



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 Ffairfach
Ysgol Ffairfach
Ffairfach
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 6SY**

Date of inspection: May 2015

by

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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

Fffairfach Playgroup meets in a cabin on the site Ffairfach Primary School near Llandeilo in Carmarthenshire. The setting is open for five mornings a week and three afternoons during the school term.

The setting is registered to take up to 23 children per session. Currently, there are 33 children aged two and three years of age on the register. Five receive funded early years education. Most children come from homes where English is the main language. A few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are a very few children with additional learning needs.

There are four permanent members of staff. They are experienced and suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. Two additional members of staff are students under training. The leader has been in post since 1993.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in July 2013 and by Estyn in May 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences
- Effective teaching promotes children's active involvement and enjoyment in their learning
- Recent initiatives place a strong focus on developing children's early literacy skills
- Children's standards of behaviour are very good
- The good relationship between practitioners and children develops their confidence as learners
- There is effective provision to promote children's personal and social development
- The setting provides a happy, caring and supportive environment for all children

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader provides strong direction to the setting's work
- Practitioners undertake their responsibilities effectively
- Practitioners demonstrate positive attitudes towards professional development
- The self-evaluation report identifies strengths and suitable areas for development
- The setting development plan sets appropriate priorities including developing children's literacy and numeracy skills further
- The management committee's officers carry out their responsibilities conscientiously
- The beneficial partnership with the primary school, the parents and the community supports children's learning and wellbeing

Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen planning to extend children's skills consistently
- R2 Ensure that activities consistently offer children of all abilities appropriate challenge
- R3 Extend the use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning
- R4 Develop self-evaluation procedures to focus more closely on planning and 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 curriculum is planned through a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. All practitioners contribute appropriately to curriculum plans which promotes their understanding of the activities to be provided. There are regular opportunities for children to contribute their ideas such as to the theme of 'camping'.

There is suitable use of frameworks, which are appropriately linked to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, for planning the provision. Planning is well organised and sets out the learning objectives and activities. Nevertheless, there is not always sufficient detail in the planning to ensure that children's skills are extended consistently.

Daily provision provides suitable opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and wider skills across the curriculum. There is consistent encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. There is purposeful use of group activities, for example, to promote children's knowledge of specific vocabulary and sentence patterns which are reinforced effectively through a range of practical activities. There are productive opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during group activities, circle time and in their play. There is effective use of cooking sessions, for example, to promote children's understanding of mathematical terms such as big and small, heavy and light. There are suitable opportunities, though uneven at times, for children to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills independently to complete number activities, for example.

Children's thinking and problem solving skills are developed appropriately through experiences such as participating in a treasure hunt in the outside area with the added challenge of finding different shapes to create a complete picture. There are purposeful experiences to develop children's skills in handling small tools, such as pencils, scissors and paint brushes, in various tasks.

The children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales is effectively developed through activities such as celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day. There is appropriate use of the contribution of people from the community,

such as members of the police and fire brigade, to extend children's learning experiences.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They use a range of teaching methods and suitable resources that generate children's interest and active involvement in their learning. There is an appropriate balance between activities under the direction of practitioners and activities the children choose.

Sessions develop at a good pace. All practitioners interact effectively with children. They make good use of questioning to confirm the learning and of positive verbal feedback. As a result, children are confident to join in the range of activities available.

Practitioners prepare activities thoroughly. There are examples of group tasks that are well matched to children's learning needs and provide appropriate challenge. During investigative activities to discover which objects sink or float for example, the youngest children experiment independently while the older children have appropriate opportunities to predict and comment. Planning, however, does not always indicate clearly how activities are organised to ensure that children of all abilities are offered appropriate challenge consistently.

Practitioners know the children well and are aware of their overall development and learning needs. They assess their progress appropriately by observing activities and noting significant aspects on individual cards. The collecting of photographs of children undertaking activities across the areas of learning with detailed comments is a useful record. There is appropriate use of assessment information in planning the next steps in learning in some aspects of provision but the process is not fully embedded.

Transition processes include worthwhile visits by children to their new schools and discussions between staff. Parents and carers receive appropriate information about their children's development through informal discussions and by receiving detailed reports and examples of their children's work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a happy and caring community. A range of appropriate policies and daily routines that are well established promote children's welfare effectively. There are appropriate arrangements to encourage children to eat healthily. They include providing healthy snacks with fruit and vegetables.

Good quality experiences promote children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as sharing and an understanding of what is right and what is wrong, are effectively promoted through daily activities. As a result, all the children are very well behaved. They form good relationships with their peers and are happy to share as they work and play co-operatively. The opportunity to offer prayers and take part in the harvest and Christmas celebrations in the chapel, for example, contribute appropriately to their

spiritual and moral development. Taking part in activities to raise money for charity teaches children the importance of caring for others.

There are suitable opportunities to develop children's awareness of different cultures by celebrating the Chinese New Year and the festival of Diwali. Activities, such as the St. Patrick's Day celebration, and cooking and tasting foods associated with different countries, contribute effectively to promoting children's awareness of the wider world.

The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and the importance of caring for all living things. They include growing and caring for plants and participating in recycling activities.

There are suitable arrangements to support children with additional learning needs. These include clear lines of communication with key agencies such as the medical services.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community that treats all children equally. Practitioners create a warm and positive ethos and respond sensitively to all children. They consider and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of the children and respond appropriately.

There is an appropriate number of experienced practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. On the whole, there are sufficient resources to support learning across the areas of learning. They are accessible to children which promotes independent learning.

The building is of good quality and offers suitable facilities. Practitioners make full use of the available space by organising various activity areas around the room. The displays of samples of children's work contribute to creating a colourful environment. The small outdoor area and access to the primary school's outdoor learning areas provide appropriate opportunities for children to investigate and play. The building and site are clean and safe.

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

Leadership: Good

Under the strong leadership of the lead practitioner, the setting provides an organised and purposeful environment for children. All practitioners carry out their roles effectively, which contributes to the smooth running of sessions. They share common values and are committed to children's development and wellbeing. They establish a positive relationship with children, their parents and carers. Relevant policies are implemented appropriately.

The management committee is very supportive and members have established a good working relationship with practitioners. They share the same goals and objectives in terms of developing the setting. Officers carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Their willingness to join with the leader in promoting the setting's work in the community is an example of this. There is an appropriate system to appraise the work of staff and to identify further professional development needs.

The practitioners give suitable attention to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's Welsh communication skills and promoting healthy eating.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has a secure knowledge of the setting's main strengths. She seeks the views of parents, the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Meithrin development officer on the setting's work. Regular staff meetings are used appropriately to plan themes and discuss general aspects of provision. More detailed consideration of aspects of planning and learning, however, is an element that has not developed fully.

The self-evaluation report offers a balanced review of provision. It identifies strengths as well as specific areas that need attention. The setting development plan sets appropriate priorities to move the setting forward. They include the further development of children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The document sets out clear targets, a timetable and specific responsibilities in order to achieve the targets set. The plan is being implemented appropriately as demonstrated by the attention to developing children's literacy skills.

Practitioners give careful consideration to the views of parents through daily discussions and through regular questionnaires. Policies and new guidelines are discussed further with the Mudiad Meithrin development officer. There is constructive use of the advice of the local authority link teacher in introducing developments that improve provision. The attention to the organisation of learning areas is an example.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a very positive partnership with parents and carers. This was confirmed in the informal discussions during the inspection. Parents demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the way their children settle and the progress they make while in the setting. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work through daily conversations, the notice board, and attractive posters and newsletters, which include examples of children's learning experiences. Parents are included in aspects of the setting's themes. Helping their children to observe and look for insects in their gardens is an example.

There is a constructive partnership with the local primary school. Practitioners and children benefit from the opportunities to attend sports days and concerts in conjunction with the school, and from the use of learning resources and facilities. The contact with the headteacher is beneficial in discussing aspects of provision, such as the focus on promoting children's early literacy skills. The links with other

schools in the area promote a smooth transition for children to the next stage of their education.

The setting benefits from the partnership with the local authority link teacher and with other agencies, particularly with regard to the guidance and support provided. There is appropriate use of links with community members to extend children's experiences and of the good relationship with local organisations in supporting fundraising activities.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and there is productive use of practitioners' time and skills. Overall, resources are used effectively to support the teaching and learning.

Practitioners attend relevant training opportunities that develop their knowledge and skills appropriately. They have received suitable training on the requirements of the Foundation Phase and on aspects of child care and development. Practitioners make appropriate use of the opportunities to visit other settings to share experiences and observe good practice.

Both the treasurer and setting leader have a sound understanding of the budget and prioritise spending in line with setting needs. There is effective use of fundraising events to augment resources.

In view of the quality of leadership, the learning experiences and the care and support for children, the setting offers 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 –

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	<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 partnerships 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.