



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 Shotton
Plymouth Street
Ysgol Croes Atti Glannau Dyfdrwy
Shotton
Deeside
CH5 1JD**

Date of inspection: May 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:

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 Shotton opened in September 2014. It is based in Ysgol Gymraeg Croes Atti, Deeside, in Flintshire local authority.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 20 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two and a half years. There are 16 children on roll, ranging in age from two and a half to four years old. There are currently two three-year-old children receiving funded early years education in the setting. The playgroup provides lunchtime and afternoon sessions, Monday to Friday.

Nearly all children have English as their home language. At the time of the inspection there were no children with additional learning needs attending the playgroup. There are three members of staff at the setting, including the leader. All are experienced in working with young children and are suitably qualified. The playgroup leader has been in post since the setting opened.

The setting has not yet been inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW). This is the first time the setting has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is adequate because:

- Practitioners provide a broad range of learning experiences
- They focus appropriately on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills
- The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to learn to eat healthily and enjoy fresh air and exercise
- There are plenty of good quality resources
- The setting provides a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos
- The indoor accommodation is well organised and maintained

However:

- Planning does not yet provide systematic support for children's skills development, including developing Welsh language skills
- Observation and assessment processes are at a very early stage of development, and are not yet used regularly to support children's learning

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Practitioners work together well as a team and value each other's contributions
- They respond positively to support and advice
- Practitioners have made valuable progress since the setting opened
- The setting has positive relationships with children and parents
- Mudiad Meithrin oversees the work of the setting effectively.
- The setting benefits from good quality partnerships with the local authority
- The setting manages the use of staffing and resources efficiently to support the delivery of the Foundation Phase appropriately

However:

- Routines are not yet established well enough to support children's learning appropriately
- Systematic planning for improvement is at a formative stage and is not yet well developed

Recommendations

- A1 Establish good quality planning procedures to ensure that children make good progress
- A2 Plan systematically to develop children's Welsh language skills
- A3 Strengthen routines and transition times so that all children are full involved
- A4 Establish an effective system to record observations and assessments in order to meet children's learning needs
- A5 Develop effective self-evaluation procedures in order to identify and prioritise areas for development successfully

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of 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?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The setting provides a broad range of learning experiences across nearly all areas of learning. For example, children are given good opportunities to develop their imaginations in the well-resourced construction area and to practice their early writing skills drawing sheep for their Spring display and using chalks outside. They learn about the world around them such as while learning about the signs of Spring and looking for mini beasts in the outdoor area.

Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in their play and through activities led by adults. For example, children are encouraged to join in counting during registration and snack time. Practitioners help children to recognise their names on labels and read to them regularly to help develop their listening and early reading skills.

Practitioners work hard at ensuring that they communicate in Welsh with the children throughout the session. They introduce vocabulary naturally through play, stories and songs. In the best instances, language patterns are reinforced carefully, such as when encouraging children to ask for fruit at snack time. However, systematic planning to support children's Welsh language skills is not well developed. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their cultural identity such as when they celebrate St David's Day and enjoy stories written by well-known Welsh authors.

Practitioners meet regularly to plan together and as a result, they provide suitable focussed activities to help children develop their skills. For example, they plan for children to learn how plants grow, to count and to wait their turn while planting sunflower seeds. However, in general, planning is at a very early stage of development.

The setting has taken steps towards preparing to take children out into the local area. However, as yet, there have been no opportunities for children to go on trips or learn from visitors.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners are developing a sound knowledge and understanding of Foundation Phase principles through effective support from the early entitlement teacher and attending training. For example, they understand the importance of providing a balance between child-led and adult directed activities. They understand the need to use questioning appropriately to challenge children's thinking, and act flexibly to support individual needs. Practitioners are beginning to put these principles into practice, such as when they provide additional opportunities for children to practice their scissor skills.

The setting provides a stimulating and engaging indoor environment which children enjoy using, adding items such as books from the local library and shells from the beach to enhance children's learning. Although the outdoor learning environment is not yet fully established, practitioners make sure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn through outdoor play.

The setting has a calm and positive approach to managing behaviour. Practitioners have developed good working relationships with the children and each other. They are establishing a regular routine to support children's learning. In the best examples, they use songs to support children well as they move from one activity to another. However, routines are not always reinforced consistently such as during tidy up time and at the end of snack time. As a result, children are not always fully engaged during the session. Although practitioners ensure that children hear Welsh spoken consistently in the setting, in a few cases, language patterns used are not wholly accurate.

Practitioners are beginning to record a few observations of children's progress, contributing usefully to developing simple profiles for the funded children. However, in general, observation and assessment are at a very early stage of development in the group. The setting keeps parents suitably informed about their children's progress through informal discussions.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting makes good provision for children's health and wellbeing. Children are encouraged to eat and drink healthy snacks and are given plenty of opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise. The setting has developed clear policies to promote positive behaviour and practitioners act on these consistently. As a result, children settle quickly in the setting, they are happy and secure in the company of the adults and are willing to ask for help and support.

Practitioners provide appropriate opportunities for children's spiritual, moral and social education. For example, children are encouraged to share and take turns throughout the session and to say thank you for their snack. Children have suitable opportunities to develop a sense of awe and wonder such as when they watch snails moving in the outdoor area. However, their opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as at tidy up time, are more limited. Opportunities to develop cultural awareness and learn about sustainability are at an early stage of development.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children's additional learning needs. Practitioners understand the importance of identifying concerns early on. However, they do not record observations to support this process, tracking children's progress and ensuring that their individual needs are met.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a warm and welcoming ethos where all children are treated equally and with respect. Practitioners make sure that all children have equal access to activities, such as having a turn to be 'Helpwr Heddiw'. They encourage children to help each other appropriately, such as when they put on their coats to go outside. The setting has sufficient suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

The setting meets in a room in a newly opened local school. The indoor environment has been adapted successfully to meet the needs of young children and is well maintained. Children benefit from the many stimulating, good quality resources provided for them, such as the well-stocked book area and the inviting home corner. There are attractive wall displays which celebrate the children's work and support their learning. Although children have to walk a distance to reach the toilet facilities and the outdoor area, this is managed effectively by the practitioners. The setting is currently developing its outdoor area, making increasingly worthwhile use of the space available. Practitioners carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that it is safe and secure for the children. However, the outdoor area is too small to allow the children to fully develop their gross motor skills.

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

The setting leader is beginning to put her stamp on the playgroup's work. She has responded well to support from the early entitlement teacher and Mudiad Meithrin and is beginning to establish good Foundation Phase practice in the setting. She has an appropriate sense of purpose for the group, aiming to create a place where children feel safe and happy, enjoy learning and make good progress. This vision contributes effectively to the setting's positive ethos. Practitioners work together well as a team, and fulfil their roles appropriately, making suitable use of individual expertise. As a result, children are safe and happy in the setting and practitioners feel valued. However, the leader is less successful at managing day to day learning and teaching effectively. For example, routines are not yet established well enough to support children's learning appropriately.

Mudiad Meithrin manages the group well. It has a powerful vision for establishing a respected Welsh medium playgroup in the area. Managers from Mudiad Meithrin provide valuable support for the setting leader, such as ensuring that all policies and effective health and safety procedures are in place. They focus on achieving high standards in the setting, for example, putting suitable performance management procedures in place. However, it is too soon in the cycle to evaluate any impact.

The playgroup meets national and local priorities appropriately, such as encouraging healthy eating and drinking.

Improving quality: Adequate

All practitioners have a positive commitment to continuous improvement. They are beginning to identify strengths in their practice appropriately and are gaining confidence in identifying areas for development.

Practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to try out new ways of working. In the relatively short time that the setting has been open, practitioners have made worthwhile progress. For example, they have set up a stimulating indoor learning environment with help from the local authority team. They have taken positive steps towards improving provision for outdoor play and have identified the need to improve assessment procedures. However, systematic planning for improvement and understanding of the self-evaluation process are at a formative stage.

Mudiad Meithrin oversees the work of the setting effectively. It has a detailed long term plan in place, which includes specific actions and timescales for completion. It also has procedures to carry out useful annual 'health checks' at the setting in order to ensure good governance. These systems are new and it is too soon to assess their impact.

Partnership working: Good

In the short time since the setting opened, practitioners have established worthwhile partnerships that improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for children.

The setting has established helpful partnership with parents. As a result of this, children settle quickly in the setting and concerns are dealt with effectively. An informative welcome pack ensures that parents are aware of the group's policies and practices. Parents appreciate the regular informal feedback that they receive about their children's progress.

The setting has beneficial partnerships with the local authority early entitlement teacher and with Mudiad Meithrin. The group works closely with the early entitlement teacher, acting appropriately on advice given, for example when setting up the stimulating learning environment. The valuable partnership with Mudiad Meithrin ensures that effective management procedures are in place.

The setting is developing useful links with the local Ti a Fi group, helping children to settle well when they arrive for the first time. The setting is establishing helpful links with the feeder school. For example, children, parents and practitioners took part in a recent Fun Day at the school, alongside a number of other organisations, helping to establish the group's place in the local community.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting manages the use of staffing and resources efficiently to support the appropriate delivery of the Foundation Phase.

Practitioners have made good use of training and support to improve their practice since the setting opened. For example, recent Foundation Phase training has helped practitioners to understand how to plan focused tasks as well as how to use resources effectively to improve opportunities for children to develop their skills.

Suitably qualified practitioners are deployed carefully to make appropriate use of their expertise, such as reading stories and leading group sessions. Children have access to high quality resources that are stimulating and challenging. Practitioners make worthwhile additions to these, such as by making good use of the local library and bringing in sea shells for the children to examine. The learning environment is managed well and is stimulating and interesting.

The management committee has a thorough understanding of the budget and plans effectively to prioritise spending appropriately. Funding allocated for regular expenditure on consumables is managed carefully. However, in view of the current shortcomings in provision and leadership, the setting provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

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

Appendix 2

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)

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.