



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Dinbych Uchaf
Capel Seion
Ffordd Henllan
Denbigh
LL16 3PE**

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 Dinbych Uchaf is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a room at Capel Seion Community Centre, which is on the outskirts of the town of Denbigh, in Denbighshire local authority. The setting provides education for children between two and three-and-a-half years old, from 8.45am to 11.15am and from 12.15pm to 2.45pm every day of the week during the academic year. The setting is registered to admit up to 20 children per session. There are currently 30 children on roll, 13 of whom receive early years education funded by the local authority.

English is the main language spoken by most children at home. A minority of children have additional learning needs.

The setting employs four members of staff, including the leader. The leader has been in post since May 2013.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in June 2018 and by Estyn in December 2010.

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 make good progress from their starting points
- Children are very happy, settle quickly and go straight to the continuous activities enthusiastically without being asked
- Many children listen to stories and join in with the actions meaningfully when singing
- Many children's number skills are developing well
- Many children develop as independent learners
- Many children behave well and respect each other
- Practitioners model the Welsh language robustly
- Practitioners know all children well and use assessment information successfully to plan the next steps in learning
- Provision for children with additional learning needs is sound

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have a clear vision based on ensuring the happiness and safety of each child, and providing provision of a high standard in a homely and happy environment
- A clear focus on developing understanding of the Welsh language has a positive effect on the children's linguistic skills
- Leaders foster a spirit of close and effective co-operation
- Practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities in full and ensure that children make the best progress
- Self-evaluation procedures enable staff to identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement successfully
- Priorities for areas for improvement are transferred successfully to the development plan
- The setting has a range of effective partnerships

Recommendations

- R1 Encourage all children who understand the language to respond orally more regularly in Welsh
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures to ensure more focus on children's outcomes
- R3 Improve planning for ICT to ensure continuity and progression in children's experiences

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan to show how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

On entry to the setting, many children have literacy and numeracy skills that are lower than expected for their age. By the end of their time at the setting, most make good progress in their language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all areas of learning.

Nearly all children are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the setting. However, during their time there, most make good progress in their oracy skills and develop an understanding of the language quickly. Nearly all listen well to adults and each other. They respond correctly to everyday instructions and show a sound level of understanding. They build on this understanding and show an increasing awareness of the language when responding to simple questions from practitioners during the registration period. Many children join in with the actions to songs regularly and purposefully. On the whole, a majority speak clearly, for example when responding to questions about the story of the Hungry Caterpillar. However, a majority of children do not have confidence to discuss in Welsh, although they understand practitioners' comments and respond to them simply. A minority choose to read voluntarily and have an increasing understanding of how to handle books correctly. Many children use mark-making equipment independently and with increasing control, for example when tracing a pattern on paper or making marks of different colours and widths on tablet computers.

Many children develop good numeracy skills. They count objects up to five correctly, for example when counting spots on a ladybird or how many different coloured balls went into the hungry caterpillar's stomach. A minority of children count correctly to ten and beyond without being prompted. Many sort and group objects by colour and name the colours successfully. Many are able to name simple three-dimensional shapes correctly and use mathematical language purposefully when comparing the size of balls of dough. Many compare the size of objects confidently and are able to identify orally whether they are 'smaller' or 'bigger', 'small' or 'big'.

Most children use a range of ICT equipment confidently. They do so by using a computer, tablet computers and electronic devices confidently during focus tasks and continuous activities. Many develop their fine motor skills skilfully while using a mouse carefully to choose, drag and place tracks for a train on a computer screen. As a result of these experiences, their use of educational programs, apps and hardware develop their thinking skills, creative skills and opportunities to solve problems purposefully.

A majority of children develop good physical skills by taking part in a range of interesting and adventurous activities. A majority use their physical skills regularly, for example when using blocks to build a tower or pedalling a tricycle. Many develop throwing skills correctly by aiming and throwing different coloured balls into the hungry caterpillar's mouth, and then counting them. Most develop effective creative skills, for example when composing a piece of music in the music area.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and settle quickly. They go straight to the activities enthusiastically and without being prompted. Most have a positive attitude towards learning. They enjoy taking part in a range of activities, and concentrate and persevere for reasonable periods, for example when threading different-coloured cotton reels to make a caterpillar. Many develop as independent learners, for example when choosing with activity to undertake or putting on painting aprons. Many are able to recall previous learning successfully, for example when remembering that the Hungry Caterpillar turned into a beautiful butterfly.

Many of the children behave well. They are considerate of others and polite. They learn to take turns and share well during activities and snack time. Many take responsibility by helping to tidy up, and treat equipment with appropriate respect and care.

After using the toilet, playing outdoors or creative work, nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly, without much prompting from practitioners. As a result, they develop their awareness of hygiene and its importance in maintaining a healthy and responsible lifestyle successfully.

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

Practitioners plan together carefully and provide a broad and balanced curriculum for children. As a result, learning experiences meet the requirements of the foundation phase successfully. Practitioners use their sound awareness of children to target children's needs and interests effectively.

One of the setting's strengths is the way in which they plan to develop children's linguistic skills systematically by immersing them in the Welsh language. As a result, children who are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the setting make good progress, particularly in terms of their understanding of the language. Plans also identify opportunities clearly to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills within a range of interesting themes. Practitioners plan beneficial opportunities to develop these skills across all areas of learning. However, provision for ICT has not been developed to the same degree as literacy and numeracy, as there is no continuity and progression in planning for children's experiences.

Practitioners plan purposeful opportunities for children to express their feelings during circle time and group work. They ensure regular opportunities to develop their musical and creative skills successfully, for example by providing fun experiences for children to play and hit different instruments. Children are encouraged to role-play in the kitchen and the dressing up area regularly. Investigative skills are developed effectively in the discovery area by providing opportunities to use magnifying glasses to observe the four caterpillars that are growing there.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. This includes celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day every year, and attending the Mudiad Meithrin festival to enjoy the lively Welsh atmosphere and experience enjoyment through Welsh-medium activities.

The setting uses visitors from the community, such as a nurse and the local crossing patrol, to enrich children's learning experiences well. Practitioners plan beneficial opportunities to use the community as part of the curriculum, for example by organising visits to the local shop to buy fruit for the Hungry Caterpillar as part of their theme work.

Teaching: Good

One of the setting's strengths is the way in which practitioners work together as a team, and the obvious trust and respect between them. This is reflected in the respect and care that the practitioners have towards children and their needs. They use praise regularly and purposefully, and use positive methods to manage behaviour successfully.

Practitioners have a good understanding of child development and the requirements of the foundation phase. They engage the children's interest effectively and provide regular opportunities for them to learn in the outdoor area throughout the year, as a natural extension of the indoor area. They plan a good balance between activities that are led by practitioners and allowing the children to make their own choices. Practitioners promote independence regularly. They do so by encouraging children to wash their hands, put on aprons and get their plates and mugs independently at snack time. Practitioners create their own purposeful and stimulating resources to engage the children's interest and promote their understanding well. An effective example of this is the crisp tube that was decorated as a hungry caterpillar to create a game to help the children to recognise fruit and the order of the story.

Another strength in teaching is the way in which practitioners model the Welsh language successfully and consistently. They provide rich opportunities to immerse children in the Welsh language by communicating with them constantly as a group and one-to-one. This helps to develop children's language by introducing new vocabulary and repeating familiar words. This has a positive effect on the understanding of children to whom Welsh is a new language. On the whole, practitioners provide suitable opportunities for children to respond to simple questions during focus tasks. However, they do not do so as successfully during plenary sessions. As a result, not all children respond regularly enough in spoken Welsh.

The arrangements for assessing and recording children's progress are thorough and consistent. Initial assessments are beneficial and enable practitioners to identify and measure each child's progress during their time at the setting. They share this information with parents successfully so that they are able to help with their child's development. There is a practical system in place which enables all practitioners to identify any important steps taken by the child and place them on the assessment wall underneath a picture of each child. This leads to a valuable discussion between them to build on their understanding of each child's progress. They use this information beneficially to target the next steps in individual children's learning and to support planning.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements through an informal discussion at the end of the session and an end-of-year meeting. At the end of the children's time at the setting, practitioners transfer information to the

primary school. This supports children as they transfer smoothly to the next stage in their education.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Practitioners promote children's health and wellbeing successfully. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and apply themselves to the activities without encouragement. Children are encouraged to take turns and to be considerate of others while washing their hands, waiting to choose a snack and pour a drink. They nurture a sense of responsibility and independence soundly by giving children an opportunity to get their own dishes and clearing them away at the end of snack time.

The setting nurtures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development purposefully. There are appropriate opportunities to promote these values, by encouraging children to discuss their feelings during 'circle time' and saying a prayer at the end of the session. Practitioners develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect successfully through daily activities and routines. This ensures that nearly all children consider and respect each other's feelings maturely. There are beneficial opportunities to develop children's sense of awe and wonder of the world around them as they observe caterpillars growing, water flowers and notice how liquid changes when colour is added.

The setting promotes the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit successfully. For example, children enjoy taking part in physical exercise activities on the large equipment outside and adventurous games in the hall. The setting reinforces healthy living habits successfully by taking part in a scheme to teach children about the importance of cleaning their teeth, and providing fruit, water and milk during snack time. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic goods and food. This develops their understanding of sustainability purposefully.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. Practitioners ensure that children are transferred safely to the care of their parents or carers at the end of the session.

Provision for children with additional learning needs is sound and purposeful. The leader arranges support and adapts provision to address any additional learning needs appropriately, where necessary. She works beneficially with parents and specialist agencies to provide appropriate individual education plans and reviews their progress regularly. She has ensured that all practitioners have received relevant training on signing, in order to include the very few children who need this in the activities.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community in which all children are given equal opportunities to develop as individuals. Practitioners place a valid emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity. They plan valuable opportunities for children to learn about different cultures and festivals, such as the Chinese New Year, and ensure that dolls and dressing-up clothes reflect a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

The setting has a wide range of resources, both indoors and outdoors, to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs well. These resources are used effectively to enrich learning. An example of this is the stimulating resources the practitioners have created to promote understanding of number. The resources are relatively new, in good condition and are set out at a level where the children are able to reach them and put them away. This develops children's independence effectively. Practitioners have recently begun to display the children's work in colourful displays in order to celebrate their contribution and promote children's pride in their work. They also display numbers and print in order to reinforce children's early reading and numeracy skills suitably.

The learning environment is clean, and the building is in good condition and maintained purposefully.

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

By ensuring that they work together effectively as a team, the leader implements a clear vision to develop the setting. This vision is based on ensuring each child's happiness and safety, and offering provision of a high standard in a homely environment, with the clear intention of giving children an opportunity to reach their potential. She shares this vision successfully with parents, practitioners and members of the management committee. The vision contributes extensively to the good progress that children make from a low starting point. The clear focus on developing an understanding of the Welsh language has a positive effect on the linguistic skills of those children to whom Welsh is a new language.

The leader has high expectations and there are clear procedures in place to share information about daily activities and children's progress among the practitioners. Job descriptions outline the staff's roles and responsibilities clearly. As a result, everyone is aware of their duties and the high expectations, and act on them. The setting gives purposeful attention to local and national priorities. They focus effectively on promoting children's literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to developing provision for health and wellbeing.

The registered person ensures that staff's performance management is sound and that all practitioners have beneficial access to training. This links well with their professional needs, but the link with the setting's current priorities for improvement is not as sound.

The committee receives regular information from the leader and, as a result, they have a very sound understanding of what is happening at the setting. They contribute purposefully towards the management of the setting, ensure that it is run smoothly, provide support and discuss the setting's needs in meetings. Leaders and the committee work together effectively in order to ensure that statutory policies are implemented.

Improving quality: Good

The setting's self-evaluation procedures are developing purposefully. Leaders observe and discuss children's standards and provision regularly with the other practitioners. The leader makes sound use of the response of practitioners, parents and carers, and the advice of officers from the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. The leader responds positively to responses and advice for the benefit of the children. As a result, the setting identifies strengths soundly and is beginning to understand the areas for improvement purposefully.

There is a clear link between the outcomes of self-evaluation procedures and the priorities in the improvement plan. The improvement plan identifies a number of clear targets, activities, who is responsible, the cost and effect. Robust quality improvement processes have led to improving children's understanding of the Welsh language by introducing a structured plan to develop children's Welsh language skills. However, the self-evaluation report focuses too much on the quality of provision, rather than children's outcomes. This does not reflect practitioners' thorough understanding of each child's outcomes and progress.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of effective partnerships. It works successfully with these partners to improve provision, leadership and children's outcomes.

There is a very beneficial relationship between practitioners and the children's parents, and this is one of the setting's strengths. The leader visits each home before a child starts at the setting, and this helps to forge close links and foster trust between parents and the setting. The setting builds on these links and trust effectively. Practitioners maintain a close link with the home by sharing the child's developmental steps with parents regularly, in addition to information about events at the setting.

The setting works purposefully with external agencies, such as the local authority, Flying Start and Mudiad Meithrin. As a result, the setting benefits from receiving advice on documentation and policies, and ensures training and management advice effectively. The relationship with Mudiad Meithrin is particularly successful, and the setting benefits greatly from being part of a scheme to develop children's Welsh language skills. This has a positive effect on provision and children's standards. The setting has shared this practice with a number of other settings that have adopted the same scheme. Another effective partnership is one with the language therapist who visits the setting regularly, where necessary. Through this close co-operation, the leader identifies children's learning needs at an early stage and is willing to refer them for support.

There are positive links with the local schools. There are effective systems to transfer the children's personal information and assessments from one organisation to the other. This supports the transition arrangements well, and these arrangements help the children as they transfer to primary education.

Resource management: Good

The setting is staffed appropriately to deliver the curriculum effectively. Leaders ensure that all practitioners support learning purposefully by making the best use of their experience and expertise. An effective example of this is that the deputy leader is responsible for healthy schools, and this has a positive effect on promoting eating healthily within the setting and children's willingness to eat a variety of fruit. Through the performance management system, the leader and committee identify staff's development needs appropriately and provide suitable opportunities for them to develop professionally. The setting benefits from training by the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. This has a positive effect on provision and children's outcomes, for example by providing an effective language immersion approach and supporting them to select resources carefully for the learning areas.

Leaders manage resources efficiently and ensure a good supply of learning equipment that responds effectively to the requirements of the foundation phase.

Leaders have a good understanding of the setting's financial situation. They make effective use of funding to ensure a range of stimulating and purposeful resources.

As a result of the effective provision, diligent staff, supportive management committee and 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	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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 three to seven 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 that 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)	<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>

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