



*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 Summerhill**  
**The Institute**  
**New Road**  
**Summerhill**  
**Wrexham**  
**LL11 4TY**

**Date of inspection: May 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:

| <b>Judgement</b>      | <b>What the judgement means</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <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 Summerhill was opened approximately ten years ago as part of the Wrexham Children and Young People's Partnership provision. It provides Welsh-medium pre-school education for children in Summerhill and the surrounding area. The area from which children are drawn is judged as being neither prosperous nor socially and economically disadvantaged.

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

The setting provides two hour sessions for five mornings a week for two and three year old children, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. Twenty two children are registered at the setting of which nine are three year old children. One child is funded by the Partnership.

English is the language spoken at home for every child. Although the setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh, English is also used as necessary.

Children's education is supported by a leader and one practitioner. Both are appropriately qualified to teach early years children.

The setting meets in a room in the Institute hall. It includes a classroom, toilets, kitchen and storerooms. An extensive hall is also available for the setting most of the time. A designated outdoor area was recently established for the setting's use.

When they have completed their time in the setting, most children will continue their education in a local Welsh medium primary school.

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

## Summary

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>The setting's current performance</b>       | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Good</b> |

### Current performance

The setting's performance is good because:

- standards in literacy and numeracy are good;
- children make good progress in learning;
- provision for developing literacy and numeracy skills are good; and
- the setting provides good value for money.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the leader gives the work of the setting a distinct sense of direction;
- practitioners are open to new ideas and eager to bring about improvement; and because
- staff are very aware of recent developments in the Foundation Phase.

## Recommendations

In order to further improve, the setting needs to:

A1 raise standards in information communications technology (ICT):

A2 encourage every child to participate in focus tasks:

A3 further develop self-evaluation: and

A4 use assessment information to plan the next steps in learning.

### *What happens next?*

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

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

**Good**

### **Standards: Good**

Bearing in mind their age and stage of development, many children achieve well in activities provided for them and make realistic progress in nearly all areas of learning. Many children have developed secure learning skills and during free choice activities, concentrate and persevere with tasks. Older children in the group apply their skills purposefully in a range of contexts and develop wider skills and personal qualities needed to take full advantage of the Foundation Phase curriculum.

Most children are developing good literacy and numeracy skills. During group sessions, they listen to and carry out instructions carefully and use appropriate language in their play. Every child shows an interest in books and has started experimenting with mark-making.

During practical activities, nearly all children select and use mathematical ideas confidently and count up to ten objects with increasing accuracy. With guidance, many children identify patterns and simple sequences and use a limited range of mathematical vocabulary.

All children listen and respond enthusiastically to material played on CD players, but their ICT skills are generally limited.

Most children make good progress in the Welsh language with all of them understanding far more words than they can speak. During whole-group sessions, all children join in songs and rhymes very eagerly and enjoy following and responding to stories.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most children demonstrate high levels of interest and motivation and develop positive attitudes towards learning. A very distinctive feature of the setting is the very good behaviour and the care and concern shown by children towards one another.

When cleaning their teeth at the beginning of each session and eating their snacks, children demonstrate a secure understanding of how to become healthy. Most know that what they eat is important and that physical activity is good for their health.

All children have a close relationship with the practitioners and trust their guidance. During their engagement in specific tasks or in tasks of their own choice, most co-operate amenable demonstrating good levels of independence. All children feel safe in the setting and feel free from physical and verbal abuse.

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| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> | <b>Adequate</b> |
|---|-----------------|

**Learning experiences: Adequate**

The principles of the Foundation Phase are reflected strongly in the quality of the curriculum provided for children. Practitioners collaborate closely to plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities for children across nearly all areas of learning. Children of all ages and ability are challenged by relevant activities which provide continuity and progression in their learning and enable them to take risks and become independent learners.

Every child benefits substantially from the numerous opportunities they have to acquire literacy, communication and numeracy skills. Provision is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for every child. However, little attention is given to developing ICT skills.

Practitioners use the indoor and outdoor environment imaginatively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences and develop their skills effectively. Children occasionally visit places outside the setting and learn from visitors to the setting. They are all actively involved in the setting's recycling arrangements.

Through their celebration of Welsh festivals and traditions, children develop their personal and cultural identity well. Not enough opportunities are provided for them to learn about people from other cultures.

**Teaching: Adequate**

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have appropriate expectations for every child, including those of lower ability. They provide stimulating learning experiences across six of the seven areas of learning and use a good range of teaching strategies which ensure the engagement and interest of children. Practitioners know when it is appropriate to intervene in children's learning and they do sensitively and skilfully to encourage children to challenge themselves as they learn. Imaginative use is made of a variety of resources to appeal to children's interest and improve learning. Adult support is clearly focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning.

Practitioners plan carefully to ensure there is an appropriate balance between child-selected and practitioner-led activities. However, children are not sufficiently encouraged to participate in focus tasks.

Although progress and learning are assessed and tracked thoroughly across most areas of learning, this information is not used purposefully to plan children's next steps in their learning. Parents are informed informally about 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. Almost 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. There are appropriate arrangements for the support of children with additional learning needs and for making effective use of key agencies.

The latest CSSIW report was very positive and made no recommendations for improvement.

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 enough 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.

With the exception of ICT, there is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual. Resources in the outdoor area and in the community are used very effectively to support learning in the classroom. The buildings and accommodation are of appropriate quality and are used extensively.

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| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|--|-------------|

### **Leadership: Good**

The leader gives the work of practitioners and children a distinct sense of direction. She communicates a clear vision for the setting's development and explores how to achieve it in collaboration with others. She is very receptive to advice and reflects critically upon her work. Learning and teaching are managed well, and the setting's policies are implemented conscientiously. The leader supports and challenges staff positively and encourages everyone to do their best. Practitioners work closely as a

team and have shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships. They make sure that the Foundation Phase and other national priorities, are successfully delivered.

Relationships with children, parents and the primary school to which most children will transfer, are very positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community.

The recently formed management committee is developing an increasing understanding of its role and is very supportive of the setting's work. Individual members are well informed of the setting's performance and have started to undertake their responsibility of supporting the setting as a critical friend.

Outcomes for children are generally good.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Practitioners have an appropriate understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for improvement. They have recently carried out an evaluation of the setting's work and have used the information purposefully in an action plan to prioritise those aspects they wish to improve. With guidance from the LA's advisory teacher, practitioners are very open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working. However, self-evaluation is in its early stages of development and as yet, has not brought about significant improvements in the setting's work. It also does not take sufficient account of the views of parents.

Practitioners are supported well by a comprehensive programme of continuous professional development which is mainly provided by the LA and the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (MYM). This ensures that all members of staff acquire new knowledge and skills regularly and are very 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 partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. There is a very productive partnership with the educational services and with the local Welsh medium primary school. 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. Through the management committee, very productive links have been formed with a number of organisations in the local community.

### **Resource management: Good**

The setting is appropriately staffed to teach all aspects of the curriculum and staff are deployed effectively to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. Resources are managed well.

The leader and the management committee have an appropriate understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are carefully evaluated by the leader 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

Two parents' questionnaires were received. Parents say their children have settled down well in the setting and are making good progress in their learning. Parents believe they are regularly informed about their child's progress 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](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))