



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Bwlchygroes  
The Village Hall  
Bwlchygroes  
Pembrokeshire  
SA35 0DP**

**Date of inspection: 21 November 2011**

**by**

**Dorothy Morris**

**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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Bwlchygroes was established in 1974 and is based in the village hall. The children who attend the setting live in the village and the immediate locality. The area is described as neither prosperous nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and a half and four years of age for four sessions a week in term time. It meets between 9.00 and 11.30 in the mornings. During the inspection, there were nine three year olds on the register. Most children come from homes where English is the main language spoken. There is one child from an ethnic minority background at present. The setting provides for children with additional learning needs and appropriate support systems are in place.

There are three members of staff. The setting is in the care of a very experienced lead practitioner and there is one other full time member of staff. They hold relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. Another adult is employed to support one child. The setting received its most recent inspection by Estyn in June 2006 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in April 2009.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- the children are happy and enjoy the learning experiences provided;
- the inclusive ethos creates a warm and caring environment for all children;
- nevertheless, curriculum planning is insufficiently secure to ensure the consistent development of children's learning skills;
- the daily arrangements at the setting operate smoothly, but evaluation and forward planning processes are underdeveloped;
- staff management processes, including the identification of training needs, are more informal in nature.

## Prospects for improvement

The setting has adequate prospects for improvement because:

- the practitioners are hard working and conscientious;
- parents are supportive;
- nevertheless, the new curriculum planning structures are not sufficiently established;
- the new assessment processes are at an early stage of development;
- procedures to manage and evaluate the provision lack sufficient structure.

## Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

R1 improve children's Welsh communication skills and extend their number skills;

R2 strengthen curriculum planning to ensure balance across the areas of learning and develop children's skills consistently;

R3 develop the processes to assess children's progress and development;

R4 develop self-evaluation and management procedures, and formalise the role of the management committee further;

R5 seek suitable opportunities for staff to receive further training and professional development.

## What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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## Standards: Adequate

The children's achievements on entry are broad and they make appropriate progress in their learning during their time in the setting. Overall, children's personal and social development is good. During practical activity sessions, they can select suitable activities concentrating well on their tasks. The majority of children work collaboratively with other children and are ready to share equipment.

The majority of children listen well and respond appropriately to instructions and simple questions. The majority demonstrate an increasing understanding of familiar words but offer very brief oral responses. Children enjoy listening to stories but very few take pleasure in looking at books. Most children recognise their names in print. They use marking tools purposefully in a range of media, demonstrating a developing awareness of some of the purposes of writing. A few children can write their names correctly.

The majority of children make accurate use of their basic number skills in daily activities. They can count to five with a few children counting to ten. They understand some mathematical terms in practical situations such as big/small, full/empty. The majority can name basic two-dimensional shapes, but their knowledge of the use of money is limited. The children's information and communications technology skills (ICT) develop appropriately. A few children make confident use of the mouse to move objects around the screen. With support, they can input appropriate instructions to programmable toys.

Children make good use of their physical and creative skills in a range of craft activities. The majority make suitable use of their thinking and problem solving skills in practical activities such as building with blocks.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

The majority of children have positive attitudes to learning. They work productively on their tasks and enjoy the range of activities available. All the children have settled well in the setting. They are happy and secure in the company of the adults and are ready to ask for help and support.

On the whole, the majority of children behave well. They play readily with other children and are familiar with the setting's golden rules. The older children work fairly independently and undertake new experiences confidently.

Children have a developing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and of eating healthily. They recognise the importance of washing their hands before eating a snack. Levels of attendance and punctuality are generally good. Children's social skills and awareness are developing effectively through daily activities and through participating in visits to places of interest within the community.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Adequate**

The setting provides a range of interesting activities across many areas of learning. The activities are based on a series of themes that are suitable for the age range. There is increasing use of new curricular frameworks to plan provision, including developing communication, numeracy and the wider skills. Overall, the planning

does not ensure sufficient balance, continuity and progression in the learning, including the development of skills.

There is consistent encouragement for children to use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play. Nevertheless, there is insufficient focus on re-enforcing basic sentence patterns consistently. The practitioners develop children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales through suitable activities, such as celebrating St David's Day and baking Welsh dishes.

The practitioners make appropriate use of the indoor and outdoor environment to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. Suitable experiences promote children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things. They include growing and caring for plants, and visits to a farm and nature centre. There are few opportunities for children to learn about the wider world including people and other cultures.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They use an appropriate range of teaching methods and suitable resources to support the learning. This includes activities chosen by the children and focussed tasks led by the practitioners. Nevertheless, the teaching does not always give sufficient attention to the aims of the activities to develop children's understanding and skills fully.

The practitioners know the children well. Recently, a more structured system has been introduced to assess and record their progress across the areas of learning. This approach is at an early stage of development. Parents/carers are kept informed about their child's progress and wellbeing, both informally and through an appropriate record form which is completed on transfer to the primary school. During activities, the practitioners interact effectively with children to ensure that they receive suitable support.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

There are effective arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing. Daily routines, including the arrangements for receiving and collecting children, promote this approach well. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle well into the setting. The practitioners are caring and supportive of all children.

There are suitable arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, including clear lines of communication with key agencies to address any specific needs. These children make appropriate progress.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Experiences, such as offering a prayer before departing in the morning, listening to stories from the Bible and celebrating festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, effectively enhance children's spiritual development. The children's awareness of the need to help those

less fortunate is developed appropriately through contributing to activities to raise money for good causes.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. The lead practitioner has responsibility for dealing with child protection matters and for guiding colleagues. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken of the site.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where children receive equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners succeed well in creating a warm and welcoming ethos. They consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately. All children are treated with respect.

There are sufficient practitioners who are suitably qualified and experienced. The setting meets in a room in the hall building. The building is in good condition overall and offers appropriate facilities. There is purposeful use of the facilities including the outdoor play area and the range of large play equipment provided. There is appropriate use of displays and samples of children's work to create an attractive environment. There is a sufficient supply of resources that is used appropriately to support the learning and teaching. There is effective use of local facilities, such as the fire brigade station and a farm, to extend children's learning.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

The setting leader succeeds in creating a positive ethos where staff feel they are appreciated. Practitioners share common values and aims and are committed to children's development and wellbeing. Relationships with children and parents/carers are constructive and contribute significantly to a sense of community. Practitioners are aware of some areas for development, but their knowledge of more formal management and forward planning processes is less well developed.

There is a close relationship between the leader and the registered person and the setting benefits from this support. Members of the management committee are very supportive and work hard to raise funds and to secure improvements such as those to the outside play area. Although there are informal discussions, more formal meetings of the management committee are infrequent.

Practitioners have a general awareness of the main national and local priorities. Although there are guidelines and structures in place, they are not used systematically to appraise the work of practitioners and to identify further professional development needs.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Aspects of provision are monitored appropriately by the link teachers. Areas for development are agreed and relevant strategies established. The practitioners are open to new ideas and improvements are evident in aspects such as observing and recording children's progress. Recently, brief comments on the children's response to the experiences provided are being included on the planning sheets. The setting development plan produced prior to the inspection is an important development. It identifies relevant targets for further improvement.

The practitioners discuss informally and have a general knowledge of the setting's development needs. Their knowledge of monitoring and evaluating processes is at an earlier stage of development. The practitioners have extensive experience of working in the setting and during this period they have attended suitable courses on the education and care of children. The lead practitioner's visits to the local school are useful experiences. Overall, the attention to further training and professional development is more inconsistent.

### **Partnership working: Good**

There is a good partnership between the practitioners. The partnership with parents is also good. This was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection and in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Practitioners are regularly available to meet parents/carers at the beginning and end of each session. Relevant information is provided to new parents.

A constructive partnership has been established with the local primary school which supports smooth transition. The productive relationship with the local authority link teachers and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin's development officer contributes to the improvements in the setting's work. The beneficial links with the community support children's learning.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting is appropriately staffed. There is a sufficient supply of resources. They are accessible to the children and this encourages independence. The investment in the outdoor play area offers children opportunities to undertake a range of purposeful activities. There is effective use of local community resources, such as the fire brigade centre and a farm, to provide additional learning opportunities for children.

The lead practitioner has an appropriate understanding of the budget and prioritises spending according to need. The use of grants and fundraising events supplement resources well. The setting offers adequate value for money.



## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Nine questionnaires were received from parents who expressed positive comments overall about the provision. They state that their children make good progress and that they enjoy attending the setting. They believe that the teaching is good and that the setting is well managed. They say that the staff are very approachable and that their children have settled in well.

#### Responses to discussions with the children

The children are happy in the setting and join in the activities enthusiastically. A few children speak simply about the activities they enjoy.

## Appendix 2

Dorothy Morris

Reporting Inspector

### Copies of the report:

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))