



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 Fflint
Neuadd Maes-y-Coed
Woodfield Avenue
Flint
CH6 5DU**

Date of inspection: January 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

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Y Fflint is a Welsh-medium setting, which meets in a cabin on the grounds of Ysgol Croes Atti in Flintshire local authority. The setting is open five days a week from 8.30am to 3.00pm.

The setting is registered to admit up to 30 children at any given time and admits children between two and four years old. Currently, very few children receive funded early years education. Flying Start funds most of the two-year-old children.

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 practitioners, including the leader. The leader took up the post in September 1999.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in June 2017 and by Estyn in June 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- planning for children's learning experiences is rigorous and meets their needs and interests successfully
- stimulating activities develop children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills purposefully
- provision to develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills is appropriate
- the effect of teaching is very beneficial to developing the Welsh language as practitioners are excellent language models
- assessment procedures and practices for recording children's achievements are effective
- the practitioners' gentle care creates a purposeful learning environment and a sensible ethos
- learning areas and readily-available resources motivate children to improve their skills constantly and, as a result, engage their interest successfully

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader sets a clear direction and willing commitment to all practical and administrative work
- of successful co-operation between all practitioners, the school, the management committee and external agencies
- the management committee supports the setting diligently to improve provision and children's outcomes
- suitable self-evaluation systems lead to setting useful targets, which have a purposeful effect on provision
- practitioners are keen to benefit from relevant training to improve their practices
- there is an excellent partnership with the school's link teacher
- leaders make successful use of funding to make improvements to provision and to maintain the building and the outdoor area purposefully

Recommendations

- R1 Improve provision to ensure that children develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively
- R2 Provide opportunities for all children to develop their independence during snack time
- R3 Ensure that the targets in the action plan derive directly from the self-evaluation process

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	N/A
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Standards: N/A

Wellbeing: N/A

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, the Welsh language or wellbeing. This is because there were not enough relevant children present at the time of the inspection to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The leader and practitioners plan children's learning experiences thoroughly in order to meet their needs and interests successfully. They work together diligently to provide interesting activities across all areas of learning, both inside the cabin and outdoors. They engage children's interest purposeful, which creates enthusiastic and keen learners; for example, they motivate children to learn practically by role-playing in the shop and counting to ten when throwing snowballs into a bucket. As a result, they provide a stimulating curriculum that reflects the foundation phase ethos purposefully.

All practitioners discuss individual children's progress in regular meetings and organise themes and activities sensibly based on this. They provide useful opportunities for children to voice their personal ideas. This enriches activities further as practitioners add children's ideas to their detailed schemes of work. As a result, daily activities add positively to children's enthusiasm as they learn through play. This includes robust opportunities for children to match mathematical equipment that is found in the sand with numbers, and to paint their hands to print a snowflake.

The setting's provision to develop oral Welsh skills 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 stimulate children to respond intelligently. Many children respond with familiar words and phrases soon after they start at the setting. As a result, most children's understanding of the language develops quickly.

Provision for developing children's literacy, numeracy and thinking skills is purposeful. Literacy and numeracy activities are prominent in all areas of learning and challenge children to perform at their best consistently. Practical examples of this can be seen as the children discuss weather features by experimenting with blocks of ice and explaining the difference between hot and cold. They also build a snowman together with different-sized boxes. As a result, learning experiences such as these are valuable and provide effective continuity and progression in children's learning.

Provision for developing ICT is appropriate and provides suitable opportunities to use cameras, tills, toys and electronic tablets. However, children are not challenged effectively enough by using 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 baking traditional cakes.

Practitioners focus on developing children's physical skills intelligently. They allow them to climb on adventure equipment and slide to the floor independently, ride bicycles energetically and run in a zigzag between giant pencils in the outdoor area. This improves their experiences and their physical skills purposefully.

Practitioners plan effective opportunities to develop children's creative skills. They use chalk on blackboards and water and brushes to make marks in the outdoor area, and stick leaves on cylinders independently to create tree trunks.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences; for example, visits to post letters in the town, buying goods at the local supermarket and contributing to jamborees and Eisteddfodau, reinforce the curriculum effectively. Visitors such as the police, a dental hygienist, a road safety officer and an individual with chicks, teach the children successfully about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a sound understanding of the requirements of the foundation phase.

Practitioners share high expectations for children and work together conscientiously. They manage children's behaviour positively and there are safe procedures that are linked to their work both indoors and outdoors. As a result, their sensible discussions with children encourage their participation and enjoyment effectively in all activities.

All practitioners challenge children regularly during focus and continuous tasks. Their use of the Welsh language is excellent as they model rich language patterns and vocabulary. They know when to intervene in children's experiences and play in order to stimulate them and motivate them to succeed. As a result, children persevere to fill a box by matching three-dimensional shapes with the two-dimensional shapes. Children are also given suitable opportunities to play independently, such as using chalk to make a path in the outdoor area, by following the first letter of their names on the floor.

Assessment procedures and practices for recording children's achievements are effective. Evidence corresponds correctly with individual children's outcomes by using the foundation phase profile as they develop at the setting. All practitioners record the daily assessments regularly and consistently. They discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, practitioners use the daily assessments correctly to target the next steps in individual children's learning through their useful planning and varied activities.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. There is daily dialogue between practitioners, parents and carers, which reinforces this purposefully. At the end of their time at the setting, comprehensive information about their children's achievement is available to parents and carers. The setting provides useful booklets for parents that are full of pictures and purposeful annotations, which reflect their children's progress over time.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides positive opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use lively plenary sessions successfully to encourage children to greet each other, reflect on other people's feelings and say thank you.

Practitioners' sensible methods nurture values such as fairness and respect successfully among the children. They reinforce the importance of these values in the setting's daily life as children line up and wait their turn to put on their coats before starting to learn outdoors.

The use of the 'helper of the day' delegates responsibilities to individuals and provides valuable opportunities for them to shoulder responsibility in turn. However, although children are given an opportunity to set out the dishes in turn, they are not given enough opportunities to serve themselves and their peers around the dining table every day.

Practitioners have effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing, and they promote eating and drinking healthily soundly. These arrangements contribute effectively to the children's overall development and wellbeing and support their learning successfully, such as showing each other courtesy while eating snacks. As a result, children understand that fruit and vegetables are part of a sensible diet. They also discuss the importance of keeping fit and that activities to increase their heart rate in the outdoor area and on bicycles have a positive effect on their lives.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic and food. This develops their understanding of sustainability purposefully.

Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any disruption or unacceptable behaviour successfully. As a result, children are happy and safe in the company of adults and they often ask for help and support to complete activities. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take diligent care of children when they arrive at the setting and when they are picked up. 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 rigorously by following the foundation phase profile's guidelines. The additional learning needs co-ordinator is very familiar with the necessary procedures in order to support children, and uses them purposefully to support individuals with specialist support. As a result, the setting targets specific children with additional support effectively, when the need arises.

Learning environment: Good

Practitioners have a sound awareness of children's needs. The setting is a wholly inclusive community where nearly all children are given an equal opportunity to learn productively, both indoors and outdoors.

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 conscientious attitudes. Practitioners challenge and support children consistently in a positive and careful manner. They teach children about different events and cultures around the world purposefully. As a result, they plan suitable opportunities for children to celebrate the Chinese New Year and Diwali each year, and to play with dolls and jigsaws from different cultures occasionally.

The setting uses resources successfully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. A range of interesting resources is used effectively in continuous activities, focus activities and to enhance learning, such as blocks to build towers, dough to make snowmen and a range of colourful books to encourage children's reading skills. Resources are kept at a practical level so that each child is able to reach them easily. This enables children to fetch them, use them independently and put them away without adult intervention. This has a purposeful effect on promoting the children's sense of responsibility as they share and work together. The setting has appropriate ICT resources.

The building is of suitable quality, is well maintained and safe. The outdoor area includes growing and planting areas, climbing equipment and challenging areas to solve problems with water and sand. The setting uses these areas creatively. Practitioners use the indoor area wisely to provide lively indoor activities, such as dancing and making movements to music.

Practitioners use the local facilities effectively by taking children to a variety of places to take part in activities in their local area, such as the town's castle.

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

The leader leads the setting purposefully in order to promote and maintain improvements effectively. Her vision and maturity when operating each day ensure that learning experiences for children, teaching and care are successful.

The setting's procedures, which include well-organised and corporate policies, focus thoroughly on improving provision. This meets children's needs effectively and promotes their achievements purposefully.

The leader works diligently with the other practitioners and they have high expectations of themselves and the children. As a result, they motivate and challenge children to improve in stimulating and supportive ways through effective teaching. This can be seen as they feed the Welsh language to children regularly by talking and singing regularly with individuals and specific groups to target improvements orally.

The leader uses relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision. This has recently included using the foundation phase profile effectively. They identify children's starting points correctly, and combine all aspects of planning with useful assessments to provide a challenging curriculum.

Practitioners focus on providing interesting activities for children. As a result, they have succeeded in making beneficial changes to both the indoor and outdoor learning areas with the support of the school's link teacher. These changes have had a positive effect on children's outcomes. The leader also focuses rigorously on national priorities, such as developing literacy and numeracy strategies, to improve children's skills before they start school.

The leadership, which includes a supportive management committee, ensures that provision for children is effective. The management committee ensures that practitioners understand their roles in full through regular evaluations and discussions, and they work diligently as a team. They focus purposefully on improving the whole provision, such as developing the outdoor area and decided to lay artificial grass to ensure regular use of the equipment. As a result, the management committee challenges the setting successfully to maintain and improve its practices and develop the areas that need to be improved further.

The management committee receives information about the setting's practices regularly from the leader. It meets regularly to discuss the setting's income and funding, and monitors expenditure and the use of grants conscientiously and in detail.

Improving quality: Good

Self-evaluation procedures are purposeful and consistent. Practitioners monitor children's standards and the quality of provision regularly by using the local authority's procedures effectively. The management committee plays an active part in the process. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of the setting's strengths, which enables them to identify priorities for improvement.

Co-operation between practitioners, the management committee, the school's link teacher, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin is effective. The information that is gathered regularly, in addition to visits and evaluations by external agencies, contributes purposefully to this practice. The effect of support and the willingness to improve means that the setting has made purposeful improvements over time. This includes implementing the foundation phase profile and striving rigorously to improve provision in the learning areas and children's outcomes in the Welsh language.

The setting uses information that derives from the self-evaluation procedures appropriately to set sensible priorities in the improvement plan. As a result, the setting's self-evaluation procedures are developing suitably. Practitioners agree on priorities and change their ways of working and aspects of provision effectively to respond to the needs that are identified in the improvement plan. However, targets in the improvement plan do not always derive directly from the setting's self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation report does not always include enough details about how and why some areas need to be improved further.

The leader and management committee prioritise expenditure purposefully in line with the targets for improvement, such as buying new ICT equipment and implementing useful language and mathematics schemes. All practitioners are keen to accept new ideas that are suggested by the school's link teacher and the Mudiad Meithrin officer. They act effectively according to their advice regularly. This has led to sustained improvements. For example, practitioners have improved outdoor experiences by using the mud kitchen and improving the provision of numeracy activities across the learning areas.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of effective strategic partnerships. Practitioners work purposefully with these partners to succeed in improving provision and children's outcomes.

The setting meets on the grounds of Ysgol Croes Atti and there is a very 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 moved forward several aspects of provision at the setting, including daily assessments and planning. The effect of this partnership is excellent. As a result, there is robust support for the transition arrangements, and personal information and children's assessments are transferred effectively. The setting also visits the school to watch the Christmas concerts and sports day, which helps children to settle into school life.

Practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. Practitioners inform them regularly, through newsletters, an active noticeboard and social media, about all aspects of the setting's work. They are encouraged to provide their views on issues to improve the setting through questionnaires and regular discussions. An example of this is the willingness to use social media to communicate better with parents following their comments in order to make improvements to the setting's procedures.

The setting's community links support children's learning successfully. This includes fundraising events, such as a walk around the cabin, and beneficial support when bidding for sponsorship and relevant grants. The setting also supports local and national charities, and this nurtures children's kindness and care for others.

The setting works purposefully with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. These organisations support documentation and practitioners' training effectively. Practitioners also work with a wide range of other partners who make important contributions towards improving provision. These include agencies that provide training, such as first aid, food hygiene and child protection.

Resource management: Good

Leaders aim consistently to improve all aspects of the setting's work by managing staff and resources purposefully. They ensure that the setting has enough qualified practitioners with comprehensive training. They are a stable, robust and effective team who are willing to accept advice for the benefit of the children.

The leader encourages practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge purposefully. As a result, the setting is a successful example of a positive learning community, which has a culture of conscientious co-operation between practitioners and other partners such as Mudiad Meithrin, Flying Start and the local school's link teacher.

Performance management procedures are sound and ensure interesting learning experiences and positive teaching practices. The setting manages resources creatively to support learning. This includes skilful use of the outdoor area for physical activities and challenges that extend pupils, such as measuring sunflowers.

The leader and the management committee have a clear understanding of the budget and the recent challenges associated with it. An effective example of this is that the management committee has allowed a member of staff to go on secondment to lead a nearby setting to reduce the costs and over-staffing at the setting. This is also a sound example of developing an individual professionally by providing an opportunity to nurture the practitioner's leadership skills.

The management committee prioritises expenditure carefully and identifies responsibilities and sensible timescales. It makes regular improvements by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully, such as starting to add to ICT equipment. As a result, the setting ensures that the use of funding has a direct effect on provision and children's outcomes.

The setting provides good value for money because of the effective provision and purposeful leadership.

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 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