



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Llanfarian
Y Caban
Ysgol Gynradd Llanfarian
Llanfarian
Aberystwyth
SY23 4DA**

Date of inspection: November 2017

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website.

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 26/01/2018

Context

Cylch Meithrin Llanfarian is a Welsh-medium setting, which meets at Y Caban, Ysgol Gynradd Llanfarian in the rural village of Llanfarian near Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. The setting is open five mornings a week and is registered to admit up to 20 children between two and four years old. Nine children are funded to receive early years education.

Nearly all children are from white British backgrounds and a very few come from Welsh-speaking homes. Very few children have additional learning needs.

The setting employs two qualified full-time members of staff and one additional occasional practitioner, as and when required. The setting has recently been through a period of significant staffing changes. The current leader was appointed to the post in September 2017, and the deputy leader at the end of October. Staff do not have previous experience in their current roles.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in July 2017 and by Estyn in July 2011.

Summary

The setting's current performance	Adequate
The setting's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- Many children develop effective early reading and writing skills
- Most children make sound progress in their numeracy skills
- Nearly all children are well-behaved and join in enthusiastically with a range of stimulating activities
- There is appropriate provision to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills
- There is a positive, happy relationship between adults and children, and between the children
- The setting is a safe environment that promotes children's wellbeing effectively
- Practitioners provide a wide range of resources in the indoor and outdoor areas, which engage children's interest successfully

However:

- Most children's Welsh language skills are limited
- Planning does not ensure appropriate opportunities for children to apply their skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), across the areas of learning
- Children are not always challenged in line with their ability
- Assessments are not recorded regularly or used to move children forward to the next steps in their learning consistently

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Recent developments are beginning to show improvements in provision and children's outcomes
- The new leader is enthusiastic and has a positive and practical attitude towards developing her skills and her role at the setting
- The leader has a robust vision for developing the setting, which is based on raising children's standards, particularly their Welsh language skills
- The management committee provides a clear strategic direction for the leaders' work
- The management committee and leader self-evaluate appropriately with the support of the advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin, and target the setting's needs appropriately

- The management committee provides valuable opportunities for practitioners to develop professionally by arranging for them to attend specific training

However:

- Self-evaluation procedures do not make effective enough use of first-hand observations in order to evaluate the quality of teaching and its effect on children's standards
- Leaders rely too much on external support to improve the quality of the setting

Recommendations

R1 Raise the standards of children's oral skills

R2 Ensure that practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the areas of learning

R3 Improve practitioners' understanding of when and how to develop children's skills when joining in with their play, and to challenge them more effectively

R4 Strengthen assessment procedures and use this information to plan the next steps in learning

R5 Develop the role of leaders in monitoring the effect of the quality of teaching and provision on children's outcomes in order to contribute better to self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress in addressing the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

In general, many children make sound progress in most of their skills from their starting points. Most recall previous learning appropriately, for example when singing familiar songs. Many children develop suitable problem-solving skills, for example when choosing the most appropriate equipment to make cakes in the mud kitchen. Most are active learners who show the development of appropriate thinking skills by making decisions about their play choices.

Most children listen carefully and respond appropriately to instructions from practitioners. They are beginning to respond suitably in Welsh from time to time by repeating simple words during focus tasks. However, in general, most children's progress in their oral Welsh skills is limited. Children do not use Welsh words and phrases when responding to adults or during informal discussions with each other.

Many of the children develop effective early reading skills. They recognise their own and other children's names in print when self-registering and when their names are drawn from a bag. A majority of children enjoy listening to stories. When choosing books in the reading area, many hold a book correctly like a reader and respond enthusiastically to books. Many children's early writing skills are developing well. A minority are beginning to write their names independently on pieces of work and form letters appropriately. A few use their skills successfully across the learning areas, for example when writing a shopping list.

Most children make strong progress in their numeracy skills. Around half of the group count objects to four or more independently, and match one-to-one reliably. A minority count the children who are present in the classroom, with support from an adult. A majority are beginning to recognise numbers to ten on a number line when counting with the leader. When matching cards, many recognise patterns and shapes and differentiate between small and large images correctly.

Nearly all children's physical skills are developing well. For example, most challenge themselves excitedly when playing in the outdoor area by running up and down a slope skilfully. A minority use scissors skilfully when cutting paper during a creative activity.

Many children show good creative skills, for example when drawing pictures with felt tips independently and decorating them skilfully.

Many children's ICT skills are developing suitably. They use an electronic tablet as a camera and to play games, for example. A minority are beginning to give simple instructions to a programmable toy suitably with the support of an adult. However, they do not use their ICT skills consistently enough across the areas of learning.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy when they arrive at the setting and throughout their time there. They respond positively to familiar adults and join in with the activities confidently.

In general, nearly all children show motivation and interest in their learning, and many concentrate well during their tasks. Most take an interest in group activities and enjoy most of the tasks that are provided for them. Most children share resources well and work sensibly with other children. A minority succeed in tidying up at the leader's request at the end of the morning.

Nearly all children are well-behaved and treat adults and each other with respect. Most listen carefully and respectfully to practitioners.

The children are happy to contribute in turn during snack time, which develops their self-respect and self-confidence effectively. They are beginning to take responsibility suitably, for example when distributing dishes and sharing food, and are beginning to develop an appropriate understanding of eating healthily.

Nearly all children make sensible choices during free play. They decide to move from one area to another independently and confidently both indoors and outdoors. A majority develop their independent skills successfully, for example when changing their shoes.

Nearly all children develop their awareness of hygiene appropriately. They wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet, playing outdoors and before their snack, with encouragement from adults.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
---	-----------------

Learning experiences: Adequate

Learning experiences meet most children's needs and interests successfully. Practitioners plan beneficial opportunities for children to develop as independent learners, which reflects the ethos of the foundation phase suitably. In a short time since being appointed, the leader has established stimulating continuous provision areas, such as the veterinary surgery and the mud kitchen, in order to motivate children to learn. Practitioners work together conscientiously to provide interesting activities that motivate children to learn by using a practical approach, for example when practising with scissors in the craft area. They plan learning experiences that contribute positively to children's enthusiasm and build appropriately on their knowledge and understanding. Very recently, practitioners have begun to provide suitable experiences for children to contribute towards planning when discussing the theme.

Plans to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within focus tasks are developing appropriately; for example, practitioners hold regular singing sessions that are beginning to have a positive effect on children's linguistic skills. Reading activities engage children's interest in becoming readers successfully. However, planning does not address the requirements of developing children's oral skills

adequately. The setting has begun to provide appropriate opportunities for children to use ICT equipment. However, planning does not ensure regular opportunities for children to apply their skills, including their ICT skills, across the areas of learning.

The setting promotes children's awareness of the traditions, celebrations and culture of Wales and other countries successfully. Practitioners make beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. As a result, children have a sound awareness of their local area and an understanding of people's roles in their community.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners greet the children warmly as they arrive at the setting and manage children's behaviour effectively. They encourage children's participation and enjoyment in activities appropriately. Practitioners have suitable knowledge of child development and understand the requirements of the foundation phase appropriately. They work together adequately when planning activities. In general, practitioners ensure a sensible balance between child-led activities and those that are led by adults. They provide a wide range of opportunities to enable children to learn through practical experiences and play. However, they do not always have a sound understanding of when to take part in children's play in order to ask questions and develop their skills effectively. As a result, children do not always make the best possible progress, particularly in more independent activities.

In general, practitioners have high expectations for a majority of children and they challenge older children regularly during focus tasks. However, they do not stretch more able children regularly or consistently enough. Practitioners question children successfully during focus tasks in order to develop their numeracy and literacy skills, for example when matching and pairing pictures. They model the Welsh language consistently and encourage children to respond suitably. However, at times, the language patterns that are used are not completely correct.

Practitioners are beginning to develop a system to record observations regularly and identify the next steps. They also inform parents and carers informally about their children's achievements. However, assessment does not inform planning effectively enough to target individual children's needs and the next steps in their learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides purposeful opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is a welcoming and inclusive community, and daily routines and engaging activities, both indoors and outdoors, help children to feel comfortable and safe. Staff and children respect each other and enjoy working together at the setting.

The setting has effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. These make a positive contribution towards their development and support their learning successfully. Practitioners ensure valuable daily opportunities for physical activities outdoors.

The setting promotes healthy eating and drinking successfully during snack time. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to say thank you for their food each day. They provide useful and practical opportunities for them to serve and help each other, which promotes their self-respect and independence. As a result, children take turns politely while eating their snacks around the table. There are recycling bins at the setting, and children are encouraged to use them appropriately.

Leaders use positive behaviour strategies and regular praise, where appropriate. As a result, nearly all children are well-behaved and feel content and safe in each other's company. They are encouraged to work together amicably when sharing tasks in the construction area and when role-playing in the veterinary surgery, for example.

The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take care of the children continuously, including when they arrive and depart. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Practitioners have identified the very few children with additional learning needs at an early stage. They consult with external agencies appropriately and receive suitable advice in order to respond to children's needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive and welcoming community in which all children are given equal access to all learning experiences. Practitioners respect all children as individuals and celebrate diversity.

The building and outdoor area are of good quality, are maintained regularly, are safe and are furnished appropriately. Practitioners provide a wide range of resources purposefully both indoors and outdoors to meet most of the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. However, ICT resources are not always available. All children are able to choose from all of the play opportunities that are set out for them. Continuous activities, focus tasks and enhanced tasks make effective use of learning resources.

Practitioners display children's creative work effectively and show respect towards their work.

The outdoor area has recently been extended to include a wild area, in which there is adequate space for children to climb and challenge each other physically. The mud kitchen and veterinary surgery are exciting areas that captivate children and provide good opportunities for them to develop their skills. The outdoor play areas include a sensory garden and flower pots that the children have planted, which provide beneficial opportunities for them to develop their understanding of nature.

The setting takes advantage of the willing co-operation of the neighbouring school to extend opportunities for children to develop physically by riding their bicycles and running on the school playground.

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

Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

Following a period of instability in terms of leadership and staffing, the new leader is working closely with the local authority advisory teacher and the management committee to establish a purposeful strategic direction for the setting. She has a robust vision for developing the setting, which is based on raising children's standards, particularly their Welsh language skills. She has shared this vision suitably with staff, parents and the management committee. Since being appointed, she has strived to develop her understanding of how to lead a setting in order to raise children's standards and improve the quality of provision.

The leader is working effectively with the advisory teacher, Mudiad Meithrin and members of the parents' committee to begin to introduce a number of valuable procedures. Although in their early stages, these are beginning to have a positive effect on children's skills; for example, work to develop numeracy is having a positive effect on most children's ability to count and recognise numbers successfully. The leader is beginning to share these practices suitably with other practitioners. However, arrangements are not rigorous enough to enable leaders to evaluate the effect of the quality of provision and teaching on children's outcomes, nor have they had enough time to become embedded fully in the setting's day-to-day life.

Informal staff meetings ensure that practitioners contribute appropriate ideas when planning learning activities. However, planning does not always ensure enough opportunities for children to apply their skills when working in the learning areas. Leaders have a suitable awareness of national priorities, such as developing procedures to encourage children to be independent, for example when self-registering in the morning.

The management committee is very supportive of the setting's work. Members are conscientious and play a prominent part in improving leadership, provision and standards. They use their expertise effectively to offer advice to practitioners, where necessary, and to help to make improvements to provision, for example when establishing continuous provision areas. Members of the committee have high expectations of the setting, and use processes such as performance management to address any areas for development well. They have a sound knowledge of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement, and they operate purposefully as critical friends.

Improving quality: Adequate

Leaders, with the beneficial support of the advisory teacher, have developed a suitable range of self-evaluation activities. Although this is a very recent development, leaders are beginning to use information that derives from self-evaluation procedures, such as informal observations, the authority's reports and considering the views of parents, to develop a sound awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. With the advisory teacher's support, they input information effectively to create a self-evaluation report. However, procedures do not make effective enough use of first-hand observations to evaluate the quality of teaching and its effect on children's standards.

There is an obvious link between the priorities in the self-evaluation report and the improvement plan. The plan has a sensible number of targets, in addition to useful actions to meet the priorities. The plan identifies staff responsibilities clearly and is costed appropriately. Leaders are beginning to evaluate progress against the priorities suitably by using success criteria. As a result, the improvement plan is beginning to have a positive effect on elements of provision and standards, for example in developing children's awareness of Welsh songs.

Although self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement are beginning to bear fruit in a few areas, leaders have not had enough time to incorporate practices fully in the setting's day-to-day life. In general, leaders do not yet have enough ownership of the self-evaluation procedures and they rely too much on external support.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a wide range of valuable partnerships that contribute successfully to enriching children's experiences, in addition to improving their standards and wellbeing.

The setting has a strong relationship with parents. The setting has strengthened this link recently by responding to parent questionnaires, and has re-established a page on social media. This provides parents with useful information about the setting's day-to-day work. Parents work closely with the setting in order to improve the learning environment, for example by building a shed to create a veterinary role-play area in the outdoor area. This enables practitioners to plan stimulating outdoor activities to develop children's skills.

There is an effective partnership with the education authority and Mudiad Meithrin. Mudiad Meithrin has ensured that the setting has appropriate policies and procedures for its day-to-day work. The advisory teacher works very closely with practitioners in order to develop their understanding of the principles of the foundation phase and improve elements of provision. This work is beginning to have a positive effect on aspects of provision and standards; for example, new planning processes ensure that practitioners plan useful focus activities to develop specific skills.

The setting has strong links with the local community. Members of the community visit the setting often, for example to teach children about farm animals. Activities with the local supermarket, for example, develop children's awareness of how food reaches their plates successfully.

There are beneficial links between the setting and the local primary school, which shares the same campus. Activities, such as regular communal singing and concerts, ensure a smooth transition between the setting and the school.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting has an appropriate number of staff in order to provide a stimulating foundation phase curriculum for children. Practitioners develop their understanding of foundation phase practices soundly by working to gain appropriate qualifications.

The management committee ensures valuable opportunities for practitioners to develop professionally. It provides beneficial opportunities for them to observe good practice and attend specific training. This is beginning to have a positive effect on leadership, provision and children's outcomes. Purposeful opportunities for them to attend training, such as first aid and food hygiene, ensure that they are able to fulfil their roles suitably.

Leaders link expenditure with priorities for improvement sensibly. They work diligently to organise fundraising activities for the setting. Leaders make appropriate use of the early years development grant, for example to provide staff training to develop children's wellbeing and their literacy and numeracy skills.

In general, the setting has a wide range of resources of a good standard to promote the objectives of the foundation phase curriculum appropriately. Practitioners make effective use of resources to plan stimulating experiences for children both indoors and outdoors. An effective example of this is the use of the mud kitchen to develop children's physical skills. Resources are accessible to children and promote their independence successfully. However, the setting does not have enough ICT resources to develop children's skills effectively enough.

Considering children's outcomes and the effect of provision, the setting provides adequate 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
CSSIW	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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