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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Porth
St Paul's Church Hall
Birchgrove Street
Porth
CF42 6RL**

Date of inspection: March 2015

by

**Mr Eifion R Morgan
Reporting Inspector**

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 Porth is a Welsh medium setting located in St. Paul's Church hall in a residential part of Porth in the Rhondda Valley. The setting has used the current accommodation since 2002 but is due to vacate the property shortly. Children attending the setting come from the immediate vicinity that is a typical valley community. It is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accommodate a maximum of 24 children in any session and children are admitted from aged two and a half years. Children move onto the next stage of their education following their third birthday to the local Welsh medium primary school

Currently there are 24 children on roll, seven are three year olds of whom three are funded by the local authority early years educational provision.

The children come from a wide range of family backgrounds. Most have English as their home language; a few have one Welsh speaking parent. Very few are from homes where Welsh is the language of the home.

No child attending at present has been identified as having additional learning needs, although in the past the setting has accepted and made arrangements to accommodate such children. No child is from an ethnic background.

There are four permanent staff. The leader is supported by a deputy leader and two assistants. During the inspection there were two students on placement.

The setting was previously inspected by the CSSIW in April 2013 and by Estyn in January 2009.

Summary

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

Current performance

The settings current performance is good because:

- all children make good progress in line with their age and ability;
- all children acquire good oral skills in Welsh;
- children are well cared for and are happy and secure at the setting;
- practitioners plan a wide range of exciting learning experiences which motivate and challenge children;
- relationships between adults and children and between children are very good;
- the setting gives valuable and effective support to children who have been identified with additional learning needs. .

Prospects for improvement

The settings prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader is enthusiastic and has a clear vision for the future for the setting;
- staff work together well as a team and have high expectations that lead to high standards of achievement and wellbeing;
- practitioners attend professional training courses and other settings regularly and are willing to try new ways of working;
- the setting receives valuable support from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin staff.
- the setting is self-evaluative and there is a good track record of implementing new ideas.

Recommendations

R1. Use assessment results consistently in planning to ensure that activities are well matched to children's ability and prior achievements.

R2. Review the taught curriculum to ensure consistently good provision across all areas of learning.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children make good progress during their time at the setting. Many are well motivated to learn and engage on activities for sustained periods of time. These children have consistently good recall of previous learning and are able to voice their opinions identifying their likes such as their favourite songs and rhymes. Overall, all children achieve well, particularly in their acquisition of the Welsh language.

Most children's literacy skills are developing well. Many listen attentively during circle time and are keen to answer questions. Nearly all have a developing understanding of the Welsh language being able to use single words and phrases in their responses. These children have a sufficient Welsh vocabulary to describe the weather, can count in Welsh and recognise and name basic colours. A few children answer in complete sentences. All children recognise their name on the registration board and a few match letters to their names and can pronounce the initial letter of their name. Early reading skills are developing with many children selecting their favourite story books in the reading area. Children hold books appropriately and turn pages logically. Many children are also developing basic writing skills and know the purpose of writing.

All children's competence in the Welsh language is sufficiently good to enable them to continue their education through the medium of Welsh.

Many children use number naturally in daily activities and nearly all children count by rote to 10. Many children, at different times, count, sort and match objects correctly. Many have a developing mathematical vocabulary such as "big" and "small", "full" and "empty". Overall, however, children's concept of number and numeracy is not as well developed as their competence in literacy.

Many children use small tools, such as pencils, paint brushes and chalk with good control and show a good level of competence when undertaking physical activities such as riding a tricycle.

Children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well. Many are able, with some help, to manoeuvre screen icons. A few children are developing skills to enable them to begin to use programmable toys and most children are thoroughly competent when playing with digital toys.

Parents are very satisfied with the progress their children are making.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enter the setting enthusiastically and are clearly looking forward excitedly to the morning activities. They view what activities have been set out for them and select what catches their interest. Most children settle down quickly and are well motivated to learn. Many show high levels of concentration and perseverance, such as when acting out ideas in their role play corner or looking at books.

All children behave well; they are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Many children show affection towards each other when playing in pairs and small groups and most are willing to share and take turns. Most children have a pleasing attitude and tackle new experiences confidently showing a growing level of self-confidence. Several children were happy to talk with the inspector and to explain what they were doing.

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

The setting plans a wide range of exciting learning experiences for the children that successfully engage them. Activities are stimulating experiences and give children a broad and balanced curriculum, encompassing the six areas of learning.

Practitioners plan collaboratively, making good use of children's ideas and planning is sufficiently flexible to take in children's ideas.

Learning experiences are well focused on enabling all children to progress towards meeting the Foundation Phase outcomes. The curriculum builds systematically on children's knowledge, understanding and skills.

Practitioners work well together as a team; they know the children well and generally plan appropriate tasks. This results in particularly good language development resulting from the good use of the language by the staff. Planning for continuous and enhanced provision is successful in motivating the children but is not always well matched to children's ability. Children, particularly the older and more able are not always sufficiently challenged and encouraged to think independently.

Children have effective opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Children are immersed in the Welsh language and all children, to varying degrees, use the language – very few being natural Welsh speakers. Practitioners ensure sufficient opportunities for children to develop and extend the language through the use of questioning and praise. Planning to fully develop children's numeracy skills is underdeveloped. The setting plans good opportunities for children's ICT skill development.

The teaching room is well set out with activity areas well matched to the requirements of the Foundation Phase. This provides good opportunities for children to work independently or in small groups and for them to make decisions about their own learning. They are encouraged to make choices and this successfully develops their thinking skills. Activity areas provide a good range of interesting activities – some based on children's ideas. One activity area is based on a child's experience of his grandfather's home improvement and represents a builder's yard.

Planning is successful in helping children form relationships and to show respect and tolerance for others in the group. Many children are confident and talk willingly to the Inspector. They are keen to show what they have done and happily undertake new experiences. Practitioners use the spacious interior environment effectively to include, for example, opportunities for physical activities. The outside, whilst inadequate, is used imaginatively and visits to the locality make a worthwhile addition in children's learning. In this urban environment the inclusion of road safety is a valuable addition to children's learning.

Children have regular and appropriate opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate important days, such as St. David's day.

Children have opportunities to learn about people less fortunate than themselves, for example, children in Africa. However, children's knowledge of other cultures and traditions is underdeveloped.

The setting gives sufficient experiences for children to understand the importance of recycling and sustainability. Waste foods are collected for recycling.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They are enthusiastic and strongly committed to their role of ensuring that all children are active learners and achieve their full potential. Staff fully appreciate and actively support the philosophy that children in the setting learn through play.

Practitioners are successful in creating a positive learning environment where children feel safe and secure and have the self-confidence to work independently. There is a good balance between child-initiated learning and adult-led activities and children are confident to try out new experiences.

Practitioners have high expectations of all children and use questioning well to extend children's learning, particularly to develop their oral skills. Overall, staff are good language role models and this enhances children's language skills.

Effective teamwork and well organised sessions ensure a good pace to morning activities ensuring that children are actively involved. Positive behaviour strategies

and the good use of praise successfully ensure children remain on task for significant periods of time.

Relationships between adults and children and between children are consistently good.

Practitioners know the children very well. Regular observational assessment by key workers is noted and form part of the records of assessment collected for each child. This gives a clear indication of their progress and is made available to parents and the feeder primary school. However, assessment results are not consistently used to underpin the planning of learning experiences so that activities are well matched to children's ability and prior achievement. The next steps in individual children's learning are not always identified. Parents also value informal discussion with the staff and are very satisfied with the progress their children are making, particularly in learning the Welsh language. Parents value the information they receive, such as Welsh words used. Parents, however, have limited knowledge of what they can do to help their child to improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting successfully promotes children's health and wellbeing. Staff respect children as individuals and are sensitive to their needs. They welcome children as they arrive and care and support them through encouragement and praise. Induction arrangements and daily contact with parents and carers is well established and beneficial and contributes significantly to children's emotional and social development. Overall, relationships between staff, children and parents are good and beneficial to the children. Day-to-day activities are effective in developing and maintaining children's ideas of keeping healthy and this includes healthy snacks, cleaning their teeth and taking regular exercise. Snack times are very effective social occasions giving children responsibility such as in preparing foods, helping to distribute the food and clearing away. Children also engage in conversation during snack time and learn to take turns and not to hurry unduly.

Activities, such as collecting waste and uneaten foods for recycling help children to understand the importance of recycling and composting waste. Rainwater is collected to water plants grown by the children.

Daily activities and experiences make a positive contribution to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are encouraged to care for and help each other, such as during visits. Children are happy in the company of adults at the setting and are willing to ask for support when required. Staff are good role models and children learn respect, honesty and fairness as an integral part of daily lives. The setting is an active part of the community and children come to understand the different roles people play, such as dance instructors, police and air hostesses.

The setting is a secure learning environment. Doors are kept locked so no one can enter or leave unannounced. Children are always supervised and never left unattended but given sufficient freedom to select different activities and to work independently. The setting's provision for safeguarding children fully meets requirements and gives no cause for concern.

The setting's arrangements for identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs (ALN) is outstanding. The policy which is agreed by the Management Committee is comprehensive and procedures well established. Children suspected of having ALN are identified at an early stage of their development and their specific needs identified. These children have full access to all areas of learning. In conjunction with specialist staff the specific requirements of each child is identified and individual educational plans are formulated. Plans are detailed and identify the next steps in the child's learning. Such plans are regularly reviewed and parents are actively involved at each stage. This ensures that the child's specific needs are met. An individual member of staff takes specific responsibility and supports the child. Such support meets the differing needs of individual children without adversely affecting the breadth, balance and continuity of children's learning. Such support has been provided for children with, for example, children hard of hearing and others with speech and language impediments. Staff have received the necessary training as part of their professional development.

A good and notable aspect of the work is that children with ALN are fully integrated and progress well in all aspects of their learning. Parents speak very well of such support and the exceptionally good progress their child/ren have made.

Careful records are kept and such recorded information accompanies the child to their next stage of education, as well as oral communication with the nursery class teacher.

The setting is recognised as an exemplar of good practice.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community that offers equal access to learning for all children. There are good procedures in place to encourage children to develop tolerant attitudes and this results in everyone working well together. The warm, friendly ethos apparent in the setting effectively promotes a feeling of wellbeing and respect for differences and diversity.

Children's behaviour is skilfully managed using positive behaviour strategies and has eliminated any oppressive behaviour. Parents fully support the setting and are pleased with their children's developing attitudes and behaviour.

The setting is appropriately staffed with well qualified and experienced practitioners who were, during the inspection helped by two students on placement.

Resources are accessible to children, are of good quality and well matched to the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum and children's specific needs.

The accommodation is secure and well maintained. Attractive wall displays reinforce children's learning. The outside provision is small and inadequate, however, the staff make the best use possible of the outdoors and compensate children with a good range of visits to the locality.

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

The leader provides a clear vision for the setting as a caring, supportive environment for all children where they are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Children are happy and eager to learn and acquire a good competence in the Welsh language that enables them to pursue their education through the medium of Welsh. Staff work together very well as a team to secure high standards of wellbeing and achievement of all children.

The setting has a welcoming ethos where all children are valued as individuals. Children are confident individuals; make decisions and behave well. Parents value the setting and the experiences their children get.

The leader is enthusiastic and fully committed to the setting. She has worked tirelessly to provide the best possible provision for children and in this she is well supported by her deputy and staff. Through visits to other settings and acting on the advice of local authority and Mudiad Meithrin staff she has initiated worthwhile improvements, such as the redevelopment of the reading area to the benefit of the children. Children now use the location regularly and it has improved their interest in books.

Overall, the indoor learning environment is attractive with learning areas set out appropriately to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. The outdoor environment is inadequate and has no potential for improvement. The leader has visited other settings to ascertain what can be achieved to improve outdoor education and has put into effect some useful visits, including highlighting road safety for children. Local visits, such as to the shops and park are good attempts to compensate for the poor outdoor facilities.

Children are regularly assessed and the information provided for the local feeder school is very beneficial and appreciated. The key worker roles also have ensured that staff are knowledgeable of children's progress.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of all staff. This has enabled staff needs to be identified and addressed through attendance at professional development courses. Courses, such as those designed for staff with specific responsibilities, such as for overseeing children with additional learning needs, have been particularly beneficial and the support provided for such children and the consequent improvement in their language skills.

The leader works very well with the management committee who are well informed of the setting's progress and areas for development.

The setting has addressed national and local authority priorities, such as developing literacy, encouraging healthy eating and dental hygiene.

Improving quality: Good

The leader has a thorough knowledge of the setting's performance and a good understanding of the self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation document is a well constructed and detailed assessment of the setting's strengths and areas for development. All staff and advisory staff have been involved in its production and it is firmly focused on improving provision where possible with the subsequent raising of standards and children's wellbeing. The setting has responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

Staff meet regularly to discuss the setting's provision and children's achievement and progress. They are actively involved in monitoring the provision, children's achievement and identifying where improvement can be made.

Targets for development are realistic and achievable and are firmly directed at improving children's achievement and wellbeing. A suitable timetable, responsible staff, cost and success criteria have been identified.

The setting co-operates very closely with the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority support teacher who provide the setting with good advice and suggestions. This has resulted in staff visiting other settings; staff visiting and staff attending relevant professional training courses. The result is that children benefit from the training and advice staff receive.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a worthwhile and beneficial range of strategic partners who contribute well to extending the provision and raising children's standards.

Children's learning and wellbeing are substantially enhanced through the close co-operation between the setting and parents and carers. Parents are aware of some of the important vocabulary their children learn and this helps with language development. However, this has not been sufficiently extended to other areas of

learning, such as numeracy. The setting also co-operates effectively with parents on behavioural issues to good effect. Parents also work closely with the setting in order to promote healthy eating and drinking.

There is a very beneficial relationship with the Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority support teacher. This partnership has successfully provided guidance on developing and supporting practitioner's skills and resulted in raised standards of the children. This has also given useful advice which has a positive effect on the setting's self-evaluation procedures.

The partnership with the local primary school is well established and very worthwhile in familiarising the children with the school and the reception class teacher. Children, by the time they leave are well prepared for the next stage in their education. This has proved very effective where children have additional learning needs.

The local community, though largely a built up environment, is well used and makes a positive contribution to children's wellbeing and their knowledge of people who help them.

The setting has appropriate arrangements with specialist agencies locally. This has proved very worthwhile as far as children with ALN are concerned.

Resource management: Good

The leader manages all resources efficiently. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced; their roles are clearly defined and they work together well as a team. Staff appraisal is effective in identifying training needs. This is a well established learning community. Staff have partaken in worthwhile professional development courses and these have impacted well on the standards achieved by the children. Staff reflect on their own practice, make best use of their skills and expertise and share good practice with other settings.

Funds are allocated appropriately according to established priorities. The setting is suitably resourced to meet the needs of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Resources are of good quality and readily accessible to children.

The Management Committee oversee spending and evaluate in terms of its impact on children's achievement and wellbeing.

Considering the quality of teaching, the learning experiences and the care and guidance children receive, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.