



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

A report on

**Cylch Meithrin Talgarreg
Memorial Hall
Talgarreg
Llandysul
Ceredigion
SA44 4ET**

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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Context

Cylch Meithrin Talgarreg is a Welsh-medium setting that meets in Talgarreg village hall in Ceredigion local authority. The setting is open between 12.30pm and 15.00pm from Monday to Thursday every week.

The setting admits children between two and four years old, and is registered to admit up to 15 children. Six children are registered to receive early years education funded by the local authority. A majority of the current children have only attended the setting regularly for a little over a term.

Nearly all children come from white British backgrounds and around half come from Welsh-speaking homes. Very few children with additional learning needs attend the setting.

The setting employs three full-time practitioners, including the leader, who began in post in September 2011.

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

Summary

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

Current performance

The setting's current performance is excellent because:

- Most children make exceptionally good progress in developing their skills across the areas of learning
- A majority of children who are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the setting make exceptionally good progress and develop the language quickly
- Nearly all children are happy, settle immediately and are keen to join in with activities when they arrive at the sessions
- Nearly all children undertake their activities enthusiastically
- Nearly all children make choices confidently when deciding where they would like to play and what they would like to do during the sessions
- Practitioners plan extremely stimulating activities for children, which hold their attention and are of interest to them
- Plans to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills are very effective
- Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development and an excellent understanding of the principles of the foundation phase
- Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are extremely useful to enable practitioners to measure their progress from their starting points
- The classroom and outdoor area are safe and very attractive spaces for children and promote their learning very effectively

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- The experienced leader has a strong vision that is based on providing effective and exciting early education for children in the area
- Leaders focus clearly on ensuring that children are happy, safe and make very sound progress during their time at the setting
- The leader shares her vision very successfully with the supporting practitioners, parents and members of the management committee
- Members of the management committee are proactive, fulfil their roles extremely effectively and allocate responsibilities very sensibly amongst themselves, and ensure that new officers receive an appropriate induction to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively
- Self-evaluation procedures are very effective, include the views of staff, members of the management committee and parents, and are based on observing and evaluating the quality of the setting's work regularly in relation to teaching and learning
- There are highly effective partnerships with a range of partners, which have a very positive effect on provision and children's progress

Recommendations

R1 Provide more appropriate opportunities for children to develop their problem-solving skills

R2 Raise children's awareness of the importance of recycling and sustainability

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

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

Standards: Excellent

On entry to the setting, around half of children have literacy and numeracy skills that are similar to or higher than what is expected to their age. During their time there, most make exceptionally good progress in developing these skills across the areas of learning. The few who are more able make excellent progress, communicate clearly in sentences and use natural vocabulary maturely. The very few with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets.

A majority of children who are unable to speak Welsh on entry to the setting make exceptionally good progress and develop the language quickly. Nearly all understand day-to-day instructions clearly and show an increasing awareness of the language when responding to simple questions. Many use familiar phrases during ticket time, in plenary sessions and when role-playing, and the most able use phrases completely naturally, such as 'tafod yr esgid' (shoe tongue) in the shoe shop. Many talk enthusiastically, and explain how they feel, and why, confidently. Most listen to each other politely, share their experiences and discuss the weather and their daily activities. Many handle books correctly and with care, and follow the order of the story appropriately. A majority recognise their names in print and a few recognise the days of the week and recite them in order. A majority use mark-making equipment independently and with increasing control, and around half write their names fairly independently.

Most children develop very good numeracy skills. Many count objects to five correctly, and a few more able children count to 20 when counting the number of objects on a table. A few 'measure' feet and find suitable shoes in the shoe shop confidently. A majority use mathematical language, such as bigger and smaller, correctly when handling a range of play equipment. When they are given an opportunity, a few are beginning to solve problems soundly, for example when discovering which shoe fits which child in the shoe shop.

Most children use a variety of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment very confidently. Nearly all children use the till and the telephone in the shop purposefully and record each other talking by using talking pegs. A majority are beginning to control an electronic roamer's steps successfully and take sensible photographs on a tablet computer. Most follow simple instructions when using computer programs on a screen.

A majority of children develop excellent physical skills by taking part very confidently in a range of practical activities, such as throwing and catching a ball, following an obstacle course and running and walking slowly in the play session in the hall. Nearly all children use large equipment, such as the slide in the outdoor area, a tunnel and a small box to climb confidently. A majority handle writing and painting equipment soundly, and a majority complete jigsaw puzzles independently.

Wellbeing: Excellent

On entry to the setting, nearly all children are happy, settle immediately and are keen to join in with the activities. Nearly all concentrate very well and listen attentively to presentations. Most behave very well and work together effectively, by following instructions intelligently and complying obediently with the sessions' usual routine. This has a positive effect on their attitude to learning and their perseverance.

Nearly all children undertake their activities enthusiastically. For example, some individuals take turns to discuss their emotions, to take out an object from a bag during a group session, and to tidy up at the end of activities. This, in addition to playing the role of "helper of the day" in turn, develops their independent skills effectively, as well as their ability to shoulder responsibility. Many speak enthusiastically about healthy foods when they eat fruit and drink milk or water during ticket time. Nearly all understand the importance of cleaning their teeth regularly and do so effectively.

Nearly all make choices confidently when deciding where they want to play and what they want to do during the sessions and respond positively when encouraged to improve.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Excellent

Learning experiences: Excellent

Practitioners plan very stimulating learning activities for children, which capture their attention and are of interest to them, such as activities based on potatoes, autumn leaves and animals that hibernate. They identify children's needs extremely well and respond very effectively to them, by reflecting the ethos and principles of the foundation phase successfully. This encourages children to develop positive attitudes to learning from an early age.

Practitioners include children's ideas completely naturally when planning activities for them. As a result, children have a keen interest in their tasks. Plans to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills are very effective. The development of children's Welsh language skills happens completely naturally and is core to all the setting's activities. Literacy and numeracy activities are very evident across the areas of learning and encourage children to develop their language skills continuously as they commit themselves conscientiously to their tasks. Very effective examples include opportunities for them to write their own names on arrival, choose books that are linked to the theme, discuss the size of cakes in the mud kitchen, and match a shoe with foot size in the shoe shop. As a result, children's oral, reading and early writing skills, as well as their numeracy skills, are developing very robustly considering their age. Provision for developing children's ICT skills is very good. Practitioners offer interesting opportunities for children to use a range of equipment such as the telephone and till in the shop when selling shoes and vegetables, and the electronic tablet to take photographs of their peers during activities. However, practitioners do not plan regular enough opportunities to enable children to develop their problem-solving skills independently.

Practitioners assess children's language skills regularly and adapt activities appropriately to address any weaknesses or different needs that they have identified.

There are regular opportunities for children to use large equipment such as the slide in the outdoor area, and a tunnel and small box on which to climb in the hall. These opportunities develop their physical skills successfully.

The setting promotes children's awareness of Welsh traditions, celebrations and culture very successfully. This includes celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day every year, and using traditional stories in their themes.

The setting makes beneficial use of local places such as the grounds of the local primary school to collect leaves, and invites visitors such as the local lay preacher to speak to the children about the importance of harvest and thanksgiving. These activities enrich children's learning activities extremely effectively, bring their learning to life and raise their awareness of people who work in their community.

Teaching: Excellent

Practitioners have up-to-date knowledge of child development as well as an excellent understanding of the principles of the foundation phase. They have high expectations for children and they work together very effectively to ensure that all children are happy and safe and make extremely good progress. They manage children's behaviour very effectively in a gentle but positive way. As a result, most children behave well, participate conscientiously and enjoy their activities. Practitioners challenge children consistently by questioning them probingly during their focus and continuous tasks. They encourage them to speak Welsh from the outset by modelling language skilfully to them. They know when to intervene purposefully during children's experiences and play to stimulate and encourage them to succeed. As a result, children's motivation is high and their desire to improve their work is consistently very good considering their age.

Procedures for assessing and recording children's achievements are extremely useful to enable practitioners to measure their progress from their starting points. Practitioners assess children effectively, especially in language, and record any notable progress that is made by children in their individual files. They use their assessments regularly to feed into planning and to target the next steps in children's individual learning. This has a positive effect on children in the current group, a majority of which have only attended the setting for a little over a term.

The setting informs parents and guardians regularly about their children's achievements. The regular dialogue between practitioners and parents and guardians at the door reinforces this very well. At the end of the children's time at the setting, practitioners transfer comprehensive information about them to the primary school. This promotes smooth and successful transition.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

Practitioners are very caring of children and are very vigilant as they arrive and when they leave at the end of the session. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

There are extremely effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing and practitioners promote the importance of physical exercise, brushing teeth and eating and drinking healthily very successfully. As a result, children understand that fruit, vegetables and physical exercise contribute positively to a healthy lifestyle. They speak maturely about healthy foods and especially about their favourite fruit.

The setting has extremely effective procedures for promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Practitioners use plenary sessions such as story time to foster these values, and encourage children to discuss their emotions, take turns, listen attentively to each other's contributions and reflect on their behaviour. This ensures that nearly everyone considers and respects each other's feelings maturely. However, there are very few opportunities for children to recycle materials such as paper, card, and plastic bottles, which hinders their understanding of sustainability. Practitioners encourage children to pray reflectively at different times during sessions, which promotes their spiritual development appropriately.

Practitioners encourage children to take turns politely as they wash their hands and receive fruit and drinks during ticket time. They give children appropriate responsibility for them to assume the role of "helper of the day", by undertaking specific activities such as calling children individually as their parents arrive at the end of the session by using a walkie talkie. This offers valuable opportunities for all children to accept responsibility and develop their independent skills.

The setting has successful arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs. They act effectively on specialist advice, by tailoring provision to address the complex needs of a small number of children and ensuring that there are opportunities for everyone to take part in all activities that are suitable for them.

Learning environment: Excellent

The classroom and outdoor environment are extremely attractive to children, which promote learning very effectively. The setting is an inclusive community in which all receive equal opportunities to take part in all activities. The active and relaxed ethos that exists reflects the robust emphasis that leaders place on working together and committing themselves to activities. Practitioners place a continuous emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity by educating children successfully about different cultures and festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year, and comparing them with the culture of their area.

The setting has enough various resources of a high standard to develop children's skills very successfully in all areas of learning both inside and in the outdoor area. Resources are used extremely effectively to satisfy the principles of the foundation phase and children's specific needs. They are used in particular in continuous activities, focus tasks and a variety of interesting activities to enrich learning very effectively. Resources are kept at an appropriate level to enable children to reach them and put them back when they have finished with them completely independently. This promotes their sense of responsibility effectively.

The classroom is kept clean and safe. The outdoor area is secure and includes interesting areas such as the mud kitchen, the music corner, the vegetable shop and specific areas to make marks and role-play. Practitioners use these areas extremely creatively to encourage children's independence and creativity in their learning.

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

The experienced leader has robust knowledge that is based on providing effective and exciting early education for the children of the area. She focuses clearly on ensuring that children are happy, safe and make very sound progress during their time at the setting. The leader shares her vision very successfully with other practitioners, parents, and members of the management committee. She has very high expectations of her herself and her colleagues and ensures that she and practitioners share information about daily procedures and children's progress very successfully among each other. Practitioners' roles and lines of accountability are clear. This ensures that staff understand precisely what needs to be done to ensure that the setting operates effectively from day-to-day and that children make progress that is at least good.

Members of the management committee are proactive and undertake their roles extremely effectively. They allocate responsibilities very effectively among themselves and ensure that new officers are inducted appropriately to enable them to undertake their role effectively. The officers are very supportive of the setting's work and ensure that staff and children have very good access to resources of high quality to enable them to comply with the principles of the foundation phase. They respect staff and assume full responsibility for managing their performance, by monitoring provision regularly and ensuring that practitioners receive training provided by the local authority. For example, all practitioners have taken advantage of language and speech training to help them to develop these elements successfully in the setting. By visiting regularly, they know the setting extremely well and appreciate the range of interesting activities that children undertake there.

Improving quality: Excellent

Self-evaluation procedures are very effective, include staff and members of the management committee, and are based on observing and evaluating the quality of the setting's work regularly in relation to teaching and learning. Practitioners discuss their practices regularly and focus on the effect of their work on children's progress. This promotes open co-operation and a clear sense of team work and continuous improvement. Members of the committee, as well as the local authority's link officer, monitor practitioners' work regularly and prepare written reports to note their findings. The leader also seeks parents' views about the setting's work. This gives her an objective picture of the setting's work and contributes directly to the self-evaluation report, which is an honest and useful document which summarises the outcomes of these procedures clearly. The leader recognises that the setting has specific areas for improvement and identifies robust examples of how she is planning specifically to adapt provision to address the needs of different groups of children.

There is a clear link between the areas for improvement that are identified in the self-evaluation report and the priorities in the development plan. The development plan identifies a sensible number of matters for improvement. It identifies actions, clear success criteria based on children's progress, who is responsible, by when, and costs. Monitoring comments are identified regularly during the year based on children's development against these matters. This leads naturally to improvement in

provision, standards and children's wellbeing, especially in improving children's oral skills, and their independence in using the outdoor area.

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting has an extremely effective relationship with a range of partners, which has a very positive effect on provision and children's progress. It has an open-door policy and one of the practitioners always greets parents at the door and is ready to discuss relevant matters with them there and then, if appropriate. Open and useful evenings are held for parents regularly to enable them to discuss their child's development more formally, as well as any concerns or issues they wish to raise with staff. Regular fund-raising activities are held, which depend wholly on the good support of parents and the strong community. For example, the Christmas fair, the St David's Day concert and the Bwlchyfadfa Eisteddfod are events that give parents an opportunity to get to know each other and to watch their children perform, while raising money towards the setting's work and the whole community. The leader gives parents or members of children's families an opportunity to contribute any specific expertise that they might have that is linked to specific themes. The setting has a soft toy called Doti that each child in turn takes home over a weekend, in order for parents to record various events that she participated in with the children during that time. These activities reinforce the link with parents and ensure that they are aware of the themes that are followed at any given time. Parents appreciate this greatly.

The setting works very closely with officers in the local authority's special needs referral department. This enables them to provide specific and very effective support to parents as well as children, where necessary. It also works very successfully with the "Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme" which promotes, for example, healthy attitudes towards nutrition, oral hygiene and physical exercise among children. By working with the local authority and Mudiad Meithrin to arrange staff training, practitioners have developed their awareness of important issues such as autism, the principles of the foundation phase, language, numeracy, staying healthy and children's fitness. These have a very positive effect on provision, standards, behaviour and pupils' wellbeing.

The setting works closely with the committee of Talgarreg hall to ensure that they use parts of the same space efficiently and to meet the requirements of both organisations. A representative of the setting's committee attends the meetings of the hall's committee. This ensures that the setting is part of any decisions, and that members of the management committee and staff receive details about any relevant issues.

As the majority of the children at the setting attend the local primary school eventually, a number of valuable joint activities are held in order for them to become familiar with it. For example, a St David's Day concert and joint sports day are held. The setting works with the school effectively to ensure that children that are about to transfer attend familiarisation sessions at the school in order to ease the process for them when the time comes.

The setting has a close relationship with the community in general, which ensures that children have a sound understanding that they belong to a wider community as well as the setting's community.

Resource management: Excellent

The leader and committee officers manage staff and other resources extremely effectively. They succeed in accessing numerous grants regularly from different sources to fund important aspects of the setting's work. For example, a grant was used to develop the outdoor area recently, which has enriched activities for children. The setting is supported very effectively by the local authority's link officers and Mudiad Meithrin to ensure that it is run successfully and offers education of a very high standard for children. Suitable use is made of the early years development grant which is kept centrally by the local authority to train practitioners in sensible areas such as developing the principles of the foundation phase and areas such as numeracy and literacy.

As a result of the sound effect of provision on the standards achieved by children, the setting provides excellent value for money.

Glossary of terms

Areas of Learning	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity • language, literacy and communications skills • mathematical development • Welsh language development • knowledge and understanding of the world • physical development • creative development
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)	This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.
Foundation Phase	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from three to seven years of age
Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings that provide education for three and four-year-olds.
Mudiad Meithrin	A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)	This organisation aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education