



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Abergele
Canolfan Y Morfa
Ffordd Y Morfa
Abergele
Conwy
LL22 7NU**

Date of inspection: June 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 Abergele is situated in a cabin on the grounds of Ysgol Glan Morfa in the town of Abergele, in Conwy local authority. The setting is registered to admit up to 52 children at any given time. Sessions are provided for two-and-a-half hours, four mornings and four afternoons a week for two and three-year-old children.

English is the main language spoken at home by most pupils, and nearly all come from white British backgrounds. There are currently very few children with additional learning needs.

The children's education is supported by two full-time practitioners and one part-time practitioner.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in February 2017 and by Estyn in April 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children's numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop well from their starting points
- Practitioners provide broad and balanced learning experiences
- Practitioners place a strong emphasis on learning through play and solving practical problems
- Nearly all children are very happy and feel safe, and there is a very good relationship between adults and children
- Most children listen appropriately and follow instructions well
- The setting provides good value for money

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader has a clear vision that is based on a sound awareness of the setting's strengths and a majority of areas for improvement
- Practitioners work together conscientiously for the benefit of the children
- Practitioners have a good understanding of their responsibilities
- The management committee has sound knowledge of what happens at the setting from day to day
- Practitioners make purposeful use of a wide range of partnerships and external support agencies
- Practitioners are very open to new ideas and implement them enthusiastically

Recommendations

- R1 Plan appropriate opportunities to develop children's oral Welsh skills purposefully
- R2 Ensure that the staff challenge children regularly to respond more confidently to questions in Welsh
- R3 Ensure that self-evaluation processes are more evaluative and identify development issues more clearly so that there is a better link between the self-evaluation report and the development plan

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?

Good

Standards: Good

Most children make good progress during their time at the setting and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Most recall previous learning effectively and persevere to complete tasks independently. During these activities, most pupils investigate confidently.

Most children choose to fetch a book and turn the pages correctly, for example when reading to each other in the den. They show interest and enthusiasm in story books and information books, and enjoy their contents. They listen appropriately to stories and join in purposefully with the story and when singing class songs. Most children follow instructions well, for example when cooking in the mud kitchen or when watering plants in the garden. While role-playing in the house and shop, most children use language that is suitable for the situation. Most handle a range of small equipment and writing implements confidently, and many are beginning to understand that writing has a purpose. For example, a few strive successfully to write a simple letter to a parent in the area under the eaves. Many children use elementary Welsh words independently when talking to adults in the learning areas. They describe what is happening confidently, for example when explaining how many pots of water are needed to fill the tub. However, a majority of children's responses to practitioners' questions in Welsh are not extensive enough, particularly those who are more able.

Many children's number skills are developing well, and they make sound progress from their starting points. Most recite numbers to ten correctly when counting how many children are present, and the plates that are needed at snack time. A minority are beginning to recognise numbers to five and match them successfully when counting flowers and seeds in the outdoor area. Many recognise two-dimensional shapes well and follow instructions carefully in order to make specific shapes, for example when building a caterpillar house.

Many children use ICT equipment confidently. They control the movements of an electronic toy correctly and use a keyboard correctly in order to turn a page on an electronic book and draw a picture. Most children record their voices on an ICT box successfully.

Most children have well-developed physical skills. They ride bicycles purposefully on the playground and follow a particular path. A few more confident children are beginning to use the pedals and are developing sound balance skills. Many children's problem-solving skills are developing well; for example, many guess successful ways of moving from one side of a tree trunk to the other without touching the floor.

Many children are beginning to develop as independent learners by taking an active part in their learning, for example when writing an invitation to a butterfly party. They develop this by making choices about what they like during snack time and when choosing free activities.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and familiarise themselves with the daily routine quickly. Most persevere for extended periods and are keen to take part in activities. For example, they put mathematical equipment together to correspond to numbers and role-play in the den under the trees.

Nearly all children behave well, particularly during focus activities, stories and singing, and measuring activities outdoors. They treat each other and adults with respect. Many children are beginning to make sensible choices about what they would like to do during free activities. They take turns well, share and help to tidy up when asked to do so.

During snack time, most children show good social skills and say 'please' and 'thank you' when receiving and serving food and drink. Most have an appropriate understanding of the need to keep fit and understand that eating fresh food, such as fruit and vegetables and drinking water, contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. Nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly with encouragement from practitioners after using the toilet and before eating. This reflects nearly all children's sound understanding of the importance of hygiene in order to prevent infections.

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

Practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the foundation phase, which is reflected strongly in the quality of the curriculum and the activities that are provided. They plan a range of interesting and appealing experiences across all areas of learning, which meets requirements and creates interest among the children towards learning.

Co-ordinated provision to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is embedded firmly in their learning experiences and each child's interests. Practitioners plan appropriately to make valuable use of resources that are familiar to the children, particularly in the construction, discovery and creative areas.

Plans identify learning objectives for activities clearly and ensure that they meet most children's needs. Practitioners have recently introduced appropriate opportunities for children to suggest their ideas for the plans, for example when developing the outdoor climbing areas. This develops a majority of children's confidence and independence appropriately.

Daily activities provide good opportunities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. For example, practitioners plan sound opportunities for children to count blocks in the construction area, choose ingredients to cook in the mud kitchen and count pots of water independently. This has a good effect on many children's numeracy skills.

The setting's provision to develop oral Welsh skills is appropriate. However, it does not ensure adequate challenge, particularly for more able children. It does not plan in enough detail to ensure that children develop their oral skills purposefully. The

setting provides regular opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of Welsh culture and traditions. Effective examples of this are the ways in which practitioners introduce celebrations such as St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day to the children and tell them stories from the Mabinogi. The children are familiar with Mr Urdd and compete in the nursery children's farewell concert in the hall of Ysgol Glan Morfa. This develops an appropriate understanding of their history and heritage.

Practitioners make appropriate use of visitors, such as a nurse and police officers, to develop awareness of road safety. This develops a suitable awareness among the children of the people who help them.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have good knowledge of the principles of the foundation phase. They make good use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources to guide learning. They plan activities that ensure a good balance between activities that are led by adults and activities that the children choose themselves. Activities maintain most children's interest well. This enables them to persevere with their tasks independently, for example as they search for caterpillars in the spaghetti and when filling a colander with pipe cleaners.

One of the setting's strengths is the wonderful relationship between staff and children. They manage behaviour sensitively and understand the children's needs well. As a result, most children behave well and treat their friends with respect by sharing resources and playing together successfully.

All practitioners model the Welsh language well, introduce new vocabulary to the children daily and use songs suitably to learn patterns. However, there are not enough opportunities to introduce and extend these patterns or new sentences regularly in order to ensure that all children develop confidence in their oracy skills.

The setting's assessment procedures are developing effectively, and nearly all practitioners contribute effectively to the process. Assessments during focus tasks are useful and contribute appropriately towards planning the next steps in learning.

The setting informs parents and carers appropriately about their children's achievements through valuable daily dialogue between practitioners and parents, and an open evening in order to discuss progress. At the end of their time at the setting, the leader provides parents with a useful report on their children's progress.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting's arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking are sound. Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities to develop children's understanding of the importance of eating healthily, for example through the Siop Sali Mali initiative. The setting ensures good opportunities for children to brush their teeth every day. As a result, most children have a good awareness of the importance of looking after their teeth.

Provision to ensure children's moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is developing well. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop their awareness of different cultures, for example by studying the Diwali festival, the Chinese New Year and the story of Handa from Africa.

Practitioners provide sound opportunities for children to recycle paper, cardboard, food and plastic. This develops their understanding of sustainability appropriately.

Practitioners develop children's social skills well during snack time. Practitioners encourage the children to take responsibility when acting as helper of the day. There are also efficient arrangements to support children's health and safety. Practitioners respond appropriately to any incidents of disruption or irresponsible behaviour in order to reinforce acceptable discipline. The setting has effective arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily.

The setting is a safe environment. Practitioners are careful as they children arrive and when they are collected at the end of each session.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is a caring and homely environment. Practitioners work well together as a team to create an inclusive ethos where children's wellbeing is given a high priority. As a result, children settle quickly at the setting.

Practitioners provide an attractive and stimulating environment. Continuous provision areas provide good opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. They make effective use of colourful and attractive displays in order to reinforce learning and celebrate children's work well.

Children have daily access to a stimulating and motivational outdoor area, which includes a wide variety of resources to stimulate learning. Practitioners plan purposeful activities in order to enrich children's experiences in this area. For example, they introduce new vocabulary and numbers in the construction area and develop children's understanding of shapes and numbers in the den, the sand and the small garden.

Activities and experiences provide equal opportunities and full access to the curriculum for each child, which ensures that they work well together.

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

The leader has established a clear vision where everybody works well to ensure valuable experiences for the children in their care. She has succeeded in fostering a spirit of close co-operation among staff. All practitioners' job descriptions are appropriate and the leader ensures that they understand their responsibilities. This enables practitioners to meet children's needs effectively and promote their progress and personal development sensibly. The leader holds regular staff meetings in order for them to work together purposefully to provide a good standard of care and education. The setting's arrangements for managing staff performance are appropriate and contribute suitably to developing an effective workforce.

The management committee's officers have good knowledge of what happens at the setting from day to day. Over the years, the committee members have ensured stable and robust leadership and staff. They work successfully with practitioners to ensure a clear and agreed vision. The management committee has a clear strategic direction and takes its responsibilities seriously. In their roles, members work with the leader to maintain standards, provision and to ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding children are effective. As a result, the setting's processes are sound and there is a clear emphasis on identifying and meeting children's needs.

The setting gives good attention to national and local priorities, including developing the outdoor area and encouraging children to eat and drink healthily.

Improving quality: Good

The leader knows the setting well. Self-evaluation arrangements are sound and are embedded in the setting's arrangements for improvement. She includes all practitioners in addition to parents' views. The leader considers this valuable input continuously in order to develop an improvement plan that focuses on improving each child's outcomes and practitioners' performance. The leader responds to parents' aspirations regularly and has strengthened the relationship between them and the setting by providing guidance and beneficial resources to enable them to play an active part in their children's education.

The leader works well with members of the management committee, in addition to officers from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin to gather appropriate information about the setting. She uses this information sensibly to produce a self-evaluation report that identifies most strengths and a majority of areas for improvement. The plan has a clear focus on raising the standard of children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. It includes appropriate actions, timescale, responsibilities and success criteria. However, there is not a clear enough link between the priorities in the development plan and self-evaluation outcomes, and targets are not always measurable enough to monitor and measure progress.

Partnership working: Good

The setting builds purposefully on a range of very beneficial partnerships. These partnerships have a good effect on children's standards and wellbeing, and on the quality of provision and leadership.

Partnerships with parents have a positive effect on the setting's work. New parents receive a useful information pack that facilitates the step from the home to the setting by providing the necessary information. The noticeboard in the foyer is used beneficially to share information from day to day. Parents are very supportive of the setting and raise money regularly in order to improve provision. Parents have built a beneficial mud kitchen in the outdoor area in order to develop children's independent and creative skills. The setting has forged beneficial links with local businesses that contribute occasionally towards buying purposeful resources that strengthen provision and improve facilities. This includes role-play equipment, multicultural dolls and a colourful carpet in the story area.

The setting has very supportive partnerships with the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. These partnerships work closely with the management committee to improve and develop the setting's leadership and staffing.

The partnership with the local school is very beneficial. Children benefit greatly from this partnership and, as a result of regular visits, they are very familiar with the school's procedures before they start there.

Resource management: Good

The leader ensures that the setting has permanent staff with suitable qualifications to meet the requirements of the foundation phase. She focuses successfully on organising training that is based on an appropriate and balanced evaluation of the setting's needs and practitioners' professional development. All of the setting's practitioners work effectively as a team.

The setting has put firm foundations in place to make the best use of resources to support teaching and learning. The setting has plenty of good quality resources to respond to the requirements of the six areas of learning. Practitioners make effective use of resources to enrich children's experiences. These include interesting, good quality books and extensive resources to help them to learn outdoors. Practitioners make beneficial use of the resources in the indoor and outdoor learning and play areas.

In light of the outcomes that are achieved by children and the procedures that the leader has established, the setting provides good value for money.

Glossary of terms

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| 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. |

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| 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 |