



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 Llanrug
Llanrug
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 4AL

Date of inspection: November 2011

by

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens

for

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



INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL

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 school'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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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

The Llanrug Playgroup was established in 1972. Since January 2008, it has been meeting in rooms which form part of Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug but are designated solely for the use of the Playgroup. Toilets are located close by and there is an open air area shared by the Playgroup's children and the school's nursery class children.

The children who attend the location live in the village or the surrounding area. The area is described as privileged.

The Group is open Monday to Friday during the school term only. Two different sessions are held each day: one between 08:55 and 11.00 and the other between 13:05 and 15:10. A lunch club is held ('Meithrin Mwy') for children in the school's nursery class from 11.00 until 12.35. No child attends more than one session per day.

A voluntary committee manages the placement. It operates as a member of 'Partneriaeth Blynyddoedd Cynnar a Gofal Plant Sir Gwynedd' (The Gwynedd Early Years and Care Partnership). It is also a registered member of the 'Mudiad Meithrin'. It provides for children between the ages of two and a half and five years. During the inspection, there were 32 children on roll, and 18 of them attend the lunch club, Most of the children speak Welsh at home and, at present, 12.5% of the children come from homes where English is spoken.

The leader and three practitioners possess appropriate qualifications in the area of young children's education and care. There are two other adults to support the work. The location was last inspected by the Welsh Social Care Inspectorate (WSCl) in March 2010. This is the first Estyn inspection.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Excellent

Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- of the supportive, gentle relationship which exists between the children and the practitioners;
- of the detailed plans and the range of excellent resources in every area of learning indoors and out;
- of the excellent quality of the teaching in the focus groups;
- of an inclusive and stimulating learning environment;
- of the planned arrangements which interweave naturally with the Group's life and work to support children in accepting diversity and challenging stereotyping .

Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improving the setting are excellent because:

- of the leader's very firm vision and her understanding of the requirements of the areas of learning;
- of the Management Committee's responsible and effective management;
- of the exceptionally good quality of the self evaluation process across every aspect of the placement's work;
- the managers and practitioners implement outcomes and recommendations which they receive and which they act upon without delay for the children's benefit;
- of the the quality of the various partnerships, and the outstanding relationship which exists between the Group and the *Ti a Fi* Club and the local primary school's nursery class;
- of the particularly good quality of the building and the resources.

Recommendations

In order to improve the setting needs to:

R1 pay deliberate attention to developing the children's information and communication technology skills;

R2 ensure consistency in the conscious feeding of language to the children and supporting them through challenging and questioning which inspires the children to develop concepts;

R3 create a structured approach to enable practitioners to co-operate within professional networks to share ideas and good practice in order to promote their professional development.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Estyn will invite the setting to prepare two written case studies describing the excellent practice observed during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

N/A

Standards: **N/A**

There is no report on children's progress, the standards in their skills' development and Welsh language development. The reason for this is that there were insufficient numbers of relevant children present at the time of the inspection to enable reporting on them without enabling the identification of individual children.

Wellbeing: **N/A**

There is no report on children's well being. The reason for this is that there were insufficient numbers of relevant children present at the time of the inspection to enable reporting on them without enabling the identification of individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: **Excellent**

The curriculum is very well planned to fulfil the philosophy of the Foundation Phase. The long term planning is based on a series of themes which are appropriate for the children's age and interests.

Very stimulating activities are provided to prompt the children to develop literacy, number, physical and creative skills. The practitioners provide very appropriate resources in every learning area indoors and outside. However, insufficient deliberate attention is paid to promoting the children's information and communication technology development.

There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and activities directed by practitioners. The planning for focus activities under adult guidance is outstanding.

The practitioners provide very valuable opportunities in the group's daily work to develop all the children's self confidence. This includes effective opportunities to form good relationships with each other and with adults and to be tolerant towards each other.

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The provision for teaching and learning the Welsh language is good. It includes the children's interaction with varied books, singing a wide range of songs and expanding vocabulary through practical activities on the designated themes.

The practitioners place excellent emphasis on arousing the children's awareness of Welsh traditions and celebrations as well as other cultures through role play and by providing varied books and displays.

Teaching: Good

The quality of the teaching is good on the whole, and excellent in the focus groups.

The practitioners use an appropriate range of methods and resources to assist the teaching. There are excellent examples of practitioners deliberately feeding children language and supporting them by challenging them through incisive and probing questioning and, as a result, developing concepts. However, these practices are not sufficiently consistent.

The practitioners know their children well and there is a supportive and gentle relationship between them. The practitioners control the children's behaviour very well.

They constantly observe the children as they go about their activities. The practice of recording significant developments is effective as regards planning the next step of the work and as regards creating a full picture of the children's development.

Parents and carers are regularly informed of their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The setting is a very caring and organised community. The induction arrangements, as well as the daily contact with parents or carers, ensure that the children settle down very well. A supportive relationship exists between the practitioners and the children and the expectation that children behave responsibly is firmly established. Children are very happy in the setting and comfortable in the company of the adults.

The policies and arrangements to support the children's health and wellbeing are implemented well. Healthy snacks are prepared for every child each day.

The children are encouraged to help each other and the "Helpwr y Dydd" (Day's Helper) Scheme offers the children good opportunities to take turns at taking responsibility. Clear expectations are placed on the children and these promote good behaviour.

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The children's needs are discovered early and an effective and appropriate provision is made for them. There is appropriate co-operation with external agencies and specialist services to fulfil any specific needs.

The setting has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding children.

Appropriate learning experiences promote the children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development well.

The very deliberate arrangements to support children in accepting diversity and challenging stereotyping are woven naturally into the Group's life and work. It is clearly excellent and a strength and is sector leading.

Learning environment: Excellent

The setting's learning environment is homely and challenging. All the children are afforded equal opportunity to access the curriculum and all the activities on offer. Excellent emphasis is placed on celebrating diversity and challenging stereotyping.

The setting has a good number of practitioners who possess the appropriate knowledge and experience to present the curriculum. They attend training frequently to keep up to date.

The indoor and outdoor facilities are excellent, and the practitioners make full use of them.

There is a particularly good supply of resources and they are used very effectively to support the learning and teaching. The practitioners make appropriate use of visits to the community and of visitors from the community to expand the children's experiences.

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

The leader has a very strong vision and good understanding of child development and of Foundation Phase requirements. The practitioners are dedicated and work together very well as a team for the benefit of the children. The learning sessions have a clear structure. Appropriate policies are in place and are effectively implemented. Parents and carers are fully aware of the existence of the complaints procedure.

The Management Committee is very organised and supportive of the placement. The members work responsibly and effectively.

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All the managers and practitioners are open to new ideas and interpret them skilfully and carefully for the children's use and requirements.

Improving quality: Good

Self evaluation is a very effective and integral part of every aspect of the placement's work.

The leader evaluates her daily observations and weekly plans to form specific steps forward to promote the development of every child.

Recently, the Management Committee has ensured consistency in its self evaluation processes by formalising its evaluation of practitioners. The leader consults the parents or carers regularly and the Local Authority Advisory Teacher for the Early Years to feed this process.

The leader and the managers use the information gathered to summarise views and to find areas to be developed. The self evaluation report notes very clearly the strengths and areas to be improved.

The managers and practitioners implement outcomes they receive and respond without delay for the benefit of the children.

However, opportunities to work with others within professional practice networks are scarce.

Partnership working: Excellent

The leader and the chairperson of the Management Committee work together very effectively for the benefit of the children and to promote the placement's continuation and development. The partnership with the parents is very good and their support for the setting is strong.

The leader works very effectively also with the local authority Advisory Teacher for the Early Years and the *Mudiad Meithrin* officer. These partnerships are successful and very beneficial from the point of view of ensuring the quality of the education of the children who attend the setting.

Community links are used effectively to support the children's learning and various local visits are arranged. The excellent partnership with the *Ti a Fi* Club and the local primary school's nursery class ease the children's transition step by step. It is an excellent aspect and a sector leading strength.

Resource management: Excellent

The setting is appropriately staffed and effective use is made of the practitioners' strengths for the benefit of the children's education. The performance management

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process which is used to evaluate practitioners and to recognise training requirements is effective.

The quality of the building and the resources is excellent. The practitioners manage resources very well and the parents work hard to add to the supply. The setting was successful in its bid for substantial lottery funding to develop the outside area.

The setting provides very good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to the questionnaires for parents and carers

Eight questionnaires were received from parents or carers and they all expressed very positive views were expressed about every aspect of the provision. Additional positive comments were received as regards the children's progress, the placement's homely ethos, the information provided, the varied visits, the link with the local school's nursery class and the practitioners' professional attitude. The parents believe that their children are very safe and that they behave very well. They say that it is easy to talk to the staff and that the children settle down well in their company. They are all of the view that the setting is well run.

Response to discussions with the children

The happiness and enthusiasm of all the children is obvious when they arrive at the setting and meet the practitioners and their friends. They are familiar with the setting's routine and completely at home there. They join confidently in the varied activities which arouse their attention and interest.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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)