



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 Pili Pala
Old St. Mellons Community Village Hall
Heol Newydd
Trowbridge
Cardiff
CF3 1DW**

Date of inspection: July 2, 2013

by

Branwen Llewelyn Jones

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 Pili Pala is situated in the Old St. Mellons Community Village Hall in Cardiff East. It was opened in more than twenty years ago as Cylch Meithrin Llaneirwg and has since moved to these premises. It is based in the LLanrumney area of Cardiff and most of the children who attend are from this area. There are also some who come from St. Mellons, Trowbridge and Rumney. The setting is run in accordance with the recognised guidelines of Mudiad Meithrin and is registered under the Children Act 1989. It is managed by a Parents' Committee.

The setting provides care for children from the local community and surrounding areas for five days a week from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. and 1.00 to 3.30 p.m. during school terms. Children of two years and upwards attend and they leave after their fourth birthday when they begin their statutory education usually in Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bro Eirwg and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen y Pîl.

The hall is used by several other organisations. This means that the staff must set out the equipment at the beginning of every session and put it away at the end. There is a very large hall which is used for activities, physical exercise and dance, a stage, a kitchen and appropriate toilets for the children. The large grassed area outside is very attractive. It contains mature shrubs, trees and is surrounded by a hedge.

This is a Welsh medium setting but all the sixty one children who attend all come from English speaking backgrounds. Of these, thirty five are funded, twelve by Flying start. The area is recognised as one which is disadvantaged with a high level of unemployment and a high percentage of single parent families. Children from different ethnic backgrounds are welcome and there were some present during the inspection. No child has English as a second language. At the time of the inspection, one child of three years of age was identified with additional learning needs.

Nine members of staff are employed including the leader and all work with the children. All have appropriate qualifications and experience in early years education and almost all have learned Welsh. All have received training in child protection and safety and in first aid. The last inspection by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales was conducted in July 2011 and the setting was last inspected by Estyn in November 2006.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because:

- the children receive excellent support and care which ensure they flourish in the happy and enabling atmosphere of the setting where they feel very safe;
- the learning environment and relationships between adults and children and with parents are outstanding;
- children's achieve well and make good progress from their starting point;
- they enjoy a wide variety of interesting experiences which match very well their needs and interests;
- the teaching is of a consistently good standard and children's learning is supported well;
- practitioners use a wide range of imaginative experiences which engage the interest of all;
- children are confident and independent learners who are actively engaged in their learning, and ;
- the assessment by observation is used effectively to plan the next steps

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- there is a very strongly shared culture of professional reflection which is founded in excellent self-evaluation;
- the leader has a very clear vision of the way forward which is shared by all;
- she has succeeded in ensuring that all aspects of provision meet the challenging needs of the children and enable all to succeed;
- the leader has created an outstanding ethos which is very caring and is centred on the needs of the child;

- she has an outstanding sense of purpose and level of commitment to the setting;
- the excellent system of induction, mentoring and appraisal has a very positive effect on practitioners' performance and children's achievements;
- practitioners have an excellent understanding of how young children learn;
- excellent strategic partnerships with key agencies consistently improve children's learning and wellbeing;
- the setting demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous professional development to improve practitioners' knowledge of current developments in early years education, and
- practitioners work exceptionally well as a team.

Recommendations

R1. Improve further the children's skills in the Welsh language

R2. Improve children's assessment files to include more detailed information about their progress

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Although children enter the setting with a wide range of abilities and language skills, the commitment of practitioners and their tireless efforts enables them all to make good progress from their starting point. All engage energetically and enthusiastically in their learning, make confident choices, concentrate and persevere well with their activities and all play whole-heartedly. As a result, all achieve well in relationship to their stage of development.

Despite having no Welsh at all when they start, all learn words, everyday phrases, rhymes and songs, understand simple instructions and sometimes use Welsh words when they play. They love to listen to Welsh stories and handle books like readers with their key workers during their daily book time when they choose their favourite stories and relax on cushions for extended periods listening and joining in with parts they know. Although they do not yet use much of the Welsh they know outside Welsh sessions, by the time they leave, they have a good foundation in the Welsh language having made very good progress from knowing no Welsh at all. They all love to make marks and a very good feature is boys' enjoyment of mark-making both in and outdoors.

The progress of all children in developing the skills of communication, numeracy and ICT is good. All enjoy music-making, dance and using puppets to communicate thoughts and feelings and all love to paint producing colourful paintings. Their numeracy skills develop well and they count to ten using their fingers and enjoy mark-making with numbers when they fill in lottery tickets. Boys in particular enjoy using real money in the shop and all children's number skills develop well when they buy things in their mini-market using a till to accept money and giving change. They use the computer and compact disk player confidently and this helps them to develop good early ICT skills.

Wellbeing: Excellent

The outstanding relationships within the setting and the constant positive reinforcement of practitioners which ensures that all children experience the pleasure of success help the children develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. Every child, without exception, is eager to come to the nursery and enjoys every minute there. All come in confidently and go immediately to their choice of the range of activities set out for them. They become engrossed very quickly in what they are doing and give it their all. All the children are hungry to learn and their deeply engaging experiences make learning a natural thing for them.

They all flourish in an outstandingly supportive, vibrant and enabling learning community. The excellent quality of relationships, the constant reassurance of adults and their gentleness towards the children make them all feel very safe and happy and helps them develop good behaviour. All are polite; they care about their friends and play very well together. Adults give the children constant opportunities to make choices and decisions about what they do in the nursery and this helps the children to develop excellent levels of independence, confidence and consideration for others.

There is a very strong emphasis on giving enough time for snacks when the children enjoy talking with their friends and adults and they develop excellent social skills. The children enjoy their fruit which they know is good for them and wash their hands before eating. They love physical activities and describe and demonstrate vividly how exercise makes their heart beat faster and makes them breathless.

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

Adults plan well a wide range of interesting and imaginative experiences which ensure that all children enjoy their learning. It meets their interests well because the adults ask the children what they would like to find out about and do and they use this as their starting point. As a result, the provision engages children for extended periods in activities which are meaningful to them. Long, medium and short term planning is based on the Foundation Phase areas of learning and ensures that children are actively involved in their learning. Adults work well together to make sure that planning reflects very well the child-centered philosophy of the foundation Phase. Practitioners use interesting themes to make learning relevant and purposeful and to build steadily on what children know, can do and understand. They work together very effectively as a team to implement planned activities but are also flexible and if the children are particularly interested in an activity or something unexpected happens, the children are encouraged to follow their interests.

Children choose from the wide range of enticing activities provided and this develops well their self-confidence and independence. It also ensures that the children engage equally well in directed activities because they have good opportunities to make choices. This balance of activities and practitioners' ability to intervene very effectively during activities to move children's learning on are good features. Adults develop children's literacy; numeracy and ICT skills well in every area of learning and ensure that all make good progress towards the Foundation Phase outcomes. They also provide many opportunities for children to enjoy new and exciting experiences, to solve problems and they encourage them to think for themselves developing their thinking skills well. Practitioners give children good opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills and an understanding of living things through their good use of the outdoors. Adults know the children very well through their system of key workers and they plan focused activities to meet their differing needs and abilities and help them make good progress.

As a result of the rich and vibrant learning experiences and positive relationships, children develop confidence, tolerance and good social skills which enable them to accept quite naturally children and adults from different backgrounds and cultures. The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the Welsh culture and traditions is good and they celebrate Welsh festivals such as St. David's day and Santes Dwynwen, sing the Welsh national anthem which they know and make traditional Welsh foods. The Welsh language is developed well through specific sessions which are lively and interesting and by the adults who have learned it themselves and provide very good role models. Practitioners encourage the children to speak Welsh at all times and develop their vocabulary and language patterns through rhymes, songs and stories which contain rich vocabulary and language. Though the children make very good progress from their starting point they do not yet have sufficient skills to use it naturally when they play. Awareness of sustainability and the impact they have on the environment is also well promoted through recycling and making compost to feed the plants they grow from seed.

Teaching: Good

The experienced and well qualified adults use an imaginative range of strategies to make the children want to learn. Meaningful activities such as role play in the shop using real money ensure that they learn naturally through play. The teaching meets well the requirements of the Foundation Phase and its philosophy because it is child-centred, flexible and interesting. They have high expectations of the children and they enable the children to meet these through their key worker system which gives them an excellent understanding of the children and helps them support the children and meet their individual needs. Adults manage behaviour in an exemplary way by gentle reinforcement and being sensitive to their different personalities. They support children's learning well by using open-ended questions which develop well children's thinking skills.

Assessment is based on observations of the children which are recorded informally and then used to inform children's individual files. These are discussed in staff meetings and then used to help decide the next steps in planning. Although the children's files give an informative picture of children's progress overall they do not contain sufficient detail about their achievements. Parents receive the files when their children leave together with reports on their progress and achievements in all the areas of learning. Practitioners are always ready to speak with parents or carers to discuss their child's progress before and after sessions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Adults have created a very caring and supportive environment and adults guide children sensitively in all things. Staff have a positive influence on children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Practitioners help children learn about the importance of fairness, honesty and truth by modelling these themselves. They give the children good opportunities to socialise at snack times and with visitors from the community and these help children develop a good understanding of the importance of respect for others. All children know the difference between right and wrong in the

context of their lives in the setting and they have regular opportunities to make decisions and choices about their life in the playgroup. Children are encouraged to take responsibility, show initiative and to behave well. They develop a good understanding of living and sharing with others and are encouraged to look at and think about the wonders of the natural world in their lovely outdoor area. The celebration of festivals and the making and tasting of different foods gives them an awareness of different cultural traditions. Adults develop well children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit by providing healthy snacks and through regular physical exercise sessions.

Children are given time to settle in gradually when they begin and they are visited by teachers from the schools they will go to before they leave which helps them settle well in the nursery class. There are good, well-established arrangements with local professional support and services to provide children with specialist support when needed. Children identified with ALN have full access to all areas of learning and all have access to all that goes on in the setting. Parents are involved well with their children's education.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for safeguarding children. Risk assessments are carried out when needed and all practitioners are trained in first aid. The leader is the child protection officer and all staff have received recent training and know what steps to take. The procedures reflect the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008). The setting draws on expertise such as the health service when required.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting has an exceptionally enabling, caring and inclusive ethos which is firmly centred on the needs of the child. The wide range of children's backgrounds is used in a natural and exemplary way to celebrate diversity and as a result all adults and children are tolerant, kind and there is no trace of anxiety. Exemplary caring and affectionate relationships form the foundation of the life and work of the cylch. Practitioners know the children and their needs and interests very well as a result of the key worker system which the nursery uses and they consistently promote high standards of behaviour and ensure equality.

The ratios of staff to children are excellent and this, together with resources of a very good quality, contributes considerably to the excellence of provision for the Foundation Phase curriculum. The accommodation and resources are excellent and provide a very stimulating and inviting learning environment. The sloping grassed area outdoors provides excellent opportunities for the children to develop problem-solving skills by experimenting with things they can push and pull. Its different areas provide very good opportunities for imaginative play and the outdoor area enhances exceptionally well their learning. The setting is extending very successfully the integration of indoor and outdoor learning.

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

The child and his/her needs and unique interests are central to everything in the setting where the leader has created an outstandingly enabling ethos which is focused on children's wellbeing and on ensuring that each child fulfills his/her potential. She succeeds in achieving this because of her exemplary commitment, outstanding sense of purpose and very clear vision of the way forward. She gives very clear direction to the life and work of the setting and the improvement process which is grounded firmly in a thorough understanding of how young children learn. She leads by personal example and has very high expectations of all which she inspires them to achieve. Her philosophy is exemplified in the outstanding level of care and support, the child-centred experiences provided and her constant striving to ensure that the setting improves continuously on its current performance. She and her deputy understand and fulfill their roles exceptionally well and conscientiously and share values, aims and objectives by personal example and through professional discussion. The leader delegates well to her deputy and she is an inspiring and excellent manager of staff, developing practitioners very well through professional training. The effect of this is seen in the imaginative child-centred provision and extremely enabling climate for learning which she has created.

The setting improvement plan which is derived from the setting's self-evaluation gives clear direction to the nursery. The leader knows the setting's performance very well and uses robust information to make very effective decisions. She discharges her legal duties fully and meets all national and local priorities. All practitioners fulfill their roles exceptionally effectively and all contribute to strategic planning enthusiastically.

The leader has implemented excellent procedures for inducting, mentoring and appraising staff which have a very positive impact on practitioners' performance and, as a result, on children's achievements. Her inspiring leadership and excellent interpersonal skills have enabled her to develop a very happy team of practitioners who work extremely well with one another. The relationships she has developed with parents are excellent and built on trust and this contributes greatly to children's wellbeing and progress.

The management committee is very well informed about everything that happens in the setting. Its members understand and fulfil their roles very well, for example in their exhaustive, successful search for suitable new premises. They are well informed about the performance of the setting which they discuss in their regular meetings. The committee makes good use of thorough information to make effective decisions and it fulfills its legal responsibilities.

Improving quality: Excellent

The procedures for self-evaluation are excellent. The setting identifies extremely accurately its strengths and areas for improvement. The leader is extremely proactive in seeking parents' and carers' opinions which are considered carefully by practitioners at staff meetings and are often implemented. Open parents' and carers' meetings are held periodically in order to gather opinion and suggestions thus ensuring they are involved well in self-evaluation and that it reflects very well the contribution of all stakeholders; this is an excellent feature. The leader makes very effective use of the support of the local authority's Foundation Phase advisory teacher and her recommendations are implemented effectively.

Following the self-evaluation process, a setting improvement plan is produced which shows an excellent awareness of the setting's performance. The targets set for improvement are very precise, well-prioritised and achievable and ensure positive gains for all children. The plan gives extremely clear direction to the life and work of the cylch. Progress towards achieving its targets is monitored regularly. It focuses on raising standards by setting challenging targets to improve provision and on improving further the cylch's role in the community. It takes into excellent account the imminent move to new premises and focuses on ensuring that these will be used to improve provision, strengthen links with the main schools it feeds and enrich the curriculum. This will ensure a positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting works in an exemplary way with many agencies in order to improve provision and ensure the best possible outcomes in a challenging area. The very close partnership with Flying Start in terms of training and funding has a very beneficial impact on children's wellbeing and progress. The leader works closely with the LA advisory teacher on planning, self-evaluation and training and she, in turn, provides both support and challenge which help the setting to move forward and improve provision. This impacts significantly on children's progress and wellbeing and is an excellent feature. The partnership with the Mudiad Meithrin officer has a very positive impact on the provision for the Welsh language for both practitioners and children and her support is very productive.

Relationships with parents are excellent and this partnership is vital to the success of the setting. Their views are sought regularly and considered very seriously. There are excellent channels of communication with them through newsletters and informally on a daily basis and some come in to help on a voluntary basis. The management committee is composed of parents and they support the setting in many ways including fundraising.

There are very fruitful relationships with the main schools to which the children transfer. Teachers from the schools visit the children in the cylch and the children go to visit the schools before they start in the nursery. The setting also makes very good use of resources within the community to enhance children's learning such as the library which they visit regularly.

Resource management: Excellent

The cylch is exceptionally well staffed by very experienced, committed and well qualified practitioners. They are deployed very well through their system of key workers in order to make the most effective use of their expertise and ensure good provision. They use resources indoors and outdoors extremely effectively in order to provide interesting and active experiences for the children. They consider very carefully the effect of resources on learning and teaching and plan for resource needs in the future. For example, the improvement plan includes resource priorities for the new premises. They make excellent use of the outdoors to develop children's skills in every learning area and this is one of the main strengths of the provision.

The setting's resources and funding are used exceptionally well to offer the best provision. Expenditure is considered very carefully and prioritised in order that improvement targets will be met. Financial decisions are evaluated effectively by the leader and management committee in order to ensure positive outcomes in raising standards. The setting provides excellent value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Sixteen replies were received to the parent/guardian questionnaire. Nearly all said they are happy with the setting's provision. Any strengths or areas for development identified in the questionnaires by individual parents were considered during the inspection. Discussions with a large selection of parents during the inspection indicated they are happy with all aspects of the setting's provision.

Responses to discussions with children

During the inspection children were very keen to come to the nursery and all went confidently to the activity they chose. Their relationships with their friends and adults are excellent and they are all extremely happy in the setting. Children who had only just started in the cylch bonded very quickly with their key worker and the other adults and clearly felt very safe. The welcoming and inclusive ethos ensures they all feel happy and secure. They enjoyed speaking to adults, including visitors, and asked and answered questions confidently. All children show a very strong sense of trust and they know that the practitioners are there to help them.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Branwen Llewelyn Jones

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 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.