



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

A report on
Cylch Chwarae Gellifor
Ysgol Gellifor

Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1SG

Date of inspection: March 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 Chwarae Gellifor is an English-medium setting that meets in the community hall, on the grounds of Ysgol Gellifor, near Ruthin, in the Denbighshire local authority. The setting is open five days a week, between 9am and 3pm. The setting changed to become an English-medium setting in September 2016, following a period as the Welsh-medium setting, Cylch Meithrin Gellifor.

The setting is registered to admit up to 26 children from two to four years old at any one time. It provides three-year-old funded education for two hours a day for eligible children. Currently, a few children at the setting receive funded early years' education.

Nearly all children are from a white British background and very few children come from Welsh-speaking homes. At the moment, no children with additional learning needs attend the setting.

The setting employs four members of staff, three of whom have direct responsibility for the three-year-old provision. The leader took up her post in September 2016.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in July 2017. Estyn last inspected the setting in July 2010, when it was the Welsh-medium setting Cylch Meithrin Gellifor.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Practitioners motivate children to learn productively through engaging daily activities
- Practitioners have a good understanding of when to intervene in children's experiences and play in order to motivate them to succeed in tasks and independent activities
- Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a sound understanding of the requirements of the foundation phase
- Practitioners provide positive opportunities for children to discuss their feelings and thank each other during tasks and co-operative play
- Practitioners use positive strategies successfully, which help children learn how to behave well
- It is an inclusive community in which all children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment, both inside the building and outdoors

However:

- Planning does not ensure regular opportunities to challenge children and target the next steps in their learning and their skills' development effectively
- Practitioners do not make beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's understanding of their own community
- Teaching does not always challenge groups of children and individuals in line with their abilities effectively enough
- Practitioners do not use assessments incisively enough to identify the next steps in individual children's learning effectively

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Leaders have begun to use relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision
- Members of the management committee and the new registered person are beginning to evaluate the impact of the provision effectively
- The school supports the setting well and aids in providing purposeful direction for the setting's practices
- Effective use of the setting's funding is improving the quality of provision
- A range of useful strategic partnerships work together purposefully to improve provision and children's outcomes

However:

- The leader and management committee have not had enough time to embed their new practices fully into the life of the setting
- The management committee's role of monitoring, challenging and supporting the setting is not yet established in full
- Self-evaluation systems are new and they have not had enough time to make the required changes to important areas for improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Improve planning to ensure continuity and progression in activities and learning experiences
- R2 Challenge individual children in line with their abilities
- R3 Ensure that assessments lead directly to purposeful planning and the next steps in children's learning
- R4 Embed the new leadership systems to affect the setting's strategic direction purposefully
- R5 Establish regular self-evaluation procedures to ensure that they identify the priority areas of development rigorously and robustly

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing:

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

Practitioners motivate children to learn productively by providing them with new and practical experiences, both indoors and outdoors. Even though the planning of learning experiences is at an early stage of development, the leader and the practitioners provide engaging daily activities for the children. This generally meets the children's needs and interests well. However, the planning for the progression of skills is at an early stage of development and is beginning to reflect the ethos of the foundation phase appropriately.

Practitioners work together successfully to improve the quality of activities. They motivate children to develop as independent learners effectively, such as when they encourage the children to count frogs out of the water to sit on lily pads. However, planning does not ensure regular opportunities to challenge children and target the next steps in their learning effectively. As a result, practitioners miss opportunities to challenge individuals and extend their understanding and skills further.

On the whole, the setting plans to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. Practical examples of this are the beneficial opportunities for children to use shapes to make faces and to make marks with chalk, pencils and paint independently. The literacy and numeracy activities available in all areas of learning develop many children's skills suitably with all children completing the same tasks in their turn. However, these activities do not challenge the more able children enough.

Practitioners provide worthwhile opportunities for children to express their personal ideas to develop activities further. Regular dialogues and listening with interest to children's ideas contribute positively to their daily enthusiasm. An effective example of this is the opportunity for them to role-play in the café, lay the table for a meal with crockery and cutlery, take orders and prepare the food.

Provision to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills is purposeful. Practitioners plan good opportunities for children to use a range of equipment, such as compact disc players, computers and electronic toys. All practitioners challenge children to develop their early ICT skills effectively through the use of stimulating educational software.

Practitioners provide effective opportunities to develop children's physical skills. Regular opportunities to ride tricycles and vehicles energetically outdoors enable them to develop good co-ordination and determination when peddling on slight inclines. Practitioners also provide beneficial opportunities for children to climb enthusiastically on the school's outdoor adventurous equipment. This has a positive effect on their abilities to work together.

The setting participates in many of the school's activities, which is beneficial to the children's learning. The setting's use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences is beginning to teach children appropriately about their local area and the roles people play within their community.

The setting's provision to develop the children's regular use of the Welsh language is suitable. As a result, most children's understanding of the language is developing adequately. The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. These activities include celebrating Saint David's Day and Saint Dwynwen's Day.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a sound understanding of the requirements of the foundation phase. They work together effectively and plan stimulating daily activities that meet the needs of most children suitably. Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively and safely. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment in all activities successfully.

In general, practitioners have appropriate expectations for all children. They know when to intervene in children's experiences and play in order to motivate them to succeed in tasks and independent activities. As a result, practitioners ensure that children are interested and motivated to complete tasks purposefully. For example, they encourage children to persevere to build a tower with wooden blocks and shapes. However, they do not always challenge groups of children and individuals in line with their abilities effectively enough to produce their best work.

Practitioners use the Welsh language suitably during group sessions and focus tasks. This develops the children's use and understanding of the language appropriately, as they begin to use basic vocabulary and simple phrases.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are beginning to affect the setting's day-to-day work and future planning positively. Initial assessments correspond correctly to the outcomes of the foundation phase profile and they are generally useful. Practitioners discuss sensibly with the children what they need to do to improve their work. However, they do not use the assessments incisively enough to target and improve children's skills further. As a result, practitioners do not use assessments to identify the next steps in individual children's learning effectively enough.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. The daily dialogue between practitioners and parents and carers reinforces this well. At the end of children's time at the setting, an informative report is available to parents and carers, which is shared effectively with the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners provide positive opportunities for children to discuss their feelings and thank each other during tasks and co-operative play. They create a calm environment and encourage children to listen to each other thoughtfully in social settings, such as snack time and when singing Welsh rhymes together. As a result, children learn to relate well to one another and take turns politely, which includes pouring drinks in their turn and washing their own dishes after eating and drinking. Such tasks create positive and useful opportunities for children to take on responsibilities. It enables them to learn about making intelligent decisions for themselves and others effectively.

The setting provides valuable opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use group discussions sensibly in order for children to consider each other's feelings. This fosters values such as honesty, fairness and respect towards each other effectively. Practitioners promote a positive ethos amongst the children when they work together to complete tasks, such as creating a farmyard scene in the small world area.

Practitioners have successful arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing, including effective systems to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, children understand that a balanced diet that includes fruit, vegetables and exercise is good for them. Practitioners encourage children to re-cycle paper, cardboard, plastic goods and food. This develops children's understanding of sustainability effectively.

Practitioners use positive strategies successfully, which helps children learn how to behave well. The setting is a safe, secure environment and practitioners take good care of the children when they arrive and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Practitioners follow guidelines to identify and support children with additional learning needs effectively. They take advice and work with appropriate agencies as necessary, successfully to provide support for children with specific needs.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners promote a caring ethos through the setting's daily activities and their positive attitudes. They place a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting achieves this by celebrating different festivals from all around the world each year effectively, such as the Chinese New Year.

The setting is an inclusive community in which all children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment, both inside the building and outdoors.

Practitioners' thoughtful practices encourage every child to be considerate and caring.

Practitioners use resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase. These resources are accessible to all children and promote their sense of responsibility successfully, as practitioners delegate tasks in the areas of learning sensibly. This includes painting daffodils at an easel independently to depict the spring, and making clay egg decorations ready for Easter.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities to enrich learning tasks and use resources effectively. As a result, they provide a wide range of interesting resources effectively for children to use in independent activities, tasks under the direction of adults and to enrich learning. Practitioners keep resources at a practical level so that all children are able to reach them and put them away. This promotes their sense of responsibility purposefully. The setting has enough ICT resources to develop children's skills successfully.

The building is of good quality, well maintained and safe. The outdoor area includes areas to grow and plant, equipment for lively play involving bikes and traffic lights and quiet areas to sit and reflect. The setting uses these areas creatively to develop children's co-operative skills using soil, sand and water. Practitioners also use the school field well, for nature walks and investigations involving the seasons.

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

The setting's new leader and management committee have a clear vision and positive approach to securing a long-term future for the setting within the community. With beneficial support from the school, the setting has begun to set a purposeful direction for the setting's practices. This includes refining the setting's management practices, promoting better learning experiences in improved areas of learning and developing better training opportunities for all practitioners. This vision is beginning to improve management practices, planning, teaching and assessment appropriately. However, this is at an early stage of development and as yet its effect on the day-to-day practices of the setting is limited.

The setting's objectives, development plans and policies focus suitably on improving provision. On the whole, this meets children's care, support and wellbeing well and promotes their achievements successfully. Practitioners work conscientiously. This commitment is beginning to affect provision positively and the leader has positive expectations of everyone in their daily work. This benefits the children, and practitioners succeed in motivating them to improve consistently in sensible and supportive ways, from sound starting points.

The leader has recently begun to use relevant and up-to-date information about the setting, through the local authority's quantitative systems, to improve provision. This includes better use of the foundation phase profile to identify children's starting points accurately, in addition to refining planning to consider children's interests and needs. Their honest and thoughtful decisions about their own roles are correct and identify areas for improvement and their training needs accurately. However, this is not affecting the next steps in children's learning effectively and the level of challenge required in daily tasks to match children's abilities.

The practitioners focus on providing purposeful activities for children. They have made beneficial changes to the learning areas, especially indoors, to motivate children to work diligently. They also focus on national priorities suitably, such as developing literacy, numeracy and ICT provision to improve children's skills before they start school.

The management committee's role of monitoring, challenging and supporting the setting is developing appropriately. Members of the management committee and the registered person have begun to evaluate children's outcomes, provision and staff responsibilities with more rigour. As a result, the beneficial monitoring, discussions and actions that now exist ensure that everyone works effectively as a team. However, the role of the management committee of challenging as critical friends is less established. It lacks rigour when monitoring planning practices and the quality of teaching.

Recently, the management committee has focused in greater depth on the targets that derive from the self-evaluation processes. Through regular meetings, members receive relevant information about the setting's practices from the leader. As a result, the new leadership team is dedicated in making clear improvements to the provision and the management processes. The management committee meets regularly to discuss the setting's income and funding, and monitors expenditure and the use of grants conscientiously and in great detail.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders have an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and most of the areas for improvement. The support of the management committee and the registered person has enabled the leader to establish suitable arrangements and procedures to evaluate the setting's work. This enables the leader to monitor, with greater rigour, the children's standards and their progress as well as the setting's provision and administrative practices. This effective and regular co-operation, together with the improvement of the collation of relevant information, contributes to the recent improvements within the setting purposefully. A positive example of this is the development of the areas of learning within the building, which the management committee funded sensibly.

The self-evaluation process considers the views of parents, the school and the local authority appropriately. However, self-evaluation procedures are new and are not yet fully embedded. As a result, leaders have not had enough time to incorporate the self-evaluation practices fully into the setting's day-to-day life.

The leader's use of relevant and regular information about the setting to ensure improvements to provision is strengthening her understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. This has begun to lead to improvements in the setting's work, such as beginning to improve the use of assessment procedures to influence future planning.

The self-evaluation report provides a clear picture of the setting's strengths and most areas for improvement. The report is accurate and targets the setting's needs effectively. There is honesty in its detail and it includes enough details about how and why the appropriate areas require further improvement.

Leaders set appropriate targets against suitable timescales and prioritise them sensibly. With the agreement of the management committee, they allocate funding well to meet targets. On the whole, targets in the development plan derive directly from the setting's self-evaluation, which is a positive feature in the setting's recent progress.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a good range of effective partners. Practitioners work purposefully with these partners to improve provision and children's outcomes.

The setting meets on the grounds of Ysgol Gellifor and there is a very positive link with the school. The leader and practitioners receive valuable advice and guidance from foundation phase teachers at the school. The headteacher, who is also the registered person, visits the setting regularly and his input has improved several aspects of provision at the setting recently, particularly with administrative practices. The effect of this partnership is beneficial to the setting. As a result, there is strong support for the transition arrangements, with effective arrangements in place to transfer children's personal information and assessments when they start in the school. The setting visits the school regularly to participate in different activities, such as concerts and sports events. This helps children to settle into school life successfully upon transferring from the setting.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. Practitioners inform them regularly, through letters and social media, about all aspects of the setting's work. They are encouraged to provide their views on issues to improve the setting beneficially through regular discussions and feedback, both verbally and on paper.

The setting's community links support children's learning successfully. This includes fundraising events, such as fashion evenings, and suitable support when bidding for sponsorship and relevant grants. The setting also supports local and national charities, and this nurtures children's kindness and care for others.

The setting works purposefully with external agencies, such as the local authority and the Wales Pre-school Providers Association. These organisations support documentation and practitioners' training effectively. Practitioners also work with 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: Adequate

The leader, management committee and the registered person are committed to focusing directly on improving all aspects of the setting's work. They co-operate well and use their expertise intelligently and allocate resources purposefully. They ensure that the setting has enough qualified practitioners who receive relevant training to meet the children's needs more effectively.

Leadership practices have improved significantly in a short period of time, which enables practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge successfully.

As a result, they have created a lively learning community, which is beginning to have a positive effect on planning and assessment practices, teaching and more rigorous leadership and management practices.

Leaders have established appropriate performance management procedures. They identify suitably that the setting's strengths lie in its care and support practices and its learning environment. However, they have not had the necessary impact on addressing fully a few important areas for improvement in relation to planning learning experiences, teaching and assessment.

The setting manages resources to support learning sensibly and shares resources creatively with the school. This includes changing the layout of the room, hall and the outdoor area. This inspires the children as they apply themselves to different themes in the different areas of learning, such as the café and when finding and counting caterpillars in the sand.

The leader and management committee use the budget and grants purposefully with the support of the school and the local authority. They prioritise expenditure against targets in the development plan suitably and make frequent improvements by discussing and prioritising specific funding for the setting's needs. An example of this is using the new ICT equipment regularly and effectively.

Although a number of significant changes and improvements have been made recently at the setting, it provides adequate value for money due to the quality of its provision its leadership procedures.

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	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
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