



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Dolybont
Y Caban Meithrin
Ysgol Gynradd Dinas Mawddwy
Machynlleth
SY20 9LN**

Date of inspection: March 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

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Dolybont is situated in a cabin on the grounds of Ysgol Gynradd Dinas Mawddwy, near Machynlleth in Gwynedd local authority. The setting is registered to admit up to 20 children between two and four years old. The setting offers three sessions a week between 8.50 and 12.10 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for 39 weeks of the year.

During the inspection, there were six children on roll, one of which was funded to receive early years education. There were no children with additional learning needs attending the setting. Nearly all children come from homes in which Welsh is the main language.

Two qualified and experienced members of staff work full-time at the setting, and the leader has been in post since 2009.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in March 2017 and by Estyn in May 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting is good because:

- Practitioners plan and provide a range of interesting activities for the children across most areas of learning
- Practitioners place an effective emphasis on developing children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Children are given stimulating opportunities to learn about the world around them
- Practitioners have high expectations in terms of children's behaviour and linguistic and mathematical development
- Practitioners are exceptionally good language models
- Practitioners promote healthy lifestyles effectively
- Practitioners provide beneficially for children's spiritual and moral development
- It has a good supply of attractive and purposeful resources that support the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum well

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader has a clear intention of providing Welsh-medium education of the highest standard for children in the area
- The leader sets high expectations for herself and the other practitioners
- Practitioners work together effectively as a close-knit team
- The committee and the registered person support the setting effectively
- It has beneficial partnerships that contribute effectively to improving children's standards and wellbeing
- Practitioners make the most of every opportunity to develop professionally

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that the setting provides 10 full hours of early education for three-year-old children
- R2 Ensure that all areas of continuous provision are available to the children consistently, and that they respond appropriately to all children's needs
- R3 Plan and provide regular opportunities for children to develop the full range of skills outdoors
- R4 Provide regular opportunities for children to take responsibility and develop as successful independent learners
- R5 Strengthen the self-evaluation procedure and planning for improvement in order to include all stakeholders, and ensure that leaders monitor and evaluate progress regularly

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will review the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	N/A
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Standards: Judgement

Wellbeing: Judgement

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

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

Practitioners plan and provide a range of interesting activities for children across most areas of learning. This engages most children's interest and enjoyment successfully, and builds increasingly on their knowledge, understanding and current skills; for example, children enjoy role-play in the veterinary surgery and use appropriate language and play together effectively to pretend to treat pets. However, the setting does not provide a full 10 hours of early education for three-year-old children consistently.

Practitioners plan to develop children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively during focus tasks, and across most areas of learning. They are given valuable opportunities to foster their early language and literacy skills throughout the session; for example, practitioners read stories regularly, choose good quality, relevant books and encourage children to read the signs that they have placed in the room. They make the most of opportunities during the session to extend children's counting skills and recognition of numbers; for example, as they take the register. Children are given beneficial opportunities to develop their ICT skills in purposeful situations, including programming an electronic toy. However, they do not offer continuous provision consistently to respond to all children's needs. As a result, children are not given enough opportunities to experiment, investigate or develop their creative and fine motor skills in full, nor to pursue their own interests. Nor are they given enough opportunities to practise numeracy skills such as weighing, measuring and experimenting with capacity, for example when playing with water and sand.

Practitioners offer children interesting and engaging opportunities to learn about nature. This includes a stimulating visit by a farmer and four lambs. They also provide them with appropriate opportunities to practice their gross motor skills by using the equipment in the outdoor area. However, in general, the setting does not yet plan wholly effectively to develop the full range of children's skills outdoors.

Beneficial opportunities are provided for children to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live by following relevant themes, such as 'in the garden' and

'the seaside'. Practitioners promote children's awareness of their Welsh heritage effectively by using a wide range of traditional Welsh nursery rhymes and taking part in the local Eisteddfod.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They have careful, caring and constructive attitudes towards the children and, as a result, children settle quickly and confidently at the setting. Practitioners have high expectations, on the whole, particularly in terms of children's linguistic and mathematical development. This has a positive effect on their wellbeing and the development of their skills. However, they do not always expect enough in terms of children's independence and, on occasion, they have a tendency to over-direct activities. Practitioners are exceptionally good language models. They use a wide range of vocabulary and polished syntax consistently, and choose good quality stories regularly to promote children's oral skills effectively. This is a strong feature of the setting's work.

Practitioners succeed in providing an attractive and stimulating indoor environment across many of the areas, and engage children's interest and enjoyment effectively. They have also developed the outdoor area recently by adding appropriate resources to expand opportunities for the children. By questioning children carefully and intervening appropriately in their play, practitioners succeed in reminding them of previous learning and motivate them to extend their understanding. They make good use of songs to add to the positive atmosphere at the setting.

Practitioners know the children and their needs well. They assess the children regularly and record their assessments effectively to measure their progress. On the whole, they succeed in using the information to plan appropriate next steps for them. Practitioners have recently begun to use the Foundation Phase profile. This is a very new development and it is too early to see any effect on children's standards. Practitioners ensure that parents are aware of their children's achievement. They provide an attractive record of children's work at the end of the year and share information informally at the door regularly.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting promotes healthy lifestyle practices effectively; for example, they offer healthy food at snack time and teach the children to wash their hands before eating and after touching animals. Practitioners have a good understanding of the importance of providing enough opportunities for children to go outdoors, and they have developed the outdoor area purposefully with this in mind. By using a recycling bin and making compost, the setting is beginning to provide adequate opportunities for children to learn how to act sustainably. However, this has not yet had a positive enough effect on their understanding.

The setting provides beneficially for children's spiritual and moral development. By observing the features of spring in the outdoor area and enjoying an exciting visit by four lively lambs, the children develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them very effectively. Practitioners take advantage of every opportunity to

foster honesty and respect, including reminding children to show appreciation for support and food. On the whole, valuable opportunities are provided to promote children's social skills. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to take responsibility, show initiative or complete tasks independently, for example when preparing food or fetching resources. The setting provides children with appropriate opportunities to develop their understanding of their culture and identity; for example, they present traditional nursery rhymes and indigenous stories to the children. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

Although there are no children with additional learning needs currently at the setting, there are relevant arrangements to respond appropriately, should the need arise. Practitioners keep records of observations regularly. These identify any additional needs promptly. The leader has a constructive partnership with the local authority link teacher and makes the most of the support, advice and information that she provides.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a pleasant family atmosphere and inclusive ethos. Practitioners help develop tolerant attitudes by treating each other with respect and treating all children as individuals. They ensure that all children are given the same opportunity to take part in all activities. They are beginning to teach the children about diversity in a relevant way by introducing suitable resources, such as multicultural dolls and books.

The setting has a good supply of attractive and purposeful resources that respond beneficially to the requirements of the Foundation Phase. These include relevant and stimulating role-play and ICT resources, and interesting books that correspond with the theme and broaden children's learning experiences successfully. However, resources in all areas do not respond fully to all children's needs. For example, play dough and paint are not available regularly, and the setting does not provide large enough paper for children to be able to experiment effectively and independently. Attractive displays on the wall are a prominent feature of the provision. These celebrate children's work and support their learning effectively. The setting makes increasing use of the attractive and safe outdoor area, which is shared with the school. Practitioners and the committee have worked hard recently to provide interesting and suitable resources that extend children's skills purposefully.

Appropriate use is made of the local environment to expand children's experiences, for example by inviting interesting people from the community to the setting and going for a walk in the nearby woods.

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

The leader has a clear intention to provide Welsh-medium education of the highest standard for children in the area. In order to achieve this, she sets high expectations for herself and the other practitioners in terms of managing children's behaviour and promoting their language, numeracy and ICT skills. Roles and responsibilities are

defined clearly, and practitioners work together effectively as a close-knit team. As a result, sessions flow freely and everyone fulfils their duties and supports children effectively. The leader makes the most of help and support from external agencies, such as the local authority link teacher, to improve the quality of provision and understand recent developments. For example, the setting is beginning to use the Foundation Phase profile to refine assessments of children's progress.

There is an appropriate system to manage staff performance. This provides a beneficial opportunity for practitioners to evaluate their work effectively. However, to date, the current system has not led to setting specific targets to develop practitioners' skills in full. The leader ensures that all of the setting's policies are in place and are implemented consistently.

The leader communicates regularly with the registered person and committee officers, and they work together purposefully for the benefit of the setting. The committee supports the setting effectively, for example when managing funding.

Improving quality: Adequate

With the link teacher's support, the leader makes competent use of the local authority's self-evaluation arrangements to evaluate the quality of the setting's work. As a result, the leader develops her awareness of some aspects of the setting's strengths, in addition to some suitable areas for improvement. However, the evaluation has not succeeded in identifying some important areas for improvement. These include providing enough hours for early years education and ensuring that the resources that are on offer respond appropriately to all children's needs. The setting uses Mudiad Meithrin's questionnaire to seek parents' views each year and has begun to use their guidelines to question the children. This makes a beneficial contribution to the self-evaluation. However, the setting does not give enough consideration to practitioners' views in order to ensure a complete evaluation.

The self-evaluation feeds into the development plan, which prioritises issues that the setting wishes to improve. However, the plan does not include enough details in terms of costs, opportunities to evaluate progress or specific dates for monitoring. As a result, some aspects of the work have still not been achieved, and it is difficult to track and ensure continuous progress against targets. However, the setting's previous plans have led to useful improvements, including providing more ICT equipment for the children and improving the quality of provision in the outdoor area.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has succeeded in developing beneficial partnerships that contribute effectively to improving children's standards and wellbeing.

The setting has a close partnership with parents. Practitioners give parents a warm welcome to the setting. They share information effectively with them informally at the door, by sharing formal documents such as the 'Welcome Pack' and by using social media. Parents value the care and education that the setting provide for their children. The 'Ti a Fi' groups meets in the same building as the setting. This provides a good opportunity for parents and children to familiarise themselves with the environment and helps them to settle smoothly when they begin their early education.

Children benefit from the beneficial relationship between the setting and the local school. The setting shares the outdoor area and its resources with the school effectively. When visiting the school for a weekly story during the summer term, children familiarise themselves with the teachers and the building. This reduces any concerns they may have before they move on to the school, and puts the children and parents' minds at ease.

The positive relationship with the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Meithrin contribute effectively to improving the setting's work continuously.

Resource management: Good

The management committee ensures that the setting is staffed appropriately to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum effectively. The setting makes the most of the practitioners' expertise and experience, for example to provide attractive displays of the children's work. Practitioners make the most of every opportunity to develop professionally by attending training that is provided by the local authority and visiting other settings. As a result, they acquire new knowledge and skills that lead to appropriate improvements. For example, as a result of a visit to a nearby setting, the 'Welcome Pack' was revised recently to make it more attractive and useful. In addition, practitioners value the opportunity that these experiences offers them to reflect on their own practice and foster their self-confidence effectively.

The setting's performance management system is developing appropriately and meets the staff's development needs increasingly. The budget is managed carefully by the committee.

Considering the standard of teaching and care, the interesting learning experiences and 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 reporting inspector

Sheila Margaret Birkhead	Reporting Inspector
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Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.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 partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
Foundation Phase	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age</p>
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012</p>
Local authority advisory teacher	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four-year-olds.</p>
Mudiad Meithrin	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh</p>

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation 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