



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pwllglas
Neuadd y Pentref
Pwllglas
Ruthin
LL15 2PB**

Date of inspection: March 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 Pwllglas is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in Pwllglas village hall near Ruthin, in Denbighshire local authority. The setting is open two mornings a week between 9.20am and 11.20am. The setting works very closely with Cylch Meithrin Rhuthun, which is open the other three mornings of the week. The same leader is in charge of both settings.

The setting is registered to admit up to 26 children at any given time and admits children between two-and-a-half and four years old. The majority of children currently receive funded early years education.

Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds and around half speak Welsh as their first language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs three qualified practitioners, including the leader. The leader began in post in June 2010.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in October 2015 and by Estyn in November 2010.

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 consistent progress in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Provision to develop the Welsh language is very beneficial and has a positive effect on children's oral skills
- Nearly all children show an interest and motivation in their learning
- Nearly all children behave responsibly and treat practitioners and each other with respect
- Practitioners implement engaging and interesting activities for children, which encourage them to learn productively
- Teaching succeeds in having a positive effect on children's outcomes
- The setting has efficient arrangements to care for the children conscientiously
- Practitioners use resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs inside the building

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader uses established procedures to ensure a clear direction for the setting's work in order to improve provision and children's outcomes
- The leader defines the setting's strengths and areas for improvement clearly
- The willingness of the leader and the management committee to act on the areas for improvement is of benefit to provision and improves children's outcomes
- The management committee's rigour and detail are of great support to the setting's leadership and management
- Intelligent use of support services has a purposeful effect on provision
- Purposeful partnerships with parents, carers, the school and external agencies support learning experiences and teaching successfully

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that planning is challenging enough to extend the writing skills of the most able children to the best of their ability
- R2 Act on assessment findings to plan the next steps in individual children's learning
- R3 Improve outdoor resources and the use of the outdoor area

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

Most children make sound progress in their skills from their starting points. Many work diligently on tasks and use the Welsh language confidently, such as singing nursery rhymes with a microphone and counting blocks to build towers to make castles.

Many children speak clearly and ensure that adults and other children understand them. They respond well to questions during plenary sessions when listening to a story about finding Easter eggs. Many hold intelligent conversations with adults and each other when making animals shapes out of dough. They listen to instructions and explanations from others meaningfully and act on them promptly and purposefully. This can be seen when they paint snowdrops and leeks as part of St David's Day celebrations. Many children express their emotions sensibly orally as they convey their feelings and whether they are happy, sad or tired. They express their views purposefully when shovelling sand together to fill a bucket and waiting their turn on bicycles in the hall.

Most children show an interest in books and understand the purpose of the text and how it matches the pictures. They discuss the content of a book and the order of the letters of the alphabet effectively with each other and practitioners. They discuss characters and events confidently with adults and their peers, such as the rabbit's role on a treasure hunt. As a result, they handle books like natural readers and respond with interest to the content of various stories.

Many children make marks effectively. They enjoy early writing experiences and use a variety of media, such as paint, chalk and coloured crayons to start their early writing. Around half the children are beginning to recognise their own names correctly. However, the most able children do not form the letters of the alphabet and numbers independently, in line with their ability. As a result, these children's understanding of the purpose of writing in the correct contexts has not been developed in full.

Many children use mathematical language intelligently and in relevant contexts. They count, recognise and name numbers up to five confidently, and a few count and sort up to ten objects skilfully. Many children choose relevant equipment and materials to solve mathematical problems effectively. For example, they use scales successfully to balance wooden cylinders of different sizes and order ordinal numbers knowledgeably, from first to third, when lining up for a snack and a drink.

Many children understand how to group objects according to size, shape and colour correctly. They compare two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes confidently, such as comparing a picture of a flower on paper with a real daffodil in the hall's foyer. Most children are also able to explain intelligently the difference between the volume of specific containers, such as a bucket that is full, empty or half-full.

Most children are beginning to use technology effectively. They take advantage of educational programs and apps well. This includes using electronic tablets and undertaking tasks with electronic toys and compact disc players. As a result, they develop their ICT skills and fine motor skills successfully.

Many children develop keen thinking skills through interesting activities. This has a positive effect on their learning and the standards that they achieve. For example, they work intelligently with others to prepare the kitchen for teatime, and decide where to place the table, which dishes are available and what food to serve.

Nearly all children enjoy listening to music and respond enthusiastically to familiar Welsh nursery rhymes and songs. Most use their physical skills effectively. They ride around the hall energetically on bicycles and move enthusiastically in line with practitioners' instructions when imitating a spaceman getting dressed and then flying to space.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children show motivation and interest in their learning. Most concentrate conscientiously during their tasks and their spontaneous play. They show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as when they hit a drum and a tambourine to make different sounds. Most children apply themselves fully to group activities and persevere successfully with tasks that are provided for them, such as colouring the dragon red with a crayon and cutting around the picture of a flower carefully with scissors. As a result, they are very willing to share resources and books, and work sensibly with other children in the learning areas.

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors when they arrive at the setting and as they leave. They behave responsibly and treat practitioners and others with respect. As a result, nearly all children listen carefully to practitioners, for example as they discuss the numbers on the eggs in the large chicken's body and wash their hands after painting.

Most children make sensible choices during free play. They express an opinion and make personal choices effectively. For example, they decide to move from one play area to another independently inside the building, and put on aprons themselves to paint. As a result, most children are confident and determined learners and understand that they have a right to use their free time to take advantage of a number of stimulating learning experiences.

After using the toilet, creative play and messy play, nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly without much prompting by practitioners. As a result, they develop their awareness of hygiene and the importance of living healthy and responsible lifestyles successfully.

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

Practitioners plan engaging and interesting activities for children every day. This encourages the children to learn purposefully through practical tasks. Practitioners'

co-operation and opportunities to suggest ideas to extend the children's experiences ensure beneficial activities. On the whole, they help to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Numeracy activities and opportunities to use ICT equipment educationally are prominent across the setting, such as in the construction area. However, there are not enough opportunities for the most able children to extend their writing skills to the best of their ability, by practising to form letters and numbers independently.

Practitioners plan interesting activities that engage children's interest purposefully, on the whole. Concise plans focus on children's interests and choices successfully, by identifying which activities they like or find difficult. However, planning does not derive clearly enough from individuals' assessment to challenge them further. As a result, practitioners do not plan thoroughly for the future once they have defined the next steps in children's learning.

Practitioners act purposefully to improve children's physical and creative skills. For example, they enable the children to ride bicycles in the hall and outdoors, and create objects from their own imagination, such as chicks from dough and feathers.

Continuous tasks inside the building develop children's skills effectively as they solve problems regularly. Effective examples of this include allowing the children to make a St Dwynwen's Day card and following instructions to move an electronic device. As a result, practitioners encourage children to offer their ideas to solve problems successfully. This makes a beneficial contribution towards the children's enthusiasm as they learn through play indoors.

The setting's provision to develop oral Welsh skills is very beneficial to the children. Practitioners are good language models. They support children who are starting to learn the language purposefully. They also extend the vocabulary and language patterns of children who are fluent Welsh speakers successfully. Practitioners encourage the children to use the language as much as possible through meaningful activities and discussions. They challenge and question children regularly in the learning areas, and their sensible questioning and consistent language patterns encourage the children to respond intelligently and promptly. As a result, many children respond with familiar words and phrases soon after they start at the setting. Most children's understanding of the language develops quickly orally.

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, attending the local eisteddfod, making soup and baking traditional cakes.

Practitioners provide effective opportunities for children to use ICT equipment, such as electronic toys and tablets, microphones and a compact disc player. The setting also provides regular opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills intelligently by using educational software and apps purposefully on a tablet.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences. These include visits to the local forest and the community shop near the hall to buy goods for the children's snacks. Visitors such as fire officers, a nurse, and farmers with lambs and chicks teach the children about the roles of people in their local area successfully.

Teaching: Good

The leader has up-to-date knowledge of child development. She is knowledgeable about the requirements of the foundation phase and works effectively with the other practitioners. As a result, teaching is effective and has a positive effect on children's outcomes.

Overall, practitioners have high expectations of the children in their care. They intervene purposefully in children's experiences and play to stimulate them and motivate them to succeed. As a result, practitioners ensure that children are highly motivated and are keen to improve their work. A clear reflection of this is the way in which the children discuss their pictures when painting on an easel, and group similar shapes before building a tower or finishing a jigsaw.

All practitioners encourage the children to take part in various activities regularly. They use purposeful questioning to develop children's thinking and communication skills. For example, they discuss some aspects of Easter, such as eggs and chicks, wisely and order mathematical equipment independently to match the number in question. Practitioners understand the importance of providing a wide range of opportunities to learn through play. Active examples of this include the opportunities for children to experiment by looking for chicks in the sand to reach a total, and making a flower by using glue and tissue paper.

Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively and safely. This encourages the children's participation and enjoyment in all activities successfully, and adds to the industrious and productive environment. They communicate with all children in a warm and friendly manner, which promotes their enthusiasm in their learning successfully.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are useful. Evidence corresponds correctly with individual children's outcomes by using the foundation phase profile as they develop at the setting. All practitioners have recently started to record the daily assessments more regularly and consistently. They discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. They use daily assessments to identify the next steps in individual children's learning effectively. However, they do not plan to act on their findings thoroughly enough when planning for individuals for the future.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements verbally. There is daily dialogue between practitioners and parents and carers about their children. At the end of their time at the setting, the setting provides the local school with a booklet and records on children's progress, which are also available to parents and carers if they wish to see them.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting has purposeful arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. They are sensible and contribute meaningfully to the children's development, and support their learning successfully.

The setting provides valuable opportunities for promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, practitioners use group sessions wisely to focus on children's feelings and the way that they treat others. As a result, practitioners nurture values such as fairness and respect effectively. Daily and regular routines are beneficial to the setting's overall ethos and contribute to activities that motivate the children to learn productively.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to reflect, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray each day. This creates a sense of calm as the children sit to listen attentively to adults during plenary sessions, and emphasises the fact that friendship is important.

Practitioners provide useful and practical opportunities for children to get their food and pour their drinks, which benefits their independent development. Children take turns politely while eating their snacks around the dining table. As a result of these robust practices, practitioners reinforce the consistent message that saying thank you for food and drink is polite and respectful.

The setting promotes healthy eating and drinking successfully, and children understand that fruit, vegetables and keeping fit are an important part of a sensible diet and healthy lifestyles. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, plastic and card at the setting, and compost food in the outdoor area. This develops their understanding of sustainability effectively.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies that eliminate any kind of disruption or unreasonable behaviour. As a result, children are happy and safe in the adults' company. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take care of the children conscientiously when they arrive and depart. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The leader records children's learning needs efficiently on entry to the setting and during their time there. Practitioners review children's progress regularly and take action to support children with additional learning needs effectively. The setting uses support and guidance from the local authority and specialist services to support vulnerable individuals, when necessary.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners remind children regularly that we live in a country and society that recognise, respect and celebrate diversity. This is consistent practice in the setting's daily work and promotes its positive ethos. Daily activities reinforce this philosophy successfully, and the children's sensible attitudes towards others are a sound reflection of effective provision.

The setting celebrates Diwali and looks at the lives of people in foreign countries, such as Nepal and its capital city, Kathmandu. Practitioners discuss fables from Africa with the children and challenge them to consider the similarities and differences between dolls from different cultures. As a result, practitioners teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures successfully.

The setting uses its indoor resources successfully to meet the needs of children and the foundation phase. Practitioners use a wide range of practical resources purposefully in continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enrich learning in the indoor environment. They allow children to use equipment independently, which contributes successfully towards promoting their sense of responsibility for other people's property.

The indoor learning environment is clean and the building is in good condition and maintained conscientiously. Practitioners organise the learning areas sensibly to create an engaging and interesting indoor learning environment. They encourage the children to move from one learning area to another without much prompting, which contributes successfully to providing them with a variety of practical experiences. The setting also uses community resources purposefully. This includes the village and the forest occasionally, which supports the setting's provision effectively and enriches the curriculum.

Practitioners grow flowers with the children in milk cartons and vegetables in pots in the outdoor area, which teaches children about plant growth effectively. The use of this area for lively activities, such as riding bicycles and exploring nature, is suitable for developing the children's skills. The setting is given free reign by the hall's committee to use the outdoor area as it wishes. As a result, the leader and management committee have development plans to improve the outdoor area. They have recently gained a financial grant to start this work. However, the current use of the outdoor area does not ensure enough opportunities for children to develop all of their skills regularly enough outdoors.

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

The leader maintains the setting's regular practices purposefully. She promotes regular improvements and celebrates children's successes purposefully. Her effective vision, in addition to sharing provision with a nearby setting, ensures that children's outcomes, teaching and care are successful.

The leader and her colleagues focus keenly on improving children's standards by forging close relationships with them and their parents and through challenging teaching. This meets the children's needs effectively and promotes their personal achievements and progress intelligently. They work diligently as a team and have high expectations of themselves and the children. As a result, all practitioners motivate the children daily to improve sensibly and supportively, particularly in their Welsh oracy.

The leader uses 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, in addition to training all practitioners to assess better in order to target the next steps in children's learning. The new leader has also succeeded in obtaining a grant from a local supermarket to develop the outdoor area.

Practitioners focus on creating engaging and interesting learning areas for the children. As a result, they succeed in making beneficial changes to the weekly challenges, inside the building, to correspond with the different themes. This has a positive effect on children's skills, particularly their speaking and listening skills. The leader focuses well on national priorities, such as developing literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies, to improve children's skills before they start school. The leader works very closely with the local school's link teacher to plan the curriculum. For example, they work together to provide different experiences for children in order to ensure that they do not repeat activities.

The leadership, which includes a supportive management committee, ensures that provision for children is effective. The management committee assesses the leader's performance annually, and the leader is currently involved in evaluating the new practitioners. As a result, all staff understand their roles fully through regular evaluations and discussions.

The management committee supports and challenges the setting sensibly to maintain and improve established practices and develop the areas that are in need of further improvement. It receives useful information about the setting's work and events regularly from the leader, such as concerts and coffee mornings. The dedicated management committee meets regularly to organise activities to increase the setting's income in order to improve its resources.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation is an integral part of the setting's regular procedures. The leader records details about children's standards and the quality of provision regularly, by using the local authority's procedures purposefully. This includes quantitative profiles that measure the effectiveness of provision beneficially. The management committee plays an active part in the process. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of the setting's strengths and the knowledge to identify priorities for improvement accurately.

Co-operation between practitioners, the management committee, the school's link teacher, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin is effective. The information that is gathered regularly, in addition to visits and evaluations by the external agencies, contribute purposefully to the self-evaluation procedures. The effect of the support and willingness to improve is that the setting prioritises needs promptly and funds any costs effectively before initiating any changes. This includes improving the outdoor area and holding formal meetings for parents to discuss their children's progress. As a result, the setting uses the information that derives from the self-evaluation procedures appropriately to set sensible priorities in the improvement plan.

Practitioners agree on the priorities and change their ways of working and aspects of provision efficiently to respond to the needs that have been identified in the improvement plan. On the whole, the priorities in the improvement plan derive directly from the setting's self-evaluation process.

The leader and management committee prioritise expenditure purposefully in line with the targets for improvement. For example, the setting arranges training for staff

on how to implement useful language schemes, under the guidance of the school, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. As a result, all practitioners operate effectively in line with their advice. This has a positive effect on improving provision for the Welsh language and children's standards.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of effective strategic partnerships. Practitioners work purposefully with these partners in order to improve provision and children's outcomes.

There is a very positive link with the school's link teacher. The leader and practitioners receive valuable advice and guidance from her as part of the local authority's support plan. The link teacher visits the setting each week. As a result, her input has led to improvements in several aspects of provision. For example, practitioners have improved the system of daily assessments and made improvements in children's oral work in Welsh.

There is robust support for the transition arrangements between the setting and the local school, and children's personal information and assessments are transferred effectively. The setting and the school also come together to hold concerts in the village hall, which supports children's awareness of the school's life and staff well.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. They inform them regularly, through newsletters, a functional noticeboard and social media, about all aspects of the setting's work. The setting encourages parents' views on issues to improve the setting through regular questionnaires and discussions. An example of this is the willingness to use social media to communicate better with parents, and the intention to hold annual meetings to discuss children's progress, which is a target in the improvement plan.

The setting's community links support children's learning successfully. This includes fundraising events, such as concerts and cake sales during coffee mornings. The setting attends the local eisteddfod and receives beneficial support when bidding for relevant sponsorship and grants from businesses in the area. The setting also supports local and national charities, which nurtures the children's tenderness and care for others successfully.

The setting works purposefully with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. These organisations support practitioners' documentation and training effectively. Practitioners also work with a wide range of other partners who make important contributions towards improving provision. These include agencies that provide training such as first aid, food hygiene and child protection.

Resource management: Good

The leader improves aspects of the setting's work effectively by managing staff and resources purposefully. With training and robust leadership, and by listening to others sensibly, she succeeds in ensuring that the day-to-day work of meeting children's needs is successful.

The management committee are responsible for the procedures for evaluating the leader's work. The leader has recently started to evaluate the practitioners' work. As a result, the procedures enable the leader and practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge efficiently. There is good practice in terms of purposeful co-operation between practitioners and other partners, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. This supports the setting's paperwork and management procedures effectively.

The setting manages resources purposefully to support learning. The setting's daily practices and arrangements are consistent and ensure that children benefit from interesting and positive learning experiences inside the building. Practitioners ensure that children have ready access to plenty of stimulating resources to support their learning effectively.

The management committee has a clear understanding of the budget, and it prioritises expenditure sensibly. It makes regular improvements by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully. As a result, the setting ensures that use of funding has a direct effect on children's standards and wellbeing, in addition to provision of learning experiences. The management committee also supports the leader and the setting to obtain grants to develop the setting further, such as the recent grant to develop the outdoor area.

On the whole, the setting provides good value for money because of the stable leadership and the positive effect on provision and 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