



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin y Fali
Ysgol Gymuned Y Fali
Valley
Anglesey
LL65 3EU**

Date of inspection: January 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:

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 Y Fali is situated in the village of Valley on the outskirts of Holyhead. It delivers Welsh medium provision in a room within the building of Ysgol Gymunedol Y Fali. It is managed by a private company and registered with Y Mudiad Meithrin.

The setting is open Monday to Friday from 8.55am to 11.00am throughout the year during school time. It is registered to take up to 10 children per session. Currently, there are 10 children between two and a half and three years of age on the register. 6 children receive funded early years education.

Nearly all of the children attending the setting speak English as their home language. A high proportion of children have additional learning needs.

There are three members of staff including the leader who work during each session. They are all experienced and suitably qualified in the education and care of young children. The leader has been in post since 2012 and the senior practitioner since 2015.

The setting has not previously been inspected by either Estyn or by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

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 create a welcoming atmosphere and the relationships between adults and children are very good
- staff work very effectively as a team to provide children with a wide range of interesting learning experiences
- the main practitioners are very effective language role models and their teaching is consistently effective and stimulating
- practitioners display high expectations to encourage children to behave well and have good attitudes to learning
- they plan well to aid children of all ability to progress in literacy and numeracy skills

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- managers and leaders have a clear vision for the development of the setting and are fully committed to it
- the self-evaluation plan includes clear targets and processes for improvement of the daily life of the setting which are implemented effectively
- all practitioners have a positive attitude to development and training and this has a good impact on children's learning
- the setting implements the local authority's support very effectively and Y Mudiad Meithrin's advice on the development of children's skills in Welsh
- the setting provides good value for money.

Recommendations

A1. Provide accessibility to sufficient resources to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all areas of learning.

A2. Ensure children's smooth transition and effective progression from the setting to the mainstream school.

A3. Formalise partnerships with all agencies to ensure they work together efficiently and effectively to make the best possible use of their differing skills to enhance children's development in every area of the curriculum.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the setting's progress.

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 well-being. This is because there were not enough children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individuals.

Wellbeing: Not applicable

There is no report on children's progress, standards in the development of their skills, the Welsh language and well-being. This is because there were not enough children present at the time of the inspection upon whom to report without identifying individuals.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

Practitioners provide a variety of stimulating experiences across all areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. They base these on relevant themes, such as snow and cold weather. The activities match individual children's needs well and appeal to their interests.

The setting plans very good opportunities to support children's creative development through a range of painting, mark-making media and building materials. All children have regular access to bikes, tricycles, climbing frames, a variety of building materials, water and sand troughs, which promotes their physical development well. The setting provides suitable opportunities for children to acquire knowledge of the world outside the family through visits to the local community and a few visits from 'People who help us.'

Practitioners provide a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. There are ample opportunities for pupils to decide themselves the activities they choose. The activities are stimulating and purposeful, for example making seed fat balls and hanging them on the trees outside to feed the birds on a particularly icy day and making and chasing bubbles.

Good attention is given to challenging the more-able children in focus groups and when they are at play, when they show an enthusiasm for how ice melts, for example.

Practitioners weave literacy, numeracy and Welsh language skills through every activity very effectively, for example when children count snowballs, and work out how to order different-sized snowflakes. They plan valuable opportunities for children to develop their enjoyment of music and of the Welsh and English languages by singing a wide variety of songs and playing games. They use labels and books around the setting effectively to enhance children's understanding of symbols and pictures that convey meaning. There are ample opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills across all areas of learning. Practitioners provide very good opportunities for children to learn and use the Welsh language daily in the setting. Opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills through both focused tasks and independent play are very limited as a result of insufficient access to resources.

Good emphasis is placed on the traditions and celebrations of Wales, such as celebrating St David's Day. Very good opportunities are provided for children to acquire knowledge and understanding of the wider world through stories and a variety of resources from different countries woven into their theme of Winter. One example was the story of how Sasha from Russia keeps warm in the snow and how she travels to school on a sledge.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is good overall. The main practitioners have good knowledge of Foundation Phase requirements. All interact very warmly with children, and this creates a supportive atmosphere, which encourages the children to develop self-confidence and enjoy new activities.

Practitioners lead the learning very well in whole-group situations. Their use of questions to develop children's thinking skills when they are at work and play is often good, but there is some inconsistency between practitioners. Activities are stimulating and purposeful, for example when children make seed fat balls and hang them on the trees outside to feed the birds on a particularly icy day.

All practitioners link the activities well with the development of children's numeracy and literacy skills. For example, children count the fish they catch with a magnet in the water tray in a planned activity. They count pairs of wellingtons as they prepare to go outdoors and they hum and sing a variety of fun counting songs as they play. Practitioners plan a rich variety of words and phrases associated with their themes meticulously and use them repeatedly across all activities. They are very good models of language and they take every opportunity to enhance children's language acquisition. However, ICT skills are given more sporadic attention and are insufficiently linked to other areas of learning.

They provide a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and practitioners ensure that both the indoor and outdoor environment is inviting and stimulating. All children have daily access to the outdoor activities and are encouraged to enjoy the open air and dress appropriately for the cold weather. These experiences support and extend their learning and physical development fully.

The setting's procedures for assessing and tracking children's progress are very clear. All staff are involved in observing children's learning during activities and noting their findings. They use this information very effectively during all activities to enhance children's next steps in learning.

Parents and carers are well informed of their children's development through daily discussions and they receive concise information on their child's next steps in learning. The setting is developing a recording system in line with recent national requirements to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners create a warm, welcoming atmosphere and promote an enthusiasm for learning. Arrangements to support children's health and well-being are very good and the setting is a very happy and caring community. Practitioners provide very good opportunities to raise children's awareness of the importance of living and eating healthily.

The setting implements good practice in terms of cleanliness, for example in relation to hand-washing before children eat their snacks and in teaching children the dangers of putting things in their mouths. For instance, once child said as she built a small igloo from sugar lumps, 'This is full of germs so we mustn't eat the sugar 'cos it's been on the floor and everyone touches it.' Practitioners provide a variety of beneficial opportunities for children to be physically active, particularly outdoors.

Practitioners encourage children to recycle paper and plastic during snack time and this develops a suitable understanding and awareness of sustainability.

All practitioners show respect and warmth towards the children. They use firm strategies to promote positive behaviour and offer very good support to boost children's confidence. The ratio of adults to children is very favourable. Staff interests and expertise are used effectively in planning and in supervising activities. They focus very well on developing children's personal, moral and social development by emphasising values such as fairness, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and caring for each other. All practitioners promote children's independence successfully by their high expectations of their charges when they dress to go outdoors and when they tidy up.

The setting provides good opportunities for children to take part in celebrations such as at harvest time and Christmas and these contribute well to children's spiritual development. Practitioners provide a suitable variety of opportunities for children to learn about the world outside the family through videos, books and some educational visits and visitors.

Practitioners use very effective systems to identify children's additional needs at an early stage. They have very good links with specialist external agencies and they make good use of these to support children and families. However, the setting's link with the school nursery is mostly confined to transferring a summary of each child's progress to the school's nursery class at the end of the year.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The practitioners create a welcoming and inspiring atmosphere which enables all children to settle in quickly. All practitioners respect the nature and background of every child and ensure that each one has access to all learning experiences. However, access to ICT resources and experiences are less developed.

The setting is a small but secure room which the practitioners use to the children's best advantage. Practitioners make effective use of space. For example, they have created a quiet, carpeted area for singing, listening to stories and looking at books, suitable mark-making and painting areas and a room for children to build large-scale constructions. The designated learning areas are attractive and practitioners work hard to change and amend these regularly according to their focussed theme.

Displays of children's work celebrate their successes and support learning further.

There is a suitable supply of indoor resources available to children because the practitioners create many of their own to enhance children's learning. They are stored and labelled clearly to promote children's independent learning during activities and when they tidy up.

The school outdoor space is very good, well-resourced and used daily. It contains a good variety of resources to promote children's physical development, such as a see saw, climbing frames, water and sand troughs and a small garden, which is used regularly and ensures children enjoy good exercise outdoors.

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

The managers show high commitment to the setting. They have a clear vision for its development and high expectations for its performance. They ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are clear and that practitioners make effective use of their expertise for the full benefit of the children.

The leader has good leadership skills and she and the senior practitioner work very effectively as a team. All practitioners understand the setting's objectives to provide a welcoming atmosphere in which children are happy, keen to learn and develop confidence and self-esteem. Practitioners share agreed values and high expectations and work very effectively to ensure consistency in their work.

Staff pay good attention to local and national priorities, for example the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, the Welsh language and in developing very positive attitudes to eating and drinking healthily.

Practitioners work closely with the local authority's link teacher to set a strategic direction for the setting, to develop a very effective planning tool and sound method of using their observations of children to plan their next stages of learning.

The manager and local authority advisory teacher work together to evaluate practitioners' work annually, based on their experience, personal development targets and the setting's priorities. The main practitioners work effectively as a team to aim for high standards of consistency through in-house, cluster and local authority training, which matches both individual and setting needs.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's self-evaluation systems and development planning processes are good and well in place. The managers and leaders, with the strong support of the local authority, have strengthened their quality assurance systems. This has improved practitioners' understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation in improving quality outcomes, provision and leadership.

The manager and practitioners have an accurate overview of the setting's strengths, shortcomings and areas for development. The areas for improvement are accurately evaluated and are specific and meaningful. The self-evaluation document is well focussed on evaluating and improving the day-to-day workings of the setting and of children's learning. Although processes are now in place to implement the new baseline assessment, the system is not completely embedded and staff therefore cannot evaluate its full effect on children learning. Nonetheless, the setting shows positive improvements over time.

The local authority advisory teacher has supported the setting significantly to set strategic direction. The main practitioners respond very positively to this support and act swiftly on advice to improve the provision for children, for example in improving the development of literacy and numeracy skills across all activities.

The setting has not been inspected previously. However, the leader and managers act quickly and make very good progress in response to the recommendations of all external feedback.

Partnership working: Adequate

Practitioners respond swiftly and effectively to the local authority advisory teacher's feedback and advice, for example in planning the curriculum, identifying children's next steps in learning and providing an effective plan for each child. Presently, the setting is establishing more effective ways of planning and assessing children's stages of development and involving parents in their children's learning.

They are working effectively with both Y Mudiad Meithrin and the local authority to enhance the children's Welsh Language acquisition.

The partnership with parents and carers is appropriate. The prospectus is a concise document which provides them with clear information about the setting before their child starts. Practitioners ensure daily face-to-face communication and a welcoming atmosphere. Parents value the setting's open door policy and the opportunity to speak to staff regularly. They appreciate their availability to discuss any concerns parents may have.

Parents have access to staff observations of their children's learning and they receive a detailed termly report. The language is clear and accessible. Good attention is given to noting individual children's next steps to enable parents to be involved in their children's learning.

All children transfer to the mainstream school. However, the partnership with the school to ensure consistency of learning opportunities and of teaching styles is insufficient to ensure smooth transition and effective progression. However, each partnership works independently of the other and they do not co-operate sufficiently, to maximise their varied experience, skills, resources or funding for the full benefit of the setting's success and for children's development in every area of the curriculum.

Resource management: Good

The setting has enough appropriately qualified practitioners to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. They work very well as a team, developing and sharing their professional knowledge.

Managers make good use of practitioners' strengths to deliver the curriculum effectively. Practitioners are confident in the Welsh language and their use of the language is consistently good and provides children with a very good structure of words and phrases to encourage their understanding and use of Welsh.

The manager's performance management arrangements identify training needs effectively. Practitioners have good access to training, which ensures their skills and knowledge are regularly updated. All practitioners have a positive attitude to professional development and this has a good impact on children's learning and progress.

Overall, resources are sufficient and practitioners make very good use of the variety available. However, resources to enhance children's ICT skills are very limited.

Managers oversee spending well and as a result, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number 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)

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 which 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.