



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

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Llan Ffestiniog  
St Michael's Church Hall  
Llan Ffestiniog  
LL41 4NA**

**Date of inspection: May 2016**

**by**

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Reporting Inspector**

**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 Llan Ffestiniog is a Welsh medium setting. It is located in the Church Hall in the village of Llan Ffestiniog in Gwynedd local authority. The setting is open 5 mornings a week. It was registered in 2013 to provide for up to 20 children per session. Presently, there are 12 children on the register ranging from three to four years old. Currently four children are funded to receive Early Years education.

The majority of children come from homes where Welsh is the first language. At the time of the inspection no child had additional educational needs.

At present, there are three members of staff including the setting's leader and two practitioners. The leader has been in post since April 2015.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in April 2015 and by Estyn in July 2013.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting is good because:

- practitioners provide a homely ethos in a warm and supportive environment
- they encourage children to be confident, to enjoy learning and behave well
- the teaching is very effective
- practitioners are good models of refined language
- they provide very good opportunities for children to handle and enjoy books
- all practitioners focus well on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills
- they provide good opportunities for children to develop thinking skills, problem solving and decision making skills
- they make very good use of the space available to them
- The quality, variety and use of all resources is good
- good arrangements exist to encourage children to be fit and healthy

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader and registered person share a vision and clear direction for the development of the setting
- they have a mutual understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for development
- practitioners share a strong sense of purpose
- they work together effectively as a team
- they all have a positive attitude towards training and development
- they welcome advice and support and act upon it swiftly
- the Management Committee is supportive and proactive
- the setting provides good value for money

## Recommendations

- R1 Ensure there is sufficient financial reserve to support the setting's future and development
- R2 Update the development plan regularly to reflect the setting's current situation
- R3 Structure the Management Committee's minutes to note the setting's progress against the development plan targets

### **What happens next?**

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

Not applicable

#### Standards: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

#### Wellbeing: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

### Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

#### Learning experiences: Good

The setting plans thoroughly for the provision of appropriate and stimulating learning experiences in both the indoor and outdoor areas. Practitioners have due regard to all areas of learning and meet the principles of the Foundation Phase fully. They provide very beneficial opportunities for children to make choices and to begin to act independently.

Practitioners create very effective opportunities for children to develop literacy skills. A good example of this is in a focussed task where children are given opportunities to handle a variety of materials and discuss their benefits for birds when building a cosy bird's nest. Practitioners plan well for children to learn specific vocabulary and concepts related to their themes and for use in a range of activities. They ensure children have regular opportunities to follow instructions; for example, when eating their snack and recycling waste food and packaging.

Practitioners ensure children understand the purpose of writing when developing their early writing skills. For example, they help children to form letters and numbers clearly and ensure regular opportunities for them to recognise their names, such as when they self-register.

Practitioners provide effective experiences for children to develop children's numeracy skills in different contexts. They ensure good opportunities for them to count and identify numerals across all areas of learning. One good example is when children count how many children are present daily. Practitioners plan opportunities systematically for children to classify objects of different size, shape and colour accurately. They also create very effective opportunities for children to learn and understand mathematical vocabulary such as big and small, full and empty, tall and

short, fast and slow when they play in the sand and water in the outside area. They encourage children to use these skills and word banks in all situations; for example, in their role play.

The setting encourages children to realise the necessity to treat all living things with care and respect, for example by planting seeds and examining their growth with magnifying glasses and measuring tapes. These experiences and the whole atmosphere of the setting promote the development of children's thinking skills well and encourage them to solve problems for themselves. The setting creates valuable opportunities for children to experiment with colours and patterns and to develop their creative skills.

They provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop their physical skills by dealing with small utensils such as scissors and glue and paint brushes. Additionally, they provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their physical skills when using moving vehicles in the outside area. However, there are limited opportunities for children to engage in free and energetic activities.

The setting provides beneficial opportunities for children to develop a better understanding of the world in which they live. They organise interesting visits to support children's understanding of themes such as 'Spring'. Then they invite visitors to talk to the children; for example, on how to care for a new-born baby and to show them newly hatched chicks. They organise walks around the local area for the children to appreciate nature and observe seasonal changes.

They plan good opportunities for children to learn about their heritage by celebrating St David's Day. At that time, the children learn about traditional Welsh costumes, songs and food. They provide suitable opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures through books, various pictures and dolls of different racial origins.

### **Teaching: Good**

All practitioners have a sound understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. Practitioners share a positive relationship which enables children to settle quickly at the beginning of their time at the setting. They understand the importance of providing purposeful opportunities for children to learn through play and first hand experiences. They ensure a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by an adult. Practitioners present tasks in a very motivating way to focus children's attention and stimulate their natural curiosity. They ensure that the children are clear about what is expected of them so that they can persevere at tasks successfully. The pace of the sessions is appropriate and all practitioners offer effective encouragement to children when they are lead and managing groups. The variety and quality of teaching methods are effective. For example, they question children purposefully in order to develop children's thinking skills and encourage them to solve problems through sharing opinions and making decisions. All practitioners have high expectations of the children and provide appropriate activities and challenge for the more able.

The practitioners themselves are good language models and as such share a rich vocabulary with children through their selection of themes, stories, songs and rhymes. They constantly stimulate children's interest in reading by encouraging them to handle books and by modelling how to use them. They all manage children's behaviour sensitively and very effectively. They implement a consistent approach and show respect to all children. A good example of this is their generous use of praise for good effort which supports children's self-belief and independence.

The staff know the children well and as a result acknowledge their needs and regularly discuss their progress. Assessment systems are beginning to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. The setting keeps parents informed of their children's progress by informal discussions throughout the year. Parents receive an attractive record of their child's work at the end of their period at the setting. The practice of including parents in the process so that they are aware of how they can also contribute to their children's improvement has been introduced but is not yet fully operational.

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

The setting is a happy, caring community where children's safety and wellbeing is a high priority. All staff is appropriately qualified and experienced and there is a generous adult to child ratio. The arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing are beneficial. The children bring their own snacks and the practitioners demonstrate excellent awareness of child care. One specific example of this is how practitioners cut up the fruit to take account of the children's young age. Practitioners ensure that the children wear their coats before going out and wash their hands before eating. They arrange beneficial opportunities for children outdoors to participate in fun activities. There is little opportunity to allow children to run freely and energetically.

There are suitable systems in place to note children with additional educational needs and the setting takes advantage of support from specialised agencies as required.

The setting's arrangements for developing the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound. For example, the children have regular opportunities to reflect and marvel at the growth of seeds and plants. All staff use positive behaviour strategies, which eliminates any form of irritability and unease. They all encourage core values such as kindness, fairness and sharing. They promote social development by encouraging the development of tolerant attitudes and to learn to work together happily and take turns politely while playing. The approach to learning about other cultures includes emphasising photographs, books and dolls from different countries suitable to the children's age and experience.

Practitioners develop children's understanding of sustainability appropriately. They give children ample opportunities during snack time to recycle food and paper waste separately.

The setting implement appropriate policies and procedures to protect children, which includes comprehensive risk assessments. They recruit staff safely and practitioners



engage in regular and appropriate training in this aspect. Consequently, the setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet the requirements and are not a cause for concern.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting is a homely and inclusive community which includes a complement of suitably qualified and experienced practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. The relationship between adults and children is very warm and supportive. This ensures that children feel happy and know that they matter. Practitioners provide appropriate and stimulating experiences that engage children for considerable periods very successfully. They ensure that all children benefit equally from a range of activities. Consequently, children participate well and enjoy their time at the setting.

Practitioners use the available space very effectively. They provide a stimulating indoor environment and make appropriate use of both their outdoor area and the local community. They organise the indoor area well into appropriate areas such as a reading tent and a comfortable area to sit together for circle time. The displays are attractive and reflect children's efforts well. The other resources are purposeful and promote learning well; for example, a chart that celebrates children's attitude and efforts. The outdoor area, which is the church hall's yard, is small and somewhat limiting however it is safe, used well and is well maintained. Practitioners occasionally arrange for the children to walk around the village to appreciate nature and to observe seasonal changes.

The setting has a good variety resources that are readily accessible and of quality. Recently, in line with their priorities, they have purchased a supply of very attractive books for the children to stimulate their interest in early reading. This has had a very positive impact on children's learning experiences.

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

The leader and the registered person shared a vision and clear direction for the setting's development. The leader successfully presents this vision to all practitioners so that they have a good understanding of their roles and daily duties. As a result, practitioners share a strong sense of purpose and work effectively and with commitment to providing purposeful learning experiences.

This creates an intimate and purposeful ethos where the children are happy and grow in confidence and independence. All practitioners have high expectations of themselves and this leads to a good standard of care and education. The leader ensures that practitioners know the needs of individual children well and enable them to provide a good range of appropriate learning experiences to them.

The management committee is supportive and proactive and contributes effectively to the smooth running of the setting. One of their strengths is that the new committee has stability and includes representatives of some of the village's organisations. The

committee meets regularly to discuss strategic issues to include maintaining the setting and methods of fundraising. However, because the meetings' minutes are too informal and no systematic structure exists to enable them to identify and monitor progress effectively against the development plan targets.

Leaders pay good attention to local and national priorities. They ensure a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, and provide good opportunities to learn about healthy eating and staying fit.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Leaders have a positive commitment to continuous improvement and their self-evaluation processes are a natural part of the setting's life and work. The team discuss how to improve the provision regularly and they talk to the children about their likes and dislikes. The leader encourages parents to express their opinions through questionnaires and a box is provided in the lobby for them to share their ideas. They use a range of external evaluations effectively in order to focus on raising standards and improving provision.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. They clearly identify strengths and areas for development with the support of the local authority advisory teacher. Their report shows that the leaders know the setting well and as a result, the self-evaluation process is successful. They transfer a lot of the information to the development plan so that the relationship between the two documents is sound. The evidence shows a positive impact on the provision, especially in developing reading skills and ICT. However, they do not have a systematic process to inform and update the document. So, it is not useful enough to reflect the current situation or to report to the management committee to ensure their support in working towards specific targets.

The leaders have acted immediately on the recommendations of the last Estyn inspection, ensuring, for example, that children enjoy handling books and are able to select them independently.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has developed a range of beneficial partnerships that contribute constructively to the wellbeing and care of children, and to the quality of provision and leadership.

The partnership with parents is very positive. Practitioners share information about the progress and well-being of their children through daily informal contact. At the end of the children's period at the setting parents are presented with a 'Llyfr Trysor' (*Treasure Book*) which is an attractive record of photographs of children at work and examples of their efforts. Information about any significant changes, their themes of study and arrangements for fundraising is shared via a page on the social website. The parents and the local community support the setting consistently through fundraising activities. This has enabled practitioners to purchase resources to enrich children's experiences, such as for planting seeds and observing their growth, which is part of their 'In the Garden' theme.

The partnership with the local primary school is good. More recently, they have agreed a schedule for the use of the school yard and field to ensure greater opportunity for children to run freely. The children visit the school during the summer term to help to prepare for the transition to the next step in their education.

Practitioners make effective use of community links to support children's learning. For example, they promote children's understanding of the world around them and their local area by accompanying them on various trips around the village. The setting is located in the local church hall and the relationship between the leaders and the church is developing beneficially.

The setting's partnerships with the local authority advisory teacher and the Mudiad's development officer is beneficial in supporting the setting's continuous improvement. The leader is open to new ideas and recommendations and implements them immediately to develop the setting further.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting makes efficient use of staff and resources to support teaching and learning. The leaders ensure that all practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced to work with young children. They make appropriate use of staff interests and skills to enhance children's learning experiences; for example to promote awareness of colour and pattern when painting.

Appropriate processes are in place to manage the practitioners' performance with the support of the local authority advisory teacher. Leaders are beginning to use these effectively to identify development needs. A good example of this is the inclusion of all practitioners in an approach to promote children enjoyment of handling books. As a result, children benefit from the consistency and the quality of experiences.

All practitioners take advantage of a wide range of bespoke training and development to build on their skills and enable them to be up to date in their work. For example, recent training promoting children's behaviour has led to formulating a very positive ethos. Practitioners are willing to make numerous links with other settings to share good practice. This has a positive influence on the setting's development.

Leaders provide a wide range of interesting resources for the indoor and outdoor areas. A good example of this is the new supply of attractive books and moving vehicles and their positive impact on children's literacy skills and physical development.

Leaders produce an annual financial statement which is verified externally and presented in an annual report to the Mudiad Meithrin. They prioritise spending appropriately in line with the setting's needs. One good example of this is the reading tent to support the development of children's literacy skills. Another good example is the balance in the selection of costumes available in the role play area to enthuse all the children to develop their creative skills.

The leaders make every effort to ensure that the group remains sustainable; however, there is little financial reserve. Given the effective teaching and the clear and specific leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

The numbers of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The Reporting Inspector

Dr Prydwen Elfed-Owens	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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## 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>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>

<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 which 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.