



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 Pentreuchaf
Pentreuchaf
Pwllheli
Gwynedd
LL53 8DZ**

Date of inspection: July 2014

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 Pentreuchaf is based in Ysgol Pentreuchaf, near Pwllhelli, in the Gwynedd local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 15 children per session. It opens for five mornings per week. Children are admitted from the age of two and a half years. There are currently 15 children on roll, ranging from two and a half to four years of age. There are currently seven three-year-olds receiving funding from the local authority, although not all were present during the inspection.

The language of the setting is Welsh. Almost all children have Welsh as their home language. There are very few children attending with additional learning needs.

There are three permanent members of staff, including the playgroup leader. All practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since 2012.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in November 2012 and by Estyn in April 2008.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the setting is good because:

- nearly all children enjoy their learning, and are eager to talk about what they do;
- practitioners create a successful, supportive environment, and as a result children feel safe, secure and cared for;
- practitioners work well together, ensuring consistent expectations in managing children's behaviour and expectations;
- learning experiences are stimulating and motivate children to learn; and
- the setting provides children with effective opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvements are adequate because:

- the leader and other practitioners are committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- effective teamwork and the positive ethos create a happy atmosphere for learning;
- the leader and practitioners have a clear picture of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement; and
- the strong partnership between the setting and its feeder primary school supports children's wellbeing effectively.

However:

- self-evaluation and improvement procedures do not focus well enough on the progress children make; and
- the management committee does not undertake staff appraisal for the leader nor monitor the setting well enough.

Recommendations

- A1 Improve the use of assessment to inform future planning needs accurately
- A2 Improve provision for the development of children's information and communication technology skills
- A3 Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement procedures are more measurable in terms of their impact on children's outcomes
- A4 Ensure that the management committee monitor the staff and the progress of the setting regularly

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language or 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.

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress and standards in 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

Practitioners plan well together and provide a wide range of stimulating and motivating learning experiences, across all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. Planning for the use of the outdoor areas is less well developed, as the setting has limited access to the school playground and field. There is an appropriate emphasis on play and learning through first hand experiences. For example, children talk about shells in the sand, and use them to create a beach for their adventures on a boat. As a result, children enjoy their learning, and are eager to talk about what they do.

Planning provides children with effective opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, many children learn to recognise their names during circle and registration time, and the use of puppets at story time develops children's speaking and listening skills well. Practitioners plan a suitable range of games for children to match, count and write numbers to ten and to recognise and name simple shapes. This supports the development of children's numeracy skills well. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and practitioners provide a range of suitable opportunities that develop children's independence effectively. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for the development of children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The setting is a Welsh medium one. Nearly all of the children speak Welsh at home. All practitioners use Welsh throughout the session to reinforce and develop children's Welsh language skills effectively. They provide children with appropriate opportunities to sing a range of songs and rhymes and to listen to short stories in Welsh. Children have appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions through celebrating dydd Calan gaeaf and St David's Day.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase principles for learning through play. They use a suitable range of teaching strategies that engage and encourage all children to learn. The setting has well-established routines and practitioners set clear expectations, and as a result all children feel safe, secure and cared for.

Practitioners are good language role models. They make good use of open-ended questions to encourage children to think for themselves and to find solutions to problems, for example “what do you need to do to be safe in the sun?” and “what might you see on a boat trip?”

Practitioners support the development of children’s literacy and mathematical skills well, and provide a suitable range of activities to develop these skills, for example counting and matching cups and saucers in the role-play area and printing using shapes in the creative area. They intervene appropriately in play situations to move children’s learning forward. There is a good balance between child-initiated learning and adult led activities.

The setting has recently introduced new assessment procedures. These provide a regular and detailed record of children’s achievements. Practitioners observe children informally on a daily basis and make suitable use of these observations to inform the assessment records. However, these informal observations are not recorded often enough to be effective in planning for the needs and abilities of individual children. Parents and carers receive a ‘llyfr trysor’ (treasure book) when their child leaves the setting, which provides them with a useful pictorial record of their child’s progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes children’s health and wellbeing well. It provides suitable opportunities for children to access a broad range of physical development activities. For example, outdoor sessions encourage children to use wheeled toys and to throw and catch equipment confidently. The setting provides children with the opportunity to take part in yoga sessions to develop their concentration and physical development skills.

Through discussions, practitioners effectively encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and take care of resources. Children are encouraged to share and take turns, for example when waiting to use the coloured sand trays. As a result, everyone works well together.

Practitioners provide an appropriate range of learning experiences, which fosters children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, the celebration of Chinese New Year. Children learn about the importance of caring for the living things in their immediate environment by making bird feeders. Children say a prayer at the end of the session and attend school events to develop their spiritual development.

The setting meets the needs of children with additional needs successfully. There is currently a very few children in the setting with additional learning needs. There are appropriate policies in place and practitioners access and act on the advice from a range of external agencies and professionals to support these children and their families well.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Appropriate policies are in place to promote safety and the management committee reviews them annually.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children feel valued and have equal access to the curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on celebrating diversity. The accommodation and site are within the school building, and are secure and well maintained. Practitioners make effective use of the available shared space. They set out and clear away outdoor learning activities daily. Despite this, practitioners succeed in creating a bright and engaging environment for learning. A range of attractive displays celebrates children's work and achievements well, reflects recent learning activities and helps to create a welcoming environment. The setting makes appropriate daily use of the outdoor area to support the development of children's mathematical skills and when learning about the world around them, for example counting and throwing hoops into marked coloured rings on the playground and watching the changing seasons in the fields surrounding the school. Learning resources are of good quality and easily accessible to the children during the session, and meet their needs effectively.

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

The playgroup leader is enthusiastic and highly committed to fulfilling her role well. She works effectively with the other practitioners to ensure the best provision for the children. Relationships with children, parents and carers and the feeder primary school are very strong and contribute significantly to a sense of community. The management committee are currently having difficulties in carrying out their role fully, which affects their management of the setting. Members of the committee are currently unable to visit the setting regularly to monitor the setting's progress. As a result, they do not have sufficient first-hand information about the setting. The leader, with support from the other practitioners and the local authority advisory teachers, monitors the setting's progress and areas for development appropriately, and provides suitable information to the management committee.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of staff. The leader has recently begun to manage the performance of the other practitioners, and practitioners have suitable targets, based on their roles in the setting. However, due to the difficulties experienced by the management committee, the performance management of the leader has not yet taken place this year. All practitioners have an appropriate understanding their roles and responsibilities. They are keen to

develop their practice, work closely with the advisory teachers and attend a wide range of appropriate training to improve the provision for the children.

The setting has made good progress in taking forward national initiatives, for example in developing literacy and numeracy skills, and it has implemented the Foundation Phase philosophy successfully. It is actively involved in the local authority's Healthy Pre-School Initiative, which has improved the provision for encouraging children's healthy lifestyles.

Improving quality: Adequate

All practitioners are clearly committed to improving quality. They work well together and have a clear focus on ensuring that learning experiences are interesting and motivating for children, and that children are happy and ready to learn.

The leader and other practitioners know the setting well. They have a sound understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve. They make appropriate use of an annual self-evaluation process and are able to identify priorities for improvement. Targets for improvement link closely to self-evaluation, although targets for development are not always specific enough to describe clearly the actions needed and the outcomes they expect. Recording on-going progress and the outcomes of monitoring are also inconsistent. Although planning for improvement is generally appropriate, it does not always focus sharply enough on how any actions taken are measureable in terms of improving outcomes for children.

Practitioners demonstrate a strong commitment to self-improvement. They attend training events, are open to new ideas and have responded positively to support from both the local authority advisory staff and the Mudiad Meithrin development officer.

The setting has made appropriate progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a strong partnership with parents. Parents value the quality of the learning experiences provided and the level of care and concern that the practitioners show their children. Practitioners provide parents with a broad range of information through the setting's noticeboard, daily personal contact, letters and a comprehensive information booklet. The setting seeks the views of parents and makes appropriate use of feedback.

The partnership between the setting and its feeder primary school, which is in the same building, is highly effective and supports the transition from the setting, to school very well. For example, children from the setting visit the school to share their work, take part in activities and the staff from the school visit the setting regularly. As a result, the setting prepares children very well for their next stage of education.

Due to its very rural location, the setting has limited opportunities to engage with the community beyond the local primary school. The setting makes good use of the immediate locality to learn about the world around them throughout the changing

seasons. Visitors to the setting include a yoga teacher who helps to develop the children's physical development.

The setting has sound partnership arrangements with the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, which benefit the children well.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting has enough appropriately trained staff and deploys them effectively.

Appropriate arrangements for staff appraisal and professional development are established. Links with the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin ensure that practitioners have access to an effective range of training. Practitioners share ideas well and make appropriate use of training to develop and improve their practice and to improve provision for children.

Managers have suitable systems for keeping spending under review. They match spending appropriately to the setting's priorities and areas for development. The leader makes effective use of a range of funding sources, to provide good quality resources for the setting, for example using grant funding to provide wheel toys to develop children's physical skills.

The setting successfully promotes activities that encourage children to learn and make appropriate progress; however, the role of the current management committee is limited in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the setting. As a result, the setting provides adequate 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

Mrs Janet Elizabeth Rowlands	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.