



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithirn Talhaiarn
Ysgol Talhaiarn
Stryd yr Eglwys
Llanfairtalhaiarn
LL22 8SD**

Date of inspection: July 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

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

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

© Crown Copyright 2017: 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: 06/09/2017

Context

Cylch Meithrin Talhaiarn is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a cabin on the grounds of Ysgol Gynradd Llanfair Talhaiarn, near Abergele, in Conwy local authority. The setting is open five mornings a week and there are two practitioners.

The setting's registration allows it to admit up to 30 children at any given time, and the setting admits children between two and four-years old.

Nearly all children are from a white British background and a minority speak Welsh as their first language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The leader took up the post in January 2009. The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in February 2017 and by Estyn in July 2012.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Practitioners plan a stimulating curriculum that improves children's learning
- Practitioners' high expectations ensure a consistent challenge
- Practitioners make excellent use of the Welsh language
- Practitioners work together diligently to improve provision and outcomes
- Practitioners' tender care creates a purposeful learning environment both indoors and outdoors
- Learning areas and resources engage children's interest successfully

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader sets a clear direction for the daily and long-term work, and works effectively with her colleague to realise this
- The management committee ensures regular support to improve provision and children's outcomes
- Regular self-evaluation systems lead to setting purposeful targets that have a positive effect on provision
- Practitioners are keen to benefit from relevant training by external agencies
- There are purposeful partnerships with parents, carers and the school
- Leaders make successful use of funding and grants to make improvements in provision and to maintain the building and outdoor area effectively

Recommendations

R1 Plan plenary sessions to correspond appropriately to all children's ages

R2 Conduct an independent audit of the accounts annually

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards:

Wellbeing:

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 inspection to report on them without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: **Good**

The leader and practitioners plan stimulating learning experiences, which target children's needs and interests sensibly. They encourage children successfully to learn by planning and providing a range of practical experiences. An example of this is the opportunities to role-play in the travel agents and researching the particular features of different seasons, such as collecting leaves and chestnuts in a wheelbarrow during the autumn. As a result, the curriculum that they provide is interesting and reflects the ethos of the Foundation Phase successfully.

Practitioners work together diligently to provide exciting and interest activities for children to develop as independent learners, both indoors and in the outdoor area, for example when choosing books to read under a canopy and using kitchen utensils as musical instruments. However, planning for plenary sessions does not always correspond appropriately to the children's ages. As a result, younger children occasionally disrupt the focus and concentration of the older children.

All practitioners discuss the progress of individual children in regular meetings, and arrange themes and activities based on this. They provide good opportunities for children to voice their personal ideas to develop activities further. Listening to children's ideas adds positively to their daily enthusiasm as they learn through play, for example to create a seaside area in the sand in the outdoor area.

The setting plans effectively to develop children's thinking, literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Literacy and numeracy tasks are evident in all areas of learning and challenge children to perform at their best consistently. Practical examples of this are the opportunities for children to make shapes and marks independently on the floor outside with chalk. They also listen and respond to music and work together to empty buckets with sand when building sandcastles.

Provision to develop ICT skills is purposeful. They provide good opportunities to use a range of equipment, such as cameras, a compact disc player, a laptop, electronic tablets and toys. All practitioners challenge children effectively and use Welsh educational software to develop their early ICT skills.

Practitioners focus effectively on developing children's physical skills. There are regular opportunities for them to climb on the school's adventure equipment and play actively on the playground on bicycles and vehicles. These activities are planned thoroughly to develop children's physical skills purposefully.

The setting's provision for developing the Welsh language is very beneficial to children. Practitioners are excellent 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. They challenge and question children regularly in the learning areas, and their thoughtful questioning and rich language patterns motivate children to respond enthusiastically. Many children respond with familiar words and phrases soon after starting at the setting. As a result, most children's understanding of the language is developing effectively.

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, discussing the route and flow of the local river and baking traditional cakes.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences. Experiences include visits to the village, the post office, the surgery and the local park. Visitors such as farmers with lambs, a policeman, officers from the fire brigade and musicians teach children purposefully about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is one of the setting's strengths. All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and they are knowledgeable about the requirements of the Foundation Phase.

Practitioners share the same high expectations for each child and they work together effectively. They manage children's behaviour positively and safely. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment successfully in all activities. They challenge children frequently through focus tasks and continuous provision, and use of the Welsh language is excellent. They know when to intervene purposefully in children's experiences and play in order to stimulate them and motivate them to succeed. As a result, practitioners ensure that children are highly motivated and that they are keen to improve their work. This can be seen as children persevere to build a tower out of blocks and get dolls ready to go for a walk in a pram.

Practitioners understand the importance of providing wide-ranging opportunities to learn through play. Good examples of this are opportunities for children to experiment with string and weave it through the holes in a cotton reel, and when they make a boat out of junk.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are useful, and initial assessments correspond correctly with the outcomes of the Foundation Phase Profile. All practitioners record daily assessments regularly and consistently. They discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work and set targets for them. Assessments based on focus groups are used regularly to target the next steps in individual children's learning.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. Daily dialogue between practitioners and parents and carers reinforce this. At the end of children's time at the setting, an informative booklet, which reflects progress in children's skills clearly, is given to parents.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides valuable opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use plenary sessions, such as snack times and story time, to nurture these values well, on the whole. This ensures that many children consider their peers' feelings intelligently, treat each other fairly and respect others.

Practitioners create a reflective environment by providing positive opportunities to think, discuss feelings, say thank you and pray. As a result, children take turns politely as they wash their hands, pour a drink from jugs and line-up quietly to clear their dishes at the end of snack time. This provides valuable opportunities for each child to foster responsibility during snack time.

There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing, and the setting operates effective systems to promote eating and drinking healthily. As a result, children understand that fruit, vegetables and exercise contribute to a sensible way of life. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, card, plastic goods and food, and to compost in the school's garden. This develops children's understanding of sustainability successfully.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies, and this, on the whole, eliminates any disruption or misbehaviour. The setting is a safe environment and the door is locked. Practitioners are vigilant when children arrive 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 appropriately when they join the setting, and during their time there. Practitioners review children's progress regularly and target children with additional learning needs effectively, when necessary. Practitioners discuss these children with support agencies to target their needs, when the need arises.

Learning environment: Good

The leader and practitioners place a daily emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. They promote a positive ethos through their daily activities and their enthusiastic attitudes. They teach children about different festivals and cultures around the world effectively. As a result, they celebrate the Chinese New Year each year, read African and Indian parables and play with dolls from different cultures successfully.

Practitioners have a clear knowledge of children's needs, and the setting is a wholly inclusive community in which all children are given equal opportunities to learn in the different areas. Practitioners challenge and support children positively and carefully every day.

The setting uses resources purposefully to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase and children's needs. A range of interesting resources are used effectively in continuous activities, focus tasks and to enhance learning. Resources are kept at a practical level so that all children are able to reach them. This enables children to reach them and put them back and promotes their sense of responsibility purposefully. The setting has enough ICT resources to develop children's skills successfully.

The building is of suitable quality, is maintained appropriately and is safe. The outdoor area include growing and planting areas, climbing equipment and quiet areas for reading and role-play. The setting uses these areas creatively. The school canteen is used sensibly to deliver lively indoor activities. Practitioners also make sensible use of the facilities in the local area, by taking children to the village to observe local facilities.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader is experienced and sets a purposeful direction for the setting's established practices. This promotes and maintains improvements successfully. Her shrewd vision ensures that planning, teaching and learning are effective.

The setting's objectives, plans and policies focus thoroughly on having a positive effect on provision. This meets children's needs regularly and promotes their achievements successfully. The leader works conscientiously with a dedicated colleague, and they have high expectations of themselves and the children. They succeed in motivating children to improve consistently in sensible and supportive ways and through effective teaching.

Leaders use relevant and up-to-date knowledge of the setting to improve provision. Recently, this has included using the Foundation Phase Profile to identify children's starting points accurately in addition to refining planning to target individuals' needs.

Practitioners focus on providing stimulating activities for children. As a result, they make beneficial changes to the indoor and outdoor learning areas to challenge children to perform at their best. The leader also focuses rigorously on national priorities, such as developing literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies, to improve children's skills before they start school.

The leadership, which includes a supportive management committee, ensures that provision for children is interesting and purposeful. The committee ensures that practitioners understand their roles in full through regular evaluations and discussions and working effectively as a team. The management committee challenges the setting effectively to maintain and improve its practices and develop areas that are in need of further improvement. They receive information about the setting's practices regularly from the leader. The dedicated committee meets regularly to organise activities to increase income, and monitors expenditure and use of grants in detail.

Improving quality: Good

A positive culture of self-evaluation permeates the setting's work. Practitioners ensure that each other's views, and those of parents and carers, the school's staff, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, are given full consideration. The leader conducts regular discussions with them in order to improve children's learning experiences and uses questionnaires meaningfully. This benefits the setting and ensures a full picture of learning, provision and management processes.

The leader and her colleague have established consistent arrangements to monitor children's standards, provision and their roles in the daily and long-term life of the setting. They use a purposeful system to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure an effective transition between the self-evaluation and the development plan. They do so by including areas for improvement that they have identified through the self-evaluation process and report in the development plan. Quality improvement systems lead to beneficial changes that ensure beneficial and thorough planning for the future.

The leader and management committee are open to new ideas and are willing to experiment with different ways of working. They are willing to accept new ideas from the local authority's advisory teachers and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. As a result, the advice on how to assess individuals' achievements during focus tasks and input into the planning process have a positive effect on the quality of daily provision.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of effective strategic partnerships. It works successfully with these partners to improve provision and children's outcomes.

The setting meets on the grounds of Ysgol Llanfair Talhaiarn, and there is a very positive link with the school; for example, the settings joins in with the school's activities and celebrations, such as a visit by a police officer, Christmas concerts and sports day. The school's link teacher visits the setting regularly and children visit the Foundation Phase often. This supports children's transition arrangements well, and arrangements for transferring children's personal information and assessments are effective.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. Practitioners inform them regularly, through half-termly newsletters about all aspects of the setting's work. They are encouraged to give their views on issues to improve the setting through regular questionnaires and discussions. The setting's links with the community support children's learning successfully. This includes community fundraising events and beneficial support when bidding for relevant sponsorship and grants. In addition, the setting supports local and national charities, and this nurtures children's kindness and care towards others.

The setting works purposefully with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. These organisations support practitioners' documentation and training effectively. In addition, practitioners work and liaise with a wide range of other partners who make important contributions to improving provision. These includes agencies that provide training in first aid, food hygiene courses, risk assessments, Foundation Phase developments and child protection.

Resource management: Good

The leader and management committee focus directly on improving all aspects of the setting's work. This is done by deploying practitioners intelligently and allocating resources purposefully. They ensure that the setting has enough qualified practitioners, who have received relevant training, to meet children's needs effectively.

Robust leadership practices enable practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge successfully. As a result, a lively learning community has been established, which has a culture of efficient co-operation between practitioners and the setting's partners.

Performance management systems are thorough and ensure purposeful learning experiences and strong teaching practices. The setting manages resources creatively to support learning. This includes changing the layout of the room and the outdoor area occasionally to inspire children as they apply themselves to different themes.

The leader and management committee use the budget and grants purposefully. They prioritise expenditure against the development plan's targets effectively and make regular improvements by discussing and prioritising specific funding purposefully. An example of this is securing new ICT equipment. The leader and management committee ensure that use of funding has a direct effect on provision and children's outcomes. However, the setting has not conducted an independent audit of accounts annually.

The setting provides good value for money due to the effective provision and purposeful leadership.

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

Mr Nicholas Jones	Reporting Inspector
-------------------	---------------------

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 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 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