



*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

## **Report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog  
St John's Vestry  
Ffordd Penamser  
Porthmadog  
Gwynedd  
LL49 9PA**

**Date of inspection: May 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:

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

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## Context

The nursery group was established in 1986 in order to provide Welsh-medium nursery education for children in Porthmadog and the area. At present, 20 three-year-old children attend the nursery group and 18 are funded by Gwynedd local authority. Two-and-a-half hour sessions are held on five mornings a week but not all pupils choose to attend all sessions. The nursery group is staffed by a leader, two other members of staff and one part-time member.

Children come to the nursery group after they reach two and a half years of age. The vast majority of them transfer to the local primary school in the term following their third birthday.

Welsh is the language of the home of about half of the three-year-old children and a good number of the remainder have one parent who speaks Welsh.

Children of all abilities and from all social and linguistic backgrounds come to the nursery group. A very few have additional learning activities and receive individual support from a teaching assistant. At present, very few children of ethnic minority descent attend the nursery group.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in July 2013 and by Estyn in July 2008.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Cylch Meithrin Porthmadog's current performance is good because:

- nearly all children show positive attitudes towards learning;
- most children make good progress during their time at the nursery group;
- children's speaking and listening skills develop well;
- many concentrate on a task very successfully;
- nearly all children's behaviour is good;
- the nursery group provides a range of activities that gain pupils' interest effectively; and
- staff ensure successfully that children persevere and keep on task, and many do this for an extended period.

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the setting has a good history of implementing change, which has a positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing;
- leaders give good attention to local and national priorities and there is an effective focus on developing literacy and numeracy;
- staff have a positive and active attitude towards development and training;
- the setting has a range of effective partnerships; and
- it makes regular use of external support.

However:

- leadership is not shared effectively enough;
- the role of the management committee in holding the leader to account for standards and provision has not been developed effectively enough; and
- the self-evaluation process is comparatively new and has not identified areas to be developed thoroughly enough.

## Recommendations

- R1 Develop children's problem-solving skills, especially the most able children
- R2 Improve planning by including all practitioners in the process and ensure that focus tasks are clear and have been developed thoroughly
- R3 Strengthen the assessment process by including the whole staff and use the information collected to feed into planning in order to move children forward
- R4 Ensure regular use of the outdoor area in order to ensure suitable opportunities for children to develop physically and to enrich their experiences
- R5 Develop the management committee's strategic role in order that they are completely aware of their duties
- R6 Ensure that the self-evaluation process is more inclusive and identifies aspects to be improved more thoroughly

### **What happens next?**

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

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

Good

#### Standards: Good

During their period in the nursery group, most children make good progress and develop positive attitudes towards learning.

Many children develop language skills that are relevant to their age and background. Nearly all listen attentively to instructions and respond to them successfully. They speak pleasantly about activities and use appropriate vocabulary. Many enjoy and are keen to listen to stories and respond well to the practitioner's questioning. They enjoy singing and joining in with the actions that are linked to the songs. Many develop their early writing skills effectively by making marks and they have an increasing understanding of the purpose of writing. The few children who arrive at the nursery group without any Welsh or English make good progress when developing language skills.

Many children develop a good understanding of number and count, identify and name numbers up to five confidently; a few count up to 12. Many use a purposeful range of mathematical language with each other when playing. For example, they describe toys and objects as 'small', 'medium' and 'big' when responding to the context of a story. Nearly all are able to group objects of various kinds according to colour, size and shape correctly.

Within the limits of the nursery group's location, many children develop physical skills such as using small tools like paintbrushes and scissors successfully, and show good control. Children's independent learning skills and thinking skills in terms of choosing activities and focusing on a task have been developed very successfully. Children's skills, especially those of the more able, in solving problems, have not been developed effectively yet.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children arrive at the setting happy and settle in quickly. They settle well to the group's established routine. Nearly all of them show positive attitudes towards learning. They persevere for considerable periods on tasks, such as tearing and gluing paper, and completing jigsaws.

Nearly all children behave very well and are courteous to each other and to adults. Most children co-operate well and show consideration for each other's feelings, often without the help of an adult. All pupils help to tidy up when asked and they use equipment carefully.

During snack time, most children display good social skills. They say 'please' and 'thank you' and are aware of the need for good personal hygiene.

Most children choose play activities confidently and concentrate well on a task for extended periods.

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

Practitioners understand the requirements of the Foundation Phase well, and plan appropriately in order to ensure that children receive purposeful experiences within the six areas of learning. However, planning is not thorough enough, as it does not identify where provision is continuous or enhanced, or what the focus activity is. As a result, the more able children in particular are not extended sufficiently.

In the nursery group itself, activities gain children's interest well. In general, provision gives valuable opportunities for children to foster and practise their information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy skills successfully. There are many opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills through interesting activities such as mixing paint and contributing to a mural. However, children do not have enough opportunities to solve problems or to experience continuous activities in the outdoor area.

Practitioners ensure that children take an active part in their learning and receive regular opportunities to make decisions about what they would like to do. This develops confidence and increasing independence successfully in most children.

There is effective provision for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the culture and traditions of Wales, for example through celebrating St David's Day and Saint Dwynwen's day.

The setting does not make enough use of visitors to enrich children's learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn about the importance of recycling are scarce.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

The range and quality of teaching methods are effective. Regular use is made of purposeful questioning in order to stimulate children's natural curiosity. Practitioners lead learning and manage groups very effectively, and ensure that children are clear about what is expected of them, for example the sessions involving rolling and cutting dough, painting and tearing and gluing. Staff are successful in ensuring that children persevere and stay on task, and many do this for extended periods. This is an obvious strength of the nursery group's work.

Purposeful use is made of new resources in order to stimulate children and develop their skills. Staff manage children's behaviour very skilfully and intervene purposefully to support children most of the time. They make effective use of the role-play areas such as the shop and the kitchen to motivate children to develop language and numeracy skills and make decisions.

The nursery group has adopted the local authority's revised assessment procedures recently. This means assessing all children on entry and then making daily observations to be included in the progress records in the six areas of learning. However, this has not yet had time to be embedded or to have a positive effect on standards. Although staff know the children well, there are not formal enough procedures to share information about them among practitioners. At present, the process is too dependent on the leader and not enough attention is paid to strategies to move children forward.

Information for parents at the end of the year conveys children's developments across the areas of the Foundation Phase appropriately.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting provides effectively for ensuring the health, wellbeing and moral, spiritual social and cultural development of children in their care. Staff foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect continuously through everyday activities. They encourage children at all times to promote their self-respect, confidence and take turns. Snack time is a social occasion in which children have an opportunity to talk to each other. Staff provide effective encouragement in order for children to take responsibility for serving the various snacks. However, not enough opportunities are given for children to appreciate the importance of sustainability.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern. Good care is taken when children arrive and when they are collected.

There are robust processes in place for supporting children who have additional learning needs. Regular reviews of children's progress ensure that practitioners identify individuals' needs at an early stage and discuss their concerns with appropriate agencies. As a result, appropriate plans are made in order to meet children's specific needs, especially those involving behaviour.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting provides an inclusive ethos and ensures that all children are respected as individuals. Children are treated equally and fair play is promoted effectively.

The setting has enough practitioners who have appropriate qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There are enough suitable resources in the setting in order to meet the requirements of the six areas of learning. Although there is a limit to what it is possible to do inside and outside the building, good use is made of what is possible in order to motivate the children. There are colourful and attractive displays that celebrate the children's work, and an interesting environment for children in order for them play imaginatively, for example in the shop and the kitchen.

However, the setting is not able to ensure suitable opportunities for children to develop physically by making regular use of the outdoor area. Nor does the setting provide opportunities for children to grow flowers or plants outside.



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

The leader is developing her management skills appropriately and ensures good opportunities for children. She also co-operates closely with the local authority to set a strategic direction for the setting and to respond, where possible, to the recommendations of the previous inspection. She has ensured that all practitioners understand their responsibilities and work effectively to provide a good standard of care and education. However, she does not yet include the staff sufficiently when planning and assessing, and as a result does not share leadership effectively enough.

There are satisfactory processes for managing practitioners' performance annually. The training that staff receive is based on the needs of the nursery group and is appropriate in order to improve provision.

Members of the committee have given much of their energy and attention during recent years to try to ensure a more suitable location. They have co-operated very successfully recently with the wider committee of local councillors and the headteacher of the local primary school in order to ensure a new, temporary location and plan a more permanent one. Because of the focus on ensuring a location, they have not been able to give the nursery group enough of a strategic direction and they have lost sight somewhat of their responsibilities. Their role in holding the leader to account about standards and provision is being hindered by a lack of information about what happens from day to day.

Leaders give due attention to local and national priorities and there is a suitable focus on developing children's literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The support of the local authority for self-evaluation and planning for development has strengthened the leadership's understanding of the quality improvement process.

The current self-evaluation process is comparatively new and has led to creating a report that is a fairly accurate picture of the setting. However, neither the other practitioners nor the management committee are part of this process. The self-evaluation report identifies what the nursery group does well but it has not identified the areas to be developed with the same rigour, especially in terms of planning, assessment and management. On the whole, there is an appropriate link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the targets in the development plan, especially in terms of children's standards and improving provision.

Practitioners receive new ideas through training, and experiment with various ways of working that are suggested by the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a range of effective partnerships. These partnerships have a positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing and on the quality of provision.

Partnerships with parents are beneficial. New parents receive a useful information pack that facilitates the step from the home to the nursery group by giving necessary information to parents. Use is made of a notice board to share information from day to day and parents receive a booklet at the end of the period in the nursery group, which shows their child's progress. Parents are very supportive of the nursery group and raise money annually in order to improve provision.

The setting has effective partnerships with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. These partnerships have supported and challenged practitioners regularly and provided advice and training that has already contributed towards strengthening provision and standards as well as managing behaviour. Transition arrangements with the local primary school are effective and ensure that children settle in well there when they transfer. This co-operation also supports the nursery group in its intention to have a new permanent home to meet children's needs in full.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting makes good use of staff and resources in order to support teaching and learning. Leaders ensure that the setting has enough staff with suitable qualifications. They use practitioners effectively and make the best use of their expertise. This contributes to raising standards and ensuring children's wellbeing.

Practitioners have access to an effective range of suitable training. This ensures that practitioners continue to build on their skills, for example when developing children's numeracy skills.

Leaders have effective processes for keeping expenditure under review. They allocate funds appropriately in order to address the setting's priorities for development.

Considering the positive results achieved by children, the setting provides good value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report -

#### Responses to the parent questionnaire

	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.	10	5 50%	5 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		80%	20%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	10	6 60%	4 40%	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.	11	8 73%	3 27%	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.	11	7 64%	4 36%	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.	11	7 64%	4 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		69%	26%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	11	8 73%	3 27%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		79%	18%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	11	9 82%	2 18%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		82%	15%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	10	6 60%	4 40%	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.	11	8 73%	3 27%	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.	9	5 56%	4 44%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		64%	24%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	11	5 45%	6 55%	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.	10	8 80%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	18%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	10	5 50%	5 50%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		62%	29%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	10	6 60%	4 40%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		71%	23%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	10	3 30%	7 70%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		62%	30%	4%	0%		
The setting is well run.	10	8 80%	2 20%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		82%	17%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Maldwyn Pryse

Reporting Inspector

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## Glossary of terms

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

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