



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pontyberem
Neuadd Goffa
Nant y Glo
Pontyberem
S15 5HU**

Date of inspection: 03 November 2011

by

Branwen Llewelyn Jones

for

**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 Pontyberem is situated in Pontyberem Memorial Hall in Carmarthenshire.

It was opened in 1977. It is registered to provide a maximum of eighteen children in any one session. It meets for five mornings a week from 8.55 am until 12.15 pm for thirty nine weeks a year. The setting is registered with Mudiad ysgolion Meithrin. The leader is the registered person.

The setting has a management committee and operates through the medium of Welsh. Around 40% of the children come from Welsh speaking homes. At the time of the inspection twenty children were registered including ten of three years of age who received funding.

It comprises a room which is adequate in size and has good resources. Although it has no window, it is very attractive and is used very effectively to provide a wide range of activities for the children. The outdoor area is inadequate but the best possible use is made of it and the surrounding environment to provide rich experiences for the children. To ensure the children's safety the door is locked at all times and can be opened only from inside; a bell must be rung to be admitted.

The children who attend the setting come from Pontyberem and the surrounding area and the children transfer to Ysgol Gynradd Pontyberem. The area is recognised as one which is economically disadvantaged.

The setting was last inspected in April 2010 by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. It has not been inspected by Estyn before. The setting is registered under the 1989 Children Act.

At the time of the inspection there were no children registered with additional learning needs. Children of different ethnic backgrounds are welcome though there were none at the time of the inspection.

Three practitioners are employed at the setting two of whom have appropriate qualifications in the field of early years. The leader and one practitioner have NVQ level 3 qualifications in child care. The other practitioner has extensive experience having worked at the setting for over twenty years.

Summary

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| The Setting's current performance | Good |
| The Setting's prospects for improvement | Good |

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good for the following reasons:

- children feel happy and secure in the setting and enjoy all their experiences;
- there is an inclusive and happy ethos with the child at its centre;
- children's achievements and progress are good;
- teaching is consistently good;
- assessment through observation feeds well the planning, and
- practitioners work effectively as a team.

Prospects for improvement

The provider's prospects for improvement are good for the following reasons:

- a culture of professional reflection is developing which is based on self-evaluation;
- leadership is good, and
- practitioners are committed to continuous professional development.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve provision and achievements practitioners should:

R1 develop further their use of open-ended and extended questions, and

R2 ensure that the teaching is not over-directed.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan which notes how the recommendations will be addressed..

Main findings

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

All children achieve well from their starting point and according to their stage of development. Every child makes good progress in all areas of learning of the Foundation Phase.

The Welsh of children who come from non Welsh-speaking homes is developing gradually and all understand more than they speak. All children make appropriate progress in their language from their starting point.

All children develop accurate vocabulary and language patterns and the majority carries out instructions and answers questions appropriately. About half speak Welsh to one another when playing. Most use the local dialect naturally and this enhances well their language. The majority concentrates well when listening to story and all enjoy listening to their favourite regularly.

All enjoy singing a range of songs and reciting rhymes and they handle books like readers. Every child enjoys mark-making both indoors and outdoors and the great majority experiments confidently with a range of materials for this purpose. Nearly all use correct mathematical language when comparing length, height and the size of objects. All use their fingers to count and recognise familiar shapes. All develop good Information and Communication Technology skills.

The majority demonstrates good creative skills when engaged in role play, painting and creating collages and all enjoy listening and moving to music.

All children develop good independence and self-confidence. All concentrate for extended periods when exploring their surroundings outdoors and all enjoy their experiences.

Wellbeing: Good

All children enjoy their time in the setting. The close and warm relationship between the adults and children gives them a feeling of security and contentment. Their self-confidence and happiness demonstrates their sense of being valued and respected and they, in turn, demonstrate respect and affection for adults. They behave like a small family and all show affection and concern for one another, practitioners and visitors.

All understand the importance of healthy eating. They name healthy foods and things they should not eat. Almost all children go to the toilet unaided and then wash their hands.

Every child has a very positive attitude towards learning, participates actively and enthusiastically in their learning experiences and behaves very nicely; these are outstanding features. All are polite and the majority shows consideration for others.

All children make choices and decisions about their learning when given the opportunity and every child is confident in the setting.

All enjoy their regular visits to the local community when visiting the memorial hall, the library, the church, the park and the office of Menter Iaith and the nursery plays an important part in the life of the community.

The great majority makes new little friends in the nursery and all are very fond of one another. They go to look for their friends to play with them and show concern for them.

Insert text paragraphs.

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

Practitioners plan together after discussing and evaluate the provision and outcomes of the previous week. They discuss the achievements and needs of individual children and evaluate the observations of children which they have made. They use the information gained well to inform the next cycle of provision. Planning responds well to the interests and needs of the children and a wide range of interesting learning experiences is planned all of which enable children to make good progress towards the outcomes of the Foundation Phase. A good feature is the flexibility of the planning and practitioners were seen to adapt it to respond to children's interests. Adults build well on children's knowledge, understanding, skills and interests in a way which is meaningful to them. These features ensure that planning is good.

Practitioners provide good opportunities for children to develop as enthusiastic learners who are confident and independent and to develop good creative, physical, linguistic and mathematical skills. Their creative skills are promoted well when they engage in role play. They receive good experiences to develop their creative skills also when creating collages, drawing from observation and playing percussion instruments. Practitioners place great importance on exploring the environment and children show considerable interest in the world around them and have a good knowledge of it. They benefit from opportunities to plant and grow flowers and vegetables and they learn about sustainable development when they have opportunities to re-cycle waste food.

By engaging in their stimulating learning experiences and cooperating within their close learning community, children have opportunities to develop strong relationships with others and to show respect and tolerance towards all including those from other cultural backgrounds.

The children receive a good, natural model of the Welsh language and are encouraged by the practitioners to extend their language by developing their interest through rhymes, songs and stories which include interesting language and a wide vocabulary. They celebrate the Welsh culture in a range of ways including St David's Day celebrations in the community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners possess a good knowledge of child development and current developments in the field and this gives a good foundation to provision. They understand well the requirements of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations of each child according to his/her stage of development. They manage behaviour in a sensitive and positive way and as a consequence, children learn to show kindness towards others and what is and is not appropriate behaviour.

Practitioners make good use of questionig to extend children's learning overall but they do not make enough use of open-ended and extended questioning to develop further children's thinking and problem solving skills. Practitioners often intervene effectively in children's activities while they are at play to extend their learning. The teaching meets children's individual needs well.

When the organisation is flexible it gives children good opportunities to make decisions and choices about thier learning and to develop their independence and self-confidence. However, organisation and teaching are over-directed in focus activities and this restricts, to an extent, the development of their independence. Practitioners give children ample time to become engaged in their experiences and they intervene only if there is an opportunity to extend their learning.

Practitioners know and understand the children very well. They assess through observing the children when engaged in learning experiences, noting significant things and discussing their findings. The information collected is used in the next cycle of planning and the effect is seen in the good provision. Continuous notes are kept of children's achievements including useful and thorough information which gives a clear picture of each child's progress. Children's progress is measured regularly in each area of learning and this knowledge is used to inform planning in order to meet the children's needs and interests well. Parents receive a comprehensive report on their children when they leave to attend school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners have created a family atmosphere in the setting where children feel very comfortable and happy. Each child is valued and respect is shown for their ideas and interests.

They develop well the children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of keeping fit. Children's curiosity about their lives and beliefs and those of others is well developed, for example, through celebrating the Chinese new year and through stories. Children say a prayer before snack and before going home. All develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them through the exciting opportunities they receive to explore the seasonal changes in their environment.

Practitioners nurture very well the morals and values they believe are necessary to the holistic development of the responsible child. The children learn about the importance of fairness, honesty and truth and they know well the difference between right and wrong in the context of their young lives. The provision enables children to

socialise well, to take responsibility, to show initiative and to develop a good understanding of life and sharing in their small community.

The relationships between the nursery, the school and outside agencies are good. The children benefit much from the productive relationship between the advisory teacher of the local authority's Foundation Phase team and representatives of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. The close relationship between the nursery and the school ensures the successful transfer of the children when they begin in the nursery.

The relationship between parents and the setting is very good. A selection of parents said they were very satisfied with all aspects of the setting's provision. They say that the practitioners know their children well and that their children are very well looked after and that they can go to the leader to discuss any matter. Practitioners have received training in child protection and know well the procedures to follow. All required policies are in place together with the necessary procedures for Child Protection and they reflect the requirements of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008. The leader is the nominated person.

There were no children with additional learning needs present at the time of the Practitioners have created a family atmosphere in the setting where children feel very comfortable and happy. Each child is valued and respect is shown for their ideas and interests.

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There were no children with additional learning needs present at the time inspection but every child has access to all the areas of learning and the rich experiences provided.

One safety matter was discussed with the leader during the inspection.

Learning environment: Good

There is a warm and positive ethos in the setting. Adults show affection and kindness towards every child and each child is valued. Practitioners know the children and their needs well and in responding to these they draw on their good knowledge of the children's backgrounds. All children have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. As a result of the kindness and respect shown to the children by the staff and the values they display, the children develop tolerance, very positive attitudes towards their learning and excellent behaviour.

The setting has positive policies and procedures which are known to everyone to deal with any instances of oppressive behaviour, and to promote equal opportunities and human rights. These are monitored and work very effectively. The setting is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and every practitioner has a Criminal Records Bureau certificate.

The ratio of adults to children is very good and the staff is well qualified and has much experience. Practitioners address the requirements of the Foundation Phase framework well and the children receive interesting and challenging experiences which respond well to their interests. The room is adequate for the number of children on the register. Children have room to engage in role play, sand and water play, painting and physical exercise. Although the outdoor area is very restricted the children enjoy playing there and receive a wide range of experiences regularly when they go to the park to explore their natural environment. Every child shows concern and kindness towards their peers, adults and visitors.

The children receive enough time to become immersed in things which interest them and which promote their creative, physical and mathematical skills and which develop their ability to concentrate. The use made by the setting of its immediate environment and the community is good and the children benefit from their visits to the memorial hall where they meet villagers from Pontyberem to celebrate such occasions as Christmas concerts and Saint David's Day celebrations.

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

The child and his/her individual needs and interests are at the centre of provision and the leader succeeds in creating a positive and very happy ethos in the nursery.

The leader gives clear direction to the nursery and the process of improvement. She and the practitioners work together well and share principles and objectives which are based on a good understanding of child development. These are seen to be implemented in the active and interesting learning experiences which the children receive and the system of organisation which allows children to make decisions and choices about their learning, to develop self-confidence and independence and to make good progress.

She fulfils her responsibilities effectively and demonstrates a strong commitment to her role in the interests of the children. All practitioners contribute to the strategic planning of the setting. The leader shares the values she wishes to promote by personal example and through discussion. She has high expectations of herself, her staff and of the children. All practitioners have personal targets which ensure good provision and high standards of achievement. Progress towards achieving them is monitored regularly.

The setting's development and improvement plan which is based on the results of self-evaluation gives clear direction to the life and work of the nursery.

The management committee has a good knowledge of everything that happens at the setting and is very supportive of it. Its members understand their roles and they fulfil them effectively. They have a good knowledge of the setting's performance. The committee makes use of thorough information to make effective decisions and it fulfils its legal duties.

The leader meets national and local priorities as required by the Assembly and the Local Authority.

Improving quality: Good

The setting makes good use of its self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation report identifies areas in need of improvement which will ensure positive benefits for all children. The leader consults with parents, carers and children to inform self-evaluation. They use the information gained from questionnaires to parents to gather views and to identify areas for development.

They work very effectively with the Foundation Phase advisory teacher for the local authority who is a critical friend. They use the information gathered through self-evaluation to produce the development plan and they also implement effectively the recommendations made by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales.

Following the process of self-evaluation, a setting improvement plan is produced which demonstrates a good understanding of its performance and which focuses on raising standards by improving provision and setting targets for this purpose. Planning for improvement is good.

An effective system of appraisal is in place and practitioners have opportunities to reflect on their performance and identify areas they wish to develop through training in order to improve the provision. The leader and practitioners attend in-service

training courses regularly. The positive effects of this are seen in the teaching and welfare of the children as practitioners implement what they learn.

Partnership working: Good

The leader works very effectively with the local authority advisory teacher for the Foundation Phase who monitors provision at the nursery regularly. She also works well with the advisers from Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin who are very supportive of the setting. These partnerships are very successful and the setting benefits greatly from them. The setting is a member of a local cluster which meets regularly to discuss current issues and to share good practice.

The staff work very closely with stakeholders and are very willing to consult with and to receive suggestions from parents and guardians.

The partnership between the nursery and the school is very fruitful. The setting benefits greatly from its fruitful partnership with Menter Iaith Cwm Gwendraeth which is very supportive of it.

Resource management: Good

Practitioners are well deployed in order to make the most effective use of their strengths and to ensure the best provision. They use indoor resources and the small outdoor area in a very creative way to provide exciting experiences for children and to broaden their horizons. They measure the effect of resources on the learning and teaching and plan in order to ensure a good supply of resources for the future. The outdoors is used very well to develop the children's skills in all areas of learning.

The leader and staff make the best possible use of the setting's resources and of the budget to offer the best provision. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

Eight responses were received to the questionnaires. All were positive and every parent / guardian was satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of provision for their children in the setting.

Responses to discussions with children

Every child was comfortable talking with a visitor and they said they are very happy in the nursery. They talked about their friends and said that they know what to do if they are unhappy or upset about something.

Appendix 2

The inspection team / reporting inspector – delete as appropriate

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| Branwen Llewelyn Jones | Reporting Inspector |
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.