



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pentre Bach
Cwm Golau
Integrated Children's Centre
Duffryn Road
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4BJ**

Date of inspection: December 2017

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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Publication date: 13/02/2018

Context

Cylch Meithrin Pentre Bach is a Welsh-medium setting, which meets in a room in Cwm Golau Integrated Children's Centre in Pentrebach, in Merthyr Tydfil local authority. The setting is open five days a week.

The setting is registered to admit up to 26 children at any given time. Practitioners provide education for three-year-old children. No children at the setting are currently funded to receive early years education. Sure Start funds a minority of two-year-old children.

Nearly all children are from white British backgrounds and a very few children speak Welsh as their first language. A few children have additional learning needs.

The setting employs six members of staff. The leader began in post in May 2005.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in December 2015 and by Estyn in May 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 plan an interesting curriculum, which improves children's learning
- Practitioners' high expectations motivate children successfully to improve their work across the areas of learning
- Enthusiastic teaching focuses firmly on the next steps in children's learning
- Assessment procedures create purposeful targets for individual children
- Practitioners work together effectively
- Provision for the Welsh language is purposeful
- Practitioners' watchful care creates a diligent learning environment
- Learning areas and resources, both indoors and outdoors, engage children's interest and enthusiasm successfully

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader focuses effectively on improving provision and children's outcomes
- Regular self-evaluation processes ensure that resources and equipment are improved consistently over time
- Practitioners benefit from relevant training that has a positive effect on provision and children's outcomes
- The leader makes effective use of external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin
- It has purposeful partnerships with parents and carers and the local community
- The management committee is beginning to improve aspects of the leadership systems
- The management committee supports the leader's philosophy in terms of promoting the Welsh language in the community purposefully

Recommendations

- R1 Create better opportunities for children to move independently between the indoor and outdoor areas
- R2 Ensure that the leader and management committee's monitoring and evaluation practices are rigorous and orderly
- R3 Create a consistent link between the self-evaluation processes and targets in the development plan

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

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 and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present during the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

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

Practitioners provide an interesting and engaging curriculum for children, which reflects the ethos of the foundation phase successfully. They plan learning experiences purposefully in order to improve children's skills increasingly across the learning areas. As a result, they meet nearly all children's needs successfully and target their interests sensibly.

Practitioners discuss individual children's progress daily and use this information effectively to make improvements for them. The setting uses a key worker system in order to share information about children efficiently. They provide valuable opportunities for children to voice their personal ideas to enrich activities further. This can be seen as children choose tasks completely independently, such as painting a picture of their choice and playing the role of the owner at the till in the cafe. Experiences such as these add positively to the children's daily enthusiasm as they learn through play and concentrate effectively on stimulating challenges.

The setting plans successfully to develop children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills. Beneficial activities to promote literacy and numeracy are prominent in all learning areas. For example, children try to write letters in a box of glitter and are beginning to recognise their own and other children's names without much prompting from an adult.

Robust provision creates valuable opportunities for children to understand that numeracy skills are a part of everyday life. For example, practitioners question children sensibly about the capacity of jugs of different sizes and whether they have less or more water and bubbles. They also encourage children to experiment successfully with different objects to trial which ones float or sink. Therefore, provision in terms of learning experiences to improve skills is effective and, as a result, provides sensible continuity and progression in children's learning.

Provision for the Welsh language is beneficial to the children. Practitioners are robust language models. They encourage children to use the language as much as possible through daily activities successfully. They challenge and question children regularly in the indoor and outdoor learning areas by using polished Welsh. They

support children who are starting to learn the language successfully. As a result, children's understanding of the language is developing effectively, and their use of the language improves in a short period of time.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. These activities include celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day, cooking with vegetables to make soup and baking traditional cakes. Practitioners focus enthusiastically on singing Welsh nursery rhymes regularly and provide interesting opportunities for children to read traditional stories in groups.

Provision to develop information and communication technology (ICT) is purposeful. The setting provides valuable opportunities for children to use a range of equipment, such as an interactive whiteboard, illuminated writing boards and electronic tablets. Practitioners challenge children successfully by using Welsh educational software to develop their early ICT skills and their control of technological equipment.

Practitioners focus on developing children's physical skills intelligently. They allow them to climb on adventure equipment and slide to the floor in the outdoor area. They challenge children to ride bicycles enthusiastically to increase their heart rate and dance with the children to lively music. Practitioners inspire children to respond creatively to specific challenges. For example, children are given interesting opportunities to paint their hands to make colourful prints on an easel and to experiment with dough by moulding, cutting and stretching it to make different shapes.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences. Experiences include visits to post letters at the post office, a visit to the supermarket and a trip to a farm. Visitors such as a dental hygienist and officers from the emergency services teach children purposefully about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and work together effectively to provide an interesting curriculum for them. They have high expectations for each child and challenge children regularly in all focus tasks.

Practitioners intervene intelligently in children's experiences and play in order to stimulate and motivate them as much as possible. They have an effective balance in their teaching between activities that are led by children and tasks that are led by an adult. They provide a wide range of beneficial opportunities for children to learn through play and to receive practical experiences, such as baking cakes in the mud kitchen and running water through pipes and gutters in the outdoor area. As a result, practitioners' teaching has a positive effect on children's standards by using wide-ranging opportunities to experiment and explore. However, practitioners do not ensure enough regular opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. This limits their opportunities to experience all areas of learning completely independently and to choose to co-operate with others on different challenges.

Practitioners question children purposefully to develop their thinking skills and willingness to express a personal opinion. This is done by comparing the toys of a child in one of the poorest countries in Africa and when discussing the main characteristics of a character in a story, such as a penguin who wishes to fly. By doing so, practitioners reinforce Welsh vocabulary and language patterns successfully. They persevere to ensure early mastery of the language, where children respond to commands and contribute enthusiastically to songs and prayers.

Practitioners complete assessments regularly and encourage children to assess their own learning orally during activities. Specific practitioners are responsible for recording a child's development. They also share and discuss children's achievements effectively with each other during evaluation sessions. These consistent arrangements lead to planning immediate tasks that meet children's future needs. As a result, this addresses the next steps in their learning purposefully, and the targets that are set for individuals are purposeful. Therefore, all evidence corresponds well with individual children's outcomes as they mature at the setting.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements during the handover periods at the end of the sessions. A report, comprehensive booklet of pictures and the child's original work with relevant annotations are available to parents at the end of their time at the setting.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides positive opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use plenary sessions for children to reflect sensibly and consider each other's feelings. By doing so, they nurture values such as telling the truth, applying fairness and showing respect successfully. They also reinforce these values and their importance effectively during group activities. These procedures create calm as the children sit to listen to adults and each other, wash their hands before eating and tidy-up resources. Children take turns politely when eating snacks and serving milk and water around the dining table. The helper of the day is given an opportunity to help purposefully when distributing snacks and drinks, recycling goods and collecting and tidying-up the dishes.

There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. These arrangements contribute well to their physical development and wellbeing. The setting has robust arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily, and the snack varies daily. As a result, children discuss meaningfully that fruit and vegetables, dancing and exercise contribute well to improving an individual's health and fitness.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle food, paper, card and plastic goods in boxes in the recycling area. This develops their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting ensures a safe environment for the children. Practitioners are vigilant when the children arrive, travel on the bus to and from school, and when they are collected. Use of positive behaviour strategies eliminates any kind of disruption or uncontrollable behaviour among the children. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting records children's learning needs diligently on entry to the setting and during their time there. Children's progress is reviewed regularly, and their starting points are identified rigorously by following the foundation phase profile's guidelines.

The setting targets specific children with additional support purposefully, when necessary. Practitioners discuss these with specialist agencies in order to provide support as quickly as possible. As a result, they are familiar with the necessary procedures for supporting children with learning needs.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners promote a positive ethos through their daily activities and enthusiastic motivation. Practitioners challenge and support children tenderly every day. They emphasise every day that they need to respect each other and that individual choices are part of their personal development.

Practitioners teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures successfully; for example, the setting celebrates the Chinese New Year each year, reads African parables and tastes food from different countries.

Practitioners meet children's needs sensibly and all children are given an equal opportunity to learn in the different areas. As a result, the setting is a wholly inclusive community that recognises children's individuality purposefully.

The setting uses resources effectively to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. A wide range of interesting resources is used effectively in continuous activities to enrich learning and focus tasks. Resources are accessible to everyone and promote the children's sense of responsibility successfully. The setting also has plenty of ICT resources to develop children's skills effectively.

The building is of good quality, maintained appropriately and the inside of the building is secure. The outdoor area provides valuable opportunities for growing and planting, inquiring and investigating and running around. They are used effectively. Practitioners also use facilities in the local area sensibly, such as the village's resources and cultural centres.

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

The experienced leader leads the setting conscientiously. She sets a clear direction for the setting's day-to-day work with a clear focus on improving children's achievements through effective teaching. She ensures that practitioners adhere to sound practices in all sessions. They follow a structured timetable, which creates consistency in the children's lives during their time at the setting. The leader's vision ensures that care, planning, teaching and learning are effective.

The setting's objectives, plans and policies concentrate purposefully on ensuring effective provision. The leader and her dedicated colleagues deal with children consistently and have high expectations of each child. They succeed in motivating children towards improving in positive, sensible and supportive ways. These practices meet children's needs and promote their achievements successfully.

However, aspects of management procedures, such as performance management and updating practitioners' details, are inconsistent at present. There are no consistent arrangements during the year to ensure that the leader monitors elements of the expected requirements rigorously.

The leader uses relevant information about the setting to ensure improvements to provision. Recently, this includes developing assessment practices by using the foundation phase profile purposefully and making beneficial improvements to the outdoor area; for example, the setting encourages children to use the playhouse as a builder's workshop. The leader also focuses conscientiously on national priorities, such as developing successful literacy and numeracy strategies, providing good quality ICT resources, and planning purposefully to develop children's Welsh language skills.

The management committee are new to their roles. They work with the leader to ensure that provision for children is interesting and purposeful. Although the committee is small, they have begun to monitor the setting's practices suitably to ensure that practitioners understand their roles in full and that they work diligently as a team. However, the regular supervision and evaluation of the leadership systems is not sufficiently established. The management committee has started to emphasise that definite guidelines are followed by the leader in relation to specific management aspects. As a result, they are beginning to define practitioners' responsibilities better. However, they do not ensure enough valuable opportunities for staff to develop professionally through annual appraisals.

Improving quality: Good

There is a positive culture of self-evaluation and regular improvements at the setting. The leader, with the support of the local authority, has established purposeful arrangements to monitor children's outcomes and overall provision. Self-evaluation processes consider the views of practitioners, parents and carers, and external agencies effectively. This is reflected in the way in which the setting has extended the use of social media to inform parents about the setting's activities.

Through sensible co-operation, the information that is gathered by the leader and practitioners in relation to improving children's achievements, contributes successfully to quality improvement practices. However, the link between the areas for improvement in the self-evaluation and the targets in the development plan is inconsistent.

The leader prioritises expenditure effectively, in line with the actions that have been identified for improvement. Practitioners are keen to embrace new ideas that are suggested by the local authority's advisory teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. They act on their advice regularly for the children's benefit. This leads to beneficial improvements, such as using the foundation phase profile to improve assessment practices, and planning to target the next steps in children's learning.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works effectively with partners to improve provision. This has a positive effect on children's standards and wellbeing. There is purposeful co-operation

between the setting and external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. This successful relationship reinforces the setting's work and supports practitioners effectively with training and management documentation.

The setting uses community links effectively to support children's learning. This includes using the local area's resources, such as the post office and supermarket, which fosters children's awareness and care of their local area. The setting has a positive link with the local school through transferring information about children and organising beneficial meetings and visits.

Practitioners work and liaise with a wide range of other partners, who make an important contribution to improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with first aid training, food hygiene courses and child protection training.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. The setting informs parents and carers regularly about all aspects of the setting's work, which includes good use of social media. They encourage parents and carers to express their views on issues to improve the setting through questionnaires and regular discussions. The setting listens to their ideas and implements changes, for example by conducting termly discussions to set targets jointly to improve their children's achievements.

Resource management: Good

The leader aims regularly to improve all aspects of the setting's work through sensible staffing and using resources efficiently. The leader and management committee succeed in ensuring that the setting has enough qualified practitioners.

Leadership systems focus clearly on improving children's achievements. As a result, they lead to tender care, interesting learning experiences and stimulating teaching. They also enable practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge purposefully through the setting's key worker system. Therefore, the setting is a strong learning community. The culture of effective co-operation between practitioners and other partners is efficient and contributes well to continuous improvements.

The leader manages resources purposefully to support learning. Practitioners change the learning areas sensibly to correspond with the different themes to stimulate children. For example, practitioners use ice effectively to reflect a penguin's living environment. They also make regular improvements by discussing and funding plans to improve purposefully. For example, they have recently improved the provision in terms of ICT resources by investing in illuminated writing boards to target children's literacy. This has a positive effect on children's early ICT skills.

The leader ensures that the use of funding has a direct effect on children's standards and wellbeing, in addition to provision. In general, she invests any profit purposefully in order to improve resources, such as an interactive whiteboard, a mud kitchen and a construction area in the playhouse.

The setting provides good value for money because of the successful provision and the positive effect of leadership on children's experiences and learning.

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
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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