



*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 Maes Y Gornel  
Heol Caradog  
Rhos  
Wrexham  
LL14 1DD**

**Date of inspection: January 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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Maes y Gornel has been located in a purpose-built room at Ysgol I D Hooson, Rhosllannerchrugog, since it was registered in 2008. The playgroup offers Welsh-medium provision to children in the village of Rhosllannerchrugog as well as children from other neighbouring areas. It is part of the Mudiad Meithrin provision on behalf of the Wrexham education authority Early Years Partnership.

No children who currently attend the playgroup come from homes in which Welsh is the only language spoken. However, approximately 38% of children are from homes where both Welsh and English are used, and the remainder come from homes where only English is spoken. No child with additional learning needs was attending the setting at the time of the inspection.

During the inspection, there were 24 three year old children attending the playgroup. Children attend the playgroup for two hours a day, five mornings a week. The playgroup is staffed by a leader, and three learning assistants. Two of the assistants share one post.

The room used by the playgroup is of a good size and there is a safe outside play area for children. These resources were designed purposely when the new school was built around five years ago.

The area is described as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Children's ability varies widely when they begin at the playgroup. At the end of their time at the playgroup, almost all children will transfer to Ysgol I D Hooson where they will continue to receive Welsh-medium education. All members of staff have suitable qualifications in early years education. The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in October 2012. This is the first Estyn inspection.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The playgroup's current performance is good because:

- almost all children achieve appropriate standards, and make suitable progress during their time at the setting;
- children's communication skills are developing appropriately;
- the playgroup offers children a range of learning opportunities which meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase appropriately; and
- practitioners have high expectations for children's learning and they provide suitable and stimulating learning experiences across learning areas.

### Prospects for improvement

The playgroup's prospects for improvement are good because:

- high expectations have been set and planning focuses appropriately on children's needs;
- good relationships exist with parents and carers which contribute specifically to children's wellbeing;
- the management committee undertakes its responsibilities effectively; and
- the playgroup has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that planning gives particular attention to focussed tasks which are led by practitioners in order to strengthen learning.
- R2 Plan a wider range of various learning experiences in order to make more effective use of learning facilities outside the building.
- R3 Make more effective use of information which derives from assessing children's progress to plan the next steps in their learning.
- R4 Extend opportunities for developing children's information and communication technology skills.

### What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

#### Standards: Good

Nearly all children achieve appropriate standards, and make suitable progress throughout their time at the setting. Overall, children respond well to basic instructions and questions in Welsh and join in enthusiastically in songs and rhymes. Nearly all children show a commendable effort, and focus well on tasks. They work well and show an interest in the activities that are provided for them. They are able to make simple choices and achieve well on the whole.

Children's communication skills are developing appropriately. The majority of them are able to talk freely with each other and with adults. They question and listen to the responses; they are able to discuss their work and play well and voice their opinion naturally. Their vocabulary is extended consistently. Every child takes part in oral activities during welcome and registration periods, and the majority respond appropriately in discussions about the weather or the day's arrangements.

The majority of children enjoy developing their marking skills using various media such as paint or crayons and through moving their fingers through sand. Many of them enjoy choosing books independently, and many of these children handle books as readers, by turning pages and repeating familiar stories meaningfully.

All children develop an understanding of number, and a majority of them are able to count to ten with an adult. A minority of children recognise simple shapes and are able to use terms such as big/small, heavy/light, bigger/smaller meaningfully. Many children use a range of computer programmes confidently and handle equipment skilfully, including a mouse.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Children are happy and settled at the setting, and nearly all of them settle easily at the beginning of their time there. They have a good relationship with each other and with staff and they are very well behaved. Children respond positively to adults' instructions and guidance and show respect towards them. They are willing to ask questions if necessary.

Children understand the importance of personal hygiene and safety, and almost all of them take responsibility for tidying and storing equipment when necessary. They are aware of the need to wear appropriate clothing for activities such as painting and playing in water and are eager to do so. The majority wash their hands with almost no help from an adult. They appreciate the orderly and familial surroundings which exist for them to eat their snack. The majority are aware that the snack's content helps them to be healthy.

Most children undertake the challenge of new activities positively. They also develop their skills as independent learners and thinkers, according to their ability and stage

of development. They enjoy choosing activities and the majority concentrate for suitable periods when undertaking tasks. Almost all children co-operate well in group tasks.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

Staff at the playgroup offer children a range of learning experiences which meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase appropriately. These opportunities are organised well within the internal learning space and they engage children effectively. Activities are planned on the basis of termly work, which ensures that every learning area is given appropriate attention over time. Within this overview, the playgroup's short-term planning gives more specific attention to teaching opportunities which enrich children's learning effectively. Practitioners are given regular opportunities to contribute to these arrangements. However, planning does not provide enough opportunities for groups of children, under the guidance of practitioners, which focus on particular outcomes. Planning also does not give sufficient attention to providing an appropriate range of learning opportunities in the learning area outside the building.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is suitable, and an appropriate emphasis is placed on ensuring purposeful opportunities across learning areas. There is appropriate provision for developing children's numeracy skills and wider skills. Beneficial activities are planned for children on a computer, but there few opportunities to use other information technology equipment, such as a digital camera, recording machines or programmable toys. Good use is made of the Welsh language by practitioners and they offer continuous opportunities for children to develop their Welsh language skills. Provision is enriched effectively by regular input from Mudiad Meithrin's language officer.

Staff at the playgroup take appropriate advantage of opportunities to foster children's understanding of the importance of protecting the environment, and children take an active part in recycling paper and plastic. All practitioners offer an appropriate range of opportunities for children to develop their knowledge of their area and of Welsh festivals. However, there are few opportunities to develop their understanding of other cultures.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have high expectations for children's learning. They provide suitable and stimulating opportunities across learning areas which are based on a good knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is a good relationship between practitioners and children. Good use is made of the playgroup's resources, including information technology, to strengthen learning.

Staff co-operate well as a team. All practitioners understand their role and responsibilities, and they intervene effectively to challenge children and enrich the learning, when appropriate. Children's behaviour is managed very effectively.

Children's progress and wellbeing are assessed effectively and recorded regularly. This ensures that practitioners have appropriate knowledge of the development of individual children, and appropriate arrangements are in place to communicate this to parents and carers. However, this information is not used regularly to plan the next steps in children's learning.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting has appropriate arrangements and policies for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. Staff encourage children to wash their hands and clean their teeth. Healthy snacks are provided daily. Induction arrangements at the playgroup ensure that children settle in well at the setting. All practitioners understand how to respond to cases of bullying or unacceptable behaviour, and do so effectively when necessary. All staff members place a good emphasis on principles such as respect, fairness and co-operation with others which helps to ensure that children feel homely and safe at the playgroup. This also promotes children's moral and social development very effectively.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners are aware of the range of support services that are available from Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority, and use them effectively when appropriate. Individuals' needs are identified well by staff, and suitable support is provided to support children who have additional learning needs.

**Learning environment: Good**

The setting has succeeded well in establishing an inclusive and supportive ethos. The family ethos which exists when children and practitioners eat snacks together is a distinctive element. The playgroup has good arrangements in place to promote equality and diversity.

Both indoor and outdoor learning spaces are very suitable for presenting the requirements of the Foundation Phase. Areas are well-defined within the learning room, which encourages children to use and take an interest in certain resources in order to develop their skills. However, this is not as well developed in the outdoor space. There is a very suitable range of resources at the setting which are used effectively to meet children's needs. These resources support children's learning effectively across every learning area. The building and outdoor learning space is of good quality, safe and is well maintained.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Leadership: Good**

The leader has established appropriate arrangements to ensure that other practitioners contribute towards the playgroup's planning. These arrangements include regular meetings which place appropriate emphasis on priorities for improvement. These arrangements also help practitioners to understand their role and responsibility in relation to daily activities. The leader sets high expectations, and planning focuses appropriately on children's needs. There are appropriate job

descriptions for every member of staff. A suitable evaluation procedure has been put in place which promotes improvement in practitioners' skills. An effective professional relationship has been established with the primary school and relevant services of the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. The quality of provision at the playgroup benefits from this. There are good links with parents and carers who contribute specifically towards children's wellbeing. The requirements of the Foundation Phase have been developed well.

The management committee includes representation from amongst parents, and it undertakes its responsibilities effectively. The chairperson of the committee maintains close contact with staff to discuss the needs of the playgroup and monitors priorities effectively.

### **Improving quality: Good**

In general, the playgroup has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. A culture of self-evaluation is well-embedded in the setting's work. All practitioners contribute appropriately to arrangements for monitoring the standards and quality of provision. Appropriate attention is given to recommendations which arise from visits by the local authority's advisory teacher. Parents' comments are presented through the management committee. The leader and deputy leader share responsibility for leading improvement plans effectively. Good progress has been made in meeting a number of identified needs and the work of developing other priorities remains appropriate.

There is a strong element of co-operation between practitioners and with the management committee. The most experienced practitioners share expertise well and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning. The quality of teaching has benefited from recent opportunities for practitioners to observe good practice in other nearby settings.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting maintains a very good relationship with parents and carers. This relationship is strengthened further through parents' attendance on the management committee. Parents receive information about the playgroup's work at the beginning and end of daily sessions and also through a regular series of letters and newsletters. Information about activities and the setting's daily requirements are also displayed on a notice board near the entrance.

The playgroup has active and effective links with the primary school in which the playgroup is situated, and some beneficial arrangements have been developed for shared use of resources, including shared employment of some staff members. Almost all children transfer to the school at the end of their time at the setting, and there are appropriate arrangements for transferring relevant information about children's progress to the school at the end of their time at the playgroup. There are also suitable arrangements for the induction of children into the nursery class, which promotes their wellbeing.



The playgroup has a good active relationship with Mudiad Meithrin, and the effective contribution of a support worker from the Mudiad for one session a week enriches provision. The playgroup's leaders are aware of whom to contact to receive additional advice and support when necessary.

**Resource management: Good**

Practitioners and members of the management committee ensure the best standards of provision within their budget and management. The setting is staffed appropriately, and effective use is made of staff's time, experience and expertise. There are appropriate arrangements for identifying staff's development needs, and they have taken good advantage of development opportunities within the arrangements of the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin.

Financial resources are used well, and expenditure is linked appropriately to improvement plans. This helps to ensure that decisions on expenditure have a direct impact on children's standards and wellbeing. Considering the good outcomes which exist, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Ten questionnaires were received from parents and carers. Every response identifies that parents are satisfied with the setting in general and they feel that their children are safe there. Almost all parents state that their children enjoy being at the setting; that practitioners treat their children fairly and with respect; and that the setting is well run. Almost all parents also feel that their children received good support to settle at the playgroup when they started there. The majority feel that their children are making good progress, but a minority state that they do not receive sufficient information about this progress. Some also say that they do not feel comfortable about contacting the playgroup with questions or to discuss problems. A majority of parents feel that their children are being prepared appropriately for moving to the school at the end of their time at the playgroup.

## Appendix 2

Iwan Roberts	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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>
<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	<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>

<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.