



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Carmel
Village Hall
Carmel
Caernarfon
LL54 7AA**

Date of inspection: July 2018

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 Carmel is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in Carmel village hall, in Gwynedd local authority.

The setting is registered to admit up to 12 children between two and four years old. It is open between 9.00am and 11.30am for five sessions a week during term time. A lunch club is held at the setting five mornings a week from 11.30am until 12.45pm. During the inspection, there were eight three-year-old children on roll, six of whom were funded. The setting is also part of a Flying Start provision.

All children at the setting speak Welsh as their main language at home. Very few have additional learning needs and nearly all come from white British backgrounds.

Four practitioners, including the leader, work at the setting, along with one volunteer. The leader has been in post since December 2011.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in May 2018 and by Estyn in October 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Practitioners work very well together in order to provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, which ensures that children make good progress across all areas of learning
- Daily activities have a very good focus on learning through play, which adds positively to children's enthusiasm and inherent desire to learn
- Provision to develop the children's oral Welsh skills is very effective
- Practitioners promote children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully
- Practitioners plan effective opportunities to develop children's creative skills
- Practitioners provide very good opportunities for children to develop values, such as fairness and honesty, in order to help them to become caring citizens who respect each other's ideas and opinions
- It has effective arrangements to meet the needs of children who need additional support

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The experienced leader's vision and enthusiasm ensure that teaching and care develop happy and independent children, who communicate and work confidently in Welsh
- All practitioners work very well together in order to provide stimulating experiences of a high standard for children
- The management committee works closely with practitioners in order to make sure that they understand their roles in full
- The leader uses relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to set sensible priorities in order to improve provision and standards
- The close co-operation between the setting and practitioners from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin is effective and ensures that practitioners act quickly in line with their advice and guidance
- The setting's community links support children's learning successfully
- Practitioners make good use of training and support in order to improve their practice

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that practitioners' assessments lead directly to purposeful planning, which targets the next steps in children's learning effectively
- R2 Plan activities more effectively in order to develop children's skills systematically throughout the year
- R3 Improve provision and opportunities to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	
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Standards:

Wellbeing:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language or their wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

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

The leader and practitioners plan stimulating experiences thoroughly, which reflect the foundation phase ethos purposefully in order to meet a majority of children's needs successfully. Practitioners work very well together in order to provide interesting activities across all areas of learning. They engage children's interest purposefully. This creates enthusiastic children who are very keen to apply themselves to activities, both indoors and outdoors. For example, they motivate children to solve problems by discovering practical ways of filling a water tub before deciding what to do with the water once they have finished.

All practitioners meet regularly in order to discuss individual children's progress. They use these meetings, in addition to children's aspirations and ideas, as a sound basis on which to organise themes and activities sensibly. As a result, daily activities have a very good focus on learning through play and add positively to children's enthusiasm and inherent desire to learn. This includes robust opportunities for children to count Sali Sws's socks, make colourful patterns while drawing Huw Bob Lliw, and outlining their friends' shadows and comparing their size and shape.

The setting's provision to develop children's oral Welsh skills is very effective. Practitioners are excellent language models. They encourage children consistently to use the Welsh language as much as possible by challenging and questioning them skilfully in the learning areas. They have high expectations that stimulate children to respond intelligently. They support the few children who are beginning to learn the language successfully, and ensure that the oral skills of children who speak Welsh at home are also developing soundly. This has an excellent effect on the standard of children's spoken language, and many use familiar words and phrases confidently soon after they start at the setting.

Provision to develop children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills during focus tasks is appropriate. Practical examples of this can be seen as children discuss the characteristics of the sheep, cows and alpacas in the nearby field and count the wild birds that are regular visitors to the outdoor area. However, planning does not provide practitioners with enough guidance to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills systematically throughout the year. As a result, there are not purposeful enough opportunities to ensure that children use their literacy and numeracy skills regularly during continuous activities.

Provision to develop ICT skills is suitable and provides occasional opportunities for children to use cameras, tills, electronic toys and tablets, and choose music on a compact disc player. Practitioners make suitable use of educational software by using the computer and the interactive whiteboard. However, children are not given purposeful opportunities to use the equipment often enough in order to develop strong ICT skills.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. This is one of the setting's strengths and children develop a very good awareness of their Welshness and heritage. These activities include singing Welsh songs and nursery rhymes while playing with a parachute, celebrating St David's Day by cooking 'cawl' and baking Welsh cakes, and joining in with the Gŵyl Mudiad Meithrin celebrations in the company of Dewin and Doti.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to climb and slide independently on adventure equipment, ride bicycles energetically and run in a zigzag in the outdoor area. This develops children's physical skills successfully.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. Visits to a coal yard and a local garage, in addition to farms in the area, reinforce the curriculum effectively. Visitors such as a road safety officer, a local dentist and a yoga instructor have a very positive effect on children's standards of wellbeing.

Practitioners plan effective opportunities to develop children's creative skills, which include composition activities in the outdoor percussion area. They provide good opportunities for children to handle dough, make superhero costumes and add bubbles, food colouring and glitter to rain puddles in order to observe the reaction.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have sound knowledge of child development and the requirements of the foundation phase. They are very aware of the need to provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, in order to ensure that children make sound progress across all areas of learning.

All practitioners have high expectations and work well together in order to challenge children regularly during focus tasks and continuous activities. They take a genuine interest in children's lives and know them well. One of the practitioners' strengths is their understanding of when to intervene in children's play in order to stimulate them and motivate them to succeed. As a result, children persevere when pairing Sali Sws's socks or when using colourful ribbons to match Huw Bob Lliw's clothing. Children are also given suitable opportunities to play independently in the mud kitchen, the home corner and on the climbing frame. Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively and well-established procedures lead to positive participation by nearly all children in all activities.

Practitioners have effective arrangements for assessing children from their starting points. Evidence corresponds correctly to individual children's outcomes through appropriate use of the foundation phase profile. Practitioners discuss sensibly with the children what they need to do to improve their work. However, although

practitioners are aware of individuals' attainment, they do not yet use the daily assessments effectively enough to challenge children further by targeting the next steps in their learning.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements through informal dialogue at the beginning or end of sessions. At the end of their time at the setting, a 'Llyfr Trysor' (Treasure Book) is presented to parents, which identifies their children's successes during their time there.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting records children's additional learning needs thoroughly on entry to the setting and during their time there. Practitioners are very familiar with the necessary procedures. As a result, they meet the needs of children who need additional support successfully, when required, and use sign language effectively, when necessary.

Practitioners ensure that day-to-day care and children's health are good, and promote healthy eating and drinking successfully. As a result, children understand that fruit and vegetables are part of a sensible diet. They also discuss the importance of keeping fit regularly and ensure that physical activities in the outdoor area on bicycles and push and pull-along toys have a positive effect on children's health.

Practitioners provide purposeful opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Morning sessions on the carpet are lively and provide very good opportunities for children to greet each other and to enjoy hearing about their peers' adventures with their families. Practitioners use these sessions purposefully in order to develop values such as fairness and honesty, which helps children to learn how to be caring citizens who respect each other's ideas and opinions.

The setting has developed a range of effective strategies to promote good behaviour, which are used sensibly and sensitively by all practitioners. Children respond to these positively. They are happy and safe and the company of adults and confident when asking for help and support to complete activities, when necessary. The use of the 'helper of the day' gives individuals valuable responsibilities in recording the weather and choosing songs to play during activities. However, although practitioners emphasise the need for children to take turns and be polite while eating their snacks, they are not given enough opportunities to serve each other or prepare the food each day.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to recycle paper and food. Practitioners plan valuable opportunities for children to plant vegetables and flowers in pots and sacks in the outdoor area, which is beginning to develop children's understanding of sustainability appropriately.

The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take diligent 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.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is welcoming and practitioners strive successfully to ensure that children and parents feel part of an inclusive community. The leader and practitioners place a daily emphasis on acknowledging and celebrating diversity. They promote a positive ethos and lead by example by encouraging children to treat others and the setting's resources with tolerance and respect. Practitioners support children regularly in a positive and caring manner.

The setting ensures that nearly all children are given an equal opportunity to learn productively, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners teach children purposefully about the world's different festivals and cultures. They plan interesting opportunities for children to celebrate the Chinese New Year by tasting traditional food, making a dragon and writing their names by using Chinese symbols. The setting has a very good supply of dolls and jigsaws from different cultures, which are used effectively to develop children's understanding of differences in society. Practitioners also use local facilities effectively by taking children on walks to collect leaves, observe the houses and listen to the sounds of horses, lambs and chickens.

The setting uses resources successfully in continuous activities, focus activities and to enhance learning in order to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. Resources are accessible, which means that children use them independently and put them away without much guidance from adults. This reinforces children's understanding successfully of the need to take turns, share and work together.

The accommodation is of suitable quality, well maintained and secure. Practitioners make sound use of the outdoor area in order to plan interesting activities that ignite children's natural curiosity. Children have continuous access to this area, which includes planting and growing areas, climbing equipment and challenging areas to solve problems with water and sand. Practitioners use a good range of stimulating resources skilfully in order to meet children's needs and develop their skills successfully. Practitioners use the indoor area, including the hall, sensibly to provide energetic activities, such as dancing and making movements to music.

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

The experienced and conscientious leader has established consistent procedures, which promote and maintain improvements effectively. She ensures that all practitioners work very well together in order to provide stimulating experiences of a high standard for children. Her vision and enthusiasm ensure that teaching and care lead to developing happy and independent learners, who communicate and work confidently through the medium of Welsh.

The leader has high expectations of herself, practitioners and children. The setting's agreed vision leads to a caring and welcoming ethos, in which children and practitioners are eager to learn. As a result, practitioners motivate children to improve in a stimulating and supportive manner through effective teaching. A notable example of this is the way in which practitioners develop children's oracy skills by talking and singing regularly with individuals and specific groups.

The leader uses relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision. This has recently included using the foundation phase profile effectively to identify children's starting points correctly.

The leadership, which includes a supportive management committee, focuses appropriately on ensuring that provision for children is effective. The management committee works closely with practitioners to make sure that they understand their roles in full. This is done through a series of evaluations and regular discussions in order to review performance and scrutinise job descriptions, which outline their teaching duties clearly.

The management committee receives information about the setting's practices from the leader regularly. Members focus purposefully on improving the whole provision, particularly the outdoor area, in order to improve children's standards of wellbeing. They meet regularly to discuss the setting's income and funding, and monitor expenditure and the use of grants conscientiously and in detail. As a result, the management committee supports the setting successfully to maintain and improve its practices and develop the areas that need to be improved further.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has robust self-evaluation procedures, which means that the leader and practitioners know the setting well. As a result, they are aware of what needs to be done in order to improve and plan appropriately in order to do so. Practitioners use first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching to judge the effect on children's standards. The management committee also plays an active part in the process and observes teaching sessions in order to gain a sound understanding of the setting's strengths. This enables leaders to identify priorities for improvement.

Co-operation between the setting and practitioners from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin is effective, and practitioners act quickly in line with their advice and guidance. The effect of the support and the willingness to improve is that the setting has made consistent improvements over time. This includes implementing the foundation phase profile, improving provision in the outdoor area and raising the children's standards of literacy.

The leader uses information that derives from the self-evaluation procedures appropriately to set sensible priorities in the improvement plan. The plan includes important priorities that derive from self-evaluation activity. It includes an appropriate focus on measurable success criteria, in addition to clear actions. As a result, leaders are in a strong position to measure the improvement plan's progress carefully. Practitioners monitor progress against improvement targets regularly and are open to new ideas in order to change their ways of working and in response to the needs that are identified in the improvement plan.

The leader monitors expenditure purposefully in line with the targets for improvement, such as purchasing new ICT equipment and implementing useful language and mathematics schemes during focus tasks.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good range of effective strategic partnerships. Practitioners work purposefully with these partners to improve provision and children's outcomes by ensuring stimulating experiences for them.

The leader and practitioners receive valuable advice and guidance from two link teachers. They visit the setting regularly and their input has moved several aspects of the setting's provision forward, including daily assessments and planning.

The setting has a positive relationship with parents, and practitioners take active steps to include them in the setting's life. Informal and friendly daily opportunities facilitate the exchange of information about their children's development. The setting informs them regularly, through newsletters, an active noticeboard and social media, about all aspects of the setting's work in order to encourage them to play an active part in their children's education. Parents appreciate the setting's contribution towards developing their children's standards and wellbeing.

The setting's community links support children's learning successfully. This includes fundraising events, such as a beauty and wellbeing evening, and beneficial support when bidding for relevant sponsorship and grants.

The setting works purposefully with Mudiad Meithrin in order to support practitioners' necessary documentation and training. Practitioners also work closely with a wide range of other partners who make important contributions towards improving provision. These include agencies that provide training such as first aid, food hygiene and child protection.

Resource management: Good

Leaders manage the use of staffing and resources efficiently in order to support and deliver the curriculum appropriately. Leaders ensure that practitioners make good use of training and support in order to improve their practice. This includes ensuring that they make skilful use of the outdoor area to develop children's physical skills and planning extensive challenges to develop their numeracy skills, such as measuring flowers to see whether they have grown.

Leaders aim consistently to improve all aspects of the setting's work by managing resources purposefully and using practitioners' expertise carefully. Children have access to high quality resources that are stimulating and challenging, and practitioners manage the learning environment well.

The management committee has a sound understanding of the budget and plans effectively to prioritise expenditure appropriately. It makes regular improvements by discussing and funding improvement plans purposefully, such as beginning to add to the ICT equipment. As a result, the setting ensures that the use of funding has a direct effect on provision and children's outcomes. The management committee ensures that the setting has enough qualified practitioners with complete training, who are willing to develop and share their professional knowledge purposefully. As a result, the setting develops a culture of conscientious co-operation between practitioners and other partners, such as Mudiad Meithrin, Flying Start and the link

teacher at the local school. This close co-operation leads to robust performance management procedures, which focus well on ensuring interesting learning experiences and positive teaching practices.

Considering the effective teaching and the clear and firm guidance, the setting provides good value for money.

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
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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