The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on
Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys
Prestatyn

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Martin Cray
Date of inspection: 13/14 April 2010 (mornings)
Contract number: T/111/09N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Cylch Meithrin Ysgol y Llys

Address: Ysgol y Llys
          Princes Avenue
          Prestatyn
          Sir Dinbych

Post code: LL19 8RP

Telephone: 01747 853865

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Helen Gilmore

Post: Leader

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five-point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>good with outstanding features</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>good features and no important shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>good features outweigh shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>some good features, but shortcomings in important areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>many important shortcomings</td>
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</table>
1.0 Context of the setting

Context of the nursery setting:
This busy Welsh medium cyclych meithrin was established in 1980. It is now located in a new classroom at Ysgol y Llys, on the outskirts of the town of Prestatyn. It serves the area surrounding Prestatyn, that is in general relatively prosperous. The children come from a variety of backgrounds.

The setting is run by a volunteer management committee and is an educational provider as a member of the Denbighshire Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership. It is also a registered member of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin.

The setting provides for children between two and a half and four years of age and is open mornings and afternoons, five days a week. At the time of the inspection there was a total of 38 children registered to attend the different sessions. All the children are three years of age and 30 of them receive funded places under the arrangements of the Denbighshire Partnership.

The setting provides for children with additional learning needs, but at the time of the inspection there were no such children registered. There are also no children from ethnic minority backgrounds currently in attendance.

English is the language spoken in the homes of almost all the children.

A spacious room is used for activities and there is a secure, hard surfaced area, a garden and coppice available for children’s use.

The setting is staffed by an experienced leader who has a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification, and by up to five assistants.

This is the first time the setting has been inspected by Estyn. It was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in October 2008.

The inspection was held on the mornings of the 13th and 14th April 2010.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children’s learning
The quality and standards of educational provision, taken overall, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children’s learning.
2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of learning</th>
<th>Grade for under-fives</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language, literacy and communication skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh language development</td>
<td>Not applicable to this inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of the world</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical development</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative development</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of education</th>
<th>Grade for under-fives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of planning for children’s learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress, and reports for parents and carers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which the setting contributes to children’s wellbeing</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of the leadership and management of the setting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year olds

3.1 Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

The children’s personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity are good and there are no important shortcomings.
**Good features**

Every child has settled in well and they are familiar with the setting’s day-to-day practices. They arrive happy and confident to the sessions and it is clear that they feel safe and secure in the learning environment. They are keen to contribute in Circle Time sessions, which are useful social occasions.

All the children are aware of the importance of washing their hands after being to the toilet and before eating their daily snacks. They gain a great deal of enjoyment from taking their turns to help with the work of preparing and distributing fruit, vegetables and drinks.

Children’s awareness of traditions and celebrations associated with Wales is developing very well.

Almost every child is able to concentrate for increasing periods of time as they engage in specific tasks. It was seen that they are happy to wait their turn to use equipment such as bikes and to contribute in groups. They are willing to experiment with new experiences, and they persevere when encountering difficulties.

**Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

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### 3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

The children’s language, literacy and communication skills are good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**

Every child understands and listens very well to instructions and the different stories they hear.

Although all the children come from homes where Welsh is not heard regularly, their spoken language is developing appropriately. The majority use Welsh words that have been introduced to them across all areas of learning. Many of them have learned a number of nursery rhymes and songs from memory and they are able to pronounce them clearly.

All children understands that words and pictures convey meaning. Every child is able to correctly select the names of their peers by using pictures as a clue, and in due course in written format only.

They develop their basic writing skills well as they use different media for marking. They write also for specific purposes such as writing greetings on Easter and Mothering Sunday cards.

**Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings, but there is room for the children to make more independent use of the books corner.
3.3 Mathematical development

The children’s mathematical development is good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
All the children are able to promote their number skills in a number of daily contexts and through learning and performing number rhymes and songs. They gain a great deal of enjoyment from their engagement in practical activities such as looking for and counting the mice hidden in the coppice, and the numbers from 1 to 10 in the sand, and matching them correctly to the number mat. Many recognise numbers from 1 to 5.

During their activities with sand and water, most of the children show that their understanding of concepts related to mass and capacity is developing well.

All the children enjoy experimenting with various shapes when playing with dough and they come to recognise two-dimensional shapes according to their correct names.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings, but there is room to develop further the children’s awareness of the function of money in a meaningful context.

3.4 Knowledge and understanding of the world

The children’s knowledge and understanding of the world are good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
Most of the children have a good awareness of the importance of the environment around them. Their regular visits to the setting’s garden, and the nearby coppice, in all weather conditions, develop their understanding of living things and the seasonal cycle particularly effectively.

They all accept responsibility for recycling the setting’s waste food materials.

They exhibit natural curiosity when investigating with magnifying glasses. They have a good knowledge of what plants need to flourish and they play a prominent part in collecting the apple harvest and preparing them to be eaten.

All the children have a good developing awareness of materials and the change that occurs in some, for example, mixing water with soil to make mud, and that chocolate melts when heated.

They are beginning to understand the concept of time in the context of their day-to-day activities.
3.5  Physical development

The children’s physical development is good and there are no important shortcomings.

Good features
All the children skilfully use a range of small equipment such as paint brushes, rolling pins, scissors, paste and sellotape in a good variety of activities.

Most children are able to put on and remove their shoes with ease and to correctly water the plants in the garden. All the children exhibit good skill as they pour water from one cup to another.

They all move confidently and safely and with growing control and co-ordination as they take part in outdoor activities. The majority work very energetically as they brush, use spades and rakes, and dig in the garden.

Children’s skills are developed further as they make use of a range of large play equipment, including bikes, cars, scooters and a slide. A number of individuals respond well as they steer through a series of cones and follow the instructions of the ‘lollipop lady’.

Shortcomings
There are no important shortcomings.

3.6  Creative development

The children’s creative development is good and there are no important shortcomings.

Good features
Most of the children know a number of action songs and nursery rhymes, and they sing them with enjoyment as they make appropriate movements.

Every child uses different materials and media to convey their ideas effectively. They develop their skills well as they help to create pictures of themselves, print with their hands and make three-dimensional models out of scrap materials.

Every child enjoys playing different roles such as an assistant in the cafe, a lollipop lady and the functions of different people who help them.

Shortcomings
There are no important shortcomings.
4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds

4.1 Quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there are no important shortcomings.

Good features
The setting has clear aims and values that are well reflected in its day-to-day life. The children are valued as individuals and they are treated with care and respect.

Children receive regular praise for their efforts and achievements, and they are encouraged at all times to work with their peers. They give good support to charities such as Children in Need.

The setting promotes the Welsh language very effectively and children’s cultural development is promoted well by celebrating practices and traditions associated with Wales, including those related to St David’s Day.

Children receive opportunities to develop their awareness of diversity by learning about celebrations such as the Chinese New Year.

Shortcomings
There are no important shortcomings.

4.2 Quality of planning for children’s learning

The quality of the planning for children’s learning is good with no important shortcomings.

Good features
Every child receives equal access to the programme of work and the planning, in general, effectively promotes racial equality and respect for cultural diversity.

The planning is based on the requirements of the Framework for Children’s Learning for 3-7 year olds in Wales and the learning experiences provided are balanced and are likely to promote the Foundation Phase outcomes in all areas of learning. One of the strengths of the planning is the emphasis placed on ensuring regular outdoor activities for the children.

There is a good balance between planning opportunities for children to choose their own activities and focus tasks that are under adult guidance.
The plans are evaluated effectively and the information is used to inform future planning.

It was seen that the skills that children are expected to gain through the activities have been outlined clearly.

**Shortcomings**
It is not an important shortcoming, but the planning for developing children’s awareness of cultural diversity is not always sufficiently clear.

### 4.3 Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good with outstanding features.

**Outstanding features**
The way in which the staff ensure an exciting and stimulating learning environment in the setting’s outdoor area is an outstanding feature of the provision. The setting ensures regular, daily access, regardless of weather conditions, for children to take advantage of the range of quality resources that are available to them.

**Good features**
The staff succeed in establishing a close working relationship with the children. They are well qualified and have a good awareness of children’s learning needs in the early years. They are all committed to ensuring that children develop a sound grasp of the Welsh language prior to their transfer to school.

Children are treated with care and respect and they receive regular guidance, encouragement and praise. The sessions are well managed and good questioning techniques are used to encourage children to discuss their play.

Opportunities are provided in every session for children to play freely and to make their own choices, and to take part in focus activities under adult guidance.

Valuable practical support and guidance is provided by the Denbighshire Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership link teacher.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings.

### 4.4 Quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress and reports for parents and carers

The quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress and reports for parents and carers is good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
All members of staff are involved in assessing children’s progress. During free sessions and focus activities, staff scrutinise and listen well to what children are saying and doing. Field notes are kept of any significant features.

Assessment observations are transferred to booklets kept for each individual child – Chwarae i Ddysgu, Dysgu Chwarae. From time to time, photographic evidence is also included. As a result, the setting’s assessment procedures succeed well over time to record the progress made by every child across the different areas of learning.

Overall, assessment has an effective impact on the planning for learning.

Parents and carers are welcome to enquire about children’s progress at any time and there is a formal arrangement for them to visit and share the content of the Chwarae i Ddysgu, Dysgu Chwarae booklets prior to their transfer to the school.

**Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings, but it is good practice to present annual written reports to parents on their children’s progress.

### 4.5 Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community

The quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community is good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
The welcome packs provided for parents ensure that they receive a good level of information about the provision before their children start at the setting. The registration arrangements are clear,

Parents receive regular information about events and other issues through the noticeboard that is located in a prominent position, and educational newsletters that are produced on a half termly basis.

Parents are very supportive of fund raising activities such as fairs and regular coffee mornings that generate considerable sums of money for setting funds to purchase resources.

Considerable appreciation of the setting’s provision and its contribution to children’s development was expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaires returned by parents.

There is very effective co-operation with Ysgol y Llys, to which the children transfer at the end of their time at the setting.

Visits are made outside of the setting, and children’s experiences are enhanced further through the contribution of a number of different visitors, such as a farmer, dentist, firemen and others.
4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children’s wellbeing

The setting makes a good contribution to children’s wellbeing and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
The setting has clear policies and procedures for children’s wellbeing and they are operated consistently. Staff are very caring of the children and they ensure that they are all valued and included.

The security arrangements are good, and ensure that parents sign their children in and that no child leaves unattended. Children are well supervised at all times and daily risk assessments are conducted in order to prevent children from being exposed to possible dangers when playing outside.

Healthy foods are provided regularly for snacks and children are given sufficient opportunities to take part in energetic physical activities, both indoors and outdoors.

There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents or incidents. Appropriate records are kept of them, and of fire drills.

The setting’s Child Protection policy is clear and staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings.

4.7 Quality of the leadership and management of the setting

The quality of the leadership and management of the setting is good and there are no important shortcomings.

**Good features**
The setting has a clear statement of purpose and its policies and procedures are well documented. The leader provides good leadership, and the support received from the other staff is crucial to the effectiveness of a very hard working, enthusiastic team that is at all times ready to respond to changes.

They receive very good support from the treasurer of the Management Committee, who visits the setting several times during the week to deal with financial matters.

The self-evaluation procedures are well established and all staff take part in the work of planning for improvement. Very good attention is given to setting targets for
improving the standards achieved by children and those relating to the quality of provision.

The staff recognise the importance of their own continuous professional development and they are supportive of the training courses arranged by the local partnership, together with those provided by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. For example, there has been considerable success in developing the confidence of some members of staff in using the Welsh language. This, together with the other training received, has had a very positive impact on standards achieved and the provision.

**Shortcomings**
There is a need to address the issue of the staff appraisal programme.

**4.8  The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report**

This is the first time the setting has been inspected by Estyn.

**5.0  Recommendations**

The setting needs to:

R1: Maintain and build on the good features to be seen in the standards achieved by children.

R2: Ensure clearer planning for developing children’s awareness of cultural diversity.

R3: Address the issue of the staff appraisal programme.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples’ Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.