



*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 Penmaenmawr**  
**Ysgol Pencae,**  
**Craiglwyd Road,**  
**Penmaenmawr,**  
**Conwy**  
**LL34 6YG**

**Date of inspection: July 2011**

**by**

**Wil Williams**

**for**

**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

Cylch Meithrin Penmaenmawr is part of the Conwy Local Authority Children and Young People Partnership provision. The setting provides Welsh medium pre-school education for children in the village of Penmaenmawr and the surrounding area. It meets in the local authority's Children Integrated Centre which is located in Ysgol Gynradd Pencae, Penmaenmawr. The area from which children are drawn is judged as being neither prosperous nor socially and economically disadvantaged.

Children of all ability and background are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, there were no children with additional learning needs nor from ethnic groups registered at the setting.

The setting provides three hour sessions for five mornings a week for children between two and a half and four years of age. The number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. Of the twenty one children currently registered at the setting, eleven are funded by the Partnership.

Welsh is the language spoken at home for approximately a quarter of the children. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh with the occasional use of English.

Children's education is supported by a leader and three practitioners. All staff are either appropriately qualified to teach early years children, or are currently receiving training.

Accommodation includes four teaching areas, toilets, kitchen and storerooms. The building is also used by numerous other services which includes the primary school. There is no designated outdoor area but the school's playground and adventure area are, most of the time, available to the setting.

When they have completed their time in the setting, children will continue their education in Ysgol Gynradd Pencae.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in August 2010. This is its first Estyn inspection.

## 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's performance is good because:

- many children achieve good standards;
- children are well-motivated and their behaviour is commendable;
- learning experiences and the provision for skills are good; and
- the quality of care, support and guidance is consistently high.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- self-evaluation has already led to improvements;
- teaching is generally good although there are shortcomings in assessment;
- the setting is capable of making further improvements; and
- the setting's willingness to act upon the advice of the support teacher.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

R1 make better use of assessment information;

R2 further develop self-evaluation;;

R3 ensure that the management committee is better informed about the setting's performance; and

R4 increase parents' role in their children's learning.

### ***What happens next?***

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

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

**Good**

### **Standards: Good**

Many children achieve good standards bearing in mind their age and stage of development and make realistic progress in what they can do, in their knowledge and understanding and skills. During sessions, most achieve well in a wide variety of activities that strengthen and develop their learning. Many children have developed secure learning skills and important personal qualities such as perseverance and confidence, which enable them to take full advantage of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Most children make good progress in their communication skills and are able to recall a good range of songs and rhymes which they recount clearly and with enjoyment. All children communicate their needs with increasing confidence and willingly discuss their experiences with adults. During play activities, children speak fluently and explain clearly what they are doing. Nearly all enjoy listening to stories and respond enthusiastically to their content.

The early reading skills of the majority of children develop well. During reading activities, they hold a book correctly and behave as readers. Older children in the group follow their favourite story carefully, either by moving their fingers under the print from left to right, or by looking at the pictures.

The majority of children understand that written symbols have sounds and meaning and are aware of some of the functions of writing. All children enjoy using a range of equipment for mark-making for a number of purposes such as making lists or writing messages.

Most children make appropriate progress in their understanding of Welsh and have started to use familiar words and phrases to express their needs. All understand more words than they speak.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All children enjoy their time in the setting and demonstrate high levels of motivation. They have positive attitudes towards learning and face new learning experiences enthusiastically and confidently. All show an interest in the activities that they are offered or choose for themselves, and make appropriate progress towards becoming independent learners.

Many children know how they can become healthy both through what they eat and the physical exercise they undertake. The close relationship between children and practitioners ensures that every child feels safe in the setting and free from physical and verbal abuse.

When undertaking tasks, all children work together amicably showing care and concern towards one another. Children's behaviour is commendable with every individual responding very willingly to opportunities such as 'helpwr heddiw, to undertake responsibilities.

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

Practitioners collaborate effectively to plan a wide range of stimulating and flexible activities that meet the needs of children of the full range of ability. This enables them to make good progress in all the Foundation Phase areas of learning. The curriculum builds systematically on children's existing knowledge, understanding and skills ensuring continuity and progression in their learning. The learning experiences provided, encourage children to form close relationships, to experiment with new experiences and to make their own choices about their learning. Although children respond positively to learning experiences, there is no specific provision for the small group of Welsh-speaking children.

Provision for literacy is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for all children. Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment very imaginatively to enrich learning experiences and to encourage children to take an interest in the world about them. Appropriate use is made of visits to places in the community and of visitors to the setting, to enhance children's learning.

Although a few opportunities are provided for children to participate in recycling activities, this aspect has not been fully developed.

Provision for promoting the Welsh language and the traditions and culture of Wales, is good. Through celebrating the Chinese New Year and other similar activities, children's awareness of other traditions and cultures is developed in a practical and interesting way. This contributes well towards raising their awareness of their role as global citizens.

**Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have appropriate expectations for most children. The learning environment created both inside and outside, is stimulating and exciting providing rich experiences across the six areas of learning. A good range of teaching strategies are used thoughtfully to secure the engagement and interest of children and give them an active role in their learning. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and they do sensitively and skilfully. Through careful planning, an appropriate balance is maintained between child-selected and practitioner-led activities. A variety of resources both indoor and outdoor, are used imaginatively to appeal to children's interest and improve learning.

Practitioners have recently began keeping rough notes of children's progress in the six areas of learning. However, these records lack detail and little use is made of them for planning the next steps in learning. Parent receive appropriate information about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development. There are also suitable arrangements for sharing assessment information with the local primary school.

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

All children are happy in the setting and confident in asking adults for support and guidance. Practitioners know the children well and strive to ensure that the needs of each individual are met.

Learning experiences successfully promote children's personal and social development. The supportive ethos of the setting fosters values such as honesty, fairness and friendship very effectively and helps children to distinguish right from wrong.

The setting has appropriate policies and procedures for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. It helps every child to achieve their emotional and physical health and wellbeing and to take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them. Practitioners know how to respond appropriately if challenges arise in relation to bullying, unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding

When specific instances arise, there are appropriate arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs and for making effective use of key agencies.

The latest report by Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales was very positive and no recommendations were made for improving the quality of care, support and guidance.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of the learning experience and to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual.

Resources in the outdoor area which is shared with the school, and also in the local community are used imaginatively to support learning. Accommodation is of very good quality and used to its full potential.

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

The leader has a secure understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and ensures that sessions have a sense of purpose. All sessions are well-organised and carefully planned to ensure that the time of children and adults is used effectively and efficiently.

The leader and practitioners collaborate very closely sharing common values about learning, behaviour and relationships. They make sure that the Foundation Phase and other national and local priorities, are implemented successfully. Practitioners



fulfil their teaching responsibilities conscientiously providing a high level of support for children and the leader. Teaching and learning is managed appropriately and there are clear arrangements for ensuring that the setting's policies are implemented. All members of staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Day-to-day administration, especially the procedures for registering children at the start of sessions, is effective ensuring that every session runs smoothly.

Although the day-to-day performance of staff is appropriately managed, procedures for the annual appraisal of staff performance lack a clear focus.

Members of the management provide good support for the setting and are very diligent in organising fund-raising activities in order to improve resources for learning and teaching. However, there are no parent representative on the committee and members do not receive regular information about the setting's performance and its developmental needs.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Through the recently established self-evaluation procedures, practitioners have an increasing understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. With significant support from the support teacher, the setting has recently undertaken an evaluation of its work and has subsequently incorporated the outcomes in an appropriate improvement plan. A few of the priorities have already been implemented and have led to improvements in specific areas of learning, such as numeracy. A recent development, has been the use of questionnaires to give parents an opportunity to voice their opinion on the setting's work. However, self-evaluation is in its early stages of development and has not developed to its full potential.

Practitioners are supported well by a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development which is mainly provided by the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin. This is complemented by regular visits by the support teacher who has been instrumental in enabling the setting to get to grips with new initiatives. This ensures that all members of staff acquire new knowledge and skills regularly and are very aware of recent developments in the Foundation Phase. Practitioners very willingly act upon the support teacher's advice, they consistently share good practice within the setting and reflect upon their own practice.

### **Partnership working: Good**

An appropriate range of partnership activities contribute well to children's achievement and wellbeing. The very productive collaboration with the local authority support teacher together with practitioners' willingness to act upon advice, has led to improvements in standards and provision. There is a strong partnership with the primary school with the setting benefitting substantially from the use its children have of the school's outdoor resources. Practitioners work together very closely, share information about children and know who to contact and when, if additional support is required for children. There are useful links with organisations in the local community.

Daily links with parents provide good opportunities for every parent or guardian to discuss any matters which effect their children with practitioners. Although parents

are informed of some aspects of the setting's work, active steps are not taken to include them in their children's learning.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting is appropriately staffed for teaching all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners are deployed effectively to make the best possible use of their expertise and experience, and all resources managed carefully.

The leader and the management committee have an appropriate understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are carefully evaluated by the leader and staff to make sure that they have a positive effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parents' questionnaires**

As one parents' questionnaire only was received, no comments are made on parents' views.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

Children say they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

## **Appendix 2**

### **The reporting inspector**

Wil Williams	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))