



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Arberth  
Bloomfield Community Centre  
Redstone Road  
Narberth  
Pembrokeshire  
SA67 7EP**

**Date of inspection: October 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:

<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 Arberth is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a room in Bloomfield community hall in the town of Narberth, Pembrokeshire. It offers education for children from two and a half to four years of age in sessions of two and a half hours, five mornings a week. The setting is registered to accept up to 24 children per session. There are currently 39 children on roll, 14 of whom receive early years education funded by the local authority.

Few children speak Welsh at home and very few children speak English as an additional language. Six members work at the setting, and the leader has been in post since January 2014.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in July 2017 and by Estyn in February 2012.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting is adequate because:

- The majority of children make suitable progress and develop positive attitudes to learning
- Nearly all children are happy when they come to the setting and settle well
- Nearly all children behave well and show respect and courtesy to others
- Practitioners plan an appropriate variety of activities which engage the interest of many children appropriately
- Practitioners develop children's physical skills soundly
- A sound working relationship exists between practitioners and children
- Practitioners have created a welcoming and caring learning environment for children

However:

- Only a few children try to use the Welsh language when discussing their work with adults and peers
- Children's thinking and problem-solving skills have not been developed soundly enough
- There are few opportunities for children to shoulder responsibilities and to nurture independent skills regularly
- Practitioners do not plan purposefully so that children can apply their skills according to their ability

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Practitioners work well as a team
- There are appropriate arrangements for managing staff performance
- A suitable range of beneficial partnerships support provision successfully
- Leaders have identified the majority of strengths and many areas for improvement appropriately
- It has a suitable range of resources to meet the requirements of the foundation phase

However:

- Leaders do not respond effectively enough to advice from partners about how to improve
- There is insufficient focus on strategic planning to raise standards
- Self-evaluation procedures are not effective enough in measuring the effectiveness of provision on children's outcomes
- Daily routines do not ensure that practitioners make the best use of all available resources

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's oral skills
- R2 Improve the role of leaders in setting a clear strategic direction and acting on the outcomes of the self-evaluation processes
- R3 Plan purposefully to enable children to apply their skills progressively in areas of learning across the curriculum
- R4 Provide regular opportunities for children to investigate, solve problems and develop into successful independent learners

### **What happens next?**

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### Standards: Adequate

On entry to the setting, the basic skills of the majority of children are as expected for their age. During their time at the setting, the majority make suitable progress from their starting points and develop positive attitudes to learning.

The listening skills of the majority of children develop appropriately through listening to stories and joining in circle time activities. They sit quietly and show increasing interest in and understanding of familiar directions and questions. Many have a suitable awareness of Welsh nursery rhymes and songs and enjoy joining in singing and making appropriate movements, for example by singing loudly to show that they are present during circle time. However, only a few children try to use the Welsh language when discussing their work with adults and their peers.

Many children can find their own names in written form without help when they self-register and when sitting to eat a snack. They recognise colours appropriately and show an interest in books, handling the book correctly and turning the pages to follow the story. The majority are very eager to find out what happens next when an adult reads an end-of-day story. A minority of children are beginning to show a suitable understanding of the purpose of writing and are beginning to create marks appropriately, for example by using chalk to make various marks in the outdoor area.

A majority of children are developing their numeracy skills appropriately through the practical use of numbers, for example by counting how many cockleshells are in the box. These children count objects up to 10 successfully and a few can recognise and count up to 20. Many can recognise two-dimensional shapes appropriately and understand how to classify objects according to similar characteristics, for example, arranging autumn leaves according to their colour. However, the numeracy skills of more able children are not developing effectively enough.

A majority of children have appropriate information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They begin to use a tablet to play a game and to control a programmable toy with suitable help from an adult. Most children have a good understanding of the purpose of technological equipment in role-play, for example when using an old telephone and the till in the 'post office'.

Many of the children have sound physical skills. They balance skilfully as they control a bicycle in the outdoor area and as they make various movements around the hall. Most children's fine motor skills are developing successfully, for example as they complete a jigsaw, use dough and handle objects in the little world. Most use small tools with sound control in a variety of different tasks, such as using tweezers to grasp a conker and a cockleshell.

In general, most children ability to solve problems is limited. Only a few children develop their thinking skills appropriately across the areas of learning. Many

children's creative skills are developing suitably, for example using musical instruments in the outdoor area, and using paint to print an outline of their hands.

**Wellbeing: Good**

On arrival at the setting, nearly all children are happy and engage enthusiastically in their choices of activities. Most show a high level of motivation and perseverance when working independently and with peers during a free play period. They make good choices about their learning during these periods, for example when choosing areas for independent play. Most behave well and show respect for others, wait their turn and share equipment with each other. However, a few children are unable to concentrate during large group activities on the carpet and lose interest.

Many children recall previous learning soundly and use their knowledge appropriately, for example when counting the number of boys and girls present. On the whole, many children's independent skills are developing appropriately, for example brushing their teeth and washing their hands before eating. Many can put on and take off their coats fairly independently although a few need help from an adult. Nearly all of them choose a healthy snack during snack time and show good social skills during these sessions. They are polite when sitting with their peers and say 'thank you' when taking refreshments.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

Practitioners offer a suitable range of learning experiences that engage many of the children appropriately. They consider children's interests and their own ideas appropriately when planning. Very recently, all practitioners have started meeting more regularly for joint planning of relevant learning activities and experiences. Practitioners make suitable use of indoor and outdoor learning areas to enrich provision, although they do not always plan purposefully enough to enable children to apply their skills progressively across the areas of learning. Apart from the morning free play session, there are few opportunities for children to choose learning experiences independently and to research for themselves.

Practitioners plan in order to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. They ensure suitable opportunities to develop these skills through regular activities and exercises. For example, they practice responses to familiar questions with children during registration and large group sessions and sing familiar songs and rhymes on a daily basis. They also reinforce numbers, colours and shapes appropriately during these sessions. However, there are few opportunities for children to develop their ability to solve problems that are appropriate to their age and ability. Practitioners read a story to children every day. They use these opportunities appropriately to teach children new vocabulary and to develop their appreciation of books. However, opportunities to develop children's early writing skills through purposeful activities are limited and practitioners do not plan purposefully enough to develop children's oral skills. Practitioners plan suitable opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills through an appropriate range of learning experiences, for example by controlling a programmable toy and starting to use apps appropriately on a tablet.

Practitioners develop children's physical skills soundly through outdoor activities and in the hall at the centre on a regular basis. However, planning and daily routine do not ensure that children have continuous access to activities in the outdoor area.

The setting provides beneficial opportunities for children to learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations, for example celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's day. Practitioners use visits and visitors occasionally to enrich learning experiences appropriately, for example by inviting a veterinary surgeon to talk to children about caring for pets. Practitioners provide suitable learning opportunities for children to learn about the importance of showing respect and tolerance towards people from a different cultural background. For example, they try foods and learn about how people use different symbols for writing as part of learning activities and experiences relating to celebrating the Chinese New Year.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

The positive working relationship between children and practitioners promotes good collaboration and mutual respect. This contributes well to creating a welcoming learning environment and a caring atmosphere for children. Practitioners work together soundly as a team and this is beginning to have a positive impact on provision and children's outcomes. On the whole, they have an appropriate understanding of the principles of the foundation phase and child development. They strive on a daily basis to create a stimulating learning environment for children by establishing appropriate learning areas within the room. However, they do not plan rigorously enough to provide useful opportunities for children to apply their skills by using these areas throughout sessions. In addition, planning does not always ensure an effective balance between activities chosen by children and those led by adults.

Practitioners praise children regularly for their efforts and manage their behaviour sensibly and sensitively. They make skilful use of 'golden rules' to reinforce good behaviour. Practitioners use purposeful questioning and open questions in seeking to make sound improvements in children's understanding and thinking skills. For example, they encourage children to count flower bulbs and to describe how to cultivate them when planting in the garden. Generally, practitioners model the Welsh language appropriately, although they do not always encourage children robustly enough to practice and extend their language skills.

Practitioners are beginning to make appropriate use of informal assessments to record children's progress across the areas of learning. The use of the foundation phase profile is beginning to develop their understanding of children's progress appropriately. However, they do not use this information effectively enough to plan purposefully enough for the needs of specific groups of children. As a result, practitioners' expectations are not always high enough to offer activities that challenge children effectively enough.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting is a happy and welcoming community in which children's health and wellbeing is a priority for all practitioners. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners provide beneficial opportunities for children to learn about looking after themselves through a suitable range of activities. A good example of this is the



guidance and opportunities given to children to learn about how to look after their teeth. They also succeed in promoting the importance of healthy eating and drinking through activities such as snack time. These periods also develop children's social skills appropriately and teach them to behave politely and to take turns. However, practitioners do not provide enough beneficial opportunities for children to undertake responsibilities within the setting, for example by serving snacks and tidying up after learning activities.

The setting provides beneficial opportunities to develop children's physical skills through a suitable range of activities, for example controlling a bicycle around the path in the outdoor area. Practitioners promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately in daily routines. An effective example of this is encouraging children to discuss golden rules during large group sessions. This ensures that nearly all children understand their peers' feelings well, work together fairly and respect others. The setting provides appropriate opportunities for children to learn about sustainability by recycling paper. This develops their understanding of how to take suitable care of the world.

The setting has sound processes for responding to the needs of any child with additional learning needs as necessary. They co-operate successfully with specialist agencies such as the speech and language therapist to deliver bespoke programmes for specific groups of children, when the need arises.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting offers a welcoming and supportive learning environment for children. It has an inclusive ethos where each child is respected and receives the same fair play. Practitioners work well together to ensure that learning equipment and tools are organised successfully each morning to create beneficial learning areas. These learning areas are attractive and organised appropriately to satisfy children's interests and to promote their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills suitably. However, not all of these areas are available to children throughout the session. This limits their ability to make decisions about where and how they learn and their ability to apply their skills independently.

The setting is safe and kept clean. Colourful and attractive displays support learning and celebrate children's work appropriately. Although the setting has an appropriate Welsh ethos, practitioners do not always reinforce this effectively enough as an integral part of daily work. On the whole, the setting has a suitable supply of resources that support the principles of the foundation phase appropriately. The outdoor area enables children to venture and learn more about nature, for example by planting and growing vegetables and flowers in the garden. However, the outdoor area has not been developed effectively enough and practitioners do not plan purposefully enough to develop children's skills in this area.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Leadership: Adequate**

The leader has a suitable vision for the setting based on providing children with a caring, homely and stimulating atmosphere. She provides sound support for staff in their daily work and allocate responsibilities appropriately. However, there is insufficient focus on strategic planning to raise standards and leaders do not ensure that provision and teaching lead purposefully enough to improvements in standards. Recently, the leader and all staff have started meeting regularly to discuss specific aspects of the setting's work, including planning themes and learning experiences. This reinforces the sense of belonging and appreciation among staff. However, these practices have not been embedded soundly enough to date and not all staff contribute effectively enough to the setting's daily routines.

The setting has appropriate arrangements for managing staff performance. Committee members take a prominent role in the performance review process for all staff, including the leader. This ensures that staff receive beneficial opportunities to discuss elements of their performance and identify any further training they need. However, leaders do not always act effectively enough on the findings of the process in order to improve important elements of provision and children's outcomes.

The leader and the management committee work together appropriately to ensure that statutory policies are implemented. They meet regularly and receive relevant information from the leader who supports them in making sensible decisions about provision and funding. The committee is supportive of the setting's life and work and makes the most of their individual expertise, for example when applying for grants regularly and organising special events to supplement funding. However, members of the management committee do not have a sufficiently sound understanding of the setting's life and work, including strengths and important areas in need of improvement.

**Improving quality: Adequate**

The setting has suitable arrangements for identifying most of its strengths as well as many aspects that need to be improved. The leader uses partners' monitoring reports as a basis for these arrangements and occasionally seeks parents' views. Very recent staff meetings have included discussions about the setting's performance. However, staff do not play an effective enough role in self-evaluation procedures and do not have a sound enough understanding of the setting's priorities for improvement. As a result, the setting is not always prompt enough in addressing what needs to be improved, for example improving planning in order to ensure that learning experiences challenge each child effectively. However, staff have recently begun to respond more appropriately to areas for improvement, for example in improving their understanding of children's starting points through the use of the foundation phase profile, and starting to develop the outdoor area.

The committee receives suitable information about the setting's work from the leader and through visiting the setting. This ensures that they offer appropriate support as necessary. The improvement plan identifies a range of priorities that link suitably to self-evaluation procedures. This includes appropriate targets, actions and

timescales. The committee has responded to a few suggestions from parents, for example using social media to improve communication between the setting and the home. However, neither the committee nor the practitioners monitor the impact of actions on children's outcomes effectively enough. The setting has not made good enough progress in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has a suitable range of beneficial partnerships that support provision and children's outcomes successfully. Practitioners work appropriately with the local authority's advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. In general, the leader and the management committee act appropriately on their advice and guidance, which contributes appropriately to improving provision and children's outcomes. The leader and practitioners undertake occasional training from these partners to improve their understanding of the principles of the foundation phase and child development. In addition, staff have visited other settings to observe good practice. This is beginning to have a positive impact on provision, for example through starting to improve the outdoor learning environment with a mud kitchen. The setting has a robust relationship with the local school and the leader meets the nursery teacher each term to share information about children who will be transferring. This relationship supports smooth transition arrangements for children as they move on to the next stage in their education.

The sound working relationship between staff and parents ensures that they are very keen to support the setting, for example by organising fundraising activities. The open door policy ensures that parents have appropriate opportunities to discuss with practitioners any concerns they have. However, parents receive few opportunities for more formal feedback about their children's progress during their time at the setting. Practitioners make appropriate use of social media to inform parents about the setting's work and events on a regular basis.

The setting makes appropriate use of the community to enrich children's experiences. For example, parents and community members visit the setting to share their experiences with children. Children also make occasional visits to nearby settings and this has a positive impact on awareness of the wider community, for example visiting a farm with other settings associated with Mudiad Meithrin.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

The setting has an appropriate number of qualified staff to provide children with a suitable foundation phase curriculum. They have an appropriate understanding of the principles of the foundation phase, although they do not always use their knowledge effectively enough when planning challenging learning experiences that meet the needs of each child. Practitioners are beginning to undertake training and visits to other settings to improve their understanding and personal skills. Arrangements for staff performance management are beginning to support staff development appropriately by identifying relevant training.

The setting has a suitable range of resources to meet the requirements of the foundation phase appropriately. Recently, leaders have been adding purposeful resources in the outdoor area in order to enhance learning, for example establishing

a mud kitchen with cooking appliances. However, the daily routine does not ensure that practitioners make the best use of all available resources. As a result, children do not have access to all learning areas throughout the session.

On the whole, leaders prioritise funding suitably to ensure good quality resources for the setting. Leaders take advantage of opportunities to increase the setting's funding by applying for external grants. This has enabled them to add resources as necessary. They make appropriate use of an early years development grant by attending relevant training by the local authority, for example to develop children's literacy skills through stories.

Given the children's standards and the quality of provision and leadership, the setting offers adequate value for money.

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<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"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CIW</b>	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<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>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<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>
<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	<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>

<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education