



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 Talgarreg
Neuadd Talgarreg
Llandysul
Ceredigion**

Date of inspection: 1 February, 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:

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 Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Cylch Meithrin Talgarreg is based in a room in the village hall. The children who attend live in the local community. The area is described as neither advantaged nor economically and socially disadvantaged.

The setting caters for children between two and four years of age for four sessions a week during term time. It is open between 12:30 and 3:00 in the afternoon. During the inspection there were nine three year olds on the register. The majority of children come from homes where Welsh is the main language spoken. At present there are no children from minority ethnic backgrounds or children with additional learning needs.

There are three members of staff. The setting is in the care of a highly experienced lead practitioner who holds relevant qualifications in the education and care of young children. She was appointed to her current post in September 2011. She is assisted by one experienced practitioner and by another practitioner who was appointed a few weeks prior to the inspection.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in June 2010. This is the first inspection by Estyn.

Summary

The Setting's current performance	Good
The Setting's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The setting's current performance is good because:

- all children make good progress during their time at the setting;
- children's speaking skills are good with a few achieving very good standards;
- the children are happy in the setting and enjoy the learning experiences provided;
- the children are offered a broad and interesting curriculum;
- the teaching is good;
- the children are offered good quality care in an inclusive and stimulating learning environment; and
- there is a very good relationship between the children and the practitioners.

Prospects for improvement

The setting has good prospects for improvement because of:

- the lead practitioner's effective leadership;
- good teamwork;
- the commitment and efficiency of the management committee;
- the consistent focus on improving;
- the successful implementation of development plans; and the
- excellent contribution of partnerships to the quality of provision.

Recommendations

In order to develop further, the setting needs to:

R1 adapt the planning to ensure consistent balance and continuity in children's learning skills;

R2 extend the more able children further.

What happens next?

The setting will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the setting to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Good
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Standards: Good

The children make good progress in their learning during their time in the setting. They work hard and acquire knowledge and appropriate skills across all areas of learning of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They are enthusiastic learners and are eager to participate in all the activities provided.

All the children enjoy listening to stories and the leader's presentations. They concentrate well and respond confidently to questions. They can recall the content and discuss the main events in detail. They voluntarily look at books and enjoy mark making for a range of purposes. They know a good number of songs and rhymes and sing them accurately. A few children have a rich vocabulary and use extended phrases correctly to offer opinions and to discuss their experiences. Their speaking skills are of a high standard.

Nearly all children count to ten correctly and recognise numbers to at least five. They know the names of basic shapes and can create and follow a pattern correctly. They know that money is needed to buy goods in the shop. They are beginning to use mathematical terms, such as more and less, heavy and light, in practical situations. Nearly all children use their information and communications technology (ICT) skills effectively to complete tasks and to record their discussions. They make correct use of the mouse to create patterns and pictures, and to play games.

The children make effective use of their thinking and decision making skills in a range of investigative activities indoors and outdoors. They make imaginative use of a range of skills to produce paintings and pictures of a very good standard. They demonstrate good use of their fine motor skills when holding a pencil or brush, and when using tools to cut and glue to make collages and handle clay. They use building tools well to join and separate different materials in their workshop. They participate confidently in role play activities in the shop and as builders.

Wellbeing: Good

The children demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They work conscientiously on their tasks and enjoy the activities provided. They undertake new experiences confidently and play together happily. Their behaviour is very good.

The children have a developing awareness of the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. They understand the importance of washing their hands regularly and particularly before eating their snack.

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

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The practitioners provide a wide range of relevant activities which gain the children's interest. Activities are carefully planned across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Children have regular opportunities to contribute to the planning of themes. Planning of activities ensures a suitable balance between activities chosen by the children and tasks led by the practitioners. There is appropriate evaluation of the activities provided and the outcomes are used to plan future activities.

The planning offers good opportunities to develop children's learning skills. They are incorporated appropriately into the themes and activities provided. Nevertheless,

there is insufficient attention at times to ensuring consistent balance and continuity in the development of skills across all areas of learning.

Welsh is the natural medium of communication in the life and work of the setting. The practitioners are good language models. They communicate very effectively with the children during activities and utilise all opportunities to extend and enrich their language. The children are introduced to the traditions and celebrations of Wales through suitable activities, including celebrating St David's Day and St Dwynwen's day. There are also opportunities for children to learn about the culture and traditions of other people through purposeful activities such as celebrating the Chinese New Year.

The practitioners make good use of the indoor and outdoor environment to encourage children to experiment with new experiences. The experiences of growing and caring for plants in the garden, recycling activities and tasks involving studying animals and their habitats promote children's awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and all living things.

Teaching: Good

The practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and a developing understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase curriculum. They make effective use of a range of teaching approaches, including individual, small group and whole group activities. Activities are carefully planned and organised and there is good use of resources to promote learning. Nevertheless, activities do not always extend the more able children sufficiently. Children are offered good opportunities to investigate and experiment in practical situations including the wood workshop, the shop and the investigation table.

The practitioners establish a close working relationship with the children which encourages them to contribute and to enjoy. The lead practitioner's use of open ended questions promotes interesting and often intense discussions. This is a very good feature of the teaching.

The practitioners know the children well and are aware of their general development and their learning needs. Suitable processes are in place to assess and record their progress. A record of each child's achievements in the six areas of learning is completed. Parents are kept well informed about their children's achievements and development through informal discussion at the beginning and end of sessions and through appropriate written reports. The practitioners have begun to keep samples of each child's work in a booklet which is a useful record of their development. Transfer booklets are completed appropriately and forwarded to the receiving school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting is a caring community with a family atmosphere which contributes significantly to children's wellbeing. Appropriate policies and procedures are

implemented to support children's health and wellbeing. The induction arrangements, alongside the daily contact with parents/carers, ensure that children settle well into the setting. The practitioners are caring and highly supportive of all the children. This is a very strong feature of the provision.

There are suitable arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs and there are clear lines of communication with key agencies. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding. Practitioners have received training. Regular risk assessments are undertaken.

Effective learning experiences promote children's personal development well, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Values, such as fairness and kindness, and an understanding of what is right and wrong, are fostered effectively through the curriculum and day-to-day activities. Thanksgiving celebrations and work on the Christmas story contribute effectively to children's spiritual development. Strong links strengthen children's awareness of their role within their community very successfully.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community where children receive equal access to the curriculum and to all the activities provided. Practitioners consider and value children's different backgrounds and respond appropriately. There is a favourable ratio of adults to children.

The accommodation is well maintained. There is purposeful use of the space available through the activity areas located around the room. The use of children's work and the colourful displays to reflect current themes provide a stimulating learning environment. There is regular use of the outdoor area which includes a small garden to offer children effective opportunities to investigate and play.

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

Under the effective leadership of the lead practitioner, the setting offers children a purposeful and organised environment. The practitioners understand their roles, which leads to good teamwork. Their sound aims and values are based on promoting children's all round development.

The management committee offers the setting sound guidance and support. Members share their professional expertise and personal skills which are used effectively to offer the setting purposeful assistance. The officers take a keen interest in the setting and work closely with the lead practitioner. They are regular visitors and participate effectively as a critical friend. They demonstrate a secure knowledge

of the quality of the provision made. There are regular meetings, and the minutes are used as a basis for further planning.

The practitioners give suitable attention to national and local priorities including implementing the Foundation Phase curriculum, promoting children's language skills and establishing effective links with the primary school. Suitable procedures to appraise their work and identify further professional development needs are implemented.

Improving quality: Good

The practitioners have a secure understanding of the setting's main strengths. This is reflected in the self-evaluation report and the improvement plan. They hold regular discussions and are open to new ideas to improve the provision further.

The provision is regularly monitored by the local authority link teacher. Areas for development are agreed and relevant strategies implemented. There is a good focus on promoting children's skills across the areas of learning. As part of the role, the chair of the management committee is a regular visitor. At specific times, observations are made of aspects of provision. The outcomes of all the observations are discussed with the setting leader and the management committee and are used productively for further planning. The lead practitioner presents a termly report on the setting's work to the management committee.

The improvement plan identifies appropriate areas for attention and includes detailed activities to achieve the targets set. The implementation of the plan is monitored regularly by the management committee. A few of the targets have already been achieved. The views of parents are sought on aspects of provision and appropriate attention is given to the observations made.

The practitioners attend suitable courses on aspects of the education and care of young children. They make effective use of the training received. The lead practitioner contributes to training organised by the local authority on aspects of management and children's creative development. There is networking and informal links between the setting and other settings in the area.

Partnership working: Excellent

The setting makes excellent use of a wide range of strategic partnerships which contributes successfully to improving the quality of provision and enhancing children's achievements.

There is very effective partnership and collaboration between the setting and the management committee. Members of the committee understand their roles and undertake their responsibilities efficiently. This has a positive impact on planning and evaluating the quality of provision, which develops the setting further. The officers are innovative, and successful, in their efforts to secure grants and raise

funds. These successful ideas are shared with other settings. Through monitoring, it is ensured that expenditure impacts productively on children's progress and wellbeing.

The setting's partnership with the local community is a very strong feature. The setting is regarded as an integral part of the community with local agencies, businesses and organisations providing practical help and regular financial support. With this support, improvements have been made to the setting including the creation of the outside play area and garden, and the purchase of additional resources. There is effective use of people's specific skills, such as craftsmen and an artist, to contribute to the provision.

There is a close working partnership between the practitioners, the management committee, the local authority link teacher and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin's officer. This creates very successful teamwork. The effective strategies promoted impact productively on the quality of provision. With the support of the link teacher, the good practice in the setting is shared with other leaders and settings through training networks.

The partnership with parents is very good. This was confirmed in the conversations with them during the inspection. There is regular communication with parents through text messages, e-mails and regular meetings. This ensures that parents are an integral part of the discussions and further planning. A close partnership has been established with the local primary school which supports smooth transition and offers children good opportunities to participate in activities such as concerts, celebrations and annual sports events.

Resource management: Good

Resources are managed and used effectively. The setting is suitably staffed and there are regular opportunities for staff to access further training. The practitioners make good use of their time and experience in working with children in a range of activities. There is a sufficient supply of resources. They are accessible to the children and this encourages independence. The investment in the outdoor play area offers children purposeful opportunities to undertake a range of valuable activities.

The lead practitioner and officers have a clear understanding of the budget and prioritise spending appropriately according to the setting's needs. Financial processes are used systematically and there is regular use of fund raising activities to increase resources. The setting offers good 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 very happy in the setting and join in enthusiastically in the activities. They talk readily about their favourite activities and interests.

Appendix 2

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)

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
CSSIW	Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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 partnership's 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 3 to 7 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 2013.
Local authority advisory teacher	These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which 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.
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
National (NDNA)	This organisation which 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.

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