



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

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Bancffosfelen  
Ysgol Bancffosfelen  
Bancffosfelen  
Pontyberem  
Llanelli  
SA15 5DR**

**Date of inspection: January 2018**

**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:

<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 Bancffosfelen is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in the hall of Ysgol Bancffosfelen in Carmarthenshire local authority. The setting is registered to admit 16 children between two and three years old, and practitioners provide early years education for six children who are funded. The setting is open five mornings a week.

Nearly all children are from white British backgrounds and four come from Welsh-speaking homes. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs three members of staff, including the leader. The leader was appointed to the post in 2008.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in October 2017 and by Estyn in July 2012.

## 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:

- A majority of children make sound progress in their oracy skills
- Nearly all children are happy when they arrive at the setting and settle well
- Nearly all children behave well and treat others with respect and courtesy
- Practitioners plan suitable activities to ensure opportunities for children to listen to stories regularly
- Practitioners model the Welsh language well with children and among themselves
- The setting has a variety of suitable resources to deliver the foundation phase curriculum
- Nearly all children develop their physical and creative skills successfully

However:

- Children's thinking and problem-solving skills are not developed soundly enough
- Practitioners do not provide regular opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all areas of learning
- The setting does not make beneficial use of visits or visitors to enrich children's learning experiences
- Planning and the daily routine do not allow children to have continuous access to both indoor and outdoor activities

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The leader has a suitable vision for the setting that is based on providing a caring and homely environment for the children
- The management committee is very supportive of the setting's work and has a robust structure and strategic direction
- The leader's understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement is developing appropriately
- There is a close partnership between the setting, the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin, which leads to a number of beneficial new procedures that are beginning to move the setting forward
- The setting makes purposeful use of external support
- The setting has a robust partnership with parents and carers, who appreciate the quality of care that practitioners show towards their children

However:

- The leader shoulders a large number of the responsibilities and not all practitioners contribute effectively enough to the setting's daily procedures
- Not all members of staff play an effective enough part in the self-evaluation procedures and, as a result, they do not have a sound enough understanding of the setting's priorities for improvement
- A minority of practitioners do not have a sound enough understanding of how to implement the principles of the foundation phase

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Plan purposefully to enable children to apply their skills increasingly across the curriculum in the indoor and outdoor learning areas
- R2 Ensure that all activities provide an appropriate and consistent challenge for children of all abilities
- R3 Provide regular opportunities for children to solve problems and develop as successful independent learners
- R4 Ensure that the self-evaluation process includes all practitioners in order to identify the important areas for improvement
- R5 Improve the role of leaders in monitoring the quality of provision and children's outcomes when planning for improvement

### **What happens next?**

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

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Adequate**

#### **Standards: Adequate**

In general, the skills of a majority of children on entry to the setting are similar to what is expected for their age. During their time at the setting, many make suitable progress and develop positive attitudes towards learning. However, a minority of children make good progress from their starting points. Children with additional learning needs make good progress towards their targets.

Most children's oral skills are developing soundly. They are increasingly confident when speaking Welsh with their peers and adults, for example when using simple vocabulary and patterns such as naming arctic animals while role-playing. The listening skills of a majority of children are developing appropriately, and around half are keen to listen to a story and respond appropriately during plenary sessions. A minority of children show an interest in using reading materials independently. They handle books correctly and are beginning to turn the pages independently. Most children are beginning to recognise their names as they complete the register themselves in the morning. Many children experiment with a range of materials both indoors and outdoors to make marks on the blackboard and appropriate objects. However, many children do not choose to write independently to make marks.

A few children are beginning to gain confidence when reciting numbers and counting objects up to five, for example when counting animals in the small world area. Around half understand simple mathematical terms, such as big and small, full and empty in practical situations, for example when filling containers in the sand pit. A majority understand two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to understand the purpose of money when buying their fruit each day.

Around half of the children develop sound ICT skills while playing from day to day. They use an electronic tablet and a laptop confidently to play counting games and a music game. They use a metal detector soundly while looking for numbered fish during a numeracy activity.

Nearly all children have strong physical skills. They play confidently on bicycles and make a good effort to peddle. They run and climb outdoors confidently. Their fine motor skills are developing soundly, for example as they complete a jigsaw with pegs, use dough and handle characters in the small world area.

Overall, most children's ability to solve problems is limited. Only a few children develop their thinking skills appropriately across the areas of learning.

#### **Wellbeing: Adequate**

Nearly all children are happy at the setting and enjoy attending each day. They respond well to adults' instructions. They work confidently in the environment, and this has a positive effect on developing their skills.

Overall, many children show motivation in their learning. They behave well when playing together. However, a few children are unwilling to concentrate during focus tasks on the carpet.

Many children make suitable choices about their learning, for example when choosing areas in which to play. A majority are beginning to discuss what they have done during sessions with increasing enthusiasm. Nearly all children follow the morning routine confidently and join in with circle time activities without fuss. Nearly all children share toys well, wait their turn and say thank you. However, only a few children are keen to help by tidying up at the end of the session.

Overall, many children's independent skills are developing appropriately. For example, they are beginning to spread butter on bread during snack time. However, a minority of children are too reliant on support from adults, for example when putting their coats on and taking them off. They understand the importance of washing their hands thoroughly and independently after playing outside and before they have food and a drink. A few children are beginning to understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily.

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

Practitioners plan interesting basic activities that are appropriate for the children's age and ability. These activities develop children's skills suitably as they work in the learning areas. For example, practitioners plan suitable opportunities for children to role-play in the igloo in order to use new Welsh vocabulary. This develops their oral skills appropriately. The understanding of a majority of practitioners of the requirements of the foundation phase is developing suitably. However, they do not plan purposefully enough to enable children to apply their skills increasingly across the learning areas.

Practitioners plan an appropriate range of experiences in order to encourage children successfully to form positive relationships with others and develop respect and tolerance towards others. Practitioners plan valid opportunities for children to use the Welsh language during activities.

Practitioners develop children's physical skills robustly through regular outdoor and indoor activities. Use of the outdoor area has increased recently, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on children's skills while using bicycles, balls and hoops. However, neither planning nor the daily routine ensure that children have continuous access to indoor and outdoor activities.

Practitioners plan suitably in order to meet the needs of most children of different abilities. However, activities do not always provide enough challenge for children, and planning does not build soundly enough on their previous learning.

The setting develops children's awareness of Welsh traditions and celebrations successfully, for example when providing opportunities for them to enjoy celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day.

Practitioners make purposeful use of the local area occasionally to go for walks and play in the park. This develops children's understanding of their local area suitably. However, the local area and visitors are not used regularly in order to enrich children's learning experiences effectively.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

One of the setting's strengths is the wonderful relationship between staff and children. Practitioners manage behaviour sensitively and understand children's needs well. As a result, many children behave well and treat their friends with respect by sharing resources and playing together successfully.

Practitioners plan exciting and interesting activities for children. They make appropriate use of the different learning areas in order to develop children's skills successfully. Nearly all practitioners work well together and are aware of their duties during the sessions. They are beginning to ensure a suitable balance between guided activities and those that enable children to work independently. However, they do not always ensure effective opportunities for children to apply their skills across the curriculum. Practitioners do not always have high enough expectations to provide activities that challenge children effectively enough, particularly when working in the learning areas.

During plenary sessions and in focus activities, practitioners are beginning to question children suitably and encourage them to think, for example when giving them an opportunity to choose an object to correspond with a number in a fishing activity. Practitioners model the Welsh language well and encourage children to extend their vocabulary successfully. As a result, many children make consistent progress in their oral skills. For example, when role-playing in the igloo and in the small world area, children begin to use new words such as 'morlo' (seal) and 'walrws' (walrus) as part of their play.

Practitioners are beginning to make suitable use of informal assessments to plan the next steps in learning. Recent use of the foundation phase profile is beginning to develop their understanding of children's progress suitably. However, not all practitioners play an integral part in this process, and assessment does not occur as a natural part of the setting's everyday practice.

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

The setting is a happy and welcoming community in which children's health and wellbeing are high priorities for all practitioners. The setting's arrangements for care and support have an appropriate effect on children's personal development. The setting provides daily opportunities to develop children's physical skills. Practitioners ensure beneficial opportunities for them to learn about eating and drinking healthily. As a result, most children understand that fruit, vegetables and keeping fit are an important part of staying healthy.

Practitioners are positive and friendly towards the children and praise them often. They give them a sense of self-respect as they respond positively to their efforts and successes.



The setting's daily practices develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect effectively, and practitioners promote positive behaviour successfully through shrewd use of short, simple and consistent instructions.

Practitioners create valuable periods to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development. They use plenary sessions, such as snack time and reflection time at the end of the session, to nurture these values skilfully. This ensures that nearly all children consider their peers' feelings intelligently, work together fairly and respect others.

Practitioners create a homely atmosphere during snack time. They encourage children to be independent and, as a result, most children take turns politely, and the helper of the day distributes plates and cups around the table regularly. However, this practice has only just been implemented and is not yet embedded in full. Although practitioners make an appropriate effort to teach children about sustainability, the setting does not yet provide enough opportunities for children to recycle as an integral part of the daily arrangements.

Practitioners are vigilant as the children arrive and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are appropriate arrangements for identifying and planning for additional learning needs. The leader discusses individual children's needs with appropriate agencies. As a result, children with additional learning needs make good progress towards their targets.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting has a welcoming and familial ethos. Practitioners strive successfully to ensure that children feel part of an inclusive community. The leader identifies children's needs well, and all children are given an equal opportunity to learn in the different areas. Practitioners provide a high level of care and ensure the rights of the child. As a result, children are happy and safe at the setting.

Practitioners lead by example by encouraging children to treat each other and the setting's resources with tolerance and respect. The respect between children and practitioners contributes well to children's contentment and desire to take part in activities, and their positive behaviour. The leader and practitioners teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures effectively. As a result, they celebrate the Chinese New Year and Diwali each year, and read various stories about the world's countries and people and their lives. However, day-to-day provision to promote equality and diversity is not effective enough.

The setting makes suitable use of the areas inside the building to create a purposeful and stimulating learning environment, on the whole. However, not all areas, such as the creative area, are available to the children all of the time. This limits their creative development and their ability to make decisions about where and how they learn during free sessions. Practitioners make adequate use of the outdoor area. However, this is a recent development and practitioners do not yet plan purposefully enough to develop children's skills in this area.

The setting has a wide range of good quality resources to support children's learning across all areas of learning, in continuous activities and focus tasks. Practitioners make valuable use of re-used resources, for example by using cardboard boxes, old curtains and bed sheets to create a stimulating role-play corner. This enables children to use their imagination while role-playing in the Arctic.

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

The leader has a suitable vision for the setting, which is based on providing a caring and homely environment for children. She has shared this vision appropriately with staff, parents and the management committee. The leader and staff meet regularly to discuss specific aspects of the setting's work, in addition to individual children's needs, where necessary. They use this information appropriately to ensure suitable provision to meet children's needs. Through these meetings, they also contribute their ideas to develop themes and activities suitably. However, the leader shoulders a large number of the responsibilities, and not all practitioners contribute effectively enough to the setting's daily procedures, including self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes.

Leaders have recently introduced satisfactory arrangements for managing staff performance. The chair of the management committee plays an integral part in the process of managing the leader's performance. The process has identified relevant opportunities to develop staff professionally. With valuable support from the advisory teacher, staff have received useful training that has strengthened their knowledge of the principles of the foundation phase suitably. However, practitioners do not always act as a result of the training to have enough of an effect on improving teaching, provision and children's standards.

The setting responds suitably to local and national priorities, for example in providing enough opportunities for children to learn about eating healthily. The leader ensures that Welsh language development takes priority in the development plan, and plans appropriate activities to develop children's oracy skills across the learning areas. As a result, many children's oral skills are developing soundly. Although leaders provide a variety of learning areas to correspond with the principles of the foundation phase, they do not always ensure that planning enables children to have continuous access to them. In addition, leaders do not ensure that children are given enough effective opportunities to apply their skills while working independently.

The management committee and the registered person are supportive of the setting. Recently, since the changes to the committee, there is a better structure and strategic direction to the committee's work. Regular meetings are beginning to enable members to identify strengths and areas for improvement suitably.

**Improving quality: Adequate**

The leader's understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement is developing appropriately. The use of children's assessments and regular discussions in staff meetings provide leaders with a suitable picture of areas for improvement. Leaders consider the views of parents effectively as part of the

process through regular questionnaires and informal methods of communicating with them. The leader's practice of encouraging children to contribute their ideas towards plans ensures that all children are included appropriately in informing the curriculum. However, not all members of staff play an effective enough part in self-evaluation procedures and, therefore, they do not have a sound enough understanding of the setting's priorities for improvement. In addition, leaders do not make enough use of direct observations in order to evaluate the effect of provision or teaching on standards and children's skills across the learning areas. As a result, leaders have not identified or addressed important aspects for improvement, such as consistency in teaching and opportunities for children to apply their skills consistently across the learning areas.

There is an obvious link between the priorities in the self-evaluation report and the improvement plan. Overall, leaders identify a majority of priorities for improvement correctly. The plan has a sensible number of targets, in addition to useful actions to meet the priorities. However, the plan does not include measurable enough success indicators in order to evaluate the effect of actions on children's attainment. It also does not consider costs to enable leaders to plan strategically for improvement. By using the setting's self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures, leaders have made improvements to provision and children's skills. For example, work to develop children's numeracy has strengthened practitioners' understanding of how to deliver numeracy activities. This has had a positive effect on children's ability to recognise numbers up to at least five successfully.

The setting has made slow progress in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection in relation to using the outdoor areas to develop children's skills and to develop the self-evaluation procedures. However, leaders have recently begun to respond to these appropriately, for example by beginning to develop the outdoor area.

### **Partnership working: Adequate**

The setting has an appropriate range of partnerships that have a positive effect on a few elements of provision and standards.

There is a strong relationship between the setting and parents, and parents appreciate the care that their children receive. There are robust arrangements in place to communicate with parents informally and to inform them about the setting's work through regular newsletters and the use of social media. Useful information is provided to parents about their children's progress through detailed written reports and by organising visits, where necessary.

The setting has suitable links with the school. They ensure appropriate opportunities for children to visit classes at the school in order for them to get to know the school before transferring there. There are suitable arrangements in place to take part in a few of the school's activities, such as sports day in the summer. This ensures that children transition smoothly from the setting to the school.

Occasional use is made of the community in order to enrich children's experiences, for example by ensuring an opportunity for children to take part in Bancffosfelen Show each year, and by going for a walk around the village.

The setting has supportive partnerships with the local authority advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. Mudiad Meithrin ensures that the setting has appropriate policies and procedures for their daily work. The advisory teacher supports the setting effectively, and tries to challenge practitioners to make improvements to leadership and provision in order to improve children's standards. She does so through regular visits and by ensuring that appropriate training is available to practitioners.

**Resource management: Adequate**

The setting has an appropriate number of qualified staff to provide children with a suitable foundation phase curriculum. Practitioners are beginning to develop their understanding of the principles of the foundation phase soundly through appropriate training, for example on how to develop continuous provision and enhanced provision. However, not all practitioners have a sound enough understanding of how to implement these principles.

The setting has a good range of resources in order to meet the requirements of the foundation phase effectively. In general, resources are within the children's reach. Very recently, leaders have added purposeful resources to the outdoor area, for example by preparing rich opportunities for children to develop their physical skills by riding bicycles. However, although the setting is beginning to make more purposeful use of the outdoor area, practitioners do not always plan purposefully enough to develop children's skills in this area.

On the whole, leaders prioritise funding suitably to ensure that the setting has good quality resources. Leaders take advantage of opportunities to add to the setting's funding by applying for external grants. This has enabled them to add purposeful resources to the outdoor area. They make effective use of the early years development grant in order to deliver new numeracy activities to children. This is beginning to have a positive effect on children's numeracy skills.

Considering children's standards and the quality of provision and leadership, the setting provides adequate value for money.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	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
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education