



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

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Amlwch  
Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch  
Amlwch  
LL68 9DY**

**Date of inspection: May 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:

<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 Amlwch is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a room at the local primary school in Anglesey local authority. The setting provides education and care for children between two and three years old from 8.50 to 11.20am four mornings a week, and from 12.30 to 3.00pm three days a week. The setting is registered to admit up to 16 children per session. There are currently 25 children on roll, 14 of whom receive early years education funded by the local authority.

English is the main home language of many of the children, and only a minority have additional learning needs.

Two members of staff work at the setting, one of whom is qualified. The leader has been in post since June 2012.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in January 2018 and by Estyn in May 2012.

## 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 current performance is good because:

- Many children make good progress from low starting points
- The children are very happy and settle quickly and without fuss
- Many children develop as independent learners
- Many children listen to a story, join in with movements meaningfully when singing and respond to simple words and questions in Welsh
- Many children's number skills are developing well in line with their age and ability
- Many children behave well and respect each other
- Practitioners model the Welsh language soundly and immerse the children in the language
- Practitioners work together effectively as a team and support each other for the children's benefit

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have a clear vision to raise standards, and to strengthen provision and leadership further
- Leaders have fostered a close-knit and effective sense of co-operation
- Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in full and ensure that children make the best progress
- Leaders use relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision
- The self-evaluation report identifies many of the setting's strengths
- Priorities for areas for improvement are transferred successfully to the development plan
- The setting has a range of effective partnerships

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that planning provides practitioners with robust guidance in order to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills systematically
- R2 Ensure that the targets in the development plan are measurable and monitored regularly
- R3 Ensure more rigorous arrangements in order to review the setting's accounts effectively

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Good</b>
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### Standards: Good

On entry to the setting, most children have low literacy and numeracy skills. By the end of their time at the setting, many make good progress in their language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Children are willing to experiment and investigate by using their thinking skills successfully when programming a toy to move backwards and forwards. Most try to solve problems independently without support from an adult. A good example of this is the way in which they search enthusiastically for animals in the sand.

Many children listen well to adults and each other, and respond to simple comments. Many listen to stories and respond to words and questions in Welsh. On the whole, they speak clearly, for example when responding to a question about different items in the florist. Many show appropriate emotions when responding to a story or a familiar song, for example the feelings of Bili Broga (Billy the Frog) as he searches for a home. Many sing a range of songs to identify times of the day, such as tidy-up time, circle time or the end of the session. Many children show good progress from their low starting points in terms of acquiring language skills. As a result, they have an increasing understanding of the meaning of sentences, questions and familiar instructions. Many are beginning to use the correct terms for counting and describing size.

A majority of children are beginning to enjoy looking at books. They recognise their favourite books and stories, and find them based on the covers and pictures. Many follow the text that is read and are beginning to provide information about familiar texts. They are beginning to identify the differences and similarities between the pictures in the story of Bili Broga, and describe what the characters are doing or how they feel in the story.

Many children enjoy making marks and experimenting with chalk and paint, and are beginning to show an understanding of the purpose of writing, for example when writing in the florist. Many children make marks independently when mixing colours to draw a picture or using large chalk outside.

Many children develop their numeracy skills well, in line with their age and ability. Many count by using real-life situations regularly, for example when identifying how many frogs are on the rock in the pond outside. A few count to ten without prompting. Many are beginning to use mathematical language correctly when discussing the size of caterpillars, by noting whether they are big or small.

Many children have appropriate ICT skills. They are beginning to use a computer independently to choose and colour animals and shapes, and develop their fine motor skills very well when using the mouse. Many are able to use a programmable toy and handle a tablet computer or mouse fairly confidently.

Many children develop good physical skills. They ride bicycles purposefully between cones and develop sound balance skills when practising on the balance board. Most use small implements with firm control in a variety of different tasks, such as paintbrushes, chalk, scissors and buttons. Many children's problem-solving skills are developing appropriately, for example as they place the parts of a caterpillar that fit together in order.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting. They settle quickly and apply themselves and concentrate enthusiastically on continuous activities. Most enjoy taking part in the range of activities and persevere for reasonable periods, for example when colouring animals on the computer. Many develop as independent learners, for example when choosing which activity to undertake or putting on painting aprons. Many are able to recall previous learning successfully when remembering that a caterpillar turns into a butterfly.

Many children behave well, are considerate of others and are polite, and learn to take turns and share. Most children take responsibility by helping to tidy up and treat the equipment with respect and care. During snack time, most show good social skills. They say thank you for the food and drink and treat others with respect during this time.

After using the toilet, creative play or outdoor play, nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly without much prompting from practitioners. As a result, they develop their awareness of hygiene and the importance of maintaining a healthy and responsible lifestyle successfully.

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

Practitioners plan together carefully each week to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. On the whole, these learning experiences meet the requirements of the foundation phase successfully and build on children's experiences and previous learning. They provide rich learning experiences that engage nearly all children's interest effectively. Plans meet many of the children's needs and identify clearly what children will learn in activities. Practitioners make suitable use of the purposeful areas, both indoors and outdoors, to enrich provision. They also ensure regular opportunities for children to investigate and foster independent learning skills. Plans identify clear learning objectives for focus activities, in addition to skills to be developed. However, planning procedures do not identify opportunities for children to use the outdoors regularly enough throughout the year.

Practitioners plan suitably to develop children's literacy skills. They ensure regular opportunities to develop children's literacy skills through a range of activities and regular exercises in order to immerse children in the Welsh language. For example, they ensure that children practice responding to familiar questions during registration and circle time, and sing familiar songs each day. By providing an appealing and comfortable reading corner, they provide stimulating opportunities for children to learn how to handle books carefully and they start to behave like readers. They

ensure that there are beneficial opportunities to develop early mark-making skills each day indoors in the busy hands area, and outdoors on the blackboards on the wall.

There are regular opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Children count objects based on the theme, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on children's number skills. An example of this is counting how many frogs each child has in the focus group. Practitioners provide rich experiences for children to develop their ICT skills through an appropriate range of interesting learning experiences, including using apps on a tablet and controlling a programmable toy appropriately. However, planning does not always provide practitioners with enough guidance to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills systematically throughout the year.

Practitioners plan purposefully to develop children's physical and creative skills. For example, they enable children to ride bicycles on the school playground and create interesting food in the mud kitchen.

Practitioners ensure purposeful opportunities to develop respect towards people from different cultural backgrounds, for example by celebrating the Chinese New Year each year. Children's Welshness is promoted daily by establishing a Welsh ethos within the setting. Children are also given useful opportunities to learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations, including celebrating St David's Day.

The setting uses local visits to enrich children's learning experiences well. These include visits to the local nature park and the local library. Visitors, such as a farmer bringing a lamb to the setting, teach children about the world around them and the roles of people in their local area successfully.

### **Teaching: Good**

Practitioners work together effectively as a team and support each other for the benefit of the children. There is a wonderful relationship between staff and children, and practitioners praise the children's efforts regularly and purposefully. This is a strength at the setting and contributes well towards managing children's behaviour and their willingness to treat each other with respect.

Another strength is the way in which practitioners model the Welsh language and provide rich opportunities to immerse children in the Welsh language by communicating with them regularly. This helps to develop the children's language by introducing new vocabulary and repeating familiar words. This has a positive effect on children's understanding, particularly as only a few hear the Welsh language at home. On the whole, practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to respond to questions during focus sessions. However, they do not do this as successfully during plenary sessions. Practitioners make effective use of resources when presenting stories, such as Mrs Wishi Washi and Ifan Cyw Melyn. This helps the children to understand the content of Welsh stories.

On the whole, practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the foundation phase. They ensure that there is a successful balance between indoor activities that are directed by adults and those that are chosen by children. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to learn through play, for

example as they roll dough and role-play in the florist's. Activities hold many of the children's attention well and enable them to persevere with their tasks. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to learn through play and pursue their interests outdoors, for example when playing in the mud kitchen and making marks with chalk.

The setting's arrangements for assessing children's progress are effective, and practitioners identify each child's needs well. Practitioners praise children orally regularly and question them skilfully during the session. The process of observing and assessing children each day ensures that children receive the necessary support. Practitioners make purposeful use of weekly planning to record the children's next steps.

Parents receive valuable information about their children's progress during their time at the setting through regular discussions and open evenings. Each child has a special "Llyfr Trysor" (Treasure Book) that records and celebrates developments across all areas of learning during the year. This concise profile is used purposefully to set a baseline and record the child's development during the year. The profiles are transferred to the school in order to show each child's development clearly.

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

Practitioners promote children's wellbeing successfully. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting. There are appropriate opportunities to promote children's spiritual and moral development, for example by encouraging children to discuss their feelings during circle time, and through collective worship before eating fruit. Practitioners develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect successfully through activities and daily routines. For example, they praise the children for sharing and treating others with respect or for good behaviour. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop awareness of different cultures, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The setting introduces the importance of eating healthily successfully. Snack time is a sound reflection of this. Through this activity, children are given a valuable opportunity to socialise and take responsibility. Nearly all are responsible for recycling any food waste, and clear their own plates and cups. Children also learn about healthy foods when planting and caring for fruit and vegetables in the garden. Practitioners promote healthy living habits successfully by delivering a scheme to promote the importance of brushing teeth. They also ensure that children are given regular opportunities to exercise, and take advantage of the school's resources when the weather is unfavourable.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners ensure that children are transferred safely to the care of their parents or carers.

The setting has robust processes to respond to the needs of any child with additional learning needs. Leaders use support and guidance from the local authority and specialist services to support individuals, as necessary. Very recently, the setting has appointed a member of staff in order to meet the needs of children with specific additional learning needs.

## **Learning environment: Good**

The learning environment is welcoming and stimulating. Through this, practitioners ignite the children's imagination and enrich learning both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners grow vegetables, fruit and flowers with the children in the outdoor area, and this teaches children successfully about how living things grow. The use of the outdoor area for energetic activities, such as riding bicycles and investigating nature, develops children's physical and investigative skills well.

Practitioners prepare colourful displays that reinforce learning, in addition to celebrating and valuing the children's work well. The whole learning environment includes a good supply of purposeful resources that support the principles of the foundation phase successfully. Areas of continuous provision provide rich opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy, ICT and creative skills purposefully.

The learning environment is clean, and the building is in good condition and maintained purposefully.

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

Leaders have a clear vision to raise standards and strengthen provision and leadership further. There is a very firm focus on raising the children's linguistic standards, as nearly all are non-Welsh-speaking on entry to the setting. There is beneficial co-operation between leaders, and this leads to reducing the burden of leadership. Through effective joint planning and sharing expertise, practitioners provide a variety of interesting learning experiences that meet the foundation phase outcomes. As a result of the effective co-operation, the setting is run smoothly and consistently from day-to-day.

Leaders use relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision. This has recently included using the foundation phase profile to identify children's starting points correctly, and training practitioners to respond to the children's linguistic needs.

Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in full and ensure that children make the best progress. They meet each week to plan the setting's work and discuss children's outcomes and progress. They act on ideas, advice and guidelines in order to maintain and improve the quality of provision, for example introducing the mud kitchen in the outdoor area. The setting gives purposeful attention to local and national priorities. They focus effectively on promoting children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, in addition to developing provision for health and wellbeing.

The registered person and management committee receive relevant information from the leader. They make a beneficial contribution to the management of the setting, and discuss the setting's support and needs in meetings. This includes taking part in the practitioners' performance management processes. Leaders and the committee work together effectively in order to ensure that statutory policies are implemented. Practitioners are given suitable opportunities for planning, preparation and assessment each week.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Following the support of the authority, leaders have established beneficial quality improvement procedures. They value parents' views and respond positively to their comments. For example, following a consultation, the leader now shares useful information with parents through a social media website. This contributes well to the self-evaluation process and ensures improvement. The registered person receives up-to-date information about the setting's work when visiting regularly. By doing so, she makes a beneficial contribution to the process and supports practitioners effectively. However, because the committee's membership changes regularly, it does not contribute actively enough to the self-evaluation process.

Co-operation between the leaders, the registered person who is the school's link teacher, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, is beneficial. This co-operation ensures that leaders follow their advice on the self-evaluation process. The setting makes purposeful use of reports and visits by these partnerships in order to contribute to the self-evaluation processes. As a result, the self-evaluation report is a useful document that identifies the setting's strengths successfully in terms of children's standards, provision and leadership.

The current reports identifies a number of important areas for improvement successfully, and these are transferred to the development plan. For example, the leader has identified the need to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills, and plans purposeful training in order to improve provision. This leads to improvements that have a positive effect on children's progress, and the setting has also responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection. The improvement plan identifies clear objectives that focus well on improving children's outcomes, in addition to enriching provision and partnerships. The plan includes actions and timescales, in addition to responsibilities and success criteria. However, targets are not always measurable enough to monitor actions and ensure improvement, and there is no evaluation of the previous plan in order to measure progress.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a range of beneficial partnerships that support provision successfully. The close link with the school in which the setting meets is one of the setting's strengths. This co-operation enriches children's learning experiences effectively. An example of this is the way in which the setting uses the hall in order to develop energetic activities, a plastic tunnel and the garden to grow seeds and plants. The school's link teacher has also been the setting's registered person for a number of years. The leader and children benefit greatly from this experience by borrowing educational resources, when necessary. All of these arrangements support the transition arrangements from the setting to the school successfully. They also ensure that children are prepared well for the next step in their education.

There is a good relationship between practitioners and the children's parents. The setting's open door policy means that parents are given beneficial opportunities to meet with staff and discuss any concerns at a very early stage. They receive frequent information about their children's progress through formal meetings and the 'treasure book', which outlines their experiences and skills over time. An open morning is organised twice a year in order to discuss the children's development and engage parents' interest in their children's early education.

Leaders work effectively with the local authority's advisory teacher and act promptly on any advice or recommendation. For example, following a recent course on the "Mud Kitchen", the setting purchased a mud kitchen immediately in order to enrich children's creative, linguistic and physical skills. Frequent use of this resource has become embedded as part of provision. The setting has a beneficial link with Mudiad Meithrin, for example by taking advantage of opportunities to receive training. Practitioners work appropriately with specialist agencies when children need additional support.

The setting makes beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences, for example by visiting the town's library for a Song and Rhyme session, visiting a local garden and welcoming a farmer to show two lambs in the outdoor area. This makes a positive contribution towards enriching children's learning experiences. The committee's fundraising activities also provide fun social opportunities for families in the area.

### **Resource management: Good**

Overall, the setting has enough practitioners with appropriate qualifications and relevant experience of working with young children. Leaders ensure that all practitioners support learning purposefully and make the best use of their experience and expertise. An example of this is that the deputy leader is responsible for the setting's social media in order to provide valuable information for parents. Performance management systems are purposeful and ensure that practitioners' development is sound. They attend purposeful training in order to develop a better understanding of how to develop children's language skills, in addition to learning about new learning and teaching methods. However, practitioners have not had an opportunity to visit nearby settings to observe excellent practice.

Leaders manage resources efficiently and ensure a good supply of learning equipment that responds to the requirements of the foundation phase effectively.

Leaders have a sound understanding of the setting's financial situation. They manage expenditure effectively and work with parents to try to ensure sufficient funding for the setting. The treasurer prepares a financial balance sheet, but this is not verified externally. As a result, leaders do not have effective enough processes to review the setting's accounts.

As a result of effective provision, the diligent staff, the supportive management committee and purposeful leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CIW</b>	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	<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>

<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education