



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Maes y Gornel
Ysgol Hooson
Heol Caradog
Rhos
Wrexham
LL14 1DD**

Date of inspection: June 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:

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website.

This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).

© Crown Copyright 2018: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/08/2018

Context

Cylch Meithrin Maes y Gornel is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets in a self-contained room at Ysgol I D Hooson in the village of Rhosllanerchrugog, in Wrexham local authority. The setting provides education five mornings a week between 9.00am and 11.00am during term time.

The setting is registered to admit up to 27 children at any given time, and admits children between two-and-a-half and three years old. All three-year-old children currently receive funded early years education. Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds and no children speak Welsh as their first language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs three qualified practitioners, including the leader. The leader began in post in May 2010.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in April 2018 and by Estyn in January 2013.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children achieve soundly from their starting points
- Many children develop an understanding of the Welsh language and early oracy skills effectively
- Many children develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully
- Practitioners plan a broad and balanced curriculum that provides interesting and engaging learning experiences
- Practitioners' rigorous assessments lead directly to planning the next steps in individual children's learning
- Practitioners discuss intelligently with the children what they need to do to improve their work
- Practitioners work together conscientiously and diligently
- The practitioners' watchful care creates a successful learning environment, both indoors and outdoors

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader provides a clear direction for the setting's work in order to improve children's learning and standards
- The leader has a sensible awareness of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement
- The link teacher and acting registered person ensure purposeful support for the setting's work
- Appropriate targets to make further improvements move the setting forward towards successes
- Practitioners' training is effective and has a beneficial influence on improving children's standards and their effective care, support and guidance
- Practical use of support services has a purposeful effect on provision
- Positive partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies support the next steps in children's learning successfully

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all children are ready promptly to persevere to complete tasks independently
- R2 Maintain children's interest during plenary sessions and introductions to focus tasks
- R3 Create a sensible balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults
- R4 Ensure that self-evaluation findings correspond directly with the targets in the development plan

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
---	-------------

Standards: Good

Many children make sound progress from their starting points. They learn successfully about their knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning, and develop effectively literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Many children's understanding of the Welsh language develops quickly from low starting points.

Many children understand and respond to language patterns and phrases effectively, with encouragement from adults, in informal play and when singing during plenary sessions. For example, they discuss colours and shapes well, and consider the differences between different insects confidently, such as caterpillars and worms. A few try to create simple sentences when building on their awareness of specific language patterns, praying and asking politely for a drink and snack around the dining tables.

A majority of children handle books when sitting on cushions in the reading area, like sensible early readers. They respond intelligently to practitioners' questioning when discussing characters and events in stories. When responding to the content of books with adults during plenary sessions, many children understand the purpose of writing to convey the story. Many children sense intelligently that events in a story lead to a specific ending, such as realising that a butterfly is the result of a caterpillar's lifecycle and that rubbish pollutes the environment.

Many children make marks effectively when experimenting with different media. They persevere with early writing experiences and use crayons to mark and draw pictures on paper purposefully. They paint and use chalk on blackboards successfully to convey the seasons of the year, such as the summer sunshine and the features of spring, such as colourful flowers. A very few children strive sensibly to note on pads with a pencil what creatures can be seen during a hunt in the outdoor area. Many children recognise their own names and the names of their peers correctly when completing the register themselves. A very few are also beginning to form letters and numbers effectively in recognisable forms.

Most children count objects to 10 correctly without support from an adult. They use mathematical language purposefully when discussing and comparing shapes. Many children sort different objects by colour and shape successfully, and count how many different objects they have correctly, such as the number of vehicles and bicycles that are on the path outside. A very few children understand how to begin to bond numbers up to five correctly, by using their own fingers and ordering objects in bowls. Many children use two- and three-dimensional shapes purposefully in practical activities, for example when comparing pictures and matching them to real-life models of insects. Most children understand differences in size when comparing objects to each other and whether they are 'small', 'big', 'smaller' or 'bigger'. An effective example of this is the children's sound understanding that the largest plastic bottle on the fence holds more water than the smallest bottle.

Most children use ICT equipment well. They do so by using a computer, tablets, toys and electronic devices confidently in focus and continuous tasks. As a result, their use of educational programs, apps and hardware develops their thinking skills and opportunities to solve problems effectively.

Most children enjoy listening attentively to music and perform enthusiastically when singing and making different sounds with a drum and kitchen utensils in the outdoor area. They develop their physical skills effectively. For example, they ride bicycles and vehicles energetically on the school path, climb enthusiastically on adventure equipment and jump from one circle to another in the outdoor area. A majority of children's thinking skills and their ability to solve problems are developing effectively. However, a minority of children do not persevere to solve and complete tasks regularly. As a result, their independence, efforts to succeed and their resilience towards completing challenges are adequate.

Many children choose equipment and materials effectively to extend their creativity. For example, they cook enthusiastically in the mud kitchen, dress dolls and lay them down to sleep, and set the table in the home area to feed their peers with slices of pizza.

Wellbeing: Adequate

Many children relate well to adults and visitors as they arrive and leave the setting. A majority show motivation and perseverance when responding to various activities, and concentrate well on their learning. However, a minority of children lose interest quickly in the activities that are planned for them, and stop paying attention during plenary sessions and introductions to focus tasks.

Many children are well behaved and polite. With the exception of a few children, they listen attentively to adults. For example, they help enthusiastically as helper of the day and follow instructions well on how to create a collage with glue, reeds and cotton wool. Many also show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as experimenting with sand, filling buckets and sieving sand, and mixing the ingredients of cakes. As a result, many children show that they enjoy activities in all areas of learning.

A majority of children are beginning to express their views and personal preferences intelligently. They share and work sensibly together, and start activities promptly. However, a minority delay before starting activities and are too reliant on instructions from adults to persevere with challenging tasks. As a result, a majority of children are independent and self-sufficient learners as they strive to solve and complete different challenges.

After using the toilet, messy play and outdoor activities, most children wash their hands thoroughly without much prompting by practitioners. They recognise intelligently that hygiene helps to avoid bad infections and is important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The leader and practitioners plan children's learning experiences thoroughly in order to meet their needs and interests sensibly. Planning is functional and effective. Practitioners work together diligently to provide interesting activities across all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. For example, they motivate children to learn practically by setting the table and cooking in the home area, and singing about the weather and the days of the week. As a result, they provide a purposeful curriculum that reflects the ethos of the foundation phase successfully.

All practitioners discuss individual children's progress in regular meetings, and organise activities intelligently based on this. This enriches activities further as practitioners provide activities to target the next steps in individual children's learning in the weekly planning. As a result, daily activities contribute positively towards children's learning. This includes sound opportunities for children to make circles with crayons on paper and program electronic cars to travel around a track that they have created.

The setting's provision to develop Welsh oracy skills is beneficial to the children and has a purposeful effect on children's standards of Welsh. Practitioners are enthusiastic language models. They support children who are beginning to learn the language successfully. Practitioners encourage children to use the language as much as possible through interesting activities. Many children understand and respond to familiar words and phrases soon after they join the setting. As a result, many children's understanding of the language develops quickly.

Provision to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills is purposeful. Activities to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills are evident in all areas of learning and challenge them regularly to perform at their best. Practical examples of this can be seen as the children discuss and paint the features of a ladybird on an easel. They also take orders for cakes and tea on paper in the cafe and push trains up and down a steep slope in turn. As a result, these and similar learning experiences are valuable and provide effective continuity and progression in children's learning.

Provision to develop ICT is effective and provides good opportunities for children to use cameras, a compact disc player, electronic toys and tablets. They are challenged regularly to use educational software and apps regularly to develop their early ICT skills.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. These activities include celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day, cooking soup, and discussing and building Welsh castles with blocks.

Practitioners focus on developing children's physical skills purposefully. They allow them to climb on adventure equipment and slide to the floor independently, ride bicycles and vehicles energetically, jump from one hoop to another and travel along blocks in the outdoor area. This improves their experiences and physical skills effectively.

Practitioners plan effective opportunities to develop children's creative skills. For example, they draw pictures with chalk on blackboards to create an insect and dress up as characters when role-playing as a builder and a princess.

The setting makes suitable use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, attending Mudiad Meithrin festivals, visits to the local park and nearby fields to study horses reinforce the curriculum appropriately. A dental hygienist also visits the setting occasionally to teach the children how to look after their teeth well.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners work together purposefully and greet the children warmly as they arrive at the setting. They have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a suitable understanding of the requirements and philosophy of the foundation phase. On the whole, practitioners manage a majority of pupils' behaviour effectively. However, they do not ensure that children are ready to work on activities promptly. As a result, children are not given regular opportunities to contribute meaningfully to their learning.

Practitioners question children successfully to develop their communication and numeracy skills. For example, they discuss the process of matching and pairing objects with pictures successfully and consider sensibly how to make insects out of dough. However, practitioners have a tendency to intervene too much during activities, which limits children's independent learning. As a result, there is not a sensible balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults.

Practitioners plan and provide a wide range of opportunities for children to use equipment and resources purposefully during hands-on experiences as they play. They have robust expectations of the children and challenge them to improve their work consistently. However, some plenary sessions and focus tasks lose pace and, as a result, a few children forget the activity's learning aim.

Practitioners use the foundation phase profile regularly and purposefully. They gather evidence of children's progress against valid outcomes efficiently as they mature at the setting. As a result, practitioners complete regular assessments thoroughly. They record evaluations and discussions in useful record books and use the comments to target the next steps in individuals' learning purposefully. The detail of their work informs planning effectively, particularly as they target improvements in the Welsh language, by using Mudiad Meithrin's guidelines to promote the language. They also discuss intelligently with the children what they need to do to improve their work.

The setting informs parents and carers appropriately about their children's achievements. They hold beneficial discussions, which are based on the children's progress and work profiles, before they transfer to the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides beneficial opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners nurture these values successfully

every day. They use sessions, such as snack time, wisely to remind the children to say thank you and socialise with each other politely. They ensure that many of the children consider their peers' feelings intelligently, respond to each other fairly and respect others, including adults.

All practitioners create a reflective environment while providing positive opportunities for children to think, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray. As a result, most children take turns politely as they wash their hands, pour drinks for jugs and serve snacks. These routines, in addition to tidying equipment and taking turns as helper of the day, provide valuable opportunities for each child to take responsibility during social events.

There are good arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. The setting operates effective systems to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, nearly all children understand that fruit, drink and exercise contribute towards a sensible way of life and lead to a healthy lifestyle.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, card and plastic goods by using particular boxes next to the kitchen. This develops children's understanding of sustainability successfully.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any periods of disruption and unacceptable behaviour quickly. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners are vigilant as they children arrive at the setting and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting records children's learning needs thoroughly on entry to the setting and during their time there. Children's progress is reviewed regularly and their starting points are identified thoroughly by using the foundation phase profile guidelines. The additional learning needs co-ordinator is very familiar with the procedures necessary to support children, and uses them purposefully to support individuals with specialist support. As a result, the setting targets specific children with additional and effective support, such as intervention to improve a few children's oracy when the need arises.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners have a clear awareness of the children's needs, and the curriculum targets improvements in their skills effectively. This leads to creating an inclusive community in which all children are given an equal opportunity to learn in the different areas. Practitioners support children appropriately each day during their teaching sessions.

The leader and practitioners place a daily emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. They promote a positive ethos through their daily activities and sensible attitudes. They teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures well. As a result, they plan valuable opportunities for children to celebrate festivals from foreign countries, such as the Chinese New Year. Daily activities, such as dressing dolls from different cultures, improve the children's awareness of the similarities and differences between the people in our world.

The setting uses resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. A range of interesting resources is used effectively in focus activities and to enhance learning, such as singing and playing instruments together to create an orchestra. Resources are kept at a practical level so that all of the children are able to reach them. This enables the children to fetch them and put them away without adult intervention, which has a useful effect on promoting the children's sense of responsibility. The setting has plenty of good quality ITC resources to develop children's skills successfully.

The building is of good quality, maintained effectively and is safe. All of the space inside the building is used sensibly to provide energetic and engaging indoor activities. The outdoor area includes planting and growing areas, climbing equipment and interesting areas to solve problems with water and a mud kitchen. The setting uses all of these areas creatively and purposefully.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader leads a team of dedicated and conscientious practitioners. She succeeds in encouraging them to improve sensibly and supportively. They work together effectively, and promote and maintain improvements successfully. The leader's vision ensures that the quality of provision has a positive effect on children's learning experiences, the practitioners' care for them and the learning environment. As a result, provision has a good effect on children's standards, on the whole.

The leader provides a robust direction for the setting's daily and long-term practices. The setting's objectives, plans and policies focus purposefully on meeting children's needs and ensure beneficial improvements in their literacy, numeracy, ICT and Welsh language skills.

The leader shares information about the setting's practices efficiently with all practitioners, and they meet regularly to plan the curriculum and related activities. This ensures that all practitioners understand their roles in full and work together each day as an effective team. They also respond conscientiously to national priorities and the requirements of the foundation phase.

The leader and practitioners work closely with members of the management committee, particularly the registered person and the link teacher who is based at the school. Their supervision, evaluation and monitoring practices ensure that the leader makes the best use of practitioners' expertise. This is very evident in tasks in the outdoor area and when planning the curriculum each week.

The management committee receives robust information about the setting's practices from the leader. They meet to monitor the setting's practices and to support it financially. They challenge the setting regularly as a critical friend in order to improve provision. An example of this is the way in which they have supported practitioners to improve the use of the outdoor area, and funded new equipment to promote ICT provision.

Improving quality: Good

A positive culture of self-evaluation and improvements over time permeate the setting's work. The leader, under the guidance of the link teacher, has established consistent arrangements to monitor children's outcomes, provision, her role and that of the practitioners and the management committee. Self-evaluation procedures consider the views of practitioners, parents and carers, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin effectively.

Through effective co-operation, the information that has been gathered over a two-year period, through the local authority's procedure, contributes well to these practices. As a result, the setting has made meaningful improvements over time, such as developing opportunities to use ICT equipment and apps, and the children's use of the book area. However, at times, the link between the areas for improvement in the self-evaluation and the targets in the development plan are inconsistent. The self-evaluation report does not contain enough details about how and why the setting has selected the targets in order to improve some areas further.

The leader prioritises expenditure usefully, in line with the actions that have been identified for improvement. She agrees on the targets with her colleagues and the management committee, and they implement the changes purposefully together.

The leader listens well to the advice of others and is keen to embrace new ideas that have been suggested by the link teacher and Mudiad Meithrin officer. They act regularly on their advice for the benefit of the children. This leads to beneficial improvements, such as using the foundation phase profile to improve assessment practices and re-structure planning to better target individuals' needs.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works well with partners to improve children's standards and provision. These partnerships have a positive effect on the setting's daily routines, such as using the school grounds and all of the equipment that is available to them.

The setting has a positive link with the school. The leader and practitioners receive valuable advice and guidance from the link teacher, who is a member of staff at the school. The link teacher visits the setting regularly, and her input has improved several aspects of the setting's provision, including daily assessments and planning. This partnership has a successful effect. As a result, transition arrangements are supported soundly. The transfer of children's personal information and assessments is effective and beneficial as they setting into school life. The setting also works well with the school to support local and national charities. This helps to foster kindness and care among the children.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. They inform parents and carers regularly about all aspects of the setting's work. They also encourage them to express their views on issues to improve the setting through occasional questionnaires and discussions.

The setting works sensibly with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. These positive relationships reinforce the setting's work and support it actively with documentation to facilitate management procedures.

Practitioners work and liaise with a wide range of other partners, who make an important contribution towards improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with first aid training, food hygiene courses, foundation phase training and child protection.

Resource management: Good

The leader and practitioners, with the support of the management committee, Mudiad Meithrin and the link teacher, have made effective improvements in terms of a number of important aspects in the setting's life. This is done by managing the performance of all practitioners and increasing resources successfully. These and similar strategies, such as developing purposeful planning and assessment arrangements, enable practitioners to develop and share their knowledge and professional development efficiently. As a result, they ensure that the setting has a good effect on children's standards and Welsh language, through purposeful training and guidance.

The setting manages resources well, both indoors and outdoors, to support learning. The setting's daily practices and arrangements are consistent and ensure that children benefit from interesting and positive learning experiences. Practitioners ensure that children have ready access to plenty of manageable resources to support their learning well.

The leader and management committee have a clear understanding of the budget, and prioritise expenditure by identifying responsibilities and sensible timescales. They make regular improvements by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully, including updating ICT resources. The setting ensures that the use of funding has a direct effect on children's standards, in addition to provision of learning experiences and the diligent care.

Overall, the setting provides good value for money because of the positive effect on children's outcomes.

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
CIW	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<p>This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.</p>

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