



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

Report on

**Cylch Meithrin Min y Ddôl
Plas Kynaston Lane
Cefn Mawr
LL14 3PA**

Date of inspection: March 2015

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

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Min y Ddôl is situated in the village of Cefn Mawr, Wrexham, and serves the village and the surrounding area. This Welsh-medium setting is held in a part of the building at Ysgol Gynradd Min y Ddôl. The setting is managed by a management committee and is an education provider as a member of Wrexham's Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership. The setting is in partnership with Flying Start and is also a registered member of Mudiad Meithrin.

The setting is open throughout the week during the school term, and provides education for three-year-old children every morning. At the time of the inspection, seven children were entitled to funded educational provision. These children have attended the setting regularly since January 2015. The setting also provides care for Flying Start children every morning, in addition to a session in the afternoon for children who attend the nursery class at the school in the morning.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children on the special educational needs register. No children from an ethnic minority background attend the setting. All the children come from homes in which English is spoken as the main language of the household.

Three members of permanent staff are employed at the setting, including a full-time leader and two part-time assistants. At the time of the inspection, there was also a student working at the setting.

The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales in March 2015.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is adequate because:

- Many children make appropriate progress during their time at the setting
- Most children show positive attitudes to learning
- Many concentrate on activities for good periods
- Practitioners plan interesting learning experiences
- Practitioners model the Welsh language well
- There are strong relationships between children and adults
- There is a clear emphasis on creating a safe environment at the setting, which encourages the children to explore the environment confidently

However:

- Although children develop their understanding of Welsh appropriately, many are not yet confident enough to speak the language
- Many children do not make enough progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology (ICT)
- There are not enough opportunities to develop their early writing skills across the areas of learning
- Practitioners do not use assessment outcomes well enough to plan the next step for children

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The leader has appropriate leadership skills
- Practitioners understand the setting's objectives and co-operate well to create a caring ethos in which children are happy and keen to learn
- The leader and staff have a positive and active attitude towards professional development and training
- The setting has a strong relationship with the primary school, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin

However:

- Many of the systems and processes are comparatively new and it is too early to evaluate their effect on the setting's provision and children's outcomes

Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's spoken language and ICT skills
- R2 Provide sufficient opportunities to develop children's marking and early writing skills across the curriculum
- R3 Assess the development of children's skills regularly and carefully in order to plan the next step in their learning
- R4 Implement new systems and processes effectively in order to improve provision and raise children's outcomes

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.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

During their period at the setting, many children make appropriate progress across the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase in line with their ability and their stage of development.

Many children develop language skills that are generally relevant to their age and linguistic background. Nearly all listen attentively and answer correctly to the practitioners' greetings and instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and join in a wide range of songs and rhymes enthusiastically. The majority understand familiar sentences and questions within focused activities and carpet time. However, they are not yet confident enough in Welsh to use it with their friends when playing.

A few children recognise their names on table mats during snack time and enjoy looking at books independently in the reading corner. The majority develop their early writing skills gradually by making patterns in the sand and creating shapes with dough. However, they do not increase their understanding of the purposes of writing well enough across other areas of learning.

Many children are developing robust numeracy skills. Most count to five confidently and sort objects of various types according to their colour or size correctly. Many apply these skills effectively when playing and undertaking specific activities. For example, they count cups and plates when setting the table for snack time. Children do not make enough progress in developing their ICT skills.

Most children's physical skills are strong. They use small equipment such as paintbrushes and scissors successfully and are keen to try challenging activities such as balancing skills in the outdoor area. Most children choose activities confidently and persevere well with tasks. For example, a very few more able children concentrate intensely when using a rod to catch magnetic fish, and are able to explain what is happening successfully.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children settle in well and familiarise themselves quickly with the setting's procedures. They move diligently and confidently between activities. Most persevere for long periods when completing tasks.

All children behave consistently well. They show that they feel safe in the company of the practitioners and are confident in asking for help. Most show positive attitudes to learning. They are confident in making choices and in doing so, they develop as independent learners.

Most children have an appropriate awareness of the importance of eating healthily. They eat a wide range of fruit and suitable snacks during the morning. They move in

time with action songs enthusiastically, use climbing equipment confidently and throw balls skilfully. Nearly all the children are beginning to take responsibility for their personal hygiene by washing their hands before eating and cleaning their teeth regularly.

Nearly all pupils tidy up after activities and undertake responsibilities in turn, such as helper of the day. They develop their social skills effectively, and co-operate purposefully and show consideration for each other's feelings.

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

The setting plans varied activities that suit the children's needs and interests well. Practitioners have developed a broad plan to develop interesting experiences across the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. There are a few suitable opportunities for pupils to contribute to planning, especially to influence the choice of learning themes.

There is appropriate provision to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills through daily experiences at the setting. Practitioners encourage the children to develop their oral language by singing songs and playing games. Labels and books are used around the setting effectively to nurture the children's understanding of symbols and pictures that convey meaning. There are good opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills through tasks that are led by adults and through independent tasks. There are a few purposeful opportunities for children to use their ICT skills to record their work by using a digital camera and to practise their oral language with the electronic voice recorder. However, there are few opportunities for children to extend their marking skills and their ICT skills across the curriculum.

The setting uses visits and visitors successfully to enhance the children's learning experiences. They go to the library and the park regularly, in addition to visiting a local supermarket to learn about their food's journey from the farm to the shop. The setting welcomes a range of interesting visitors, including the police, the nurse and the dentist. Appropriate use is made of the outdoor area to develop opportunities for children to learn about how things grow and how to care for plants and the environment. There are appropriate opportunities to introduce Welsh traditions and celebrations to the children, such as St David's Day.

Teaching: Adequate

The quality of teaching methods is generally effective. There are strong relationships between practitioners and the children and this creates a supportive atmosphere that encourages the children to attempt new activities. Practitioners lead the learning and manage groups well and they ensure that children persevere on task for extended periods. This is a strength in the setting's work.

Staff make purposeful use of the good resources, especially in the role-play area and the outdoor area. This stimulates children to develop their language and numeracy

skills in addition to their ability to make decisions. Appropriate use is made of Welsh by practitioners. They model polished language and this develops children's listening and comprehension skills well.

The setting's procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are comparatively new. The setting has adopted the local authority's suggestions appropriately. Practitioners assess all children on entry and at the end of their time at the setting. They ask suitable questions and provide oral feedback to the children as they take part in their activities, and they sometimes make informal observations. However, practitioners do not yet use the evidence to influence planning in order to ensure an appropriate challenge for each child. As a result, the new procedures have not yet had a positive effect on standards.

Staff are available before and after sessions to speak to parents or carers about their children's progress. They receive appropriate information about their children's achievements from day to day, but this practice is informal and too inconsistent.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing are good and the setting is a happy and caring community. There are suitable opportunities to raise children's awareness of the importance of eating healthily, and there are plenty of beneficial opportunities for them to be physically active. The setting implements a scheme that promotes good practice in terms of cleanliness.

The quality of activities, practitioners' good modelling and the consistent attention paid to giving positive feedback to children boosts their confidence and their personal, moral and social development well. Values such as fairness, an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and caring for others are promoted occasionally through the daily activities. Opportunities to pray and take part in celebrations such as harvest, Christmas and Mothering Sunday, contribute suitably to children's spiritual and moral development. There is an appropriate supply of resources in the setting to develop awareness of the wider world and other cultures. However, this aspect does not always have a purposeful enough place in the setting's activities and plans.

At the time of the inspection, there were no children on the special educational needs register. However, suitable systems are in place to identify children's additional learning needs. The leader and practitioners understand the importance of identifying children's needs at an early stage and are aware of the local authority's expectations in terms of co-operating with specialist external agencies. The setting transfers information about the children to the school's nursery class effectively.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The setting creates a welcoming and homely atmosphere to ensure that all children are respected as individuals. It is an inclusive community, in which all children have

equal access to all learning experiences. Practitioners consider their nature and various backgrounds carefully and act appropriately in line with this information. The setting's positive ethos enables most children to settle in quickly.

The setting has enough practitioners who have appropriate qualifications to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. There is an extensive supply of good quality resources which are within the children's reach. They are arranged and labelled carefully in order to promote children's independent learning as they take part in their activities and when tidying up. Practitioners make effective use of the space by arranging attractive learning areas. Displays of children's work celebrate their successes and support learning further. The room is clean and safe.

The outdoor area has been organised recently into interesting learning areas. For example, practitioners have created a small garden in which children plant plants in order to observe them growing and learn to care for them.

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

The leader is developing her management skills appropriately by working closely with the local authority's link teacher to set a strategic direction for the setting. All practitioners understand the setting's objectives and support the clear focus on providing a caring ethos in which children are happy and keen to learn. They share agreed values and expectations successfully and work hard to ensure consistency in their work and expectations. They co-operate purposefully to improve provision and ensure positive experiences for children.

The practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clear. Each one of them contributes regularly to planning and they fulfil their duties conscientiously from day to day. The setting has satisfactory processes to manage the staff's performance. As a result, practitioners develop their professional skills appropriately.

There is a strong relationship between the setting and the registered person. She understands the setting's strengths and areas for improvement in detail and ensures that the management committee receive accurate information about the setting's progress. The committee is well organised and is supportive of the leaders and practitioners.

The setting pays due attention to local and national priorities. For example, there is a suitable focus on developing aspects of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and on the importance of eating and drinking healthily.

Although the leader and staff have introduced many useful procedures recently, they are very new, and have not yet had a significant enough effect on children's outcomes.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement are suitable, but fairly new.

The leader and the other practitioners, with the support of the local authority, have strengthened their understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation and improving quality. The leader now has accurate knowledge of a few of the setting's strengths and shortcomings and the other practitioners are beginning to contribute appropriately to the process. The current self-evaluation report refers specifically to standards, provision and leadership. It identifies what the setting does well and identifies some important areas to be improved.

On the whole, there is a strong link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the targets in the development plan. The development plan focuses well on improving provision in order to raise standards. Practitioners respond positively to the support of the link teacher, the headteacher and the teachers at the primary school and Mudiad Meithrin. They are keen to experiment with various ways of working that are suggested to them.

The setting has not yet completed its first cycle of self-evaluation. As a result, processes are new and comparatively informal. As a result, it is too early to measure their effect on provision and on raising standards.

Partnership working: Good

The recent co-operation with a wider range of partnerships is bearing fruit and contributes positively to the children's wellbeing and standards.

The constructive working relationship with the registered person, the management committee, the link teachers and Mudiad Meithrin officers contributes effectively to the setting's further development.

Practitioners are available to meet informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of each session, and they value this contact.

The partnership with the primary school is developing very well in order to ensure a smooth transition for children to the next stage of their education. Adults co-operate closely to discuss and share resources and expertise. This includes children's visits to the school and opportunities for them to attend concerts and celebrations arranged by the school.

Resource management: Adequate

The leader manages staff and resources appropriately. She ensures that there are enough practitioners with suitable qualifications at the setting every day and uses their strengths well in order to deliver the curriculum effectively. Beneficial use is made of the wide range of good quality resources. This contributes to ensuring children's commitment, wellbeing and confidence.

Performance management arrangements identify practitioners' needs appropriately. As a result, they receive relevant training, which has been based recently on their personal development targets and the setting's priorities. However, because the arrangements are comparatively new, leaders have not evaluated their effect on provision or on children's outcomes.

The committee manages and allocates the setting's funds carefully in order to ensure that it has plenty of appropriate staff and useful resources. Considering the children's outcomes, in addition to the quality of care and teaching, the setting provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to the parent questionnaire

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

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Sarah Jane Morgan	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available at 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>

National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (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.