



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Cylch Meithrin Abergwili  
Ysgol Abergwili  
Abergwili  
Carmarthen  
SA31 2JP**

**Date of inspection: 24 January 2012**

**by**

**Dorothy Morris**

**for**

**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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## Context

Cylch Meithrin Abergwili is based in the canteen of the local primary school. The setting was established in 1993 and the children that attend live in the village and the immediate area. It is judged that the area is neither affluent nor socially and economically disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age for five sessions a week during term time. It is open between 9:00 and 11:30 in the morning. During the inspection there were 10 three year olds on the register. English is the main language spoken in the homes of most children and there are no children from minority ethnic backgrounds at present. The setting admits children with additional learning needs and appropriate support arrangements are in place.

There are two members of staff. The setting is in the care of the lead practitioner who has relevant qualifications in the care and education of young children. There is also an experienced full time practitioner.

The setting was inspected previously by Estyn in December 2005 and by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in April 2011.

## Summary

<b>The Setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The Setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting's current performance is adequate because:

- the children are happy in the setting and enjoy the learning experiences provided;
- the inclusive ethos creates a warm and supportive environment for all children;
- there is a close relationship between the practitioners and the children;
- daily routines operate smoothly;
- nevertheless, the development of children's learning skills is uneven;
- the more able children are not extended sufficiently; and
- the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent.

## Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- the practitioners work hard and are conscientious,
- the parents are supportive,
- nevertheless, the teaching does not provide a strong enough focus on developing children's' learning skills;
- evaluation procedures lack sufficient structure to ensure consistent improvements in provision;
- the implementation of the development plan is at an early stage; and
- leadership strategies, including the role of the local committee, are more informal in nature.

## Recommendations

In order to develop, the setting needs to:

- R1 strengthen children's Welsh communication, number and information communications and technology skills, and extend the skills of the more able;
- R2 amend the planning to place a greater focus on introducing basic Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns consistently;
- R3 strengthen aspects of teaching and learning; and
- R4 develop self-evaluation and management processes further.

## What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Standards: Adequate**

During their period in the setting, most children make consistent progress in their learning. They work hard and acquire knowledge and appropriate skills across most of the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase. The children's personal and social development is good. The majority collaborate easily with other children and they are ready to share resources.

The majority of children listen well and respond accurately to greetings and instructions. They demonstrate an increasing understanding of familiar Welsh words but most offer very brief oral responses. Children from Welsh speaking backgrounds are ready to converse and have a good grasp of vocabulary. All the children enjoy looking at books and most can recognise their name in print. Children use marking tools appropriately in a range of media. A few children can write their names correctly.

The majority of children make correct use of basic number skills in daily activities. They can count to five with a few counting to ten. They understand some mathematical terms, such as big and small, in practical situations. Most children are unable to recognise two-dimensional shapes and their knowledge of the use of money is limited. The children's early information and communications technology (ICT) skills develop appropriately. They make correct use of the mouse to move objects around the screen and to complete simple tasks. On occasion, they use a camera to take photographs.

The children make effective use of their fine motor skills in their craft activities. The majority make suitable use of their thinking skills when searching for treasure in the sand and when building with different materials.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

The majority of children have positive attitudes to learning. They work conscientiously on their tasks and enjoy the activities provided. All children settle well into the setting. They are happy and safe in the company of adults and are ready to ask for support and help.

The children have a developing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. They understand the importance of cleaning their teeth regularly, and also of washing their hands before eating their snacks. They play collaboratively and behave well. Most children undertake new experiences confidently.

The children's social awareness and skills develop appropriately through day to day activities and through experiences linked to the setting's close partnership with the school and the community.

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

The practitioners provide a range of interesting experiences across many of the areas of learning. The activities are based on a series of topics which are suitable to the children's age range. There is consistent use of curriculum frameworks to plan the general provision and more focused tasks. The provision to promote children's communication, number and broader skills is incorporated appropriately into the experiences provided.

There is consistent encouragement for children to use their Welsh skills in their learning and play. Nevertheless, the focus on extending children's language does not always receive sufficient attention in the planning. The practitioners develop the children's awareness of the traditions and celebrations of Wales effectively through activities such as celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's Day.

The practitioners make appropriate use of the internal and external environment to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. Suitable experiences, such as growing and caring for plants, visits to the local gardens and recycling activities, promote children's awareness of caring for the environment and all living things. Children have appropriate opportunities to develop their awareness of the wider world, including other people and cultures. They celebrate the festival of Divali and the Chinese New Year through a range of relevant experiences including craft and cooking activities.

**Teaching: Adequate**

The practitioners have a developing knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and this is reflected in aspects of the teaching. They use a range of appropriate teaching methods and resources to support the learning. They include activities chosen by the children and focused tasks which are led by the practitioners. Although activities have a clear objective, at times they lack sufficient structure to ensure consistent learning. The practitioners communicate continuously with children in small group activities and in whole group sessions. Nevertheless, there is insufficient use of opportunities to reinforce Welsh vocabulary and basic sentence patterns.

The practitioners know the children well and can discuss their general development in detail. They regularly observe children's progress and responses, and record their observations appropriately. Some samples of children's work are kept in personal files. Practitioners make reference to aspects of the information collected when planning tasks but this process is at an early stage of development. Parents are kept informed of their children's achievements and wellbeing informally and through an appropriate record which is completed when children transfer to the primary school. During activities, the practitioners ensure that each child receives the necessary support.

**Care, support and guidance: Good**

There are effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. Daily routines, including the arrangements for receiving and collecting children, promote this approach well. The induction arrangements ensure that children settle well into the setting. Practitioners are caring and supportive of all children.

There are suitable arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs, including clear lines of communication with key agencies to address any specific needs.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Experiences, such as celebrating Christmas, the visits to the local church and participating in special services, enhance children's spiritual development effectively. The children's awareness of the need to help those less fortunate is developed appropriately through contributing to activities to raise money for good causes.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

**Learning environment: Good**

The setting is an inclusive community where children receive equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners succeed well in creating a warm and welcoming ethos. They consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately.

There are sufficient practitioners with relevant experience of working with young children. The accommodation and facilities are adequate and there is full use of the space available. The displays and samples of children's work create an attractive environment. There are sufficient resources that are used appropriately to support the learning and teaching. There is good use of the outside learning area and the playground to provide children with a range of purposeful activities.

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

Practitioners share common values and are committed to children's development and wellbeing. There is appropriate management of daily routines. Nevertheless, the use of planning and management processes in the context of the whole provision is at an early stage of development.

There is a close link with the registered person and the setting benefits from this support. Members of the management committee are also ready to offer their support. There is good co-operation and members work hard to raise funds to purchase additional resources. The committee's role within forward planning and evaluation processes is not as effectively developed.

The setting gives appropriate consideration to national and local priorities including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum and promoting effective links with the primary school. The registered person appraises the work of the practitioners and a suitable structure is in place. The practitioners' further professional development, particularly that of the lead practitioner, is discussed and training opportunities are planned appropriately.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The practitioners discuss informally and they have a general awareness of the setting's needs. Their understanding of evaluation processes, such as reflecting on their practice and taking appropriate steps, is less secure. Aspects of the provision are regularly monitored by the link teacher and agreement is reached on suitable aspects to receive attention. Appropriate strategies are put in place.

The practitioners are open to new ideas and the improvement plan produced before the inspection is an important development. Appropriate areas for improvement together with a timetable and specific responsibilities to achieve the targets set are included. The implementation of this plan is at an early stage.

The close links with staff in the primary school are beneficial when discussing teaching and learning approaches. The CSSIW framework is used to undertake a review of the provision and an appropriate report is produced for parents. In addition, further informal discussions are held with parents in order to gain their views.

The practitioners attend courses alongside staff in the primary school on aspects such as safeguarding.

### **Partnership working: Good**

There is a good partnership between the practitioners and they work effectively as a team. The partnership with parents is also good and this was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection. Practitioners are regularly available to meet parents at the beginning and end of each session and information is provided regularly about setting activities. Parents in turn are very ready to support the setting through activities such as creating a covered area for outdoor activities.

A constructive partnership has been established with the local primary school which supports smooth transition. The productive relationship with the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin's development officer contributes to the

improvements in the setting's work. The links with the community support children's learning effectively.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Resources are managed appropriately. The setting is suitably staffed and there are sufficient resources. The play areas and the covered learning area offer children purposeful opportunities to undertake a range of activities. There is effective use of local resources, such as the post office and the local museum gardens, to extend children's experiences.

The registered person has a clear understanding of the budget and spending decisions are prioritised according to the setting's needs. There is effective use of grants and fund raising initiatives to increase resources. Having regard to children's outcomes and other aspects of provision, the setting offers adequate value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

There is no commentary on the parent questionnaires due to the small number of responses received.

#### **Responses to discussions with the children**

The children are happy in the setting and join in enthusiastically in the activities. A few children talk readily about their favourite activities.

## **Appendix 2**

### **The reporting inspector –**

Dorothy Morris	Reporting Inspector
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### **Copies of the report**

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

## 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>CSSIW</b>	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	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 partnership's conditions of registration.
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	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.
<b>National Childminding Association (NCMA)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which 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.

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