



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin y Gelli
Safle'r Gelli
Ffordd Bethel
Caernarfon
LL55 1DU**

Date of inspection: January 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

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

© Crown Copyright 2017: 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: 14/03/2017

Context

Cylch Meithrin y Gelli is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a purpose-built building on the site of Ysgol y Gelli in the town of Caernarfon, in Gwynedd local authority. The setting provides education and care for children between two and a half and four years old, between 8.50 and 10.55 in the morning, five days a week for 39 weeks a year.

The setting is registered to admit up to 24 children per session. There are currently 23 children on roll, seven of whom receive early years education that is funded by the authority.

Welsh is the main language spoken at home by most children at the setting, and the remainder comes from homes in which at least one parent speaks Welsh. There were very few children with additional learning needs at the setting at the time of the inspection.

Four experienced and qualified members of staff work at the setting, in addition to one volunteer. The leader has been in post since March 2011.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in May 2015, and by Estyn in February 2010.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Children are very happy and feel safe
- Many of the children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding
- There is a lovely relationship between practitioners and children
- Many of the children listen appropriately to stories and follow instructions correctly
- Most children handle small equipment and writing implements confidently
- Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability
- Many of the children are well-behaved
- Learning experiences are broad and balanced
- Practitioners offer rich learning experiences that engage nearly all pupils' interest successfully
- Practitioners model the Welsh language well and consistently

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader is experienced, organised and very conscientious, and she has high expectations of herself and all practitioners
- The leader has established a clear vision whereby everyone works together to ensure the very best for the children in their care
- The leader has succeeded in fostering a spirit of close co-operation among the staff, so that practitioners understand their responsibilities
- Detailed planning and assessment procedures have a positive effect on children's standards
- Officers on the management committee have useful information about what happens at the setting from day to day and know the setting well
- The self-evaluation report identifies many of the setting's strengths
- Priorities for areas for improvement are transferred to the development plan successfully
- The setting has responded well to the previous inspection's recommendations
- The setting has a range of effective partnerships

Recommendations

- R1 Plan more purposefully to make frequent use of the outdoor area
- R2 Introduce more frequent opportunities for children to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R3 Ensure administrative time for the leader
- R4 Develop the relationship with the local primary school

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

During sessions, many children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding.

Many children have sound literacy skills. They speak clearly and confidently with each other and adults, and use full sentences consistently. A few hold a mature conversation and use lively language. Many listen appropriately to stories and participate purposefully in the class songs and making the appropriate actions. Nearly all children find their names without help when they arrive and when they complete the register themselves.

Many show an interest in books and their content, and handle and discuss them meaningfully with adults, using appropriate vocabulary. Many respond enthusiastically to stories and answer questions about different events confidently. They refer to previous learning successfully when describing the content of a story. Many make marks effectively by using a variety of different media, such as paint, chalk and coloured pencils.

Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability. Most recite numbers up to twenty successfully and match numbers with objects up to 10. They recognise familiar two-dimensional shapes well as they match them with shape cards. Many use correct mathematical language when discussing their number work, for example when discussing one more or less than different numbers, and when filling and emptying different-sized containers in the sand.

A majority of children have appropriate ICT skills. They are beginning to use a programmable toy and handle a tablet computer fairly confidently.

Many children have well-developed physical skills. They balance skilfully when stepping from one block to another, and move bicycles purposefully along a special path. Most use small equipment with firm control in a variety of different tasks, such as paintbrushes, chalk and buttons. Many children's problem-solving skills are beginning to develop appropriately, for example when placing blocks that fit together in order.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and are happy there. They settle quickly and choose activities independently. Most enjoy taking part in the range of activities, and many persevere for reasonable periods of time. A few can concentrate on a task and persevere for extended periods of time while investigating what has happened to water after putting it in the freezer overnight.

Nearly all children show good attitudes towards learning. Most are beginning to develop as independent learners by playing an active part in their learning. They develop this by helping to serve during snack time and by putting on their coats and taking them off. On the whole, they respond enthusiastically to questions from adults. Many children are beginning to make sensible choices about what they would like to do during free play, for example when creating shapes with connectable blocks.

Most children are well-behaved, are considerate of others and polite. They learn to take turns, share and practice good self-control. Many help to tidy up when asked and they use equipment carefully.

During snack time, most children show good social skills. They learn how to say 'thank you' and they are all aware of the need for good hygiene by washing their hands before snack time.

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

Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners provide rich learning experiences that engage nearly all children's interest successfully. On the whole, learning experiences meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase very successfully. Practitioners meet every week to plan jointly effectively, and build on children's previous experiences and learning. They offer interesting activities that stimulate nearly all children to discover for themselves, for example when experimenting with ice. Plans meet many children's needs and identify learning objectives for focus activities and enrichment activities clearly. Practitioners include children's ideas in their plans well by giving them appropriate opportunities to offer interesting ideas for the theme.

Practitioners plan effectively in order to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills, and ensure continuity and progression in these skills; for example, opportunities to count different-coloured buttons on the snowman are beginning to have a positive effect on children's number skills. The setting provides beneficial opportunities for children to develop their physical, thinking and creative skills, including handprinting to create a picture of a tree and a snowdrop. However, although children are given opportunities to use ICT equipment, plans for promoting children's ICT skills have not been developed to the same extent. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills systematically across the areas of learning.

Children are given valuable opportunities to choose their own tasks and activities in the indoor areas. Focus tasks ensure that most pupils are challenged appropriately in line with their age and ability. However, planning procedures do not identify opportunities for children to learn through play outdoors and in all weather consistently enough.

They are given various opportunities to treat people from all cultural backgrounds with respect, and learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations well by celebrating St Dwynwen's Day and St David's Day. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities to develop children's understanding further by enabling them to wear traditional costume and eat leek soup that they have prepared.

The setting makes beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences; for example, a visit to a local supermarket develops awareness of the world around them and the local area effectively. Appropriate use is made of visitors to enrich children's learning experiences, for example visits by the fire brigade and the police to enrich the 'night and day' theme.

Teaching: Good

On the whole, practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the Foundation Phase and child development. They ensure a successful balance between adult-led activities and those that are chosen by children indoors. Practitioners make suitable use of a range of teaching methods and appropriate resources to inform learning. They offer valuable opportunities for children to learn through play, for example by rolling dough and role-playing. Activities hold many children's interest well and enable them to persevere with their tasks. However, practitioners do not offer regular enough opportunities for children to learn through play and pursue their interests outdoors.

One of the setting's strengths is the way in which all practitioners work together effectively as a team and support each other well for the children's benefit. There is a lovely relationship between the staff and children. This contributes well to managing children's behaviour and their willingness to treat each other with respect.

Practitioners model the Welsh language well. They offer rich opportunities to extend children's language by speaking with them consistently and providing them with enough opportunities to respond to questions. As a result, children's understanding and oral skills are developing well.

The setting's arrangements for assessing children's progress are effective. All practitioners praise children orally regularly and question them skilfully during the session. Practitioners observe children daily and keep comprehensive records of their development. As a result, practitioners have a good awareness of each child's needs. In general, they use this information appropriately to plan the next step in their education. Parents receive valuable information about their children's progress during their time at the setting through regular discussions and an open evening. The highlight of the information that is shared is transferring the 'Treasure Book' ('Llyfr Trysor') to parents, with examples of the child's work within the different areas. However, there are no sufficiently formal arrangements for sharing information about children's attainments with the school when they transfer there.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes the importance of eating and drinking healthily effectively. Drink and fruit time reinforces this well by giving children beneficial opportunities to develop their social skills. It also give children a sound opportunity to foster patience, learn to take turns and share. Practitioners encourage children successfully to take responsibility when acting as the helper of the day. Part of the responsibility is to recycle any leftover food, and this develops their understanding of sustainability appropriately. It is ensured that children are given regular opportunities to exercise indoors through activities that have been planned purposefully.

Provision to promote children's wellbeing and moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is developing successfully. Practitioners foster values such as honesty, fairness and respect successfully through daily activities and routines; for example, they reward children for sharing and treating others with respect, or for good behaviour. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop awareness of different cultures, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners ensure that children are transferred safely to the care of their parents or a carer.

The setting has robust processes to respond to the needs of any child with additional learning needs. The leader works closely with external agencies to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented effectively, as necessary.

Learning environment: Good

There is a caring and diligent atmosphere at the setting. Practitioners work together well to ensure an inclusive ethos in which all children are respected and treated fairly and equally.

Practitioners provide an attractive and stimulating environment, and the setting has a suitable supply of purposeful resources. Effective use is made of these to support the principles of the Foundation Phase in the building. Areas of continuous provision indoor offer rich opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. They make effective use of colourful and attractive displays in order to reinforce learning and celebrate children's work successfully. The setting is safe and is kept clean.

The setting has a purposeful outdoor area with a variety of resources to support literacy and numeracy. However, practitioners do not ensure regular enough activities in the outdoor area throughout the year.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader has a clear vision that places a strong emphasis on ensuring children's wellbeing and progress. She shares this vision successfully with all practitioners. She is an experienced, organised and very conscientious leader, and she has high expectations of herself and all practitioners. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in full and work together effectively as a team. This contributes to an industrious ethos in which children and practitioners feel that they are appreciated. As a result, the setting runs smoothly and consistently from day to day. The leader uses guidance and advice from external agencies skilfully in order to improve provision and raise standards.

The committee and the registered person receive relevant information from the leader. The committee contributes beneficially to the management of the setting and discusses the setting's support and needs in regular meetings. This includes playing an active part in performance management processes. However, they have not ensured sufficient administrative time for the leader.

The setting gives valuable attention to local and national priorities. It focuses effectively on promoting children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Improving quality: Good

The leader works effectively with practitioners and the management committee to conduct a formal self-evaluation every year. The setting gathers parents' views and comments skilfully through regular questionnaires. This contributes well to the self-evaluation report and ensures improvement; for example, following a comprehensive consultation, arrangements for meeting with parents were changed. The committee and the registered person contribute beneficially to the process by supporting practitioners effectively. They receive up-to-date information about the setting's work and visit regularly. As a result, they offer appropriate support, as required.

The leader takes advantage of the local authority's procedures and advice in order to ensure that the report focuses on standards, provision and leadership. On the whole, the self-evaluation report is evaluative and identifies the setting's strengths successfully, in addition to many of the areas for improvement.

Priorities for areas for improvement are transferred to the development plan successfully. This leads to improvements that have a positive effect on children's progress, and the setting has responded well to the previous inspection's recommendations. The leader and practitioners work effectively with the county's advisory teacher and act promptly on any advice or recommendation. An example of this is the strategies to support children who need additional support to speak Welsh. Evaluations of previous plans show continuous progress. The development plan is a practical document that focuses appropriately on enriching provision. It sets suitable targets for improvement and identifies clear criteria in order to evaluate the effect of action. However, the plan does not include specific costs for implementing the targets.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works effectively with a range of partners who contribute beneficially to raising children's standards and wellbeing. There is a very good relationship between practitioners and the children's parents. The setting's open-door policy means that parents are given regular opportunities to meet with staff and discuss any concerns at a very early stage. They receive regular information about their children's progress through formal meetings and the 'Treasure Book' ('Llyfr Trysor'), which outlines their experiences and skills over time.

Parents receive valuable information about the content of the term's plans and about daily activities. This allows them to play an active part in their children's education.

The strong partnership with the local authority's advisory teacher has a positive effect on the setting's provision and leadership. The setting has a beneficial link with Mudiad Meithrin, for example by taking advantage of opportunities to receive training. Practitioners work appropriately with specialist agencies when children need additional support.

Nearly all parents feel that their children are well-prepared for the next step in their education at school. Although there is an appropriate link between the setting and the school, they do not take sufficient advantage of opportunities to transfer useful information about skills, children's outcomes and wellbeing.

The setting makes very beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences, for example visiting a local garden centre and a supermarket. This contributes positively to enriching their learning experiences. In addition, the committee's fundraising activities offer fun, social opportunities for families in the area.

Resource management: Good

The setting has enough practitioners with suitable qualifications and relevant experience of working with young people. The leader ensures that all practitioners support learning skilfully by making the best use of their experience and expertise.

Performance management systems are rigorous and support staff development effectively. The leader is also effective in developing the skills of students who come to the setting on work experience and as volunteers. Practitioners take advantage of opportunities to attend training in order to develop their understanding and learn new methods of teaching and learning, for example by attending training on methods to promote positive behaviour. Practitioners have visited nearby settings, and they share the setting's good practice with other settings.

The leaders manage resources efficiently and ensure a good supply of learning equipment that respond to the requirements of the Foundation Phase effectively.

The leaders and committee officers have a good understanding of the setting's financial situation. They manage expenditure effectively and work together to try to ensure sufficient funding for the setting. In light of the effective provision, diligent staff, supportive management committee and purposeful leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fewer than 10 responses were received. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Mr Maldwyn Ellis Pryse	Reporting Inspector
Mr Kevin Davies	Team Inspector

Copies of the report

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

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 partnership's 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.