



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

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Hermon  
Yr Hen Ysgol Hermon  
Glogue  
Pembrokeshire**

**SA36 0DT**

**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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Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Hermon is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in a room at Canolfan Hermon near Crymych, in Pembrokeshire local authority. The setting provides education for children between two and four years old from 9.00am to 12.00pm from Monday to Thursday during the academic year. The setting is registered to admit up to 17 children per session. There are currently 19 children on roll, 13 of whom receive early years education funded by the local authority. English is the main home language of most children. The setting has not identified any of the children as having additional learning needs.

The setting employs three members of staff, including the leader. The leader has been in post since September 2018.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in October 2018 and by Estyn in October 2012.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- Most children respond well to the consistent Welsh language provision and develop a strong understanding of the language quickly
- Children are very happy, settle quickly and go straight to the continuous activities enthusiastically without being asked
- Most children's number skills are developing well
- Most children listen to a story and join in with the actions meaningfully
- Many show an interest in books and their content, and spend time every day 'reading'
- Many children are very willing to take responsibility
- Many children behave well, share their feelings and respect each other
- Practitioners model the Welsh language very robustly and consistently
- Practitioners promote children's wellbeing particularly successfully through the skilful use of puppets to encourage children to discuss their feelings during 'circle time'
- Colourful and attractive displays are used very effectively to reinforce learning and celebrate children's work
- Practitioners know all children well and use assessment information successfully to plan the next steps in learning

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders have a clear, successful vision that is based on developing children's wellbeing and strengthening provision in order to raise standards
- A particular focus on developing an understanding of the Welsh language and immersing the children in the Welsh language has a positive effect on children's linguistic skills
- Leaders respond quickly to advice from external agencies
- 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 transfer areas for improvement to the development plan successfully
- The setting has a range of highly effective partnerships
- Practitioners respond very quickly to any advice and training

## Recommendations

- R1 Plan more purposefully to develop children's skills in the outdoor area
- R2 Plan more purposefully to develop children's information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R3 Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement procedures to ensure more focus on children's outcomes and that targets in the improvement plan are measurable

### **What happens next?**

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

Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study describing the excellent practice that was seen during the inspection.

## Main findings

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

On entry to the setting, many children's literacy skills are lower than expected for their age, as they are unable to speak Welsh. By the end of their time at the setting, most make good progress in their language and numeracy skills across all areas of learning. During sessions, most children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding.

Most children respond well in Welsh and develop an understanding of the language quickly. As a result, nearly all children listen very well to adults and each other, particularly during 'circle time'. They respond to instructions correctly and show an increasing level of understanding. A minority hold very mature conversations with each other and adults, and use the area's rich language. A notable example of this was when children were having an imaginary telephone conversation and ended the lively conversation by saying that they needed to put the baby to sleep. Many listen appropriately to stories and participate purposefully in classroom songs by making the appropriate actions.

Many show an interest in books and their content. They show an increasing understanding of how to hold a book and turn the pages, and a few more able readers are beginning to respond to the content by identifying clues in the pictures. Many respond enthusiastically to stories and answer questions confidently about different events in the story of 'Maldwyn y Wiwer' (Maldwyn the squirrel). A few are able to refer to previous learning successfully when describing the content of a story. Many find their names without help when they arrive and when completing the register themselves. Many make marks effectively and with increasing control by using a variety of media, such as paint, chalk, coloured pencils and apps on a tablet computer.

Many children's number skills are developing well for their age and ability. Most recite numbers to 10 successfully and match numbers with objects up to 10. They recognise and name familiar two-dimensional shapes well, for example when placing jigsaw pieces. Many use correct mathematical language when discussing number work, for example when discussing tall and shorter when building a tower out of pegs and then measuring the towers against a giraffe.

A majority of children have appropriate ICT skills. They handle a tablet computer fairly confidently and use a range of electronic toys well.

Most use small equipment with firm control in a variety of tasks, such as paintbrushes, chalk and buttons. They develop effective creative skills when creating pictures that relate to the theme. A particular example of this is the detailed work when painting pictures of autumn trees and 'Colin y crwban' (Colin the tortoise).

Many children's problem-solving and thinking skills are developing appropriately, for example when placing lids on the correct boxes after they have been mixed up and

solving how to move the contents of a pumpkin safely to the mud kitchen. A majority of children develop good physical skills by taking part in interesting and adventurous activities.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children enjoy coming to the setting and are happy there. They settle quickly and choose activities independently straight away. Many children make sensible choices about what they would like to do during free play, for example when role-playing in the kitchen. Most enjoy taking part in a range of activities. Many are able to concentrate on a task and persevere for extended periods when sewing thread around a shape and painting 'Colin y Crwban', ensuring that he has a head, eyes and feet. Many are able to recall previous learning successfully, for example when describing what happens next in the story of 'Gwiwerod Gwirion Bost!'

Nearly all children are eager to learn and are beginning to develop as independent learners. They develop this successfully by helping to serve during snack time and when putting on and taking off their coats. One of the setting's strengths is the way in which nearly all children take responsibility for tidying up after the period of activities that they have chosen themselves. They enjoy doing this to the purposeful background music.

Most children behave very well, are considerate of others and are polite. They learn to take turns, share and practice self-control well, and many use equipment carefully.

During snack time, most children show good social skills. They learn to say 'thank you' and are all aware that they need to practice good hygiene by washing their hands before snack time.

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

Practitioners plan together carefully every week to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. Overall, these learning experiences meet the requirements of the foundation phase successfully and build on children's previous experiences and learning. Practitioners provide rich learning experiences that engage nearly all children's interest effectively. Plans meet children's needs and identify clearly what they will be able to learn in activities.

Practitioners plan to develop children's literacy skills very successfully. They ensure regular opportunities to develop children's literacy skills through a range of activities and regular exercises in order to immerse children in the Welsh language. For example, they ensure that children practice responding to familiar questions during registration and circle time, and sing familiar songs daily. This increases children's confidence in using the Welsh language well. By providing daily opportunities, they provide regular opportunities for children to learn how to handle books carefully and start to enjoy behaving like readers. As a result, many children gain an enjoyment of books and choose to go to the reading corner or pick up a book without being asked. They ensure that there are beneficial opportunities to develop early mark making skills by using various media, both indoors and outdoors.

There are regular opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills. Children are given regular opportunities to count objects based on the theme, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on their number skills. An example of this is choosing how many conkers correspond to the number. Practitioners provide suitable opportunities to develop children's physical and problem-solving skills. However, although children are given opportunities to use ICT equipment, plans to promote children's ICT skills are not as purposeful as literacy and numeracy plans. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills systematically across the areas of learning.

The setting uses local visits and visitors to enrich children's learning experiences very well. When studying the theme of 'transport', practitioners organised an opportunity for children to visit a local haulage company that transports goods across Britain and Europe, a local bus company and the nearest train station to enrich learning. Visitors teach children about the world around them practically by bringing animals that they care for to the setting. The range of visitors that came to the setting when the children were looking at 'people who help us' enabled them to understand the roles of people in their local area successfully.

Children's Welshness is promoted daily by establishing a wholly Welsh ethos at the setting. Children are also given useful opportunities to learn about Welsh traditions and celebrations, including attending Gŵyl Mudiad Meithrin (the Mudiad Meithrin roadshow).

Children are given valuable opportunities to choose their own tasks and activities in the indoor areas. Focus tasks ensure that most children are challenged appropriately in line with their age and ability. However, planning procedures do not identify regular enough opportunities for children to learn through purposeful opportunities outdoors. As a result, activities do not always have enough purpose.

### **Teaching: Good**

In a short period of time, practitioners have started to work together effectively as a team and support each other for the benefit of the children. There is a delightful relationship between staff and children, and practitioners praise children's efforts regularly and purposefully.

One of the setting's obvious strengths is the way in which practitioners model the Welsh language tirelessly. By doing so, they provide rich opportunities to immerse children in the Welsh language by communicating with them frequently. This helps to develop children's language by introducing new vocabulary and repeating familiar words. This has a positive effect on children's understanding, particularly as only a few hear the Welsh language at home.

Overall, practitioners have a sound understanding of the principles of the foundation phase. They ensure a successful balance between activities that are led by adults and those that are chosen by children, both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners provide valuable opportunities for children to learn through play, for example when they roll dough and form it to create the shape of a hedgehog and role-play in the kitchen. Activities hold many children's interest well and enable them to persevere with their tasks.



The setting's arrangements for assessing children's progress are effective and practitioners identify all children's needs well. Practitioners praise children orally regularly and question them skilfully during the session. The process of observing and assessing children every day ensures that children receive the necessary support. Practitioners make purposeful use of weekly planning to record the children's next steps.

Parents receive valuable information about their children's progress during their time at the setting through regular conversations and an opportunity to come to the setting to discuss their children's progress. All parents receive a pack of their children's work, which records and celebrates their developments across all areas of learning during the year. Beneficial information is transferred to the schools that admit the children in order to show the development of all children clearly.

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

The very successful way in which staff promote children's wellbeing is highly effective and one of the setting's obvious strengths. The welcoming environment and familial relationship that are created mean that nearly all children feel safe, trust the staff and enjoy coming to the setting. There are very rich opportunities to promote children's moral and social development. A very notable example of this is encouraging children to discuss their feelings during 'circle time' through the skilful use of puppets. These puppets are well established at the setting and children identify with them completely and, as a result, they are very willing to share their feelings. As a result, practitioners develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect highly successfully, and most children are very well behaved, considerate of others and are polite. Staff praise children frequently for sharing, respecting others and behaving well.

There are purposeful opportunities to promote children's spiritual development, for example by encouraging children to participate in collective worship before eating their snacks and at the end of the session. Practitioners take advantage of beneficial opportunities to develop an awareness of different cultures, for example when celebrating the Chinese New Year and providing multicultural resources and dolls.

The setting promotes the importance of eating healthily effectively. Drink and snack time reinforces this very well by providing purposeful opportunities for children to develop their social skills. It also provides an excellent opportunity for children to gain patience, learn to take turns and share. Practitioners encourage children successfully to take responsibility when acting as the helper of the day, and particularly when encouraging everyone to tidy up. Part of the children's responsibility is to recycle materials, and this develops their understanding of sustainability well. Opportunities to develop physical exercise are developing soundly.

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.

The setting has effective processes to respond to the needs of any child with additional learning needs. The leader works closely with external agencies to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented effectively, where necessary.

### **Learning environment: Good**

There is a very caring and diligent environment within the setting. Practitioners work well together to ensure an inclusive ethos where all children are respected and treated fairly and equally.

Practitioners provide an attractive and stimulating environment and the setting has a suitable supply of purposeful resources. These are used effectively to support the principles of the foundation phase inside the building. Areas of continuous provision indoors provide rich opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. However, practitioners do not plan purposefully enough to make use of all of the resources that are available outside. Overall, practitioners ensure relevant activities to develop problem-solving and thinking skills.

Practitioners make very effective use of colourful and attractive displays to reinforce learning and celebrate children's work successfully. This is one of the setting's strengths. The setting is safe and kept clean.

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

Leaders have a clear vision for developing children's wellbeing and strengthen provision. Provision ensures a daily focus on raising the children's linguistic standards, particularly as many are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the setting. In a short period, the new leaders have worked beneficially with other practitioners and are beginning to share leadership responsibilities purposefully. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in full and work together effectively as a team. Through purposeful joint planning, practitioners provide a variety of interesting and stimulating learning experiences that meet the principles of the foundation phase successfully. As a result of effective co-operation, the setting runs smoothly from day to day and children respond well to this.

Leaders use relevant and up-to-date information about the setting to improve provision. This includes using the foundation phase profile to identify children's starting points and tracking their progress simply. Leaders use advice from external agencies well and respond quickly in order to improve the quality of provision and focus on standards. An example of this is the strong focus on using puppets and reading to improve children's skills. The setting gives purposeful attention to local and national priorities. It focuses effectively on promoting children's literacy and numeracy skills, in addition to developing provision for health and wellbeing. However, provision for ICT has not been developed to the same extent.

The management committee and registered person receive relevant information from the leader regularly. The committee makes a beneficial contribution towards the management of the setting, and discusses the setting's needs regularly in meetings. This includes playing an active part in performance management processes.

Leaders and the committee work together effectively to ensure that statutory policies are implemented. Practitioners are given regular opportunities for planning, preparation and assessment every week.

### **Improving quality: Good**

Following the support of the authority, leaders have established beneficial quality improvement procedures. Leaders make purposeful use of reports and visits from the authority to contribute to the quality improvement procedures. As a result, they now seek parents' views by using questionnaires to gain further ideas on how to improve. Leaders make beneficial use of assessment information and discuss children's standards and provision regularly as part of the quality improvement procedures.

Quality improvement procedures identify many of the setting's strengths, particularly in terms of provision, and identify clearly what needs to be improved. However, there is not enough focus on evaluating children's standards. Plans for improvement arise naturally from these procedures and include clear actions, timescales and responsibilities, and a useful column to record progress. Procedures have led to an improvement in the consistent focus on ensuring rich opportunities for children to read. However, targets are not always measurable enough in order to monitor actions.

### **Partnership working: Excellent**

The setting works very effectively with a range of partners, which contributes beneficially towards raising children's standards and wellbeing. There is a good relationship between practitioners and children's parents. The setting's open-door policy means that parents are given regular opportunities to meet with staff and discuss any concerns at a very early stage. They receive regular information about events through social media. Parents are given an opportunity in turn to welcome 'Colin y Crwban' on a visit with their children. This enables them to play an active part in their children's education by following the literacy, numeracy and wellbeing activities that are included in the sack in which Colin sleeps.

The excellent partnership with the local authority's advisory teachers and the Mudiad Meithrin officer has a very positive effect on the setting's provision and leadership. The setting has combined what it has learned about how to develop children's wellbeing through training from these two supporters very successfully in order to encourage children to share their feelings by responding to puppets. Practitioners work appropriately with specialist agencies when children need additional support.

The setting makes very beneficial use of the community to enrich children's experiences, and the community supports the setting's activities well. For example, children go to the cafe that is part of the centre every week to order toast, which develops their oral skills, numeracy and social skills in a real-life context.

Successful co-operation with the young farmers' club provides social opportunities through the medium of Welsh through concerts, and ensures funding to support the setting.

There is an appropriate link between the setting and the Cylch Ti a Fi that meets in the same building, and between the setting and the schools into which it feeds. The setting takes advantage of opportunities to transfer useful information about children's skills, outcomes and wellbeing. These arrangements promote children's transition well.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has enough practitioners with appropriate qualifications and relevant experience of working with young children. Leaders ensure that all practitioners support learning purposefully. Performance management systems are purposeful and ensure that practitioners' development is sound. They attend purposeful training in order to strengthen their understanding of how to develop children's language skills and wellbeing, in addition to learning about new teaching and learning methods. They respond very quickly to any training and advice.

Overall, 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 sound understanding of the setting's financial situation. They manage expenditure carefully and work with parents to try to ensure sufficient funding for the setting. The treasurer prepares a financial balance sheet and ensures that it is verified externally. Leaders use funding very beneficially to ensure that the setting prioritises the Welsh language and wellbeing.

As a result of effective provision, diligent staff, the supportive management committee and purposeful leadership, the setting provides good 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