



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Maenclochog
Community Hall
Maenclochog
SA66 7LB**

Date of inspection: November 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 Maenclochog is a Welsh-medium setting. It meets in Maenclochog community hall in Pembrokeshire local authority. The setting provides education four mornings a week, from Monday to Thursday, from 9.00am to 11.30am during term time.

The setting is registered to admit up to 24 children at any given time and admits children between two and four years old. Eight 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 two qualified practitioners, including the leader. The leader began in post in September 2018.

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

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 effective literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- Most children behave responsibly and politely
- Practitioners plan interesting learning experiences to stimulate children's learning successfully
- Engaging teaching improves children's outcomes positively
- Provision is effective and the Welsh language is modelled purposefully
- Practitioners' robust and sensible care creates a happy a sociable environment
- The purposeful learning environment engages children's interest intelligently

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- Leaders set a robust and clear direction for the setting's work
- Evaluation procedures create valid targets to act on improving children's standards
- Practitioners' training is effective and has a beneficial influence on provision for the benefit of children
- Support services and specialist services are used conscientiously and usefully
- The management committee provides active and purposeful support
- There are robust partnerships with parents and the local community
- The new management committee is beginning to monitor and support the setting purposefully

Recommendations

- R1 Nurture the children's willingness to persevere and complete tasks independently
- R2 Create an effective balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults
- R3 Improve the use of assessment findings to plan the next steps in individual children's learning
- R4 Ensure that the management committee's monitoring, evaluation and finance management practices are rigorous

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

Most children make sound progress from their starting points. Many are knowledgeable about their day-to-day work and, as a result, they learn well. Most solve challenges and tasks effectively across the areas of learning as, as a result, develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully.

Many children listen attentively and respond enthusiastically to practitioners' questions, both indoors and outdoors. Given many of the children's low starting points in Welsh, a majority are beginning to use accurate language patterns and familiar phrases independently. For example, they discuss weather features and events in stories confidently, such as the adventures of a wizard and his dog. They follow instructions meaningfully and sing Welsh songs and nursery rhymes purposefully. As a result, a majority master early oral skills within a short period of time.

Many children show an interest in books and give good consideration to the purpose of the story, pictures and writing. They re-tell stories in order intelligently and the roles of characters wisely. For example, they discuss the features of familiar characters well, and understand that the fox is a danger to the lives of the chickens. Many children handle books in the reading area like keen early readers.

Many children make marks effectively when experimenting with different media. They persevere with early writing experiences diligently. For example, they use chalk on the floor of the outdoor area to make numbers, letters and shapes, and take orders from each other on paper in the role-play cafe. Many experiment with early writing and understand its purpose, when tracing letters from their names and numbers in the sand pits. Many children recognise letter from their own names regularly when completing the register themselves and setting the snack table.

Many children recognise, name and count numbers to five confidently without the support of adults. They use mathematical language purposefully as they discuss and compare shapes, and count different-coloured objects into coloured bowls. They also count pegs on boards correctly and match numbers with mathematical equipment purposefully. A few count accurately to ten and beyond without being prompted, and count cautiously from ten down to one with support from an adult.

A few children understand how to start to bond numbers to five effectively by using their fingers and setting out objects, such as building blocks. Most use mathematical language and concepts purposefully in practical activities. For example, they understand the differences between the size of circles, whether they are 'small', 'big' or 'medium sized', and 'smaller' or 'bigger' than each other.

Most children use technology effectively when using electronic tills, toys and tablets in day-to-day activities. They use educational software and various apps effectively. This develops their thinking skills, and ICT, literacy and numeracy skills, soundly.

Most children enjoy listening attentively to music and perform enthusiastically when singing familiar songs and nursery rhymes. Many choose equipment and materials purposefully to extend their creativity. For example, they experiment with salt dough to make candlesticks and print on paper with paint and apples. They also develop their physical skills effectively by riding bicycles in the outdoor area, climbing enthusiastically and sliding daringly on adventure equipment in the outdoor area.

Wellbeing: Good

Nearly all children relate well to adults and visitors as they arrive at, and leave, the setting. Many take an interest in their work as they respond to engaging activities, and share resources and work sensibly together. Many show positive attitudes towards new experiences, such as experimenting with water by using troughs and planting flowers in pots in the growing area. However, at times, a few children show a lack of willingness to persevere and complete tasks independently.

Most children are beginning to express their opinions and personal preferences well. This is evident as they choose specific tasks or begin new activities of their own choosing, such as sticking paper together to create a red bird. Many explain sensibly which areas of learning include their favourite activities, such as the construction area, trains and the role-play cafe. They are eager to please and hold the adults' attention well, for example by hitting kitchen utensils outside to create raucous music and singing familiar nursery rhymes enthusiastically. As a result, many children are confident participants who learn productively during play activities.

Most children are well behaved and polite. They show respect when responding responsibly to adults and each other. Most listen attentively to adults, for example as they wait their turn to put on their coats and line up quietly to walk to the outdoor area. 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 is important to avoid bad infections and is an integral part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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

The leader and practitioner work together purposefully to provide interesting and imaginative activities across all areas of learning. They provide a stimulating curriculum, which reflects the ethos of the foundation phase intelligently. Their planning of interesting activities engages children's interest effectively. This creates enthusiastic learners, on the whole, who work diligently both indoors and outdoors. For example, they motivate the children to learn practically by role-playing in the mud kitchen and building a milking parlour on the farm in the small world area. As a result, planning of learning experiences is thorough and targets children's interests successfully.

All practitioners discuss individual children's progress in regular meetings, and organise themes and activities based on this. They provide valuable opportunities for children to voice their personal ideas to enrich activities further. These include painting dinosaurs at an easel and using brushes to create letters, numbers and shapes with water on the wall outside. These activities add positively to the children's daily enthusiasm as they learn through play and broad experiences.

Provision to develop children's literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking skills is good. Literacy, numeracy and ICT activities are prominent in all areas of learning and challenge children to perform at their best consistently. Practical and effective examples of this are as the children discuss the features of different flowers with magnifying glasses, and use educational apps confidently on an electronic tablet. As a result, the learning experiences that are available daily are robust and develop children's skills purposefully.

Practitioners' use of the Welsh language is beneficial to the children. Practitioners are consistently good language models. They support the children who are beginning to learn the language successfully. Practitioners encourage children to use the language as much as possible through interesting activities and by reinforcing vocabulary and language patterns regularly. They challenge and question children purposefully in the indoor and outdoor learning areas. As a result, many children's understanding of the language is developing soundly, and they respond to familiar vocabulary and phrases soon after they start at the setting.

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, cooking 'cawl' and traditional cakes, and through activities about the local races across the Preseli mountains.

Practitioners focus on developing children's physical skills effectively. For example, they plan valuable opportunities for children to balance on stepping-stones, crawl through tunnels and throw balls effectively. Practitioners plan valuable opportunities to develop children's creative skills, such as allowing them to experiment with chalk, crayons, paint and water to make marks. The setting uses visits and visitors beneficially to enrich children's learning experiences. For example, experiences such as visits to the village cafe, the war memorial and the nearby park to collect apples, reinforce the curriculum successfully. Visitors such as the police, a vicar and farmers with lambs and dogs, teach children purposefully about the roles of people in their community.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners work together purposefully and greet the children warmly as they arrive at the setting. They have up-to-date knowledge of child development and a sound understanding of the requirements and philosophy of the foundation phase. They manage children's behaviour effectively and provide regular opportunities for children to contribute meaningfully to their learning.

Practitioners question children successfully to develop their communication skills and numeracy skills. For example, they challenge children to use scales to balance money and vegetables successfully, and melt crayons on a pumpkin with a hairdryer to create unusual patterns. However, at times, practitioners have a tendency to intervene too much during activities, which limits children's independent learning. As a result, there is not always a sensible balance between activities that are led by children and those that are led by adults.

Practitioners plan and provide a wide range of opportunities for children to use equipment and resources purposefully during practical experiences as they play.

They have sound expectations for the children and challenge them to improve their work regularly. Introductions to plenary sessions and focus tasks are lively and concentrate on developing children's understanding purposefully.

Practitioners use the foundation phase profile regularly and purposefully. They complete regular records thoroughly and encourage children to assess their own learning effectively orally. They also discuss sensibly with the children what they need to do to improve their work. However, assessment procedures do not lead directly to planning tasks to target the next steps in individual children's learning in their planning.

The setting informs parents and carers regularly about their children's achievements. Daily dialogue between practitioners and parents, and reports and evidence of children's progress, reinforce this before they transfer to school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting provides positive opportunities to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners provide sensible activities to encourage children to greet each other, pray, reflect on the feelings of others, and say thank you successfully.

Practitioners' sensible approach to nurturing values such as honesty, fairness and respect among the children is effective. A good example of this is the practice of appointing a 'helper of the day', which allocates duties to individuals and provides valuable opportunities for all children to shoulder responsibility in turn. As a result, children are given an opportunity to pour drinks, set out dishes and serve each other around the dining table every day, without too much intervention from practitioners.

Practitioners have effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. These arrangements contribute well to children's overall development and wellbeing, and support their learning successfully. For example, they provide activities to increase the heart rate in the outdoor area by riding bicycles, and opportunities to run enthusiastically around the hall in a zigzag between equipment. The setting has robust arrangements for promoting eating and drinking healthily. As a result, children understand that fruit and vegetables are part of a sensible diet. Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to recycle paper, card, plastic and food. This develops their understanding of sustainability purposefully.

Practitioners use positive behaviour strategies, which eliminate any disruption or unacceptable behaviour successfully. As a result, children are happy and safe in the company of adults and are very willing to ask for help and support. 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 records children's learning needs thoroughly on entry to the setting and during their time there. The leader co-ordinates any provision for children's additional learning needs and reviews children's progress regularly with the other practitioner and a local authority officer. As a result, practitioners discuss children who are in need with the appropriate agencies, such as the speech therapist, to provide support as soon as possible to target their needs.

Learning environment: Good

The setting promotes a supportive ethos through effective daily activities and the positive attitudes that are adopted by practitioners. It is an inclusive community and children have equal access to all areas of learning and equipment. Practitioners have good knowledge of children's needs and their individuality is acknowledged successfully through daily discussions.

Practitioners place a clear emphasis on acknowledging, respecting and celebrating diversity. The setting achieves this successfully by celebrating specific holidays, such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali. The setting also uses different stories sensibly to promote cultural differences purposefully.

Practitioners use resources successfully to meet the requirements of the foundation phase and children's needs. They ensure that resources are within the children's reach, and children are able to reach equipment without any difficulty. This promotes their sense of responsibility successfully as they discuss books, use equipment to build and investigate, and make marks with different media. As a result, a wide range of resources is used effectively in continuous activities, focus tasks and opportunities to enhance learning.

The accommodation is of good quality, maintained regularly and is safe. The interesting outdoor area is used purposefully. Practitioners also use the outdoor area intelligently to reinforce the curriculum, for example when they visit businesses in the village.

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

Following her recent appointment, the leader has ensured that the setting's leadership and management practices are the main focus of her work. She works well with the other practitioner, and they have made beneficial and positive changes in a short period of time. They use relevant and regular information to improve quality, to ensure improvements to provision and children's outcomes. As a result, the leader is beginning to establish robust leadership procedures to promote and maintain improvements. However, these processes have not had enough time to become established firmly, and the enthusiastic and intelligent work is only just beginning to have an effect.

The leader ensures that provision for children is interesting and purposeful. Practitioners have clear responsibilities and duties, and they act on these conscientiously in order to promote successes at the setting. Practitioners receive relevant and informative training, and this has a positive effect on the quality of provision. The leader has started the procedure of effective supervision and evaluations of the other practitioner, and the new management committee is beginning to evaluate the leader's work more frequently.

The leader follows the local authority's guidance and advice effectively, for example on how to plan a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, the setting's daily activities and long-term processes have a positive direction. The leader and management committee also work closely with the Mudiad Meithrin officer to establish robustness in the management structure and management of funding.

The management committee receives useful information about the setting's day-to-day routines from the leader and in regular meetings. The members are very new to their roles and have created beneficial practices to measure the quality of provision in a short period of time. As a result, they are sensible and conscientious, and are beginning to have a good effect on provision and children's outcomes. The management committee is supportive and has implemented purposeful steps to remedy the previous over-expenditure. However, these new procedures have not yet had time to become embedded and ensure enough stability in the financial situation.

Improving quality: Good

Leaders have created a positive culture of self-evaluation in a short period of time. New procedures are in place and the leader and management committee are working together purposefully to make improvements. As a result, self-evaluation procedures lead to identifying the setting's strengths effectively, and the development plan targets areas for improvement purposefully.

The leader and management committee have established efficient arrangements to monitor children's standards and provision. Conscientious co-operation that can be seen from day-to-day, in addition to the recent regular meetings, contribute to this successfully. As a result, self-evaluation procedures give sensible consideration to the views of practitioners, children, parents and carers, the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin. In a short period of time, the information that derives from the new procedures builds a clear picture of the setting's work and areas for improvement.

The leader takes purposeful steps to maintain regular routines and implement changes through effective development plans. She and the management committee prioritise expenditure effectively in line with the steps that have been identified for improvement. As a result, they improve provision by adopting different strategies and accepting valuable advice from others. For example, they have responded successfully to national expectations, such as implementing the foundation phase profile and targeting over-expenditure purposefully to create a sustainable setting.

The leader and management committee are open to new ideas and willing to experiment with different strategies in order to succeed. They are very willing to embrace suggestions by the local authority advisory teachers and Mudiad Meithrin. For example, advice on how to monitor provision and how to develop challenges across the areas of learning are now fully operational. As a result, they have improved their practices positively for the benefit of the children.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works effectively with partners to improve provision and children's outcomes. The leader takes purposeful steps to include parents and carers in the setting's life. The setting informs parents and carers regularly about all aspects of the setting's work, which includes good use of social media. It also encourages them to express their views on issues to improve the setting through questionnaires, an ideas box in the foyer and regular discussions.

There is sensible co-operation with external agencies, such as the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin, and positive co-operation reinforces the setting's work well. As a result, they support management training and documentation purposefully and actively.

The setting has positive and useful partnerships with the school. Arrangements for transferring information, as the children start and settle at the school, are effective. They work well together to develop interesting experiences, such as taking part in the school sports day. There is also a purposeful partnership with businesses in the village, and educational visits to them support children's learning intelligently.

Practitioners work and liaise with a wide range of other partners, who make an important contribution to improving provision. These include agencies that support the setting with training such as first aid, food hygiene courses, foundation phase developments and child protection training.

Resource management: Good

The leader and management committee ensure effective co-operation. They aim consistently to improve all aspects of the setting's work by managing staff, funding and resources purposefully. They succeed in ensuring that the setting has the correct ratio of qualified practitioners, with complete training, to meet children's needs well. With the support of the diligent management committee, they are a new, robust and effective team.

Performance management procedures are suitable and are beginning to ensure that staff provide interesting learning experiences and positive teaching practices for children. The leader and supportive practitioner share and develop their professional knowledge successfully. As a result, the setting is an effective example of a positive learning community, which has a culture of purposeful co-operation between practitioners and other partners.

The setting manages resources creatively to support learning. This includes sensible use of the outdoor area for physical, creative, inquiry and investigative activities.

The leader and management committee have a sound understanding of the budget and the challenges that are involved with maintaining the setting's funding. They now prioritise expenditure carefully, and identify responsibilities and sensible timescales. They make regular changes by discussing and funding plans for improvement purposefully. As a result, the setting has recently ensured that the use of funding has a direct effect on provision and children's outcomes.

Considering 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	<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