



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Penmaenmawr
Ysgol Pencae
Craiglwyd Road
Penmaenmawr
Conwy
LL34 6YG**

Date of inspection: July 2017

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 Penmaenmawr is a Welsh-medium setting. The setting meets in a dedicated room on the grounds of Ysgol Pencae, in Penmaenmawr, Conwy.

The setting is registered to admit up to 25 children between two and four years old. Six children are funded by the local authority. It provides three-hour sessions, five mornings a week for 41 weeks of the year.

There are currently no children with additional learning needs at the setting. Very few children come from homes in which Welsh is the main language.

Four qualified members of staff work full-time at the setting. The leader has been in post since 2014.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in March 2015 and by Estyn in July 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is unsatisfactory. The setting's strengths are that:

- A majority of children make sound progress in their oracy skills
- Children are happy on arrival at the setting and settle well
- Practitioners plan suitable opportunities to ensure a balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults

However, areas for improvement outweigh the setting's strengths because:

- Nearly all children's writing and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are limited
- Nearly all children's ability to use the full range of numeracy skills is weak
- Children are not given enough opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all areas of learning
- Planning does not ensure that experiences lead to raising standards effectively enough
- Assessment systems do not lead directly to planning the next steps in learning

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory. The setting's strengths are that:

- The leader has a robust vision to provide Welsh-medium education in a nurturing environment
- Practitioners work together effectively as a team
- The setting has a few effective partnerships that contribute beneficially to improving children's standards and wellbeing

However, areas for improvement outweigh the setting's strengths because:

- The management committee does not have robust enough information about the setting's performance
- The lack of strategic direction by leaders hinders the setting's development
- Important elements of the setting's self-evaluation and planning for improvement need to be improved
- The setting has not addressed recommendations from the previous Estyn inspection

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure purposeful and consistent opportunities to develop children's early writing skills and numeracy skills across all areas of learning
- R2 Provide more opportunities to develop children's information and communication technology skills
- R3 Ensure that learning experience provide an appropriate challenge in order to meet the needs of children of all abilities
- R4 Use assessment information more effectively to plan the next steps in learning
- R5 Improve leadership, including the management committee, to ensure that they set a definite strategic direction for the setting
- R6 Strengthen self-evaluation procedures in order to identify all strengths and areas for improvement and act on them

What happens next?

I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is in agreement, that focused improvement is required in relation to this setting. The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress each term.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Unsatisfactory

Standards: Unsatisfactory

Around half the children make suitable progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills from their starting points, particularly in their oracy skills. However, in general, most children do not make the expected progress in their learning. A majority are beginning to recall previous learning suitably and work together appropriately, for example when making a cake in the mud kitchen.

A majority of children develop a sound understanding of the Welsh language soon after starting at the setting. They follow instructions appropriately, for example when helping during tidying-up time. A few are able to respond orally in Welsh efficiently when playing in the learning areas. From time to time, they use simple words and phrases when role-playing in the mud kitchen and when reciting the setting's rules. Around half the children listen carefully during singing sessions. They listen to instructions and act in accordance with them appropriately, and show an increasing awareness of the Welsh language. However, a minority of children's listening skills are weak and they do not always follow instructions.

A minority of children handle books appropriately in the reading area. They follow the print from left to right and are beginning to understand appropriately that print has a meaning. They understand the purpose of the pictures and recognise different characters in stories effectively, for example characters from traditional stories. Nearly all children's early writing skills are weak.

A few children use an increasing range of mathematical language suitably during spontaneous play, for example when making a mud cake. They use vocabulary such as bigger, smaller, big and small appropriately when comparing equipment. Around half the children begin to enumerate when counting resources, for example when counting candles for the cakes. They use their knowledge of counting appropriately when counting how many children are at the setting each day during circle time. Around half the children join in with number rhymes during circle time and when brushing their teeth. However, nearly all children's ability to use the full range of number skills across the learning areas is limited.

Most children develop their physical skills appropriately and competently. They jump successfully and throw balls with increasing control. They ride bicycles confidently and use their physical skills. However, nearly all children's fine motor skills, such as early marking, using scissors and painting, are limited. Children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills are weak.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Nearly all children come into the setting happily and confidently. Many behave suitably and politely. They listen carefully to adults, for example when decorating a crown for the king's party. However, a few children's behaviour affects other

children's ability to concentrate during tasks and plenary sessions. This has a negative effect on their own learning and that of other children. On the whole, a majority of children treat each other and practitioners with respect.

A majority of children make decisions about what and where they would like to learn while playing in the areas appropriately. A majority enjoy practical activities and are able to work together appropriately for periods efficiently. They concentrate on tasks for suitable periods of time. This is evident as they make cakes in the mud kitchen and build a castle in the construction area. However, a minority of children's concentration skills have not developed appropriately.

A few children develop their independence skills suitably. A majority are able to make choices about what they would like to do during free play sessions. Most children are beginning to understand that they have rights as individuals, and that they have a choice to make decisions for themselves and to express an opinion; for example, they decide to continue with specific tasks, or stop doing them. A majority of children understand the importance of personal hygiene as they brush their teeth daily at the setting.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Unsatisfactory

The setting provides a few varied learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors, to engage the interest of a majority of children. Most practitioners are beginning to plan together orally appropriately in order to provide a suitable curriculum. However, planning does not ensure sound opportunities in order to develop children's writing, numeracy and ICT skills. Planning also does not ensure that practitioners understand the purpose of all activities. As a result, planning does not have enough of an effect on raising standards or challenging children effectively enough.

Recently, practitioners have begun to plan more systematically to develop children's oracy skills by following a new scheme of work. These activities build appropriately on a majority of children's previous attainment. Practitioners make every effort to promote the Welsh language by repeating phrases and through challenging questions. Practitioners make effective use of singing in order to reinforce previous learning. As a result, a majority of children make appropriate progress in their oracy skills. However, opportunities for children to develop their early reading and writing skills, both indoors and outdoors, are limited.

Children are given suitable opportunities to learn outdoors occasionally during unstructured play sessions. These develop children's gross motor skills appropriately, for example when using the climbing frame, the slide and bicycles. However, practitioners do not plan activities purposefully enough in order to ensure continuity and progression across the areas of learning.

In general, the setting makes suitable use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences, for example a visit from a hairdresser and nature walks to the local forest add interest to the curriculum appropriately.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners greet each child warmly when they arrive at the setting. They interact appropriately with children. This leads to a close relationship between practitioners and children. In general, they manage children's behaviour suitably, although they do not have robust enough strategies at times to deal with challenging behaviour. Children are given suitable opportunities to make choices in the learning areas. Practitioners provide children with relevant support when necessary. They plan suitable opportunities which ensure an appropriate balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults. This develops children's independence skills suitably. Practitioners plan a few suitable opportunities for children to learn through play and practical experiences.

Practitioners have appropriate expectations for most children and they challenge children competently in a few tasks. However, practitioners do not always tailor activities to meet the needs of all children, and they do not challenge children effectively enough. As a result, children do not make the expected progress in their learning. A majority of practitioners intervene appropriately in children's play. Practitioners question children suitably in order to develop thinking and communication skills. This is evident when discussing how many ingredients are needed to make mud cakes and how for how long they need to be cooked.

Practitioners record relevant assessments in a record book and they provide a suitable picture of individual children's attainment. However, this does not lead directly to planning the next steps in children's learning rigorously enough.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

The setting provides a few appropriate opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development; for example, practitioners use group discussions to discuss the setting's rules suitably during circle time. This fosters values such as fairness and respect among children appropriately.

There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. The setting has appropriate procedures to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, children are beginning to understand that fruit, vegetables and exercise contribute to a sensible way of life, for example when choosing healthy fruit during snack time.

Learning experiences encourage children's moral and social development competently; for example, practitioners use snack time to encourage children to learn how to eat together, share and wait their turn. As a result, many children develop an appropriate understanding of how to relate to other people's aspirations. However, the setting does not provide enough opportunities to develop children's awareness of sustainability.

Practitioners promote the importance of personal hygiene by encouraging children to wash their hands regularly and to brush their teeth during the morning sessions. However, there are not enough opportunities to extend children's independence further by giving them responsibilities.

The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take good care of the children as they arrive and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting targets children with additional support suitably, when necessary. Practitioners discuss these children with appropriate agencies in order to provide support as quickly as possible.

Learning environment: Adequate

Practitioners succeed in creating a warm, welcoming and inclusive ethos at the setting. Boys and girls are given the same opportunity to access resources and activities. However, practitioners do not promote co-operation and fairness consistently; for example, there are no opportunities to celebrate diversity. This limits children's awareness of how to be tolerant.

Practitioners use displays to celebrate children's efforts suitably. They give children daily opportunities to develop their physical skills competently. They enable children to explore and experiment with climbing equipment in the park, by running around energetically and using bicycles and scooters safely during play time.

The setting has a suitable range of resources to stimulate children. Practitioners provide an interesting environment for children to play imaginatively, for example in the hairdressers, the small world, sand and the mud kitchen. However, practitioners do not always make effective enough use of resources, particularly when nurturing and developing children's writing, numeracy and ICT skills.

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

The leader has a robust vision to provide Welsh-medium education in a nurturing setting. The leader and her team are dedicated to supporting and caring for each child to ensure that they feel safe and happy. They understand their responsibilities appropriately and work well together by sharing values and objectives effectively. However, leaders do not include staff effectively enough in self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

There is no formal management committee in place to receive reports or feedback on progress from the leader. The committee does not meet regularly and does not have rigorous enough knowledge of the setting's performance. As a result, a lack of strategic direction from leaders hinders the development of the setting. The committee monitors expenditure from the setting's current budget and has audited it formally.

Recently, leaders have introduced satisfactory processes to manage staff performance annually. As the setting does not have a fully functional committee, the leader's performance has not been included in these processes. The training the staff receive develops their awareness of child development and improves provision appropriately. However, they do not always act in line with the training, and training does not have enough of an effect on improving provision and children's standards.

Practitioners give suitable attention to a few local and national priorities. For example, the setting succeeds in promoting eating healthily, in addition to teaching children about the importance of taking care of their teeth. Leaders are beginning to give due attention to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in planning. However, they do not ensure enough opportunities to develop children's early writing and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Unsatisfactory

There are important elements of the setting's self-evaluation that are in need of improvement. The self-evaluation reports identifies a few relevant areas for development. Practitioners act positively in order to raise children's standards and improve provision, for example in improving oracy skills. However, self-evaluation procedures do not identify a majority of areas for development with the same rigour, particularly in terms of leadership, assessment and provision. There is an adequate link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation and targets in the improvement plan. However, actions, timely targets and success criteria are not effective enough to ensure that the setting acts successfully to develop these. Although it has received support and guidance from the local authority, the setting's processes for self-evaluation and implementing improvement continue to be ineffective. Recommendations following the previous inspection continue to be aspects for development; for example, the use of assessments, developing self-evaluation further and ensuring that the management committee is well-informed about the setting's performance.

The setting is beginning to try to include the views of all practitioners about the quality of provision and planning. However, it does not include all stakeholders, including parents and the management committee, as part of the process.

Practitioners receive useful new ideas through training and follow a few recommendations from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, for example in developing the Welsh language at the setting. However, practitioners do not always act in line with relevant training.

Partnership working: Adequate

The setting has a few effective partnership that make a beneficial contribution to improving children's standards and wellbeing, for example in implementing a scheme to promote eating and living healthily with language support from Mudiad Meithrin. The setting's relationship with parents is very positive and they value the care that is provided by practitioners. However, there are few opportunities for the setting to share information about child development and to encourage parents to play an active part in their children's education and in the life of the setting.

There are robust links with the local primary school through transition visits and sharing use of the outdoor areas. The setting uses an extensive part of the school's grounds to provide children with experiences to discover, for example as they search for insects in the woods. The school supports the setting by ensuring the necessary resources.

The setting has an appropriate partnership with a variety of agencies to support children and practitioners, as required. The setting works well with the pre-school healthy officer when arranging a visit from a book character to promote children's health and wellbeing in a lively and interesting manner. A few members of the community visit the setting; for example, a visit by a hairdresser enriched children's first-hand experiences effectively as they had an opportunity to role-play in the hair salon.

Practitioners hold a few fundraising activities as the current committee is not fully active in the life of the setting. The setting has difficulty attracting people to undertake the management committee's duties.

The setting has supportive partnerships with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. These partnership support and try to challenge practitioners through visits and ensuring that relevant training has an influence on children's skills at the setting.

Resource management: Unsatisfactory

Leaders manage staff, resources and funding appropriately. They use staff expertise well and work competently as a team to improve children's achievements, for example in raising children's standards of oracy. The staff's knowledge is developing soundly through appropriate training, such as guidance from Mudiad Meithrin on the Welsh language and how to develop children's language at the setting.

The setting promotes the objectives of the Foundation Phase curriculum appropriately. However, the setting does not have a wide range of resources to support all areas of the Foundation Phase, and they are not always within children's reach. As a result, it does not enable children to develop their independence effectively.

The management committee is not successful in undertaking its duties to develop and support staff and ensure that improvement strategies are effective. Considering standards, provision and the important areas for improvement in relation to leadership and management, the setting provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark – this is the total of all responses to date since September 2010.

	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.	14	10 71%	4 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	21%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	14	11 79%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	14%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	14	11 79%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	14	8 57%	6 43%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		71%	28%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	14	9 64%	5 36%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	14	11 79%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		83%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	14	12 86%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	24%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	14	13 93%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	14	7 50%	3 21%	0 0%	0 0%	4	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	14	8 57%	2 14%	4 29%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	31%	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.	14	10 71%	4 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	19%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	14	6 43%	6 43%	0 0%	0 0%	2	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	32%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	14	11 79%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	14	5 36%	3 21%	6 43%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	32%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	14	10 71%	4 29%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		81%	18%	1%	0%		

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Nerys Rogers	Reporting Inspector
Vanessa Bowen	Team Inspector

Copies of the report

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

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 three to seven 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 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