



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
Cylch Meithrin Cymraeg Y Fflint
Neuadd Maes y Coed,
Chester Road,
Flint
Flintshire
CH6 5DU

Date of inspection: June 2011

by

Wil Williams

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

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.uk

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

© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2011: 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 copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Context

Cylch Meithrin Cymraeg Y Fflint was established in the Play Centre at Flint in 1977 before being subsequently moved to a portacabin in the playground of Ysgol Gymraeg Croes Atti. The setting has been in a new portacabin since 2008 following the destruction of the original building by fire. The setting is part of the Flintshire Children and Young People's Partnership provision and provides Welsh-medium pre-school education for children in the town itself and the surrounding area. The children who are admitted to the setting represent a wide range of economic and social backgrounds with a few living in 'Communities First' areas.

Children of all ability and background are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, there were no children with additional learning needs nor from ethnic groups registered at the setting.

The setting provides two and a half hour sessions for five afternoons a week for three year old children, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. The fourteen children who currently attend the setting are funded by the Partnership.

Although English is the language spoken at home for every child, Welsh is the setting's main medium of teaching and learning. When they have completed their period in the setting, the majority of the children transfer to the Welsh medium school nearby.

Children's education is supported by a leader and four practitioners. Nearly all members of staff are appropriately qualified to teach early years children.

Accommodation includes a classroom, toilets, kitchen and storerooms. There is a designated outdoor area which is used regularly by the setting.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2009. This is setting's first Estyn inspection.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- standards in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology are good;
- many children demonstrate high levels of interest and motivation;
- learning experiences are of a high quality; and
- the setting gives good value for money.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the quality of leadership is good;
- procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are developing well;
- practitioners are willing to undertake new initiatives and to accept advice; and
- substantial improvements have already been implemented by the setting.

Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

- A1 use assessment information more effectively to plan next steps in learning;
- A2 provide more challenging tasks for more able children;
- A3 establish staff appraisal procedures; and
- A4 strengthen links with the local community.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Bearing in mind their age and stage of development, nearly all children achieve good standards and make realistic progress in what they can do and in their knowledge, understanding and skills. During sessions, many achieve well in activities that strengthen and develop their learning.

Standards in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology are good with most children using their skills confidently in a range of contexts. When conversing with one another or with adults, all children express their feelings and ideas clearly and listen carefully to the listener's response. Many ask meaningful questions, show an enthusiastic interest in books and enjoy discussing the main events in the story. Nearly all children enjoy mark-making and develop an increasing understanding of some of the functions of writing. The majority use appropriate mathematical language during practical activities and are confident when counting a collection of objects. Nearly all children apply their information communication technology skills purposefully when using 'talking books' and controlling the movements of different toys.

In a comparatively short period, most children have made significant progress in gaining Welsh language skills. Many understand and follow instructions confidently, they participate in Welsh songs and rhymes enthusiastically and follow and respond to stories very eagerly. During discussions with adults, the more confident children use individual words, phrases and short sentences with appropriate accuracy.

Most children persevere with free-choice tasks diligently and are confident when experimenting and exploring. Problem-solving and decision-making skills develop appropriately.

Results of parents' questionnaires indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the progress that their children are making.

Wellbeing: Good

Many children demonstrate high levels of interest and motivation and develop positive attitudes towards learning. All children have a secure understanding of how they can become healthy both through what they eat and the physical exercise they undertake. Every individual has a close relationship with practitioners and trust their guidance. When undertaking designated tasks or tasks of their own choice, children co-operate amenable demonstrating a high degree of independence. A very distinctive feature of the setting is the very good behaviour and the care and concern shown by children towards one another.

Children enjoy their time in the setting. All feel safe and free from physical and verbal abuse.

Learning experiences: Good

Through effective collaborative planning, practitioners succeed in organising and delivering stimulating and flexible learning experiences which engage the interest of all children and enable them to make good progress in all areas of learning. As children move through the Foundation Phase, the curriculum build systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills. The learning opportunities provided encourage children to form close relationships with one another, to take risks and experiment with new experiences and to make their own choices about their learning. Although every child responds very positively to learning experiences, the tasks provided do not always sufficiently challenge the more able children.

Provision for literacy, numeracy and information communication technology and wider skills is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for all children. Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment very imaginatively to enrich learning experiences and to encourage children to take an interest in the world about them. However, little use is made of visits to places in the community and of visitors to the setting, to enhance children's learning.

The opportunities children have to become actively involved in the setting's recycling and energy saving procedures, contributes well towards raising their awareness of sustainability and their role as global citizens.

Provision for promoting the Welsh language and the traditions and culture of Wales is comprehensive and effective. Children's awareness of the traditions of other cultures is developed in a meaningful way.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and have a secure understanding of Foundation Phase requirements. Adult support is clearly focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning. Although expectations for middle and lower ability children are appropriate, on occasion, tasks for the more able children lack challenge. Through careful planning, practitioners ensure there is an appropriate balance between child-selected and practitioner-led activities. The outdoor area is used very imaginatively to provide interesting activities in all six areas of learning. Practitioners use a good range of teaching strategies in order to engage and interest children, and intervene in activities in a purposeful and sensitive way. Children's behaviour is managed in a quiet and firm manner. A variety of resources is used skilfully to appeal to children's interest and improve learning.

With guidance from the local authority support teacher, the setting is in the process of updating its processes for assessing children's learning. Children's progress and welfare are recorded in detail across all areas of learning but little use is made of the information to plan individual children's next step in learning. There are appropriate arrangements for sharing assessment information with the schools to which the children will transfer and for informing parents about their children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Effective induction arrangements together with the close relationship with parent, ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. Every child is happy in the setting and is confident in asking adults for support and guidance. Practitioners know the children well and strive to ensure that the needs of each individual are met.

Learning experiences successfully promote children's personal and social development. The supportive ethos of the setting fosters values such as honesty, fairness and friendship very effectively and helps children to distinguish right from wrong.

The setting has appropriate policies and procedures for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. It succeeds well in helping every child to achieve their emotional and physical health and wellbeing and to take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them. Practitioners know how to respond appropriately if challenges arise in relation to bullying, unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding. When specific instances occur, there are appropriate arrangements for supporting children with additional educational needs and for making effective use of key agencies.

The latest Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales report was very positive and no recommendations for improvement were made.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. The setting has a good number of practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of the learning experience and to develop positive values and attitudes.

There is an ample supply of resources for all areas of learning. They are of good quality and carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual. Resources in the outdoor area are used very effectively to support learning but little use is made of resources in the community. The buildings and accommodation are of very good quality and are used extensively.

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

Leadership: Good

The leader and practitioners collaborate very closely giving a sense of purpose and continuous improvement to the setting's work. They make sure that the Foundation Phase and other national and local priorities, are implemented successfully. Teaching and learning is well managed and there are clear arrangements for ensuring that the setting's policies are implemented. All members of staff have a

clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and manage their time carefully during sessions. The leader is very receptive to advice and reflects critically upon her work.

The close relationship with children, parents and the management committee contributes significantly to a sense of community. Officers of the management committee provide good support for staff and are exceptionally diligent in organising fund-raising activities to improve the resource provision for learning and teaching. However, the committee does not have appropriate arrangements for conducting staff appraisal.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. They have recently carried out a detailed evaluation of the setting's work and have used the information purposefully in an action plan to prioritise those aspects they wish to improve. All practitioners are very open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working. This has led to significant improvements in the quality of provision and ways of working during the past two years. Through questionnaires, parents have regular opportunities to voice their opinions on the setting's work.

Practitioners are well supported by a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development which is mainly provided by the local authority and the Mudiad Meithrin. This is complemented by regular visits by the support teacher who has been instrumental in enabling the setting to get to grips with new initiatives. These arrangements ensure that all practitioners acquire new knowledge and skills regularly and are aware of recent developments in the Foundation Phase. Practitioners consistently share good practice within the setting and reflect upon their own practice.

Partnership working: Good

A very wide range of partnerships activities make a significant contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. There is a very productive partnership with the local authority's educational services and with many other organisations and agencies. There are very close links with the Welsh medium primary school with which it shares the same campus. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work with the leader taking advantage of every opportunity to include them in their children's learning. Practitioners work very well together, share information about children and know who to contact and when, if additional support is required for children.

Resource management: Good

The setting is well-staffed for teaching all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Staff are deployed effectively to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. All resources are carefully managed and reviewed regularly to make sure they are fit for purpose.

The leader and the management committee have a thorough understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are carefully evaluated to make sure that they have a positive

effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Seven parents' questionnaires were received. All parents say that their children enjoy attending the setting and are making good progress in their learning. All parents believe they their children are prepared well for moving on to school and that the setting is well managed.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Wil Williams	Reporting Inspector
--------------	---------------------

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)