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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Creigiau
Scout Hall
The Terrace
Creigiau
Cardiff
CF15 9NG**

Date of inspection: March 2015

by

**Mr Eifion R Morgan
Reporting Inspector**

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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW..or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Creigiau is a Welsh medium setting located in the Scouts Hall in Creigiau, a village near Llantrisant. Most children attending the setting come from the immediate locality and are mostly from homes where English is the predominant language spoken. Many children are from homes where one parent is Welsh speaking or are learning Welsh. Very few come from homes where Welsh is the language spoken in the home.

The setting is registered by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to accept up to 18 children in any session. Currently there are 51 children on the register; 11 are aged three years, of whom five are funded. The setting accepts children from the age of two years and children move onto the next stage in their education following their third birthday and when there is room for them at the Welsh medium local primary school.

The setting is open for five mornings a week during school term time, between 9.15 a.m. and 11.45 a.m. At present there is no child identified as having additional learning needs.

Since January 2015, the setting has been jointly led and the leaders are supported by an assistant. They are suitably qualified and experienced. During the inspection there were also two students on placement.

The last CSSIW inspection was in September 2014. The setting has not previously been inspected by Estyn.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement because:

- Children are happy, feel secure and settle quickly when they arrive in the morning.
- Relationships between adults and children are good.
- Children are well cared for and supported.
- Many children have good listening skills and join in enthusiastically with class action songs.
- Practitioners encourage children to eat healthily and to take exercise.

However,

- There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Assessment is not used well enough to inform planning or to provide a clear picture of each child's progress.
- Learning experiences are not well matched to children's age and ability.
- Children, particularly the more able, are not sufficiently challenged.

Prospects for improvement

Strengths outweigh areas for development because:

- The new leadership is committed to providing the best possible provision for all children.
- The recently appointed leader gives the setting a clear vision for the future and high expectations.
- The recently appointed leader has identified and is addressing areas for development. She is eager to develop the setting's provision and consequently improve children's outcomes.
- The setting has established good relationships with parents and this contributes to a sense of community.
- The setting is beginning to use self-evaluation as a basis to bringing about improvement.

- The management committee is very supportive of the setting.

However

- Planning for improvement is at an early stage of development.
- Self-evaluation does not focus sufficiently on children's standards of achievement and wellbeing.

Recommendations

- R1. Improve children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- R2. Develop an assessment system that clearly identifies children's achievement and progress.
- R3. Use children's assessment records in planning learning experiences so that tasks are well matched to children's age and ability.
- R4. Ensure that children, particularly the more able, have sufficient challenge.
- R5. Provide parents with information that will enable them to help children improve.
- R6. Produce a setting development plan to prioritise and monitor improvements.

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many children make acceptable progress in their knowledge and understanding across most areas of the curriculum. These children show a positive attitude to learning and often achieve well. Most children choose activities that interest them and persevere. The majority of children have good listening skills and nearly all partake enthusiastically in class songs and particularly enjoy action songs. Most children follow instructions appropriately and recall previous learning, such as answering questions about a previous story that they have heard.

Most children are developing a basic understanding of the Welsh language. However, very few children are able to converse freely in the language and the majority are limited to single words and simple phrases and conversation during play is invariably in English. Apart from a few, children are not confident in using the Welsh language and have very limited vocabulary.

Most children enjoy listening to stories but their enjoyment is often spoilt by a few children with poor listening skills. Very few children look at books independently.

Most children handle writing implements, including chalk, pencils and felt tip pens confidently and a few make reasonable attempts to write their names. A minority are able to write number in a recognisable form.

Children's counting skills are developing suitably as a group. All children recite numbers to 10 confidently and most do so in Welsh. Individually most children count to five accurately such as when counting the number of steps they have climbed. The more able can count to 10 and a few beyond 10. Many children are beginning to recognise number and the more able can match numbers in written form. A minority of children are developing a basic mathematical language and understand the meaning of words such as "full and empty, large and small". Many children can match simple shapes, such as a jigsaw. A few children are beginning to recognise two dimensional shapes, such as triangles, squares and circles and know their Welsh names. Very few children have the ability to draw recognisable shapes

Many children have relevant experiences of using digital toys and play with toy mobile phones. Overall, children's competence in information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

Many children have well-developed physical skills. They pedal and manoeuvre tricycles skilfully and use paint brushes with good control. They happily select and use paint and use a range of materials in their displays. Many children know that seeds and plants need water to grow and where to find minibeasts, such as insects in their outside environment. Children's problem solving and independent learning skills are insufficiently developed.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are enthusiastic to enter the setting in the morning and to get involved in the activities set out for them. They settle down quickly and staff are always on hand to support them though many are happy to work independently or in small groups.

Children are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. Many are affectionate towards other children and are happy to take turns and share resources. Most show a positive attitude to learning and behave well. However, a few children have poor behavioural skills and are, at times, disruptive, such as during snack time or when listening to a story. This affects other children's learning and the contribution they can make. Relationships are good between adults and children and between children themselves.

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

Practitioners provide children with a worthwhile range of learning activities both indoors and outdoors. Provision and planning for the development of children's basic language, literacy and communication skills and numeracy skills does not support children's learning well enough. Planning for the development of children's ICT skills is inadequate. Overall, planning does not provide for sufficient differentiated activities to cater for children of different ages and ability and consequently does not provide for sufficient challenge. The planning does not clearly and consistently indicate the next steps in individual children's learning.

Practitioners work well together as a team and are sensitive to children's individual needs. The key worker system in operation means that practitioners know the children well and they use questioning and advice appropriately to encourage children's thinking skills.

Children have regular and timely opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate important days in the Welsh calendar, such as Santes Dwynwen and St. David's day. Children learn about the artefacts associated with such celebrations.

Practitioners use the Welsh language throughout the sessions and this impacts well on children's language development. Opportunities to sing Welsh songs, particularly action songs are much appreciated by children. However, the range of ages and children's differing abilities, especially in the Welsh language, make storytelling to the whole group inappropriate. A minority of children soon lose interest and their anti-social behaviour affects other children's learning.

Practitioners offer children satisfactory experiences to learn about and understand the importance of recycling and sustainability. Good opportunities are provided by

the setting's location to learn about the world in which they live. Children know about the Chinese New Year and celebrations.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners are enthusiastic and committed to providing the best possible support for the children. They are sensitive to children's needs and respect them as individuals. Staff make time to listen to children and converse with them. This makes a positive impact on children's developing Welsh language.

Practitioners have a useful understanding of the expectations of the Foundation Phase. They use an appropriate range of teaching strategies, such as working with small groups and individual children, but allowing children sufficient time to work independently. There is a good balance between child-selected and adult-led activities. Staff use praise and encouragement well and questioning is well directed at developing children's thinking skills.

Relationships between adults and children are good and practitioners are good language models.

Assessment procedures are in the process of being developed. Each practitioner supports a group of children and knows the children well. Assessment records are compiled for each child in photographic and booklet form and provide parents with an end of year record of what their child has achieved. Such records do not focus sufficiently on the skills the child has acquired neither are they used to plan the next stage in the child's learning. Consequently, the planned activities are not well matched to individual children's needs and often do not challenge them sufficiently.

Parents and carers are kept suitably informed about their child's progress through informal contact with staff and through attending the setting's activities. There is no regular communication with parents to make them aware of their child's progress and to identify what they can do to help them improve.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting successfully promotes children's health and wellbeing. Practitioners are caring and support the children well. All children are respected as individuals and treated equally. Practitioners encourage children to form positive relationships and to show respect and tolerance towards one another. Induction arrangements and the setting's open door policy ensure that children settle quickly into the setting and this helps to ensure their emotional and social development.

Day-to-day activities successfully foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are encouraged to share toys and other resources and to care for each other. They learn to care for living things by growing seeds and looking after them.

The setting is a secure area. Gates to the location are kept locked during the sessions and the outdoors is a large fenced and secure area. When children are indoors the door is kept locked so no one can enter or leave unannounced. Children are always supervised. All practitioners understand the procedures for dealing with

safeguarding issues and there are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with additional learning needs. There were no such children present during the inspection.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a welcoming, attractive and stimulating environment for the children, where all children have equal access to all activities. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced and during the inspection were supported by three students on placement. Resources are of good quality and accessible to children. The setting's positive, caring ethos ensures that children feel secure and the good relationships between adults and children ensure that all children know where to obtain help if needed.

The internal accommodation is spacious and well maintained. Good use is made of the available space and displays of children's work enhance the learning environment. Facilities to encourage children to write and to develop their numeracy skills are underdeveloped.

The outdoor environment is safe and secure and allows a wide range of learning experiences to take place. The outside makes a significant impact on children's learning. Children have opportunities to visit the locality, such as the local post office and shop and visitors to the setting include the local police. This extends children's knowledge and understanding of the local community appropriately.

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

The setting is jointly led and the sharing of leadership responsibilities is a very recent development. Both leaders are firmly committed to providing good quality provision and the recently appointed leader has brought to the setting a clear vision for the future and high expectations. She displays a strong sense of purpose focused on improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for all children. There is some indication that improvements are taking place, such as small group activities focused on developing more able children's numeracy skills. Overall, however, such improvements cannot be evaluated objectively since such improvements have not had sufficient time to become embedded in the day-to-day running of the setting.

The setting aims to ensure that all children are well cared for and treated with affection and respect. These aims are achieved in practice. Parents value the fact that practitioners are approachable and that their children are happy and eager to attend. Relationships between parents and staff are positive and this contributes to a sense of community.

Practitioners are hard working and work well as a team. During the inspection they were well supported by two students on placement. All are focused on providing good provision for the children. Leaders are beginning to involve all staff in planning and children's views are taken into account. However, the learning experiences are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of children of different ages and ability. The curriculum overall lacks balance and does not focus sufficiently on developing children's literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The management committee is strongly supportive of the setting and is well informed. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support the day-to-day running of the setting and these are consistently implemented. Good links have been established with parents and carers.

Procedures for staff appraisal meet requirements and practitioners have a developing understanding of their responsibilities.

The setting meets national and local priorities appropriately, such as implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum and encouraging healthy eating and regular exercise.

Improving quality: Adequate

A culture of self-evaluation is developing well within the setting set in motion by the recently appointed leader. Since her appointment she has worked efficiently at evaluating the provision and on coming to an understanding of children's achievements and wellbeing. Slowly a picture is emerging and the self-evaluation report produced recently is a useful document identifying the strengths and areas for improvement. She has consulted widely including staff, parents and children and is developing a clear view of the setting.

Areas identified for development are extensive but are not prioritised nor given a satisfactory timetable for completion. Planning for improvement based on the findings of self-assessment is underdeveloped.

The leader who has assumed responsibility for addressing the deficiencies in the setting is committed and has worked very hard over the last two months. She is enthusiastic and her efforts are well focused on improving children's standards of achievement. However, a great deal remains to be done.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a suitable range of partnerships that impact well on the quality of provision and outcomes for the children.

The partnership with parents makes a valuable and worthwhile contribution to developing children's achievement and wellbeing. All parents are given a useful welcoming pack providing them with essential information about the setting and its main aims and objectives. Parents are invited to an open afternoon to meet and discuss issues of mutual concern with the staff and meet the key worker who will have primary responsibility for their child. The setting also invites parents to remain

and settle their child when their child first attends the setting. Practitioners are always available to greet children and speak with parents/carers when children arrive in the morning. Staff are on hand to talk with parents/carers when they collect their children and to keep them informed of the morning's activities. Parents are also very active in fund raising activities and have made substantial contribution to ensure a good supply of resources.

Good arrangements are in place for the transfer of children to the local Welsh medium primary school. Children are familiar with the nursery teacher and she is given information about the children before they start the next phase of their education. The setting, as part of its "wrap around" role also collects and supervises children who attend school on a part time basis and have previously been at the setting. This means that younger children know those children at the school.

The setting makes good use of resources within the community to enhance its provision. Visits to the post office and local shops increases children's awareness of the locality. Visitors such as the local police, help children realise people who look after them in the community. The setting also uses the immediate local environment well. It is well differentiated into play areas, areas for investigations and a seating area for story time – all aspects make a useful contribution to children's learning.

When necessary, local services are used, such as speech therapists to support children with additional learning needs.

Staff have attended some relevant professional training courses including courses on safeguarding children, first aid and food hygiene. There have been significant changes in the setting over recent months with the appointment of a new leadership team. The new leadership team however, has not been well supported by the local authority. As a result curriculum planning does not support children's learning well enough, assessment is not well used in planning children's next steps in learning, and planning for future improvement is underdeveloped.

Resource management: Adequate

The setting makes adequate use of staffing and resources to support the delivery of the Foundation Phase. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced and have attended professional development courses relevant to their needs.

Staff appraisal is planned but has not taken place as yet and training requirements have not been identified.

The setting is generally suitably resourced. Outside provision is particularly good and well used. Internally some areas, such as the role play facilities, are interesting and stimulating for children. However, some important aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum are underdeveloped, for example facilities for mark making and writing are not prominent and no suitable location exists for children to learn computer skills.

Finances are well managed and spending priorities evaluated carefully. The budget is kept under regular review and a small surplus is kept in reserve.

In view of the weakness identified in children's standards of achievement and learning experiences, the setting provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mr Eifion R Morgan	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)

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 3 to 7 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 which 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)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation which 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.