant contribution to their development as confident and independent learners.

There are thorough plans for developing literacy, communication and numeracy skills. During group or whole-class sessions, practitioners encourage children to listen carefully to others, to ask questions and to talk about matters that are important to them. All children join in rhymes and songs on a daily basis and are afforded regular opportunities to follow stories which are read to them. When they play in the indoor and outdoor learning areas, children are encouraged to experiment with mark making for a wide variety of purposes.

All children enjoy using information and communications technology for different purposes but there is a lack of equipment; this limits the range of their learning experiences.

There is very thorough provision to promote Welsh and the Welsh dimension. The setting develops children's awareness of the cultural traditions and celebrations of Wales in a very meaningful and interesting manner.

By following themes such as 'Children of the World', children have valuable opportunities to develop their understanding of their role in society and in the world. Too few opportunities are provided for children to learn about the importance of sustainability.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners possess up-to-date knowledge about child development and they have a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They expect much from every child regardless of ability, and ensure that there are stimulating and challenging learning experiences for all of them. By using a wide range of learning

strategies, they are successful in arousing interest and ensuring the involvement of all children in their tasks. There is a strong emphasis on learning through play and on solving practical problems, and a good balance between activities chosen by the child and those directed by practitioners. The practice of following the child ensures that adult intervention in children's learning is timely and effective and makes a good contribution towards moving the learning on. Any instances of unacceptable behaviour or disagreements between individuals are resolved firmly and sensitively by practitioners.

The setting assesses children regularly and records observations and assessments carefully to measure children's progress. Although the setting makes some use of the assessment outcomes to plan activities for the future, this practice has not been fully developed. The close links practitioners have with parents ensure that every parent is aware of their child's progress and what they, as parents, can do to help them to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Every child is happy to come to the setting in the mornings and are comfortable in the company of adults. Every child is confident when seeking support or guidance from a practitioner. Practitioners know children well, they keep detailed records of their needs and ensure that those needs are met. When there are children with additional learning needs at the setting, practitioners work closely with the local authority and other specialist agencies to ensure that the provision is appropriate.

Provision for promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is comprehensive. Values such as honesty, fair play and respect towards adults and other children are regularly and effectively reinforced through every aspect of the setting's life and work.

The thorough induction arrangements, as well as the close relationship with parents, ensures that new children settle down quickly at the setting. Practitioners take great care of every child and ensure their safety at all times.

The setting has appropriate policies and arrangements to promote children's healthy living and wellbeing. It succeeds well in helping every child to achieve good health and emotional wellbeing, to take full advantage of the learning activities provided and to play a full part in the setting's life, Practitioners know how to respond appropriately if challenges arise regarding bullying, unacceptable behaviour or suspicion of abuse. The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child has equal right to all areas of learning and activities provided. There is strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that all children and members of staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners who possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The setting successfully creates a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere where every child can take full advantage of learning experiences and develop positive values and attitudes.

With the exception of information communications technology, there is a suitable supply of good quality resources in all areas of learning and these are carefully matched to every individual's development and learning needs. The setting uses the resources in the outdoor area well to promote children's physical development and to support learning in the classroom. The main teaching area is of sufficient size and includes all the appropriate facilities to teach children. Practitioners make the fullest possible use of the area to provide rich and interesting learning experiences.

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

The leader is successful in providing the setting's work with a strong sense of purpose and creating an ethos where children and staff feel that they are appreciated. She conveys high expectations and has established clear aims and policies which focus on children's needs. The two practitioners collaborate very closely as a team, they share agreed values about learning, behaviour and relationship and ensure that the Foundation Phase is delivered successfully. Practitioners' willingness to tackle national priorities and new ventures is one of the setting's main strengths.

Relationship with children and parents is positive and makes a significant contribution to creating a sense of community.

The management committee fulfills its responsibilities conscientiously and is increasingly becoming more influential as regards raising standards and setting a strategic direction for the setting's work. The committee officers take an active role in staff evaluation arrangements and hold the setting to account for the standards and quality it achieves.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know the setting well, self evaluate and continuously explore ways of improving. Robust arrangements have been established to maintain good practice and to implement change in areas which need improving. Self evaluation gives careful consideration to the views of parents and benefits substantially from the professional advice of the local authority support teacher. Practitioners are able to demonstrate how, through self evaluation, they have improved provision and raised children's standards of achievement and wellbeing.

The setting's self evaluation report is of good quality. The setting made very effective use of the information to draw up an action plan and to implement strategies for improvement.

Practitioners receive strong support from the programme of continuous professional development provided mainly by the local authority and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. This has enabled them to acquire new knowledge and skills and to deliver the Foundation Phase successfully. The training sessions also provide valuable opportunities for staff 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 they are willing to try out different ways of working and to share knowledge and ideas amongst themselves.

Partnership working: Adequate

Generally, there is an appropriate range of activities which contribute appropriately to children's achievements and wellbeing. Parents are regularly informed about every aspect of the setting's work and active steps are taken to include them in all the activities arranged. The setting's links with the primary school nearby are few and, as a result, neither one nor the other benefits fully from each other's strengths. The setting makes full use of the resources the village has to offer but it does not take full advantage of potential contributions from people in the local community who could share their experiences with children.

The productive co-operation between the setting and the local authority support teacher contributes very positively towards improving the quality of the provision and standards. Practitioners work together effectively, share information about children and know whom to contact and when if children need additional support.

Resource management: Good

There are effective arrangements for managing staff and resources. Generally, there are enough good quality resources to support children's learning and the setting is appropriately staffed. The comprehensive arrangements for fulfilling practitioners' development needs ensure that they have current knowledge about recent developments in the Foundation Phase. The leader and the management committee have a thorough understanding of their budget and prioritise spending in line with the setting's development needs. Expenditure decisions are carefully evaluated to ensure that they have a direct impact on children's standards of achievement, progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money

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.