



*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 Thomas Ellis  
Ysgol Y Parch  
Thomas Ellis  
Caergybi  
LL65 2AP**

**Date of inspection: March 2015**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<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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**Publication date: 01/04/2015**

## Context

Cylch Meithrin Thomas Ellis is a Welsh-medium setting situated in Ysgol Thomas Ellis, Holyhead, in Anglesey local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 22 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two and a half years. There are currently 12 three and four-year-olds on roll, of whom five are funded for part-time education.

Nearly all children have English as their home language. No child is from a Welsh speaking home. There are very few children with additional learning needs.

Four full-time and one part-time member of staff run the playgroup. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since September 2013.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in February 2014 and by Estyn in February 2009.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- The setting promotes children's listening, early reading and writing and numeracy skills well
- Practitioners understand the importance of children learning through play and active involvement
- Practitioners have established strong routines that help children feel safe and secure
- The setting promotes healthy living well
- Children have valuable opportunities to learn to be independent and take responsibility
- The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader and the registered person share a commitment to providing worthwhile experiences in a nurturing environment for the children
- The leader manages the setting well and ensures that sessions run smoothly
- Practitioners are committed to continuous improvement
- The setting has a worthwhile range of partnerships that contributes effectively to children's achievements and wellbeing
- Practitioners make the most of opportunities to attend training and use information well to enhance their practice

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve planning for developing children's speaking skills more systematically
- R2 Improve practitioners' Welsh language skills
- R3 Use assessment more effectively to identify what children need to do next
- R4 Look at procedures for supporting children with additional learning needs to ensure that their progress is reviewed regularly
- R5 Involve all practitioners in evaluating the setting's work

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

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

N/A

#### Standards: N/A

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

The setting leader plans carefully to develop children's knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. This planning ensures that children have many worthwhile experiences to consolidate and extend their learning each week. All practitioners contribute to long-term thematic planning, sharing ideas and suggestions for activities. As a result, they provide activities that are fun and motivating.

Practitioners make valuable use of visits within the local area to enhance children's learning experiences. For example, a recent visit to the fire station has increased children's understanding of people who help them in the community.

The setting promotes children's listening and early reading and writing skills well. Practitioners use songs and sung instructions effectively to reinforce setting routines and promote listening skills. They make sure that children practice mark making regularly and encourage them to write and recognise their own names. The book corner is attractive with a good supply of books, which practitioners change often to maintain children's interest. Children hear stories regularly and have good opportunities to learn songs and rhymes. For example, children learn a new song for each half-termly theme. However, the setting is less successful in promoting children's speaking skills in Welsh. It does not always plan carefully enough to ensure that all children develop their speaking skills in Welsh systematically.

The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. For example, they encourage children to sort and match objects in the sand tray. Children have good opportunities to develop their thinking skills. For example, they puzzle over how to match cogs together and experiment with different sized ice cubes.

Children have worthwhile opportunities to learn about their Welsh heritage as they celebrate Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day. They also learn about celebrations in other cultures appropriately, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and understand Foundation Phase practice. For example, they understand the importance of providing opportunities for children to learn through play and active involvement. Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively, using praise and encouragement well to encourage children to share and take turns. They have established useful rules and routines and, as a result, children feel safe and secure.

Practitioners provide a stimulating and challenging environment both indoors and outside that encourage children's involvement, participation and enjoyment. However, they do not always make enough use of outdoor facilities to extend children's learning. All practitioners work constructively alongside the children. They are developing their questioning skills appropriately. However, practitioners are not all confident in using Welsh consistently with the children and, on occasions, they use incorrect language patterns. As a result, children do not develop their speaking skills in Welsh as well as they could.

Practitioners take responsibility for groups of individual children and record observations about their progress regularly. As a result, practitioners develop a useful picture of children's strengths. However, they do not always identify well enough what it is that individual children need to develop next. Occasionally, practitioners do not have high enough expectations of what children can do and, as a result, activities lack challenge.

Parents are well informed about their child's progress through informal meetings and a comprehensive and attractive record of achievement book.

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

The setting promotes healthy living well. Children have many opportunities to learn about keeping healthy, through eating well and taking regular exercise. For example, practitioners foster children's physical skills effectively through weekly exercise sessions to music.

The setting promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. For example, practitioners ensure that snack time is a social occasion where children are encouraged to say please and thank you. Practitioners give children valuable opportunities to learn to be independent and take responsibility. For example, they encourage children to put food waste in the bin and spoons in the sink at the end of snack time. Children have worthwhile opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder, for example, finding mini-beasts in their outdoor area. The setting is beginning to develop children's understanding of sustainable development appropriately.

The setting offers children with additional learning needs full access to all areas of learning. Practitioners support the wellbeing of these children effectively and communicate appropriately with parents and carers. The setting ensures that children receive worthwhile support from specialist services and follows advice given carefully. However, the setting has no formal planning in place to support children with additional needs or to review their progress regularly.

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

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to all areas of the setting's provision. Practitioners create a warm and welcoming ethos and encourage children to develop tolerant attitudes effectively.

The indoor space is well maintained and secure and opens onto a stimulating outdoor area. The setting provides a good range of worthwhile resources that support children's learning well. For example, children buy and sell train tickets in an imaginative station role-play area. Practitioners make effective use of available wall space to celebrate children's achievements.

The setting makes good use of the local area to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, they learn about autumn fruits when they collect blackberries in a nearby park and about using money when they visit a local supermarket.

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

The leader and the registered person share a commitment to providing worthwhile experiences in a nurturing environment for the children. Together, they ensure that all staff understand and fulfil their roles in most aspects of the provision.

The leader manages the setting well and ensures that sessions run smoothly. She leads by example and has established an effective routine and positive ethos since taking on her role. As a result, practitioners and children feel valued in the setting. The leader manages her time well and sets high standards in her own practice. She has a strong vision for improving experiences for children. The leader and registered person keep practitioners well informed about the setting's policies through regular, purposeful staff meetings. A helpful appraisal system enables practitioners to reflect on their performance and request appropriate training.

The management committee oversees the work of the playgroup and the Flying Start provision that meets on the same site effectively. The registered person leads this, which ensures continuity and provides stability. The setting has implemented national and local priorities appropriately. For example, there is a strong focus on teaching children about healthy living and the leader ensures that there are good opportunities for children to develop early reading, writing and numeracy skills well.



### **Improving quality: Good**

All practitioners have a positive commitment to continuous improvement. They regularly adapt their day-to-day practice to improve the provision and outcomes for children. They identify strengths in their practice appropriately and are gaining confidence in identifying areas for development.

Setting leaders carry out an appropriate evaluation of standards and the quality of provision through observations. For example, they identified the need to make the book corner more interesting and attractive to children and acted on this by arranging to borrow books from the library. Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working. They have made good use of advice from the local authority to develop their planning procedures. However, leaders do not always involve practitioners in the formal self-evaluation process. As a result, not all practitioners are aware of their role in bringing about the necessary improvements.

Setting leaders use information from the self-evaluation process to produce an appropriate development plan that includes suitable targets. Leaders prioritise matters they wish to improve effectively and allocate suitable funding. For example, the setting prioritised the funding of new resources in the home corner role-play to improve the quality of children's imaginative play.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has developed a worthwhile range of partnerships that contributes effectively to children's achievements and wellbeing.

Practitioners develop positive partnerships with parents and share information with them informally on a regular basis. Parents appreciate the positive relationships they have with practitioners and the good level of communication between home and the setting. This contributes positively to parents' engagement in their children's learning.

There is a worthwhile partnership with the Flying Start playgroup, which aids the smooth transition into the setting.

The playgroup meets on the school site and has a strong partnership with the school. Children become part of the school community during their time at the setting and, as a result, they settle quickly into the next stage of their education.

The setting makes good use of its constructive partnership with the local authority link teacher and with Mudiad Meithrin to improve provision.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting has sufficient suitably qualified staff to provide worthwhile Foundation Phase experiences for the children. The leader deploys practitioners well, making good use of their expertise and experience. Practitioners make the most of opportunities to attend training and use information from training well. For example, the setting leader established a lively weekly music and movement session giving children and practitioners valuable exercise following recent training.

The setting leader and the registered person ensure that they keep the budget under close review. They prioritise spending according to the setting's needs and use funds efficiently to ensure that the group remains sustainable.

In view of the overall quality of provision and leadership, 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

Sheila Margaret Birkhead	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](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>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</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 Day Nurseries Association (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.