



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Llanfair Caereinion
Mount Road
Llanfair Caereinion
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 0AT**

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:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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Publication date: 28/12/2018

Context

Cylch Meithrin Llanfair Caereinion is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets in a self-contained building in the town of Llanfair Caereinion in Powys local authority. The setting provides education for five mornings a week between 9.00am and 11.30am during term time.

The setting is registered to admit up to 16 children at any given time and admits children between two and four years old. Thirteen three-year-old children currently receive funded early years education.

Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds and a few children speak Welsh as their first language. There are currently no children with additional learning needs.

The setting employs three qualified practitioners, including the leader. The leader began in post in September 2008.

The setting was last inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in February 2016 and by Estyn in May 2013.

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 sound progress from their starting points
- Most children develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills successfully
- Nearly all children behave responsibly and politely
- Practitioners plan an interesting curriculum that supports children's learning effectively
- The successful use of Welsh by practitioners has a positive effect on children's linguistic skills
- Teaching is sound and creates a willingness among the children to work and learn productively
- Practitioners provide valuable opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development
- Effective use of the building and the outdoor area stimulates children to improve their skills

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The leader provides a clear direction for all of the setting's work and has robust expectations of the practitioners and children
- The dedicated management committee is supportive and monitors provision intelligently and responsibly
- There is a well-established culture of self-evaluation, which ensures consistent improvements over time
- Practitioners benefit from purposeful training and professional development
- There are successful partnerships with parents and external agencies, which support provision and children's learning effectively
- The leader and management committee prioritise expenditure sensibly to improve provision in order to improve children's experiences and outcomes

Recommendations

- R1 Plan activities to develop children's problem-solving skills, particularly those of the most able children
- R2 Act on assessment findings to plan the next steps in individual children's learning
- R3 Improve opportunities to teach children about the world's different cultures

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
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Standards: Good

Most children make good progress from their starting points. They develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively across all areas of learning.

Most children listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to practitioners' questioning during plenary sessions. They play an active part in these sessions purposefully, for example by showing the story of the day in a book to other children. A majority use correct language patterns and interesting phrases wholly independently in Welsh, during informal play and focus tasks. For example, they discuss the characters and events in stories confidently. A majority of children pronounce clearly and use the Welsh language purposefully to express an opinion and their personal preferences, such as the flavour of chocolate and weather features. They follow instructions promptly and sing Welsh nursery rhymes and songs enthusiastically. As a result, a majority are natural and intelligent speakers.

Most children show an interest in books and consider the purpose of the story and pictures intelligently. They understand the purpose of writing and repeat the order of stories sensibly. For example, they discuss the features of familiar characters and their adventures effectively. As a result, most handle books in the reading areas, either indoors or outdoors, as confident early readers.

Many children make marks effectively when experimenting with different media. They persevere diligently with early writing experiences. For example, they record individuals' orders on paper successfully at the counter in the role-play cafe. Many explain the purpose of writing well when recording their names purposefully on a whiteboard to confirm their attendance at the setting. A few recognise their own names soundly. They are also beginning to form the letters of the alphabet and numbers in fairly recognisable forms on paper and on electronic writing boards.

Most children recognise, name and count numbers to five well without the support of an adult. They use mathematical language purposefully when discussing and comparing shapes, and counting conkers to correspond with mathematical equipment correctly. A few count to ten and beyond correctly without being prompted. Many children sort different objects by colour and shape successfully, and count how many objects of each type they have correctly. Most children use numbers purposefully in practical activities, for example when arranging eight legs around the spider's body. Most understand the differences in size and weight when comparing objects and whether they are 'small' or 'big', 'smaller' or 'bigger' and 'heavy' or 'light'.

Most children use technology skilfully. They do so by using electronic tablets, toys and devices confidently in focus tasks and continuous activities. As a result, their use of educational programs, apps and hardware develops their thinking skills and opportunities to investigate effectively.

Many children solve problems appropriately. However, they do not think for themselves wholly confidently in order to solve problems wholly independently. They are too reliant on instructions and support from adults to succeed in tasks, particularly the most able children.

Many children choose equipment and materials effectively to extend their creativity. For example, they use play dough to create a meal on a plate and arrange eyes, spikes and colourful reeds to make hedgehogs out of potatoes. Nearly all children enjoy listening attentively to music and perform enthusiastically when singing and doing actions to correspond with the words.

Nearly all children develop their physical skills effectively. For example, they ride bicycles and vehicles energetically outdoors, and slide and climb adventurously on outdoor equipment.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors when they arrive at, and leave, the setting. Many show motivation and resilience when responding to engaging activities that are led by adults. As a result, they concentrate purposefully on their learning and work enthusiastically with practitioners.

Most children enjoy the tasks in all areas of learning, and share and work sensibly together. They show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as experimenting with sand by filling boxes and comparing the volume, and planting flowers in the setting's planting areas.

Most children are beginning to express an opinion and their personal preferences effectively. This is evident as they decide to continue with particular tasks or start new activities of their own choosing. Many explain thoughtfully which areas of learning include their favourite activities, such as filling a wheelbarrow in the construction area. They are wholly confident and decisive when identifying which practical tasks are of most interest to them. This can be seen as they choose to cook in the mud kitchen or persevere with removing seeds from a pumpkin. As a result, many children are confident learners and work purposefully during play activities.

Nearly all children are well behaved and polite. They show respect when responding responsibly to adults and each other. Nearly all children listen attentively to adults, for example when serving drinks and putting on their coats to play outdoors. Nearly all children wash their hands thoroughly, without much prompting from practitioners, after using the toilet, messy play and outdoor activities. They understand that hygiene helps to avoid infections, and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle successfully.

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

Practitioners provide a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects the ethos of the foundation phase successfully. All learning experiences meet children's interests and needs effectively by providing valuable opportunities for them to learn productively. An effective example of this is the opportunity for children to thread pasta onto a string and compare how many pieces are on each string.

Practitioners plan to develop children's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills purposefully. They encourage children to choose suitable equipment to solve practical problems that are linked to the current theme. For example, practitioners feed rich phrases to children as they describe the features of the autumn, discuss the colours of the leaves and study the life of a hedgehog.

Practitioners plan useful opportunities for children to express their own opinions and develop their creative and expressive skills successfully. They encourage children effectively to role-play in the cafe and the dressing-up area, by describing each other's dresses when looking in the mirror. They also focus effectively on children's fine motor skills in the experimenting areas. For example, they provide valuable opportunities for children to use scissors and glue to create a spider, and spoons to pour chocolate on apples. These activities build intelligently on children's current understanding and skills. However, practitioners do not plan purposefully enough to develop children's problem-solving skills wholly independently, particularly challenges for the most able children.

The setting's provision to develop and raise awareness of the Welsh language is sound. Practitioners are good language models for the children. They encourage children to use the language as much as possible through engaging activities, and take pride in the area's dialect. As a result, considering their starting points, a majority of children's understanding of the Welsh language is developing increasingly, and their use of the language is improving regularly.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture successfully. These activities include celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day, making 'cawl' and baking traditional cakes.

Provision to develop children's ICT skills is good. The setting provides purposeful opportunities for children to use a range of equipment, such as electronic tablets, devices and toys.

Practitioners plan to develop children's physical skills effectively, for example by allowing them to climb on adventure equipment outdoors, dance energetically and balance together on one leg. There is also an effective emphasis on developing children's creativity through activities such as experimenting with paint and role-playing in the mud kitchen.

The setting makes beneficial use of visits to enrich children's learning experiences and raise their awareness of their local area. Experiences include visits to the library, local businesses in the town and a centre for the elderly. A number of visitors come to the setting, such as officers from the emergency services and farmers with lambs. These opportunities provide valuable opportunities for children to learn about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

All practitioners have a sound understanding of the philosophy of the foundation phase, and they work together effectively to ensure that the requirements are met. They provide a wide range of beneficial opportunities for children to learn through play and practical experiences, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, all practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development.

Practitioners have sound expectations for most children and challenge them effectively, on the whole, in line with their needs and abilities. They intervene in children's play appropriately, where necessary, in order to ensure that they understand the task. This motivates most children to perform at their best consistently during focus tasks and continuous activities.

Practitioners question children skilfully in order to develop their communication, number and ICT skills. They time plenary sessions successfully to hold every child's interest effectively.

Practitioners greet the children in a warm and lively manner as they arrive, and this liveliness continues throughout the sessions. Practitioners manage children's behaviour positively and children listen attentively to practitioners' explanations. This encourages children's participation and enjoyment in all activities successfully. Practitioners distribute their responsibilities effectively between indoors and outdoors. As a result, children are given good opportunities to move independently between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are useful. Evidence corresponds correctly to individual children's outcomes by using the foundation phase profile as they develop at the setting. All practitioners record the daily assessments regularly and consistently. They discuss sensibly with children what they need to do to improve their work. However, they do not use daily assessments consistently enough to target the next steps in individual children's learning in their planning.

Practitioners share suitable information informally with parents and carers at the end of the session. The setting provides parents with useful booklets and reports when their child leaves the setting to attend school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides effective opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development. Practitioners use group discussions sensibly to encourage children to consider each other's feelings. This nurtures values such as fairness and mutual respect successfully.

Practitioners create valuable opportunities for children to sit quietly, and to discuss and listen to adults and other children thoughtfully. For example, children take turns politely as they share their snacks and pour a drink before they start to eat their food. During these sessions, there are purposeful opportunities for children to express the reasons for their choices, as they discuss their snacks and drinks. There are efficient arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing, including effective procedures to promote healthy eating and drinking. As a result, children understand that fruit, vegetables and exercise are good for their bodies and their overall health.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic goods and food. These activities develop children's understanding of sustainability purposefully.

The setting uses positive behaviour strategies that eliminate any kind of unacceptable behaviour. The setting is a safe environment and practitioners care diligently for the children as they arrive, during the session and when they are collected. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are robust arrangements to support any child with additional needs. Practitioners work together closely and observe children carefully when identifying any concerns. They act on these by communicating with parents and seeking advice from external agencies under the guidance of the local authority. The setting keeps formal records of additional comments to help it to track these children's progress thoroughly.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community in which all children are given an equal opportunity to access all areas of learning and equipment. Practitioners have thorough knowledge of every child, and their individuality is acknowledged successfully through daily discussions. Practitioners challenge and support children daily in a positive, careful and loyal manner.

The setting promotes a positive ethos through its daily activities and the attitude that is adopted by practitioners. Everyone places an appropriate emphasis on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity, for example by celebrating the Chinese New Year every year. However, the setting does not teach children about the world's different festivals and cultures effectively enough.

The setting uses resources successfully, on the whole, to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. A wide range of interesting resources is used effectively in continuous activities and focus tasks to enrich learning. Resources are accessible to all children and promote their sense of responsibility purposefully. The setting has plenty of ICT resources to develop children's skills successfully.

The building is of good quality, maintained effectively and is secure. Outdoor resources are used regularly. This includes growing and planting areas, climbing equipment and a small playground on which to run around and ride bicycles. Practitioners also use the local area's facilities sensibly, such as the town and local businesses.

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

The leader provides a purposeful direction for the setting's daily and long-term practices. She ensures that the setting's objectives, strategic plans and policies are implemented in full. As a result, the setting improves provision regularly to have a successful effect on children's progress.

The leader leads a team of dedicated practitioners, and they have high expectations of the children. The leader works effectively with others, which succeeds in

encouraging all practitioners to improve their practices sensitively and supportively. As a result, their day-to-day work is positive, and promotes and maintains improvements successfully over time.

The leader shares information about the setting's practices purposefully with all practitioners. They meet regularly to plan the curriculum and associated activities. This ensures that all practitioners understand their roles in full and focus sensibly on children's needs. They also respond well to national priorities, such as developing literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies, and focusing on improving children's standards in the Welsh language.

The leader and practitioners work very closely with members of the robust management committee. Regular supervision and evaluation practices ensure that the leader makes the best use of practitioners' expertise. This is extremely evident in practical tasks that are based on specific themes, such as 'Autumn'.

The management committee receives up-to-date information about the setting's practices from the leader. They meet regularly to monitor the setting's practices rigorously and provide financial support. They challenge the setting regularly as critical friends to improve provision, and conduct purposeful evaluations to develop practitioners' expertise effectively. Effective examples of this are improving the resources in the outdoor area and funding new technological equipment, such as writing boards and electronic tablets.

Improving quality: Good

Procedures for self-evaluating the setting's practices and actions are rigorous. The leader and practitioners monitor children's standards and the quality of provision regularly, by using the local authority's quantitative procedures.

The leader makes sensible use of these procedures to identify the setting's strengths and areas for development. The views of practitioners, parents and carers, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin are given sensible consideration through questionnaires, discussions and regular visits. The leader and management committee act on their advice for the benefit of children. As a result, the leader and practitioners work together conscientiously to ensure that the setting makes purposeful improvements.

Priorities in the development plan derive directly from the self-evaluation process. They correspond correctly to the areas for improvement in the self-evaluation report. The development plan includes beneficial actions and timescales to achieve the purposeful targets. The leader and management committee monitor improvements regularly against the success criteria. As a result, they evaluate the effect on children's learning well. A sound example of this is the way in which the setting acts on the local authority's suggestions to improve provision, such as ensuring opportunities for mark making in the role-play area.

The leader and committee prioritise expenditure successfully, in line with the actions that have been identified for improvement. This leads to useful improvements, such as implementing the foundation phase profile, improving planning and the use of ICT equipment in the setting.

Partnership working: Good

The setting has a range of successful partnerships. The leader works diligently with partners to improve provision and children's outcomes. The setting's links with the community support children's learning purposefully and include holding a Christmas market every year. As a result, similar events enable the setting to raise money purposefully. Bids for grant funding and support from parents to maintain the building are also effective.

Partnerships with the local, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin have been established firmly. These partnerships enable the setting to develop and improve its practices successfully. This enables practitioners to target children's needs at an early stage, and use the expertise of external agencies to support individuals and specific groups of children. Agencies also provide administrative support and up-to-date training. As a result, they support and challenge the setting purposefully, particularly on improving planning and implementing the philosophy of the foundation phase.

There are very positive links with the local school. This supports transition arrangements well. Effective systems are used to transfer children's personal information and assessments from one organisation to the other. The school's teachers visit the setting regularly and the setting takes part in school events, such as the harvest thanksgiving service. As a result, arrangements benefit the children as they settle into primary education.

All practitioners take active steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. They keep parents and carers well informed about all aspects of the setting's work, including through social media and newsletters. The setting encourages them to express their views on issues to improve the setting through regular questionnaires and discussions, which lead to improvements such as improving resources in the outdoor area. The setting also supports local and national charities, and this nurtures kindness and care for others among children.

Practitioners liaise and work with a wide range of other partners who make important contributions towards improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with first aid training, food hygiene courses and child protection training.

Resource management: Good

The leader and practitioners focus thoroughly on improving all aspects of the setting's work. They use the building and equipment intelligently and allocate responsibilities sensibly.

The leader's leadership practices and the management committee's intelligent support enable practitioners to develop and share their professional knowledge effectively. The co-operation of the dedicated management committee ensures that the setting has enough qualified practitioners with purposeful training. As a result, they meet children's needs successfully.

Practitioners ensure that children have access to interesting resources that support their learning purposefully, such as ICT software and hardware, and climbing and

sliding equipment outdoors. The setting is an intelligent learning community in which robust co-operation between practitioners and other partners supports the setting's aims and objectives effectively.

Performance management procedures are thorough. They ensure that the effect of daily practices and the practitioners' willingness to make improvements create interesting learning experiences and positive teaching.

The leader and management committee use the budget purposefully and prioritise expenditure effectively in line with the targets in the development plan. They ensure that funding is used wisely to improve provision and children's outcomes. They make effective use of external grants to improve provision for children, such as a significant grant from a local supermarket to improve the technological equipment.

The setting provides good value for money because of the positive progress that children make from their starting points, purposeful provision and effective leadership.

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