



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Pontrhydfendigaid
Neuadd Pantyfedwen
Pontrhydfendigaid
Ystrad Meurig
Ceredigion
SY25 6BB**

Date of inspection: October 2015

by

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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 Pontrhydfendigaid meets in a room at Canolfan Pantyfedwen, Pontrhydfendigaid, near Aberystwyth. The setting is open four mornings a week during term time.

The setting is registered to take up to 12 children per session. Currently, there are 20 children aged two and three years of age on the register. Twelve children receive funded early years education. The majority of children come from homes where English is the main language spoken. The setting has not identified any children with additional learning needs within the current cohort.

There are three members of staff, including two full-time leaders and one practitioner on a temporary contract. Most of the staff are experienced and suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. One leader has been in post since 2007 and the other since 2012.

The nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in September 2013 and by Estyn in October 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Most children make good progress from their starting point
- Most children develop an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy skills
- All children have positive attitudes to learning
- Good teaching ensures children's enjoyment and active involvement in their learning
- The good relationship between children and practitioners promotes their confidence as independent learners
- Practitioners provide a wide range of interesting learning experiences
- The inclusive ethos creates a warm and supportive environment for children

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leaders provide strong direction to the setting's work
- All practitioners are committed to children's development and wellbeing
- Planning processes contribute to effective teamwork
- The management committee and officers carry out their duties conscientiously
- Leaders continually evaluate provision and look for ways to improve
- The development plan includes suitable areas for improvement
- Improvements have been introduced successfully in aspects such as planning and assessment
- Effective partnerships contribute constructively to the setting's work

Recommendations

- R1 Extend children's Welsh oral skills
- R2 Strengthen the provision to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills more consistently
- R3 Extend the use of assessment outcomes in planning the next steps in children's learning
- R4 Prioritise further the key areas for attention in the development plan

What happens next?

The setting will draw up 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

Nearly all children listen well and respond accurately to greetings and instructions. They display interest and enthusiasm when listening to stories. A few children speak confidently in Welsh. They respond in full sentences using appropriate vocabulary. The majority of children show a good understanding of adults' questions and comments but offer very brief responses orally. Most children know a range of songs and rhymes and sing them accurately overall. The majority of children use marking equipment purposefully to draw, record their ideas and to overwrite neatly. They begin to understand some of the functions of writing by writing greetings on postcards, for example. A few children write their names independently. Most children enjoy looking at books and handle them correctly. Nearly all children recognise their names in print.

Most children make effective use of their basic number skills in everyday activities. They count to ten accurately and most understand the value of numbers to at least five. The majority can sort objects by shape, size or colour correctly. They have an appropriate understanding of two-dimensional shapes and refer correctly to the shapes seen on their walk to the village. The majority understand the meaning of mathematical terms, such as big, small, heavy, full, during practical activities. They begin to understand the purpose of money through experiences such as paying for stamps during a visit to the post office and selling vegetables from the garden to parents.

The majority of children's basic ICT skills develop appropriately, although unevenly. They make appropriate use of their investigative and problem-solving skills in activities such as gardening, cooking, experimenting with various containers in the sand area, and finding and matching numerals in the outdoor area. Most children use their creative skills effectively to paint, draw, create a collage and to emulate the work of a well-known artist. The majority use cutting, painting and gluing tools with good control.

Wellbeing: Good

All children settle well and quickly become familiar with setting routines. They play happily together and are willing to share and take turns. They behave well.

All children show positive attitudes towards learning. The majority are happy to make choices and develop as independent learners. They concentrate and persevere with their activities for an appropriate period of time.

The majority of children have an appropriate awareness of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. They understand the importance of washing hands frequently and especially before eating snacks.

Children's personal and social skills develop well. They take on responsibilities, such as 'helper of the day' and tidying up after activities, confidently. Their social awareness develops further through participating in activities such as sports, concerts and a carnival, organised in collaboration with the school and the local community.

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

Practitioners provide a range of learning experiences that gain children's interest and their active involvement in their learning. Activities are organised around a series of themes that are suitable for the children's age range and stage of development. There are suitable opportunities for children to contribute to the planning. Weekly planning includes appropriate detail on the activities and learning opportunities for children, indicating the skills to be developed clearly. There is effective use of a colour coding system to identify the activities to be introduced, record those which have been introduced successfully, and to note activities that require further attention. There is effective use of these observations to plan future provision. However, planning to develop children's ICT skills consistently lacks sufficient rigour.

There is effective provision to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. There are appropriate opportunities for children to listen to stories, join in songs and rhymes, look at books, and use their marking skills. There are productive opportunities for children to count and discuss numbers during group activities, circle time and in their play. In addition, activities led by practitioners are carefully planned to cater for the learning needs of specific groups of children. The activities to develop children's understanding of number are an example.

There are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their investigative, creative and physical skills. For example, children participate in productive experiences in the small garden where they grow a range of vegetables. They collect the vegetables and prepare them for sale to parents. They also contribute to the preparation of an advertisement to inform parents that vegetables are for sale.

The children are introduced effectively to the traditions and celebrations of Wales through activities such as celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day. There is appropriate use of visits and the contribution of a few visitors to children's learning. For example, the visits by bus to a nearby town and a local forest succeed in promoting children's awareness of their local area. In addition, the visits of a chef and postmistress to speak with the children develop their knowledge of the roles some people play in the community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a sound knowledge of child development and the Foundation Phase. This is reflected in the productive use of a range of teaching methods and suitable resources that promotes children's learning effectively. Practitioners

maintain a good balance between activities led by adults and those the children choose.

All practitioners create a happy and positive learning environment for children. As a result, children are confident to join in the range of activities provided. Practitioners interact effectively with children. They talk with the children constantly, introducing new vocabulary and encouraging them to investigate and to use their skills in their play.

Most activities are organised effectively and offer children appropriate challenge. For example, practitioners make effective use of story books, resources and puppets to develop the young learners' basic Welsh vocabulary. Tasks for children who speak Welsh fluently include drawing an imaginary character, describing it to the group and contributing sentences to include as captions on their work. These activities develop children's oral, reading and writing skills in a meaningful way.

Practitioners know the children well and are aware of their overall development. They conduct assessments when observing children and record relevant observations clearly across the areas of learning. The information gathered is used effectively to guide the overall planning for the following week. The use of children's individual assessments in planning the next steps in their learning is an aspect that is developing appropriately.

There are suitable arrangements to inform parents about their children's development. They include informal discussions, written reports and parents' evenings. The collections of samples of children's work, which are available to parents, are an interesting record of their development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a happy and caring community. Daily routines are established and promote children's wellbeing effectively. The constructive use of pre-school health education programmes gives good attention to developing children's awareness of the importance of healthy living. They include providing children with healthy snacks including fruit. Being part of the Designed to Smile project promotes good practice in the care of teeth.

Relevant learning experiences promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. Values, such as sharing and considering others, are promoted effectively through daily activities. As a result, children are well behaved. There is further attention to developing children's awareness of the importance of caring for others by collecting money for good causes. There are a few suitable opportunities to develop children's awareness of different cultures by participating in activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The opportunities for children to grow plants, visit a local forest and engage in recycling activities develop their awareness of the importance of caring for the environment effectively.

There are suitable arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, when required. They include clear lines of communication with key agencies such as health services.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where all children have equal access to the curriculum and to all activities. Practitioners consider and value children's diverse backgrounds and respond appropriately.

The setting has enough suitably qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. On the whole, there are plenty of resources to support learning across the areas of learning. They are accessible to children and promote independent learning effectively.

The building provides facilities of adequate quality. Although space is limited, the activity areas which are arranged around the room are well equipped. Displays of children's work contribute to creating an attractive environment. The outdoor area provides appropriate opportunities for children to practise their physical, creative and problem-solving skills. The new garden is a valuable resource for research activities. The building and site are clean and safe.

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

The leaders provide sound direction to the setting's work. This ensures an organised and purposeful environment for children. All practitioners are aware of their responsibilities and work effectively as a team. They share common values and are committed to children's development and wellbeing. The weekly planning sessions ensure that the objectives and organisation of activities are clear. Consequently, daily sessions run smoothly. Suitable policies are implemented appropriately.

The management committee supports the setting effectively. The chair and officers are regular visitors and have established a constructive working relationship with the leaders. This contributes positively to the process of identifying future needs and planning improvements. For example, detailed planning and successful communication with appropriate agencies have secured an extension to the outdoor play area, and the use of a nearby allotment as a small garden for the children. There is a suitable system for appraising the work of practitioners and identifying their further professional development needs.

The setting gives appropriate attention to national and local priorities, including implementing the Foundation Phase, developing children's Welsh language skills and promoting healthy living.

Improving quality: Good

The leaders have a secure understanding of the setting's strengths and the main areas for improvement. They continually evaluate provision and look for ways to improve. They observe children's responses in detail, analyse the planning and discuss constantly. The weekly meetings to discuss aspects of provision and to plan ahead are useful sessions. Recently, an evaluation of planning approaches, assessment methods and the organisation of activities has led to constructive improvements in provision.

The self-evaluation report provides an appropriate view of provision. The development plan arising from this identifies a number of suitable areas for improvement. It includes clear targets, sets out a timetable and outlines responsibilities and the resources needed. Nevertheless, the areas to be addressed are not always prioritised sufficiently to assist practitioners with the task of implementing the action plans.

There are regular opportunities for children to express an opinion simply about the activities they like or dislike. Their comments are reflected in the planning of activities. Practitioners give due consideration to the views of parents through daily discussions, open evenings and by analysing the annual questionnaires, which are supportive.

The new chair of the management committee visits the setting to observe provision and to discuss with the leaders. This ensures that the committee has appropriate knowledge of the implementation of the development plan and the areas being addressed. Aspects of provision are monitored constructively by the local authority link officer and Mudiad Meithrin development officer. They discuss and share their views with the setting leaders and management committee which contributes positively to further planning.

Partnership working: Good

A sound relationship has been established with parents and this was confirmed during the inspection. The setting provides parents with relevant information through brochures, posters, modern technology, and the notice board in the foyer. Practitioners are approachable and are available to discuss with parents at the beginning and end of each session, and during parent meetings.

The productive working relationship with the management committee sets an appropriate basis for the setting's further development. The purposeful collaboration with the local authority link officer and Mudiad Meithrin development officer leads to improvements in the setting's work through the practical advice provided.

The setting has a positive partnership with the primary school. Children and practitioners benefit from the opportunities to visit the school and participate in activities such as the sports day. The partnership with the school and with the village Ti a Fi playgroup promotes a smooth transition for children to the next stage of their education.

The setting has beneficial links with the community. For example, there is successful use of links with local organisations and businesses to raise money for the setting and for charities. The setting benefits from the constructive partnership with the hall committee and the community council. The links with organisations, such as Coed y Bont conservation group, contribute productively to extending children's learning experiences.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and there is constructive use of practitioners' experience and skills. There is productive use of resources to support learning.

Practitioners attend relevant courses on the Foundation Phase and on aspects of the education and care of children. The positive effect of the training can be seen in the quality of the experiences provided such as activities to develop children's early literacy skills. The leaders have visited other settings and received some visitors to share experiences and observe good practice.

Both the leaders and treasurer have a secure understanding of the budget and the management committee prioritises expenditure appropriately according to the needs of the setting. There is successful use of fund-raising activities and of procedures to gain grants to ensure the further development of the setting.

Given the quality of leadership, teaching, and the care and support for children, the setting offers good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Dorothy Morris	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)

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 3 to 7 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 which 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)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which 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.