



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Prion
Ysgol Pantpastynog
Prion
Denbigh
LL16 4SA**

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 Prion is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a dedicated cabin on the campus of Ysgol Gynradd Pantpastynog in the rural village of Prion, in Denbighshire local authority. The setting opens at 11.30am but provides education for children for two hours a day, between 1pm and 3pm five days a week.

The setting admits children between two and four years old and is registered to admit up to 17 children. Three children receive early education that is funded by the local authority.

Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds, and a little over half come from Welsh-speaking homes. There are currently no children at the setting with additional learning needs.

The setting employs two full-time members of staff. The leader began in post in June 1990.

The setting was last inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in September 2015 and by Estyn in March 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 stimulating learning experiences for children
- Practitioners respond well to children's needs, and reflect the ethos and principles of the foundation phase successfully
- Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and an appropriate understanding of the principles of the foundation phase
- There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing
- There are valuable opportunities for all children to accept responsibility and develop their independent skills
- It is an inclusive community in which each child is given an equal opportunity to take part in all activities
- It has plenty of varied resources of a high standard, and they are used effectively to meet the principles of the foundation phase and children's specific needs

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- It is run in an organised way by an experienced leader who has a clear vision to provide effective and exciting early education for children in the area
- The leader shares her vision successfully with the supporting practitioner, parents and members of the management committee
- Members of the management committee are supportive of the setting's work and ensure that the staff and children have good access to resources of a high standard to enable them to comply fully with the principles of the foundation phase
- The self-evaluation process is effective and there is a clear link between the setting's outcomes and the priorities in the improvement plan
- It has an effective relationship with a range of partners, which has a positive effect on provision and children's progress
- The leader and committee manage the staff and other resources appropriately

Recommendations

- R1 Make effective and regular use of daily assessment results to plan the next steps in children's learning
- R2 Ensure that the success criteria that are identified in the development plan always refer specifically to children's outcomes

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?	
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Standards:

Wellbeing:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language or wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of 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 plan stimulating learning activities for children, which hold their attention and are usually based on exciting stories that are of interest to them, such as the story about Sali Sws the octopus. They respond well to the children's needs and reflect the ethos and principles of the foundation phase successfully. This encourages children to develop positive attitudes towards learning from an early age.

Plans to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills are effective. The development of children's Welsh language happens completely naturally and is at the heart of all of the setting's activities. Literacy and numeracy activities are prominent across the areas of learning and encourage the children to develop their language skills continuously while applying themselves conscientiously to their tasks. Good examples include fishing in the pond, counting and describing the fish that they catch, taking orders in the cafe, and pairing different coloured socks after listening to the story 'Sanau Newydd Sali'. As a result, children's oral, reading and writing skills, in addition to their numeracy skills, are developing very well. Provision to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills is appropriate. Practitioners provide interesting opportunities for children to use a range of equipment, such as the till in the shop when selling seaside objects, the telephone in the cafe to take food orders and the electronic tablet to take pictures of their peers as they undertake their activities.

Practitioners adapt activities to address any different weaknesses or needs they have encountered while observing the children taking part in their activities wholly naturally. For example, they have purchased more ICT resources recently to develop children's skills in this area. They provide good opportunities for children to evaluate their activities at the end of the day by choosing the one that has given them the most enjoyment. This encourages them to be reflective and develops their thinking skills effectively.

There are regular opportunities for children to use small bicycles and large equipment in the outdoor area. These activities develop their physical skills effectively. They also develop their creative and problem-solving skills effectively, for example by challenging them to build a fishing boat out of cardboard boxes.

Promoting children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture is at the heart of all of the setting's work, and it does so successfully. This includes celebrating St David's Day each year and using traditional stories as a basis for some of its themes.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits to places of interest, such as a local farm and the hospital, and invites visitors, such as a nurse, to talk to the children about living healthily. This enriches children's learning experiences, brings their learning to life and raises their awareness of people who work in their community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and an appropriate understanding of the principles of the foundation phase. They have high expectations for the children and work together effectively to ensure that all children are happy, safe and make good progress. They manage children's behaviour very effectively, in a gentle but positive way. As a result, children behave well, participate conscientiously and enjoy their activities. Practitioners challenge the children regularly by asking them probing questions during focus tasks and continuous tasks. They encourage them to speak Welsh from the outset by modelling language for them skilfully. They know when to intervene purposefully in children's experiences and play, in order to stimulate them and motivate them to succeed. As a result, children are highly motivated to improve their work consistently well.

Procedures for assessment and recording children's achievements are useful to enable practitioners to measure their progress from their starting points. Practitioners record any notable progress that the children make against the requirements of the foundation phase profile in their 'Chwarae i ddysgu: Dysgu chwarae' booklets. Although they encourage them to attempt to take the next step continuously, they do not always use assessments formally enough to target the next specific steps in individual children's learning.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. Regular dialogue between practitioners, parents and carers by the gate reinforce this. Parents are given formal opportunities to discuss their children's progress with practitioners during the year and, at the end of their time at the setting, they transfer specific information about them to the primary school. This promotes smooth and successful transition.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The cabin and outdoor area are safe places for the children. Practitioners are vigilant as they children arrive and when they go home at the end of the day, and show a high level of care towards them during the session. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing, and practitioners promote the principle of eating and drinking healthily successfully. As a result, children understand that fruit, vegetables and exercise make a positive contribution towards a healthy lifestyle. They talk maturely about foods that are healthy for them, particularly about their favourite fruits. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, card and plastic goods. This develops their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting has valuable and effective procedures to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use large group sessions, such as circle time and story time, purposefully to nurture these values. They encourage children to take turns, listen attentively to each other's contributions and reflect on their behaviour successfully. This ensures that nearly all children consider and respect each other's feelings very maturely.

Practitioners encourage children to take turns politely as they dry their hands, distribute snacks and accept a drink. They give children appropriate responsibility for setting and clearing the table during snack time. This provides valuable opportunities for all children to accept responsibility and develop their independent skills.

Practitioners create a relaxed atmosphere for children at particular times of the day, by playing music quietly, which in turn encourages them to calm down wholly naturally. They pray reflectively before they go home.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community in which everyone is given an equal opportunity to take part in all activities. The industrious and relaxed ethos within the setting reflects the emphasis that leaders place on co-operation and engaging in activities. Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to acknowledge, respect and celebrate diversity, and teach them successfully about different cultures and festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. This provides an appropriate opportunity for children to compare the food and clothing of children from China with their own.

The setting has plenty of varied resources of a high standard to develop children's skills successfully in the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Resources are used effectively to meet the principles of the foundation phase and children's specific needs. In particular, they are used in continuous activities, focus tasks and various interesting activities to enhance learning. These resources are kept at an appropriate level to enable the children to reach them and put them away when they have finished with them. This promotes their sense of responsibility effectively.

The cabin is kept clean and safe. The outdoor area is secure and includes areas such as the garden, the sand pit, a seaside shop and appropriate areas for mark making and role-play. Practitioners use these areas creatively to encourage children's independence and creativity in their learning.

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

The setting is run in an organised way by an experienced leader, who has a clear vision to provide effective and exciting early education for children in the area. She focuses clearly on ensuring that the children are happy, safe and make appropriate progress. The leader shares her vision successfully with the supporting practitioner, parents and members of the management committee. She has high expectations of herself and the supporting practitioner, and they share information about day-to-day procedures and children's progress successfully with each other. Practitioners' roles

are clear and are recorded in appropriate job descriptions. This ensures that they understand what they need to do, promotes effective co-operation and contributes well towards their ability to ensure that the children strive diligently in their activities and make good progress.

There is an appropriate procedure for managing staff's performance each year, and specific training is provided following the evaluation meeting, which links well to their professional needs in the early years area. For example, following recent training on developing education in the outdoor area, they have expanded provision effectively to enable children to develop their skills successfully in various areas outside the cabin.

Members of the management committee are supportive of the setting's work and ensure that the staff and children have good access to resources of a high standard to enable them to comply fully with the principles of the foundation phase. Through regular visits, they know the setting well and value the range of interesting activities that the children undertake there.

Improving quality: Good

The self-evaluation process is effective and based on observing and evaluating the quality of the setting's work regularly in relation to teaching. Officers from the management committee and the specialist teacher contribute to these activities. The current report, which is an appropriate record of the outcomes of this procedure, acknowledges that the link between assessment and planning is limited.

Practitioners are responsible for assessing the effect of their own work and that of their peers on children's progress regularly. This promotes open co-operation and a clear sense of teamwork and continuous improvement. The supporting practitioner is monitored by the leader regularly, and the leader by one of the management committee's officers. The outcomes of this procedure contribute appropriately towards the content on the self-evaluation report, and lead naturally to improving provision, standards and children's wellbeing.

There is a clear link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation procedure and the priorities in the improvement plan. Leaders ensure that the improvement plan identifies a sensible number of areas for improvement, how they will be improved, who is responsible, by when, and the success criteria. Monitoring comments are identified regularly throughout the year, based on development against these issues. However, a number of the success criteria refer too much to provision, rather than their effect on children's outcomes.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has an effective relationship with a range of partners, which has a positive effect on provision and children's progress.

The partnership with parents is strong. Staff always greet parents at the gate and are willing to discuss relevant issues with parents on the spot, where appropriate. Useful open evenings are held for them regularly to enable them to discuss their child's development more formally, along with any concerns or issues they would like

to raise with the staff. An open afternoon is also held for them to see their children's work. Newsletters are used regularly as a means of informing parents about events and to share any other useful information, such as stories that will be introduced to the children during each half term. Parents value this greatly.

The setting has a strong partnership with the primary school that it is fortunate to be situated on its campus. This enables it to share resources, which include the cabin, the hall, play areas and the outdoor area. Children are familiar with attending the primary school and practitioners work effectively with staff, attend training sessions and organise for children to take part in concerts and services jointly with the school's pupils. This strong and beneficial link facilitates the transition process and ensures that children, in turn, are happy on entry to the primary school.

Practitioners have a beneficial partnership with other Welsh playgroups (cylchoedd meithrin), which enables them to share ideas and learn from each other.

A robust partnership with the local community enriches provision. For example, children have visited a local farm to learn about animals. The disco, Santa's Grotto and social evening that are organised by the setting's practitioners and parents are popular community events, which raise significant amount of money for the setting each year and foster a positive relationship with the local community.

Resource management: Good

The leader and committee manage the staff and other resources appropriately. The setting is supported effectively by the local authority link teacher, who also works at the local school, and the Mudiad Meithrin officer, among others. In turn, for example, they provide beneficial ideas for practitioners to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills through various activities, and advise them on new developments in the early years. Various grants are used appropriately to enrich the range of resources and support training for practitioners in appropriate areas, such as developing children's literacy and numeracy.

The setting benefits greatly from receiving various grants, which are useful for them in order to operate successfully from day to day. Funding is managed effectively by the management committee's officers. As a result of the sound effect of provision on the standards that children achieve, the setting provides good value for money.

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