



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 Fenni  
St David's Road  
Abergavenny  
Monmouthshire  
NP7 6HF**

**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
<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 y Fenni is a Welsh-medium setting that is situated in two rooms on the grounds of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni, Abergavenny in Monmouthshire local authority. Children who attend the setting come from the town of Abergavenny, across the county and from surrounding counties.

The setting is registered to admit 26 children between two and four years old per session. There are currently 37 children on roll, nine of whom are funded. The setting is open five mornings a week between 9.00am and 11.30am.

Many children come from English-speaking homes, and a few children come from Welsh-speaking homes. There are no children in the current group who have additional needs, and very few children are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The leader has been in post since October 2016 and she leads five qualified members of staff. The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2015 and by Estyn in June 2012.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- A majority of children participate enthusiastically in the experiences that are provided for them
- Many children have a positive attitude towards learning
- Many children are able to apply their key skills appropriately in the learning areas and recall previous learning successfully
- There is a positive and supportive relationship between all practitioners and children
- Most children are polite and well-behaved
- Practitioners plan a wide range of interesting activities that meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase successfully
- The setting has an inclusive ethos and a supportive environment

However:

- Many children's literacy skills, particularly their oral skills, have not developed adequately, and very few children use the Welsh language naturally without being prompted
- A minority of children become restless during tasks
- Presentations are not effective enough to challenge all children during focus tasks
- Teaching does not challenge children to develop their Welsh language skills effectively enough
- Practitioners do not use information from assessments effectively enough to plan the next steps in learning

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the new leader has a sound vision based on ensuring that children achieve as well as they can in a caring environment, and she has shared this vision effectively
- staff work closely as a team and work together purposefully to ensure stimulating experiences for children
- job descriptions are clear and all practitioners undertake their roles conscientiously
- the management committee is very supportive and works enthusiastically to ensure that the setting runs well from day to day
- the setting has appropriate arrangements for identifying its strengths

- there are valuable links between the setting and the local primary school, which ensure a smooth transition between the setting and the school
- the setting makes purposeful use of external support
- the setting has a strong relationship with parents
- leaders ensure that practitioners observe children every day and keep beneficial records of their development

However:

- there is not enough of a focus on planning strategically to raise standards
- the new self-evaluation processes have not had time to become fully embedded in order to have a robust enough effect on provision and children's standards
- as the setting has not identified all important areas for improvement, planning for improvement does not lead to improving children's outcomes or standards of wellbeing effectively enough
- leaders have not ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been met in full
- the outdoor area is not used effectively enough to raise standards

## **Recommendations**

R1 Raise children's standards of literacy, particularly their oral skills

R2 Improve the quality of teaching in order to challenge children of all abilities to ensure that they make appropriate progress across all areas of learning

R3 Use assessment more effectively to plan the next steps in learning

R4 Strengthen and embed self-evaluation procedures in order to identify all areas for improvement

### **What happens next?**

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

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

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Overall, many children make suitable progress from their starting points across the areas of learning. Many children's personal and social skills are developing well. Many children apply their skills in the learning areas appropriately and they recall previous learning successfully. A majority of children develop good thinking skills, for example when choosing which fruit to eat during snack time.

A majority of children develop their literacy skills competently. They enjoy listening to a story and join in appropriately with phrases that are repeated. Most children have a suitable recognition of simple songs. Many children use one word or a phrase of two words when speaking with adults in Welsh. Older children, and those who are more able, are able to form simple sentences when asking a question, but their vocabulary and range of sentence patterns are limited. However, only a few respond confidently enough to new instructions, and many wait for English instructions before they respond. A majority of children handle books appropriately, turn pages correctly and look at pictures with interest. A minority choose to look at books independently in the outdoor area. A majority of children are able to recognise their names, make marks successfully and a few are able to write their names.

Many children develop early numeracy skills appropriately. They rote count to ten, and more able children count to twenty. A very few children recognise numbers up to three suitably and place them in the correct order. Around half use mathematical language appropriately when playing in the outdoor area, for example as they describe a box or a tool that is full or empty when pouring water or filling a pot with soil. They explain successfully whether objects are 'big', 'medium-sized' or 'small'.

Many children have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Many use an electronic tablet successfully to create a picture or to take a photograph independently. They imitate adults on the telephone and are able to control a programmable toy and give it a command successfully.

Many children have good creative skills and nearly all persevere and enjoy developing their skills both indoors and outdoors; for example, when making a mud cake. Most children's physical development is good, and nearly all children are able to hold a pencil confidently when drawing a picture effectively. Nearly all children are able to run in a straight line and jump with both feet. Most children are able to build a tower successfully with six blocks of wood.

#### Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and leave their parents without fuss and settle well. Nearly all children shoulder responsibilities conscientiously when they self-register at the beginning of the day and distributing food and drink to their peers. Most take part immediately in the activities that are set for them.

Nearly all children are able to work well independently, for example when putting mathematical equipment together to correspond to a number, or when role-playing in the creative area. Nearly all children are able to work well together, for example when playing in the mud kitchen. Many children concentrate increasingly for appropriate periods during focus tasks. However, a minority become restless during tasks in the learning areas.

Nearly all children behave politely and relate well to other children, adults and visitors. They have learnt the importance of showing courtesy and being kind to their friends. Many of the children make sensible decisions and choices when choosing what they would like to do during free play time.

Most children have learnt to tidy up conscientiously and take care of resources. They develop a sound awareness of the need for good hygiene by washing their hands before snack time.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

All practitioners plan a wide range of interesting activities that meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase successfully. In general, practitioners plan creative opportunities to develop children's skills across the areas of learning appropriately, for example by giving children opportunities to count colourful dinosaurs in the small world area. Practitioners meet each week to plan jointly in order to provide stimulating activities for the children. These activities have a sound emphasis on learning through first-hand experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They ensure an appropriate balance between activities chosen by children and those that are led by adults. Practitioners are beginning to stimulate children to offer ideas for the term's activities, for example on what they would like to do in the art area.

In general, planning enables a majority of children to make sound progress in their literacy and numeracy skills across the areas of learning. However, there is not enough of a focus on developing children's oral skills. This limits their ability to communicate in Welsh. Planning to develop children's ICT skills is good. Practitioners plan purposeful opportunities to develop these skills systematically across the areas of learning. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their physical and creative skills, including printing with apples to make an equal pattern, and moving like a butterfly outdoors.

Children are given regular opportunities to develop their understanding of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture. Practitioners organise beneficial opportunities for children to celebrate St David's Day and to learn about Welsh traditions. An effective example of this is giving children opportunities to wear traditional dress and to cook and eat leek soup.

Practitioners ensure beneficial opportunities for all children to recycle and grow vegetables. There is a good link with the community, and visitors such as firemen and gardeners visit the setting. By doing so, children begin to develop a purposeful understanding of the role of different people in the community.

## **Teaching: Adequate**

All practitioners have a sound awareness of the principles of the Foundation Phase and child development. They work together successfully in order to ensure interesting provision and make appropriate use of a range of teaching styles. Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and encourage them to take part in all activities regularly. Many practitioners question children suitably in order to develop their thinking, numeracy and ICT skills. Practitioners have high expectations for a majority of children, and they challenge these children frequently in focus tasks. However, they do not always challenge the most able children to perform at their best regularly enough.

Practitioners plan activities in detail. However, there is not enough focus on the lesson objective in the presentations. At times, overdirection from adults limits a few children's ability to work independently. Practitioners praise children appropriately when they behave well, and use suitable strategies to attract children's attention when they become restless. The quality of the staff's Welsh is varied, and they do not model language consistently enough or provide adequate opportunities to develop children's oral skills. As a result, children's oral standards are not developing soundly enough.

Practitioners plan an interesting and tasteful environment in the rooms and make effective use of resources to guide learning. However, outdoor sessions are not always structured enough to develop children's literacy, numeracy and physical skills consistently.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for assessing children's progress, and practitioners have begun to use the Foundation Phase Profile to assess children's starting points suitably. Practitioners observe daily and keep beneficial records of children's development. However, they do not always make effective enough use of this information to plan the next steps in order to ensure that learning provides sufficient challenge for all children. Annual consultations with parents provide them with balanced information about their children's progress.

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

The setting provides rich experiences to promote children's health and wellbeing. A pre-school health scheme and a dental health scheme have become embedded, and children's understanding of the importance of these is developing well. The setting promotes the importance of eating and drinking healthily successfully and many children are beginning to understand the importance of eating fruit and vegetables and keeping fit.

There are purposeful opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By doing so, many children develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect well. Practitioners provide purposeful activities every day for children to discuss feelings and say thank you. This helps the children sit and listen to adults, practice washing their hands and say thank you for their food. Older children are given regular opportunities to help others and, by doing so, they begin to shoulder responsibility beneficially.



Practitioners ensure regular opportunities for children to recycle paper and card at the setting. This is beginning to develop their understanding of sustainability effectively.

On the whole, practitioners encourage children successfully to develop positive behaviour towards their learning, and towards others, by rewarding them with stickers, star of the week, circle time and positive praise. This contributes fairly successfully towards trying to eliminate disruption or unacceptable behaviour. As a result, children are happy in the company of adults and feel comfortable when asking for help.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting has robust processes to respond to the needs of children with additional learning needs, and staff identify children's additional needs well. The additional learning needs co-ordinator targets and monitors the progress of children with additional learning needs, when necessary. The setting works closely with the primary school and external agencies to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented effectively.

### **Learning environment: Good**

There setting has a caring and inclusive atmosphere. All children have equal access to all resources and areas of learning. All staff work well together as a team to create a happy atmosphere in which the child's voice is respected. Children settle well at the setting each day and practitioners know the children well and respect them.

The setting places an emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. They do so successfully by celebrating the Chinese New Year, Mother's Day and Diwali, and they develop children's understanding of different traditions successfully.

Practitioners provide an interesting environment in the setting. There are enough opportunities to display and praise children's work, and practitioners change the displays regularly. There is a stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors, and a variety of resources to stimulate learning successfully. The setting has a purposeful supply of good resources that are used to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase well, and they are within all children's reach.

The building is of suitable quality, is maintained safely and the setting is furnished well.

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

The leader, who is relatively new to the role, is developing her management skills appropriately by working closely with the local authority's link teacher and the management committee to set a strategic direction for the setting. She has a robust vision that is based on ensuring that children achieve as well as they can in a caring

environment. She has shared this effectively with staff, parents and the management committee. The staff work closely as a team and work together purposefully to ensure stimulating experiences for children.

Job descriptions are clear and all practitioners undertake their roles conscientiously, for example when ensuring that the setting is safe before the children arrive in the mornings. Staff meet regularly and contribute appropriately to planning and assessing children's attainment. However, there is not enough of a focus on strategic planning to raise standards, and leaders do not ensure that teaching leads purposefully enough to improvements in standards.

There are suitable arrangements in place to manage performance. This supports practitioners' professional development suitably. The setting meets national and local priorities appropriately, including developing the outdoor area and encouraging healthy eating and drinking.

The management committee is very supportive of the setting. They work enthusiastically to ensure that the setting runs well from day to day. They ensure resources of a high standard and are preparing rigorously for the setting's relocation to a new site. Members visit the setting regularly and develop a suitable awareness of the quality of provision and standards.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The setting has appropriate arrangements for identifying strengths and a few areas that are in need of improvement. The current self-evaluation processes are relatively new, and the new procedures have not yet had time to become embedded in full to have a positive enough effect on provision and children's standards. Recently, the leader has created a useful monitoring timetable in order to strengthen self-evaluation processes. This ensures beneficial opportunities to evaluate provision, scrutinise children's work and staff assessments, and to observe sessions. Reports that derive from monitoring set sensible targets for improvement. Although in their early stages, they are beginning to have a positive effect on a few aspects of provision, for example use of ICT during focus tasks. However, in general, arrangements do not identify important areas for improvement effectively enough, for example children's ability to use the Welsh language when working independently.

Self-evaluation arrangements are beginning to feed into the self-evaluation report appropriately. In general, the report is evaluative and identifies strengths and a few areas for improvement suitably. There is a clear link between the setting's findings and the development plan. The development plan sets suitable targets for improvement, and identifies responsibilities for action and the procedure for monitoring and evaluating progress against priorities. However, the timetable for implementing and monitoring priorities is not specific enough, and the cost of implementation is not always given detailed enough attention. As the setting has not identified all of the important areas for improvement, planning for improvement does not lead to improving children's outcomes or standards of wellbeing effectively enough. Leaders have not ensured that all recommendations from the previous inspection have been met in full.

### **Partnership working: Good**

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

The setting has a strong relationship with parents. Parents receive beneficial, regular information about their children's development through open evenings, informal discussions and written reports. The setting informs parents about the term's work and events through regular newsletters. Recent work to creating home-setting packs enable parents to reinforce their children's learning successfully at home. The setting has recently strengthened the link with parents effectively by using social media. They use parents' expertise effectively in order to enrich children's experiences, for example through the shelter building day.

There are valuable links between the setting and the local primary school, which is situated on the same campus. This ensures a smooth transition between the setting and the school. The setting works closely with the school's staff. This has a positive effect on practitioners' confidence and language fluency at the setting.

The setting has suitable links with the local community. Members of the community visit the setting often, for example to teach children how to be safe near the road. The setting makes appropriate use of the local park, in addition to the nearby fields. This has a positive effect on most children's physical development.

The setting works effectively with external agencies, such as the local authority and Flying Start. This positive relationship reinforces the setting's work successfully, for example in developing self-evaluation procedures.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting makes good use of staff and resources to support teaching and learning.

The setting has a wide range of resources of a high standard to promote the objectives of the Foundation Phase curriculum appropriately. Practitioners make effective use of resources to plan stimulating experiences for children, both indoors and outdoors. Resources are within children's reach and promote their independence effectively.

Through performance management procedures, all members of staff take appropriate advantage of training in a number of relevant areas, for example use of the outdoor area and food hygiene. This develops their understanding and knowledge of these areas suitably. This has been supported recently by visits to other settings to observe good practice.

The committee manages and allocates the setting's budget carefully to ensure that the setting has enough appropriate staff and high quality resources. The setting's staff and the committee are very active in organising fundraising activities to improve provision. They have planned wisely for the setting's relocation to a new site in the new academic year.

Considering children's outcomes, in addition to the quality of teaching, the setting provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Denotes the benchmark – this is the total of all responses to date since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the setting.	21	15 71%	5 24%	1 5%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n fodlon â'r lleoliad yn gyffredinol.
		79%	21%	0%	0%		
My child likes this setting.	21	18 86%	3 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r lleoliad hwn.
		84%	16%	0%	0%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the setting.	21	16 76%	5 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn y lleoliad.
		86%	14%	0%	0%		
My child is making good progress at the setting.	21	17 81%	4 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn y lleoliad.
		81%	19%	0%	0%		
Children behave well in the setting.	21	13 62%	7 33%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae plant yn ymddwyn yn dda yn y lleoliad.
		71%	28%	1%	0%		
Teaching is good.	21	14 67%	5 24%	1 5%	0 0%	1	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		80%	19%	0%	0%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	21	18 86%	3 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		83%	16%	0%	0%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	21	17 81%	4 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		76%	24%	0%	0%		
My child is safe at the setting.	21	17 81%	4 19%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn y lleoliad.
		84%	15%	0%	0%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs.	21	9 43%	4 19%	0 0%	0 0%	8	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		72%	27%	1%	0%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	21	11 52%	9 43%	1 5%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		63%	31%	5%	1%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the setting with questions, suggestions or a problem.	21	18 86%	3 14%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Rwy'n teimlo'n gysurus ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r lleoliad, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		80%	19%	1%	0%		
I understand the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints.	21	11 52%	6 29%	1 5%	0 0%	3	Rwy'n deall trefn y lleoliad ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		65%	32%	3%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to school.	21	17 81%	3 14%	0 0%	0 0%	1	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol.
		73%	26%	1%	0%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	21	9 43%	9 43%	3 14%	0 0%	0	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		63%	33%	4%	1%		
The setting is well run.	21	16 76%	5 24%	0 0%	0 0%	0	Mae'r lleoliad yn cael ei redeg yn dda.
		81%	18%	1%	0%		

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Olwen Green	Reporting Inspector
Jonathan Cooper	Team Inspector

### 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 three to seven 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 that 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 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