



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Plws Ysgol Gwenffrwd
Ysgol Gwenffrwd
Whitford Street
Holywell
CH8 7NJ**

Date of inspection: July 2018

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Plws Ysgol Gwenffrwd is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets in a room at Ysgol Gwenffrwd, Holywell in Flintshire local authority. The setting provides education five afternoons a week, between 12.45pm and 2.45pm during term time.

The setting is registered to admit up to 25 children at any given time, and admits children between two and four years old. Most of the three-year-old children currently receive funded early years education. Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds and none of them speaks Welsh as their first language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs four qualified practitioners, including the leader. The manager began in post in September 2016. The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in June 2018 and by Estyn in June 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:

- Most children make sound progress from their starting points
- Most children develop effective literacy and numeracy skills
- Most children behave responsibly and politely
- Practitioners plan stimulating and thorough learning experiences to challenge children successfully
- Interesting and engaging teaching improve children's outcomes purposefully
- Practitioners work together consistently to improve learning experiences and children's outcomes
- Provision for the Welsh language is effective
- Practitioners' diligent and sensible care creates a happy and industrious environment
- A stimulating learning environment engages children's interest successfully

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The manager and leader set a clear and robust direction for the setting's work
- Regular and appropriate self-evaluation procedures lead to setting relevant targets
- Practitioners are keen to develop professionally and attend purposeful training
- Support services and specialist services are used conscientiously and usefully
- Support from the management committee is active and purposeful
- There are robust partnerships with parents and the school
- There is sensible use of funding to ensure improvements inside the building and in the outdoor area

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision and opportunities to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2 Time and organise plenary sessions better to maintain all children's interest
- R3 Provide daily opportunities to develop each child's independence during snack time

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 sound progress from their starting points. Many are knowledgeable, intelligent and learn well. Most solve problems and tasks across the areas of learning successfully and, as a result, they develop effective literacy and numeracy skills.

Most children listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to practitioners' questioning, both inside and outside the building. A majority are beginning to use correct language patterns and familiar phrases independently in Welsh, as they discuss the weather and explain their feelings. For example, many of the children discuss events in stories confidently as individuals and in groups, such as the adventures of two characters at the seaside. A majority of children pronounce clearly and use the Welsh language sensibly to express their opinions and personal preferences effectively. They follow instructions meaningfully and sing Welsh nursery rhymes and songs purposefully. As a result, many start to master early oracy skills in a short period.

Many children show an interest in books and consider the purpose of the story, pictures and writing well. They re-tell the sequence of stories sensibly and the characters' roles wisely. For example, they discuss the characteristics of familiar characters, such as sea creatures, intelligently. A majority of children link actions with emotions meaningfully, such as the stories of St David, and when discussing the lives of people from foreign countries. As a result, most children handle books in the reading area as confident early readers.

Many children make marks effectively when experimenting with different media. They persevere diligently with early writing experiences. For example, they mix different colours creatively when painting to create a symmetrical picture of a butterfly. Many experiment with early writing and understand its purpose when copying letters from their names and numbers with brushes and water on the side of the shed outside. As a result, many children recognise their own names regularly when completing the register themselves.

Many children recognise, name and count numbers to five confidently without the support of an adult. They use mathematical language purposefully when discussing and comparing shapes, and count shells in the water effectively. They also count dots on blocks and match them to numbers purposefully when building a wall. As a result, a few count correctly to ten and beyond without encouragement.

Many children sort different objects by colour and shape successfully, and count how many objects of each type they have correctly, such as cars and tractors. A few children understand how to start to bond numbers up to five effectively, by using their fingers and by placing objects in order. Most children use mathematical language and concepts purposefully in practical activities. For example, they understand differences in size when comparing objects and whether they are 'small', 'big', 'smaller' or 'bigger', and 'heavy' or 'light'.

Most children use technology effectively by using tills, cameras and electronic toys in everyday activities. However, their use of educational software to develop their thinking skills, ICT skills, literacy and numeracy is limited.

Nearly all children enjoy listening attentively to music and they perform enthusiastically when singing and doing actions that correspond with the words. Many children choose equipment and materials purposefully to extend their creativity, such as experimenting with dough and paint, singing and talking with microphones and weaving ribbons on the fence outside. They also develop their physical skills effectively. For example, they ride bicycles energetically in the outdoor area, climb enthusiastically on the adventure dome and slide adventurously on a slide in the outdoor area. As a result, many children develop as well-rounded learners during their time at the setting.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors as they arrive and leave the setting. Many take an interest in their work when responding to challenging activities. Most children share and work sensibly together. They show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as experimenting with water and sand, and planting peas and potatoes in the growing area. As a result, they focus purposefully on their learning.

Most children are beginning to express their opinions and personal preferences well. This is evident as they decide to continue with specific tasks or start a new activity of their choice, either indoors or outdoors. Many explain sensibly which areas of learning include their favourite activities, such as the construction area and the home area. They choose to balance when climbing on the wooden train outside and sing familiar nursery rhymes enthusiastically at the end of the session. As a result, many children are confident learners who work purposefully during play activities.

Nearly all children are well behaved and polite. They show respect when responding responsibly to adults and each other. Nearly all children listen attentively to adults, for example when waiting their turn to put on aprons before painting, and lining up quietly to walk to the outdoor area. Nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly without much prompting from practitioners after using the toilet, messy play and outdoor activities. They show intelligence by remembering that hygiene is important in order to avoid infection and, as a result, helps to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

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

The manager, leader and practitioners work together purposefully to provide engaging activities across all areas of learning. On the whole, their day-to-day work engages children's interest effectively. The effect of their work is enthusiastic learners who work diligently both indoors and outdoors. For example, they encourage children to engage in practical learning by role-playing in the mud kitchen, making cakes and communicating with each other by using microphones. As a result, they provide an interesting curriculum, which reflects the foundation phase ethos intelligently. Planning for learning experiences is very thorough and meets the children's needs and interests successfully.

All practitioners discuss individual children's progress in regular meetings, and organise themes and activities based on this. They provide valuable opportunities for children to voice their personal ideas to enrich activities further. This includes matching numbers on vehicles to parking spaces in the outdoor area and rolling cars down troughs to compare their speed. These activities add positively to children's daily enthusiasm as they learn through play.

Provision to develop children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills is good. Literacy and numeracy activities are prominent in all learning areas and challenge children to perform at their best consistently. Practical and effective examples of this can be seen as children discuss weather features and discuss their feeling by using different faces. As a result, learning experiences are sound and provide sensible continuity and progression in children's learning.

Developing the Welsh language is beneficial to the children. Practitioners are consistently good language models. They support children who are beginning to learn the language successfully. Practitioners encourage children to use the language as much as possible through stimulating activities and regular reinforcement. They challenge and question children purposefully in the indoor and outdoor learning areas. As a result, most children's understanding of the language is developing significantly, and they respond with familiar vocabulary and phrases 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, baking traditional cakes and studying castles and the local landscape.

Provision to develop ICT skills is appropriate and provides suitable opportunities for children to use electronic equipment. However, practitioners do not plan purposefully to develop children's skills effectively enough. Practitioners do not use software and hardware intelligently enough to develop children's ICT skills consistently across the areas of learning.

Practitioners focus on developing children's physical skills well. They allow them to climb on adventure equipment, slide to the floor independently and ride bicycles energetically to improve their physical experiences. Practitioners plan valuable opportunities to develop their creative skills by using chalk, crayons, paint and water to make marks, and using kitchen utensils purposefully to make unusual sounds.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, experiences such as visits to the fire station, local shops and supermarkets and the nearby park reinforce the curriculum effectively. Visitors such as the police, a dental hygienist and a veterinary surgeon teach children successfully about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have high expectations of children and challenge them regularly through focus tasks and stimulating continuous activities. They intervene purposefully in children's experiences and play in order to motivate them to succeed. They

understand the importance of providing a wide range of opportunities to learn through play to improve children's outcomes. An effective example of this is experimenting by building towers in the construction area and painting at an easel wholly independently.

All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and are knowledgeable about the requirements of the foundation phase. They manage children's behaviour positively and safely by setting firm boundaries throughout the session. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment successfully. However, at times, they do not time and organise plenary sessions effectively. As a result, they do not maintain all children's interest throughout the session.

Practitioners encourage children to take part in various activities effectively. They ensure regular opportunities for children both indoors and outdoors. This provides good opportunities for them to make sensible choices about their learning. Practitioners use questioning purposefully to develop children's thinking and communication skills. This is done skilfully by discussing each other's feelings and experimenting with the volume of specific boxes after filling them with sand.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are purposeful. Practitioners discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. They have a sound understanding of children's outcomes by using the foundation phase profile effectively. Practitioners use the assessment arrangements as useful evaluations. As a result, they use daily discussions to plan the next steps in children's learning successfully.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. Daily dialogue between practitioners and parents and carers reinforces this well. At the end of their time at the setting, comprehensive information about children's achievement is available to parents through useful booklets and annotations.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides positive opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners provide lively activities successfully to encourage children to greet each other, reflect on the feelings of others and say thank you.

Practitioners' sensible approach towards nurturing values such as honesty, fairness and respect among the children is successful. An effective example of this is the practice of appointing a 'helper of the day', which allocates duties to individuals and provides valuable opportunities for each children to shoulder responsibility in turn. However, although children are given an opportunity to pour drinks and set the table, they are not given enough opportunities to serve each other and their peers around the dining table each day without intervention from practitioners.

Practitioners have effective arrangements for supporting children's health and wellbeing. These arrangements contribute well towards children's overall development and wellbeing, and support their learning successfully, such as promoting activities to increase the heart rate in the outdoor area by riding bicycles. The setting has sound arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a

result, children understand that fruit and vegetables are part of a sensible diet. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, card, plastic and food. This develops their understanding of sustainability purposefully.

Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any disruption or unacceptable behaviour successfully. As a result, children are happy and safe in the company of adults and often ask for help and support without any concerns. The setting is a secure environment and practitioners take good care of children as they arrive and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting records children's learning needs thoroughly on entry to the setting and during their time there. The manager co-ordinates any provision for children's additional learning needs and reviews children's progress regularly with other practitioners. They identify children's starting points thoroughly by following the foundation phase profile guidelines. As a result, the setting targets children with additional learning needs effectively, where necessary. Practitioners discuss these children with the appropriate agencies, such as the language therapist, to provide support as quickly as possible to target individuals' needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting promotes a supportive ethos through daily activities and the positive attitudes that are adopted by practitioners. It is a wholly inclusive community and children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment. Practitioners have a rigorous knowledge of each child and their individuality is acknowledged successfully through daily discussions and detailed records. Practitioners challenge the children daily in a positive, caring and gentle manner.

Practitioners place a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting achieves this successfully by celebrating specific festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. The setting also uses dolls from different ethnic backgrounds to promote cultural differences purposefully.

Practitioners use resources successfully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. They ensure that resources are within the children's reach and children are able to reach equipment without difficulty. This promotes their sense of responsibility successfully as they discuss books, use equipment to build and investigate, and make marks with different media. As a result, a wide range of resources is used effectively in continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enhance learning.

The accommodation is of good quality, maintained appropriately and is safe. The interesting outdoor area is used purposefully. Practitioners also use the local area sensibly, by shopping in the supermarkets and playing in the park, in order to reinforce the curriculum.

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

Leadership: Good

The manager and leader have established a clear vision to improve the setting's practices, which is based on a sound understanding of the setting's needs. This provides a purposeful strategic direction for the setting's daily and long-term work. They monitor daily provision rigorously in order to ensure that it is engaging and interesting and drives children towards successful outcomes. As a result, they discuss plans and the purpose of daily activities before the start of each session, in order to target children's individual needs intelligently.

The manager promotes new developments purposefully and motivates practitioners supportively to make improvements. This has led to using the foundation phase profile successfully, recording daily assessments very thoroughly and developing the outdoor area successfully, by gaining grants from a local company. As a result, the manager and experienced practitioners have high expectations of provision and children's standards.

The manager and leader ensure that practitioners understand their roles in full and that they work diligently as a team. Regular supervision and evaluation practices are stable. They ensure that the best use is made of practitioners' expertise, particularly when providing vocabulary and language patterns of a high standard in Welsh, and when dealing with individual children's personal needs.

Regular discussions and staff meetings enable practitioners to share information about individual children's development effectively. The manager and leader have succeeded in creating an environment in which children and practitioners feel that they are valued and, as a result, give of their best.

The management committee receives useful information about the setting's practices regularly from the leader. They meet to organise fundraising activities and monitor funding regularly. Administrative procedures are rigorous and support the setting's needs. The management committee understands clearly which aspects of the setting are strong and which need to be improved. The management committee's consistent and detailed records are a clear reflection of their sound understanding of the setting's work.

The setting focuses well on local and national priorities. They develop children's literacy and numeracy skills successfully, and develop outdoor provision purposefully. They plan effectively to develop the Welsh language by following guidelines from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, and this has a positive effect on children's linguistic skills.

Improving quality: Good

A positive culture of self-evaluation permeates the setting's work. The self-evaluation report identifies the setting's strengths purposefully and the development plan identifies areas for development effectively.

The manager, leader and management committee have established consistent arrangements to monitor children's standards and provision. The conscientious co-operation that can be seen every day, in addition to regular meetings, contribute to this successfully. As a result, self-evaluation gives purposeful consideration to the views of practitioners, children, parents and carers, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. Information that derives from these procedures builds a complete picture of the setting's work.

The manager takes purposeful steps to maintain regular practices and implement changes through effective development plans. She and the management committee prioritise expenditure in line with the steps that have been identified for improvement purposefully. As a result, they improve provision by adopting different strategies and accepting valuable advice from others, for example when responding to national expectations, such as implementing the foundation phase profile intelligently.

The manager, leader and practitioners are open to new ideas and are willing to experiment with different strategies to succeed. They are very willing to embrace suggestions from the local authority's advisory teachers and Mudiad Meithrin. For example, the advice on how to develop planning and how to assess to target the next steps in children's learning has now been implemented in full. As a result, they have been developed successfully and have improved the setting's practices for the benefit of the children.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works effectively with partners to improve provision and children's outcomes. There is sensible co-operation with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, and the positive co-operation reinforces the setting's work well. As a result, it supports training and management documentation purposefully and actively.

The setting has forged positive and useful partnerships with local supermarkets and a nearby company. They have worked well together to develop the outdoor area for the benefit of the children.

Practitioners take purposeful 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. It also encourages them to express their own views on issues to improve the setting through questionnaires and regular discussions.

The setting uses its valuable links with the school to support children's learning. This includes using the school's resources and accepting useful advice from the school's headteacher and link teacher. Arrangements for transferring information, as the children start and settle at the school, are effective and well-established.

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

Resource management: Good

The manager, leader and management committee aim consistently to improve all aspects of the setting's work by managing staff and resources purposefully. They succeed in ensuring that the setting has enough qualified practitioners with complete training. They are a stable, robust and effective team.

The manager and leader encourage practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge successfully. As a result, the setting is an effective example of a positive learning community with a culture of diligent co-operation between practitioners and other partners.

Performance management procedures are sound and ensure that practitioners provide interesting learning experiences and positive teaching practices. The setting manages resources creatively to support learning. This includes sensible use of the outdoor area for physical activities, enquiry and investigation.

The manager and management committee have a sound understanding of the budget and the challenges that are involved in funding the setting. They prioritise expenditure carefully and identify responsibilities and sensible timescales. They make regular improvements by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully. As a result, the setting ensures that the use of funding has a direct effect on provision and children's outcomes.

The setting provides good value for money because the effective provision and purposeful leadership have a positive effect on children's outcomes.

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh</p>
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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