



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Cwm Derwen
YGG Cwm Derwen
Syr Dafydd Avenue
Oakdale
Gwent
NP12 0JJ**

Date of inspection: July 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:

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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Context

Cylch Meithrin Cwm Derwen is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a cabin on the grounds of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen in Caerphilly local authority. The setting is registered to admit 16 children between two and four years old. It provides early years education sessions between 12.45pm and 3.15pm, five days a week during term time. During the inspection, 9 children were receiving funded early years education.

Currently, no children with additional learning needs attend the setting. A very few children come from Welsh-speaking homes.

The setting employs three qualified full-time members of staff and one part-time, including the full-time leader. The leader was appointed to the post in September 2015.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in February 2016 and by Estyn in May 2011.

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children listen well and acquire the Welsh language soon after they start at the setting
- Most children's numeracy skills are developing effectively and many use their knowledge to solve simple problems successfully
- Most children concentrate for extended periods and choose and persevere with activities independently
- Nearly all children behave well
- Practitioners plan a wide range of interesting learning experiences that engage most pupils' interest successfully
- Practitioners model the Welsh language skilfully in order to develop children's communication skills soundly
- Practitioners create a homely and welcoming atmosphere, which ensures that all children enjoy their time at the setting
- The setting has a wide range of resources of a high standard, which are used effectively to enrich the curriculum

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader has a clear vision, which is based on providing experiences and care of a high standard for all children at the setting
- Practitioners fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively and contribute positively to the day-to-day teaching
- The setting has robust arrangements for identifying its strengths and many of the areas for improvement
- The setting uses the planning for improvement process beneficially to improve aspects of leadership, provision and children's outcomes
- The setting has a wide range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and have a good effect on children's standards and wellbeing
- Leaders prioritise funding to improve provision consistently

Recommendations

- R1 Plan focus activities more effectively in order to develop children's skills systematically
- R2 Improve the use of assessment information to plan the next steps in learning more effectively
- R3 Develop the role of the management committee to evaluate and monitor the setting's work

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

On entry to the setting, most children have the skills that are expected for their age. On the whole, most make sound progress in their skills during their time at the setting. Most recall previous learning successfully, for example when discussing the lifecycle of a butterfly.

Although nearly all children join the setting without the ability to speak Welsh, they acquire the language quickly. Most listen well during presentations and activities. They have a sound understanding of the Welsh language and respond effectively to instructions from adults. With encouragement, many children begin to use familiar vocabulary and language patterns successfully during activities and snack time. A minority use full sentences independently when responding during activities, for example when describing their feelings during registration periods. Most children join in with songs enthusiastically. They enjoy listening to stories. They handle books appropriately, by turning the pages correctly and following the print carefully. A few older children emulate adults telling stories confidently to the rest of the children, and use vocabulary from the story correctly. Many children's early writing skills are developing well. For example, many children use marks to write a shopping list for the caterpillar's party.

Most children make good progress in their number skills and use mathematical language successfully as part of their play. They recite numbers up to 10 confidently. On the whole, many children count to 5 objects confidently, for example when counting how many butterflies have hatched from their cocoons. Most of the youngest children count fruit confidently up to 3 in order to place them in a shopping basket, while older children subtract one correctly. A few children are beginning to understand the difference between masculine and feminine numbers in Welsh well when counting the number of boys and girls who are present. Many children are beginning to recognise 2D shapes confidently. A majority of children use their number skills to solve simple problems successfully. For example, after buying seeds from the garden centre, they collect the correct number of pots to grow the seeds.

Overall, many children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing soundly. They use a wide range of technological equipment competently when working across the learning areas. For example, children use the digital camera confidently when taking pictures of their activities, and use a metal detector to search for food from the story 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' in the sand pit.

Most children's physical skills are developing soundly, for example when riding scooters and bicycles around the outdoor area. Most children have effective creative skills and make sensible choices from a selection of media to create pictures in the creative area. Many children are beginning to observe living things carefully to paint their own pictures independently.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children are happy when they arrive and leave the setting. They enjoy the activities and work confidently with other children, for example when role-playing in the garden centre. Nearly all children show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as tending to fruit and vegetables in the outdoor area. Most are beginning to express their views and personal preferences effectively, for example when discussing their favourite food and favourite colours.

Most children concentrate on their activities for extended periods. They show an interest and perseverance in their learning and enjoy activities in all areas of learning. Most make sensible choices during free play; for example, they decide to move from one learning area to another wholly independently. As a result, most children are confident learners.

Nearly all children behave well. They have good relationships with practitioners and relate well to each other. Nearly all children listen carefully to adults.

Nearly all children are happy to help each other and show care and concern for others. For example, they pass plates and food during snack time, and ask for a nappy and food in order to take care of the doll. Many children have a suitable understanding of how to stay healthy. They wash their hands after playing and before snack time. As a result, they learn how to care for themselves and other people positively.

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

Practitioners plan a wide range of interesting experiences that engage most children's interest successfully. Practitioners contribute purposefully to planning a stimulating curriculum jointly, which meets the requirements of the foundation phase suitably, although children do not play a strong enough part in this process.

Through effective use of the indoor and outdoor learning areas, practitioners plan activities that enrich children's learning successfully; for example, they encourage children to investigate ways of moving objects down troughs from the water tub. They plan valuable activities to develop children's independence and their ability to investigate purposefully. On the whole, practitioners ensure a suitable balance between adult-led activities and activities where children work independently. However, focus tasks are not planned purposefully enough to ensure that all children develop their skills systematically and are challenged regularly.

Practitioners plan useful activities to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Planning to develop children's Welsh language skills is developing effectively. For example, practitioners ensure regular opportunities to develop children's oracy skills throughout the sessions, with opportunities for them to learn new patterns and vocabulary. Practitioners plan appropriate activities to develop children's numeracy skills, for example by encouraging children to count food from a story and place it in a shopping basket. Planning to develop ICT is developing appropriately and there are relevant opportunities to develop children's skills by experimenting with a range of resources. However, on the whole, practitioners do not plan thoroughly enough to ensure that they develop the full range of skills across the learning areas.

Provision to develop the Welsh language and Welsh dimension is good. The use of a structured plan to develop the Welsh language has a positive effect on staff's language skills and, as a result, children's language skills. For example, practitioners ensure regular opportunities to reinforce the language during the session and encourage children to answer specific questions correctly. Through interesting activities, such as baking Welsh cakes and celebrations such as St David's Day, children develop a sound understanding of Welsh traditions and celebrations. This is supported successfully by visits to the Gŵyl Feithrin, which shows the children that the Welsh language is alive in the community.

The curriculum is enriched effectively by using visitors and visits. The use of external music expertise to teach music to the children has a positive effect on their creative skills. Visits by the dental hygienist, for example, develop children's awareness of the roles of people in their community purposefully.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the foundation phase. They have an effective awareness of when to intervene in children's play and when to allow them to experiment with their own ideas. One of the strengths in teaching is the close relationship between all practitioners and children. They praise the children's efforts frequently and manage behaviour sensitively. This leads to a supportive learning environment in which children enjoy experimenting and discovering new things for themselves.

Practitioners model the Welsh language successfully in order to develop children's communication skills soundly. They make effective use of songs and introduce new phrases and vocabulary purposefully. As a result, most children make good progress in their Welsh language skills and are beginning to use vocabulary and simple phrases when playing independently.

Practitioners provide a stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. They use their expertise purposefully to enhance learning, for example by providing opportunities for children to grow flowers and vegetables and take care of them in the outdoor area. Practitioners use issues that arise naturally throughout the day as a way of teaching children skilfully. For example, practitioners use the fire alarm test to remind the children of what they need to do if they hear the alarm. During focus activities, practitioners model expectations purposefully, for example when making a shopping list with the children for a party.

The setting's arrangements for assessing children's achievement are sound. Practitioners assess children by using the foundation phase profile appropriately. They keep detailed records of children's progress and areas for improvement during activities. They give suitable consideration to the information that derives from the assessments when planning activities, although they do not always use the information effectively enough to plan the next steps in learning. Parents and carers receive appropriate information about their children's progress through open evenings and informal discussions.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners create a homely and welcoming atmosphere, which ensures that nearly all children enjoy their time at the setting. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners take good care of the children as they arrive and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The setting provides valuable opportunities to promote children's spiritual and moral development. They do this effectively by encouraging children to discuss their feelings during registration periods and through collective worship at the end of the session. Practitioners plan very valuable opportunities to develop the children's sense of awe and wonder of the world in which they live. An effective example of this is observing the lifecycle of a butterfly before releasing it in the outdoor area.

The setting has effective arrangements to develop the children's awareness of the importance of living and eating healthily. For example, it provides valuable opportunities for children to grow vegetables in the outdoor area. Practitioners make beneficial use of snack time to reinforce these messages, in addition to developing children's personal and social skills. They use this time successfully to emphasise the need to be fair, wait their turn and share with others. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to recycle food, paper and plastic. This develops children's awareness of sustainability effectively.

Although there are currently no children with additional learning needs at the setting, it has appropriate arrangements in order to identify needs at an early stage.

Learning environment: Good

The setting has a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Practitioners know the children well and ensure that they have equal access to all activities.

Practitioners place a regular emphasis on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity. They teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures successfully, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year and the Diwali festival.

The setting has a wide range of resources of a high standard. Practitioners use these resources successfully to enrich children's learning, both indoors and outdoors. They use colourful displays to celebrate children's work effectively. Practitioners have developed a very stimulating outdoor area for children and there is a wide range of resources available. Where possible, practitioners ensure that they use real life resources to enrich the curriculum well, such as using live flowers and plants in the garden centre. They use the outdoor area regularly in order to develop children's social and personal skills soundly.

The setting is safe and clean. Visitors and visits to local venues, including the library and the museum at St Fagan's for the Gŵyl Feithrin, enrich children's learning experiences successfully.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Good

Leadership: Good

The leader manages the setting's day-to-day work conscientiously. She has a clear vision that is based on providing experiences and care of a high standard for all children at the setting. She shares this vision successfully with other practitioners, parents and the new management committee. The leader works closely with the other practitioners to create an ethos of teamwork. As a result, they fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively and contribute well to the day-to-day teaching. The leader looks for ways to improve her leadership skills regularly, for example by taking advantage of leadership training and working closely with the advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. As a result, her leadership skills are developing effectively.

The leader uses regular meetings to discuss issues, such as the quality of provision and children's assessments. As a result, practitioners make valuable changes to provision and identify children's needs well. There are appropriate performance management procedures in place at the setting, which make a beneficial contribution towards sharing ideas and ensuring high expectations among the staff. The leader makes valuable use of these arrangements to ensure that all staff have a sound knowledge of aspects of effective teaching.

The setting gives due attention to local and national priorities. For example, practitioners are very keen to improve their Welsh language skills, and plan in detail in order to introduce language of a good standard to children. This has a positive effect on children's linguistic skills.

Members of the management committee are very new to their roles. They meet regularly and are supportive of the setting's work. However, the committee's role in supporting the setting with its strategic direction has not yet been developed in full.

Improving quality: Good

The setting has robust arrangements to identify its strengths and many areas for improvement. All practitioners contribute to this process beneficially. The setting has recently introduced a self-evaluation book in order for practitioners to record their comments, which ensures that the process of evaluating the setting's work happens continuously. This strengthens the self-evaluation arrangements successfully and ensures that all members of staff have a sense of ownership of the process. For example, practitioners noticed that not all children were communicating confidently during registration periods. As a result, they adapted the arrangements for this period so that all children feel confident enough to contribute to discussions. However, the setting's self-evaluation arrangements have not identified a few important areas for improvement, such as the need to plan purposefully to develop children's skills progressively during focus sessions. Recently, leaders have used a wider range of evidence in order to gather information about strengths and areas for improvement, such as individual observations. Although they are in their early stages, these procedures strengthen leaders' knowledge of aspects that are in need of attention well.

There is a close link between the outcomes of the self-evaluation process and the development plan. The setting has an appropriate improvement plan, which includes relevant targets for improvement. The plan identifies costs, responsibilities and a suitable timescale for action. The setting uses the planning for improvement process beneficially to improve aspects of leadership, provision and children's outcomes. For example, as part of the process, practitioners have worked to improve the outdoor area. They have created an attractive and stimulating area that enhances the curriculum well and has a positive effect on children's personal and social skills.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a wide range of partnerships that improve the quality of provision and have a good effect on standards and children's wellbeing.

There is a strong relationship between the setting and parents. Practitioners share information about the setting's activities regularly through social media and newsletters. Activities such as the 'sach cyswllt cartref' (home link sack), and occasional activities for parents to complete with their children, provide them with beneficial ideas on how to help their children. Open evenings also provide a valuable opportunity to inform parents about what their children are learning.

The setting makes effective use of visitors and visits to enrich the curriculum. This makes children aware of the roles of people in the community, for example the police. The setting makes successful use of the local area to enrich the curriculum and to make children aware of their local area. An effective example of this is the visit to a residential home at Christmas time to sing carols.

The setting has a close relationship with the school, and the leader meets with the nursery teacher during the year in order to discuss the strengths and needs of children who transfer there. This ensures that children transfer to the school smoothly. This is supported effectively by visits to the school, which is on the same site, for example to perform in the Christmas concert.

Practitioners have an effective working relationship with the advisory teacher and Mudiad Meithrin. They listen to advice well and respond to ideas in a timely manner in order to make improvements to provision. The leader has recently responded to advice to improve aspects of the self-evaluation procedures. This has strengthened leaders' understanding of strengths and areas for improvement, and has made the self-evaluation procedures more effective as continuous processes.

Resource management: Good

The setting is staffed appropriately to teach the curriculum effectively. The leader ensures that practitioners support learning skilfully and make the best use of their experience and expertise.

The setting uses the performance management process rigorously to identify practitioners' development needs. As a result, the leader ensures appropriate opportunities for them to develop professionally. The setting has benefitted from a range of valuable training, including training by the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. This has had a positive effect on leadership, provision and children's

standards. For example, practitioners use their knowledge from recent training on the new curriculum for Wales to begin to weave the four purposes into planning. Cooking training has enabled practitioners to enrich the curriculum soundly with regular opportunities for children to cook during sessions.

The setting has a rich range of useful resources of a good standard. Leaders prioritise funding to improve provision regularly. They also make effective use of external grants, for example to improve the quality of the outdoor area.

Considering the children's robust standards, the effective provision and the purposeful leadership, the setting provides good value for money.

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
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	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.
Foundation Phase	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
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	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
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 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