



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 Maesincla
Safle Plas Pawb
Ysgol Maesincla
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1DF**

Date of inspection: January 2015

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 Maesincla is on the 'Plas Pawb' site within the grounds of Maesincla Primary School, Caernarfon in Gwynedd local authority. The area is urban with high levels of social and economic challenge. The setting provides part-time care for two-year-olds as part of the 'Flying Start' initiative and part-time education places for three-year-olds.

The setting is registered to take up to 26 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years. At the time of the inspection, 18 three-year-olds received funded early years education in either a morning or afternoon session.

All children have Welsh as their home language and all are of white British ethnicity. There were a few children with additional learning needs.

A full-time manager and leader share responsibility for leading and managing the setting. There are eight full-time members of staff, including the setting leader, and one part-time member of staff. Three full-time members of staff provide support for individual children. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The setting leader has been in post since January 2014. The previous leader became the manager of the setting in 2013 and has no direct teaching responsibilities.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in January 2013 and by Estyn in February 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Most children make realistic progress in learning from their differing starting points
- Most children's literacy, communication and numeracy skills are developing well
- Almost all children behave well and have a developing understanding of the difference between right and wrong
- A wide range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors engage most children successfully
- Practitioners have very good working relationships with the children; they know the children well and generally manage their behaviour effectively
- There are effective arrangements in place to support children's healthy eating and drinking
- The setting is an inclusive community

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The setting manager provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing environment where children are happy, eager to learn and not afraid to make mistakes
- A beneficial range of partnerships make an important contribution to children's progress and wellbeing
- There is a strong partnership with parents and carers
- Practitioners make good use of training to improve areas, such as managing children's behaviour and improving children's physical skills
- The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well
- The setting has a good track record of bringing about lasting improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of curriculum planning to provide better support for teaching
- R2 Ensure that children are encouraged to speak in sentences and are provided with better opportunities to solve problems and to think for themselves
- R3 Make better use of assessment to identify children's next steps in learning and to provide suitable challenge for the more mature and able children
- R4 Improve the quality of improvement planning by ensuring that success criteria focus sharply on benefits for children

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children make realistic progress in learning from their differing starting points. They make good progress overall in their personal and social skills and in managing their behaviour. This prepares them well for the next step in their education.

Most children's literacy and communication skills are developing well. They listen carefully during whole class sessions, such as story time, and join in with songs and rhymes with enjoyment and pleasure. Most follow instructions accurately during physical activities and when playing language games. Many respond positively to opportunities to develop their early writing skills and understand the purpose of writing. For example, they write lists of clothes to wear outside demonstrating appropriate pencil control. Most children are beginning to take an interest in print and books. A few recognise their names without the help of adults and choose to visit the quiet area to 'read' books. Children's speaking skills are developing acceptably. Almost all children make themselves understood and respond to simple questions appropriately.

Most children are developing valuable early numeracy skills. For example, children count objects to five accurately, use appropriate mathematical language, such as big and small, and use a hand-held electronic device to sort two-dimensional shapes correctly. In large group sessions, with practitioner support, many count by rote to 20. Almost all recognise a one pence coin and understand that they can exchange this for a snack during snack time. A few more able children match the spoken words and symbols for numbers to five correctly.

Almost all children have good physical skills. For example, they confidently pedal and manoeuvre successfully a range of wheeled toys and are beginning to use small tools with a degree of control.

Wellbeing: Good

Well-established routines and a warm welcome help the children to settle quickly and feel secure. As a result, children are developing confidence to try new experiences, such as mark making with frozen paint lollipops or tasting unfamiliar foods. Most persevere with activities for a reasonable amount of time and show pleasure in finishing tasks. Most children concentrate well for lengthening periods, such as during circle time or story time.

Almost all children behave well and have a developing understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They treat each other and adults in the setting with consideration and respect. Most children take turns and share toys and equipment well. Many children are developing worthwhile social skills. For example, they know that it is important to look at someone when you talk to them and to listen carefully to what they say.

Children are developing appropriate independent skills. For example, they help themselves to snacks and make choices about where and with whom they want to play.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Adequate

A wide range of learning experiences indoors and outdoors engage most children successfully. For example, children learn about the world around them through worthwhile visits and walks in the locality. Visitors, such as a local farmer, enhance children's understanding of animals and encourage their speaking and listening skills well. There are valuable opportunities to develop children's physical skills through yoga sessions and regular outdoor play. The setting is particularly successful in developing children's personal and social skills.

There is suitable provision to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Children have regular opportunities to count and to recognise numbers. For example, they count the number of children present each day and fish for numbers in the water tray. There are regular, useful opportunities for children to take part in mark making activities and the printed word is highly visible. However, the setting does not plan well enough to extend the skills, knowledge and confidence of more mature and more able children. This means that these children do not always make the progress that they should, particularly in their speaking skills.

Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage. For example, children dress up to celebrate St David's Day and to learn about Santes Dwynwen.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have a sound understanding of Foundation Phase practice. They use a suitable range of strategies to encourage and to motivate children to learn. For example, they use circle time appropriately to encourage children's good listening skills while small group work encourages children's personal and social skills well. Sessions generally progress at a lively pace, which keeps children interested and engaged. On a few occasions, children sit for too long and, as a result, they become restless and inattentive.

Practitioners have very good working relationships with the children. They know the children well and generally manage their behaviour effectively.

Activities usually build suitably on children's interests and experiences. However, activities are not always challenging enough for all children and practitioners do not make the most of opportunities to extend children's speaking, thinking or problem solving skills. In a few instances, practitioners do not allow children to be independent enough, for example when putting on their coats or serving themselves at snack time.

The setting has a useful range of assessment procedures in place. For example, practitioners use sticky notes to record when children say something of importance or demonstrate a new skill or concept. In addition, 'Treasure books' provide useful annotated photographic evidence of individual children's learning across all areas of learning. However, practitioners do not always use assessment well enough to identify and to plan clearly for children's next steps in learning.

The setting keeps parents well informed about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has effective arrangements to support children's healthy eating and drinking. For example, practitioners encourage children to enjoy eating fruit in their popular 'caffi'. They provide valuable opportunities for children to take regular physical exercise both indoors and outside. This develops children's co-ordination well and encourages them to be physically fit.

Practitioners plan worthwhile activities to foster values such as respect and a sense of right and wrong. They encourage children to take responsibility for their actions, to share equipment and to take care of resources. A beneficial range of learning experiences foster children's spiritual, moral and social development well. For example, children celebrate Chinese New Year and take part in fundraising for charity. The setting promotes children's cultural awareness suitably, for example through attendance at the annual Gwyl Feithrin. Opportunities for children to learn about sustainable issues, such as recycling and composting food waste, are limited.

There are appropriate processes to support children with additional learning needs. The setting accesses professional help for children and their families when necessary and uses this effectively to support children's specific needs.

The setting makes beneficial use of additional practitioners to provide support for individual children, to encourage children's language skills and to manage their behaviour. Suitable individual play plans are in place to support the progress of children with additional learning needs. However, targets are not always specific enough to allow support workers to assess children's progress effectively.

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

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Practitioners lead by example in encouraging children to show respect and tolerance towards one another.

The setting's building and outdoor area are secure and generally well maintained. There are plenty of good quality resources that are matched well to children's needs.

Practitioners make good use of the available space indoors. Clearly designated learning areas make it easy for children to access resources and to foster their

independence well. The setting makes regular use of its outdoor space to develop children's physical skills and dexterity. For example, outdoor equipment allows children to balance and climb and wheeled toys encourage children's co-ordination skills well. The introduction of 'learning boxes' with a focus on specific areas of learning has enhanced the quality of play and children's learning experiences such as promoting their mathematical development. There are limited opportunities for children to learn about the natural world through growing and caring for plants.

Practitioners arrange worthwhile visits to the local area to enhance children's experiences. For example, visits to a local farm improved children's knowledge and understand of the world in which they live.

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

The setting manager provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing environment where children are happy, eager to learn and not afraid to make mistakes. Core values, such as respect, kindness and affection, are paramount. Practitioners share this vision and work hard to make this vision a reality. This has a positive impact on children's attitudes and the way they behave.

Regular staff meetings reinforce good practice and remind practitioners of the manager's expectations, such as encouraging children to say please and thank you. There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of staff and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The manager works successfully with the Chair of the Management Committee to ensure that staff training needs are met appropriately. Non-contact time for the leader of the setting to plan ensures an effective balance of learning experiences across the curriculum.

The setting leader and deputy provide suitable day-to-day leadership. For example, they are pro-active in modelling the use of circle time and story time to encourage children's listening skills.

The manager keeps the management committee informed appropriately about day-to-day issues, such as finance, staffing and resource needs. They do not generally have enough information about the impact of training and spending on outcomes for children. As a result, they are not always able to evaluate effectively whether spending decisions are worthwhile.

The setting has worked well with the 'Flying Start' team in 'Plas Pawb' to reduce the inequalities in children's speech and language and to improve children's behaviour on admission to the setting. As a result, by the time children reach three years of age, most have the skills necessary to take full advantage of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for improvement are developing well. The manager monitors planning and assessment information

informally. Weekly meetings between the manager and leader and regular staff meetings ensure that the setting addresses day-to-day issues speedily and identifies longer-term priorities for improvement. For example, the leader was concerned that children were sometimes distracted in the book corner by resources and wall posters. Practitioners removed the additional resources and posters to create a calmer environment. As a result, children are more attentive during story time. Last year, the setting identified that too few parents and carers were attending meetings to discuss their child's progress. The introduction of flexible interview times has resulted in considerable improvement in attendance.

The self-evaluation report is detailed and generally accurate. The setting's current development plan is based securely on areas that it wants to improve and links appropriately to its self-evaluation report. The plan is costed, and has relevant timescales and success criteria. However, leaders do not always identify success well enough in improvement planning in terms of positive outcomes for children. On occasions, this makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness of actions taken.

The setting has a good track record of bringing about lasting improvement. For example, the introduction of learning boxes has improved children's learning experiences outdoors and, as a result, children are developing better counting skills.

Partnership working: Good

A beneficial range of partnerships makes an important contribution to children's progress and wellbeing. There is a strong partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers value the quality of care and concern shown by practitioners towards their children. The setting keeps them well informed about what their children are learning through daily personal contact, home-setting link books and regular formal meetings. The setting encourages parents and carers to take an active interest in supporting learning at home. For example, parents are encouraged to borrow reading books on a weekly basis and to complete simple activities at home, such as following patterns, counting objects and naming shapes.

The partnership between the setting and its feeder primary school is sound. The setting leader makes appropriate use of the expertise in the school, for example in identifying relevant materials for young children to use on a tablet computer. There are valuable links with the early year's assessment unit to support the transition of children with additional learning needs.

The setting has a worthwhile partnership with the community. The involvement of local people and visits into the community contribute well to children's understanding of where they live and people in the community who help them.

There are useful partnership arrangements with the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, which benefit the children.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes good use of staffing and resources to support children's learning well. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough suitably qualified and well trained practitioners.

Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement through attending training and learning from others. They make good use of this training, for example, to improve, such areas as, managing children's behaviour and developing children's physical skills.

Managers have an appropriate understanding of the budget and have suitable systems in place for keeping spending under review.

As a result of children's good standards and positive leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	13%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	0%	0%		
Teaching is good.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	16	14 88%	2 12%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		73%	22%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		85%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		65%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	30%	5%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	19%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	16	13 81%	3 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	30%	3%	0%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	16	15 94%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		70%	24%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		61%	30%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	16	16 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Beverley Jenkins

Reporting Inspector

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.