



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 Carmel
Carmel Village Hall
Carmel
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL54 7AB**

Date of inspection: October 2011

by

**David K Davies
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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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About the setting

Cylch Meithrin Carmel was established in 1976 and is accommodated in Carmel village hall in the centre of the village of Carmel. The children who attend the setting live in the village and the immediate area. The area is described as neither advantaged nor economically and socially disadvantaged. The setting operates as a member of Gwynedd Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is also a registered member of 'Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin'.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age. It is open for five sessions a week during school terms between nine and five past eleven in the morning. During the inspection, there were three, three year olds on the setting's register. Welsh is the main language spoken in the homes of most children. At present, there is one child from a minority ethnic background attending the setting. There are no children with additional learning needs currently attending the setting.

There are two members of staff. They were recently appointed in June 2011. The setting is led by a practitioner who holds appropriate qualifications in the education and care of young children. She is supported by another full time practitioner. The setting was inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April, 2011. This is the first time the setting has been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- the teaching is good overall;
- the children receive good care within an inclusive learning environment;
- there is a warm and welcoming atmosphere;
- the practitioners fulfil their responsibilities effectively; and
- there is a very good relationship between the children and the practitioners.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the provision at the setting is based on the needs of the individual child;
- the staff work closely with the staff of the local authority and the "Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin" which is proving beneficial to the setting's development;
- staff regularly attend training;
- the strong support given by the management committee and parents; and
- good close working relationship with the local school.

Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

- R1 improve the long term planning to ensure it is more structured;
- R2 refine the assessment procedures to note clearly what children have achieved and to outline the next steps in their learning;
- R3 further develop the information technology and communication skills of the children by providing more equipment
- R4 further develop the outdoor learning environment to encourage the children's understanding of the world around them.

What happens next?

The playgroup will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. The local authority will monitor the playgroup's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Wellbeing:

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Adequate

The practitioners provide a range of interesting activities throughout most of the learning areas. They provide regular learning experiences for the children to experiment with, which aid them to become independent learners. Good opportunities are offered to the children to develop their key skills and basic skills in literacy, numeracy and creativity. Appropriate curricular frameworks are used to plan provision. The long-term planning is based on a series of themes to suit the age range of children. The short term planning gives appropriate attention to the specific skills to be developed in the learning corners around the room.

The planning for adult-led focus activities is more uneven. Overall, the planning does not include sufficient detail to ensure balance, continuity and progression in the learning process, including the development of children's learning skills. The provision for information technology skills requires further development.

Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment as fully as possible to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. However there is need for more appropriate equipment. Visits, such as one to a local farm and agricultural company site nearby, as well as caring for plants in the setting allow the children to gain a good understanding that the environment and living things must be treated with care.

There is consistent encouragement for children to develop and use their Welsh communication skills in their learning and play through appropriate activities. There is appropriate emphasis given to the celebrations and traditions of Wales. Appropriate age related activities are planned to help the children understand the wider world and

raise awareness of global citizenship.

Teaching: Good

Teaching is good overall. The practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and are aware of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They provide consistent learning experiences which interest the children.

They use a range of appropriate methods and resources to support learning. Practitioners work well as a team and offer regular support to the children. They communicate effectively with the children during story and small group work sessions. They use appropriate language and purposeful questioning to develop the children's vocabulary. Children join in enthusiastically in role playing and singing sessions. Behaviour is managed effectively.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to report on the children's progress and development. The practitioners know their children well. They regularly observe them as they take part in activities and record outcomes in file notes. Further comments on the children's skills and outcomes in the areas of learning are made on record sheets. However not enough use is made of the information gathered to plan the next stage of teaching to further develop the children's skills. Parents and carers are regularly updated both formally and informally on their children's achievement welfare and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a caring and orderly community. Appropriate policies and arrangements are implemented to support children's health and wellbeing. The induction arrangements alongside the daily contact with parents and carers ensure that children settle well into the routines of the setting. The children are happy in the setting and comfortable in the company of adults. Children and adults demonstrate respect for each other. Healthy snacks are provided for all children and the children are induced to help each other. The "Helper of the Day" provides an opportunity for children, in turn, to take responsibility for certain periods of the day. There are clear expectations which promote good behaviour.

Children's needs are identified early and appropriate and effective support is arranged. The staff work appropriately with outside agencies and specialist services to address any specific needs. The setting has appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well include their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is good emphasis on children's personal and social development. Children are encouraged to collaborate with others and to take full advantage of the learning experiences.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where every child receives equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. There is appropriate emphasis on

celebrating diversity. The practitioners succeed in creating a warm and welcoming environment for children. The setting has sufficient practitioners with the relevant knowledge and experience to deliver the curriculum. On the whole there is a sufficient supply of resources that are used effectively to support the learning and teaching. There is suitable use of visits and of visitors from the community to enhance children's experiences.

The accommodation offers adequate facilities which are used fully by the practitioners. The outdoor play area is used for activities but there is a need to develop this further for children's physical activities.

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

The management and staff succeed very well in meeting the needs of the children attending the setting. There is a clear structure to the sessions with a specific role for each member of staff. There are child protection and equal opportunity policies in place. The complaints procedure is also implemented, but there are no records of any complaints being received.

The practitioners work closely together as a team and have shared values about the learning and the development of children. The relationship with children, parents and the local primary school was very positive and contributes significantly to creating a sense of community.

The management committee is fulfilling its responsibilities conscientiously. The members are very supportive and have established good relationships with practitioners. Regular meetings are held and records kept of the discussions on which developments are planned. In their planning, the practitioners respond appropriately to pertinent initiatives at both local and national levels. They attend appropriate courses in aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum and child care development. They use the training effectively in their work. They evaluate their work and identify their further professional development through a relevant performance management system.

Improving quality: Good

The practitioners are open to new ideas and willing to try different ways of working. They make appropriate use of the opportunities provided to network and share experiences with another setting in the area.

The setting makes good use of their self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation report leads to the identification of aspects to improve that will ensure positive benefits for all children.

The leaders discuss issues with parents, carers and children to aid the self-evaluation process. They use the information received from questionnaires to parents to gather views and identify areas for development. They work very effectively with

the local authority Foundation Stage advisory teacher.

Partnership working: Good

The lead practitioner works very well with the Foundation Stage advisory teacher of the Local Authority who regularly monitors the provision at the setting. The setting also co-operates well with the “Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin” officials who are very supportive of the setting. These partnerships are very successful and benefit the education of the children who attend the setting.

The staff work very closely with the management committee and are very willing to consult and to receive suggestions from parents and guardians. They collect the views of parents by sending out a written questionnaire. Parents and carers are also invited to discuss any areas of concern directly with the setting. This was confirmed in conversations with parents during the inspection and highlighted in the collated responses to the pre inspection questionnaires.

By the time the children leave the setting parents feel that their children have been well prepared for the next stage of their education. The partnership between the setting and the local school is very strong and this facilitates the smooth transition of children from the setting to the school. The use of local community contacts is effective in supporting the children’s learning through visits, for example a local farm.

Resource management: Good

The setting is appropriately staffed and effective use is made of the abilities of the practitioners. An appropriate performance management system is used for staff appraisal and identifying training.

There are appropriate procedures in place for cover should one of the permanent staff be absent from work. All resources are managed well by the practitioners and they have a clear understanding of the available budget. The management committee and the local community are active in collecting funds for the setting. The staff and management have identified areas for improvement and are aware of how they intend to move the setting forward. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Ten questionnaires were received from parents with very positive comments about the provision. They believe that their children are making good progress and enjoy attending the setting. They believe their children are safe and behave well at the setting. They state the staff are easy to talk to and that the children settle well in their company. They are of the opinion that the setting is run well.

Responses to discussions with learners

The children were at ease when speaking to visitors and say they are very happy in the setting. They join in enthusiastically in the activities. They are very eager to chat about their favourite activities and about their friends

Appendix 2

Reporting inspector

David K Davies	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.uk)