



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

**Miri Melyd Fun Club
Ysgol Melyd
Ffordd Pennant
Meliden
LL19 8PE**

Date of inspection: February 2014

by

**Mary Dyas
Reporting Inspector**

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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About the setting

Miri Melyd Fun Club opened in September 2013 and operates from a recently refurbished room in Ysgol Melyd in the village of Meliden. It offers full day care for children aged from 2 years to 11 years and 11 months, including after school and holiday times. The playgroup provides for children aged from three years until they move on to the school's nursery class and operates from 9.15-11.15 am Monday to Friday during school term times. There are currently eight children on roll in the playgroup. Five of these are receiving funded educational provision from the local authority. All children in the playgroup speak English as their home language. The setting is inclusive and welcomes all children. A few children have been identified as having additional learning needs and these are receiving appropriate support.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales has not yet inspected the setting. This is the first time Estyn has inspected the setting.

Summary

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

Current performance

The current performance of the provider is good because:

- most children make good progress from their starting points during their time in the playgroup;
- most children behave well and treat one another with care and respect;
- practitioners provide a good range of interesting and exciting learning experiences that motivate the children to learn;
- children enjoy their time in the setting and engage well with the activities that are planned for them;
- in a relatively short space of time the setting has developed good partnerships with individuals and organisations that provide good support and guidance; and
- teaching is good.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the management structure is clear and everyone knows their roles and responsibilities;
- the management committee and staff share high expectations of themselves and of the children;
- the current self-evaluation is realistic and targets for improvement are appropriate;
- practitioners are already working towards meeting the targets for improvement; and
- self-evaluation is a working document that is constantly reviewed and extended.

Recommendations

- R1. Provide opportunities for children to have a say in their learning.
- R2. Ensure planning includes opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills.
- R3. Develop the use of incidental Welsh throughout the sessions to encourage the children to use the Welsh they have learned more independently.

What happens next?

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

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

All children are making good progress from their starting points across the areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. They are developing independence and confidence in making choices about what they want to do and nearly all are fully involved in the activities they choose.

All children enjoy listening to stories read to them by adults either during group times or in areas of free play. They are learning to sit and look at books themselves and many like to 'read' familiar books to themselves. Most children join in with songs and rhymes with enthusiasm and participate well in moving to music. All children are developing their mark making skills using a variety of materials. A few are beginning to recognise their written name when they find their coat pegs to go outside and again when they come back inside.

Most children are making appropriate progress in numeracy. They count confidently to ten by rote and count objects accurately to three independently and to five together with others.

The development of children's knowledge and understanding of information and communications technology (ICT) is developing appropriately. Children play confidently with a range of electronic toys such as a kettle and a toaster and most are able to use a digital camera. Most children are making reasonable progress in developing their Welsh language skills. They respond to the register in the morning in Welsh and are beginning to know some words to describe the weather. Most know some Welsh colour words and are able to count to at least five in Welsh.

Wellbeing: Good

All children are happy in the setting and are well motivated and engaged in the activities that they choose. They are confident and make clear choices about the activities in which they would like to participate. They choose when they go to have their snack and wait until there is a space at the table. Most children behave well throughout the sessions. They know the daily routines well and all help to tidy up when asked. They are kind and thoughtful towards one another and share equipment well. Most concentrate well on the tasks they have chosen and sustain interest and involvement for appropriate lengths of time. There are currently no arrangements for children to make suggestions about what they would like to learn.

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

Practitioners plan together a good range of interesting and stimulating learning activities. Planning takes account of the use of skills ladders to ensure coverage of the range of skills based on the Foundation Phase areas of learning. The learning opportunities are fun and interesting and encourage children to interact with one another and to form good relationships. Planned activities engage the children's interest and curiosity both indoors and outdoors and support them in developing their communication and ICT skills. Although numeracy is promoted incidentally throughout the sessions, planned opportunities to develop numeracy are limited. Children learn to care about living things by looking after the plants in the outdoor area and caring for the pet fish in the classroom.

Welsh is promoted throughout the session both during group times and incidentally. Practitioners support children counting in Welsh and encourage the use of Welsh when naming colours. The children are learning about different landmarks in Wales such as the 'blue bridge' in Rhyl and know that they live in Wales. They recognise the Welsh flag and are looking forward to their celebrations of St David's Day

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a good understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Phase and good first-hand experience and knowledge of child development. There is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-selected activities across the curriculum and all staff have high expectations of themselves and of the children whatever their age or stage of development. Practitioners make use of open questioning to challenge children and to encourage them to think for themselves. There is an appropriate balance between adult intervention and allowing children to follow their own ideas.

Practitioners provide an interesting and exciting environment both indoors and outdoors that stimulates children to want to investigate and to learn. Teaching sessions have good pace. Practitioners engage children's interest effectively. All staff show enthusiasm for the activities they have planned which involves and encourages the children to take part and to find out for themselves.

Practitioners assess by observing the children while they are engaged in their learning experiences. The information gathered informs the next steps in planning and contributes to the local authority's assessment document, which builds on an entry assessment. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's

progress through a daily report book that gives information about what their child had enjoyed, how well they ate, any progress in learning and suggestions for the next steps in learning. Parents value this. They will receive the report book and assessment record at the end of the year and a summary 'Me in a Nutshell' will be prepared to provide information for the school.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The provision made for developing children's health and wellbeing, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Children in the setting are actively involved in the school's arrangements for recycling and sustainability.

The daily routines in the setting help to develop values such as honesty, fairness and respect. Most children are aware of the difference between right and wrong and adults help them to behave accordingly. Practitioners communicate with parents daily and share information about the children's progress and wellbeing. Children are encouraged to take responsibility by washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack and by putting on their own coats before going outside.

Practitioners understand the importance of early identification of children with additional learning needs and have worked with outside agencies to provide appropriate support. The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no reason for concern. All practitioners have received up to date training and understand their roles and responsibilities. Other policies are appropriately detailed and relevant.

Learning environment: Good

The playgroup is an inclusive community and children are encouraged to treat one another fairly. Particularly good attention is taken to ensure that all children have access to the full range of activities. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The outdoor area provides a learning environment that enables children to explore a wide range of interesting experiences. Children have free access to this area easily from the main room.

The setting employs sufficient well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of all children. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase. All practitioners are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills through relevant training. There are ample good quality resources to support the planned activities.

Good use is made of the local area and visitors from the community have enhanced the children's understanding of the world around them.

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

The setting is well led and the manager makes good use of the experience and expertise of her staff team. In a short space of time she has established a positive culture of self-improvement which is helping to develop and maintain the good work of the setting. Practitioners respond well to advice and support and ensure that changes impact positively upon children's standards and the quality of provision.

A management committee, that includes members of staff from the school, oversees the playgroup. The committee meets regularly and the setting manager attends all meetings.

Documentation provided for parents clearly lists the main objectives of the setting and the provision available. Procedures for performance management are in place staff performance and their training needs are reviewed regularly. Practitioners respond appropriately to national and local priorities and are fully involved in training and developments connected with the Foundation Phase.

Improving quality: Good

Although the playgroup is still comparatively new, effective self-evaluation procedures are already in place and targets are regularly reviewed and updated. The self-evaluation process involves all stakeholders including staff, the school-based support teacher, parents and children. Parents were very positive in their responses and attention has been paid towards addressing their suggestions. In addition, the setting has used a self-evaluation tool to look at other aspects of provision for the children. The results from this were very positive, particularly in view of the short time the playgroup has been in existence, and the information gained has been used to set targets to address areas for improvement.

Staff have visited other settings in the local area and have made improvements as a result, for example in the development of the outdoor area. The local authority support teacher has indicated that she would like to encourage practitioners from other settings to visit Miri Melyd to see their good practice once they are more established.

Partnership working: Good

Practitioners have positive relationships with parents and carers who speak highly of the setting and say their children enjoy attending. Newsletters, daily conversations and the daily home/school diary keep them very well informed.

The playgroup has good relationships with the school and almost all children move on to the nursery class. As part of a new initiative in Denbighshire, a school-based teacher provides practical support and advice to the setting once a week. In this instance, she is also the leader of the Foundation Phase within the school that provides positive links for transition.

The local authority support teacher works effectively with the setting and the school-based link teacher. Practitioners value the support they receive and are keen to respond to advice and guidance. Good links with the local community further support the provision.

Resource management: Good

The playgroup has sufficient qualified and experienced practitioners who are deployed appropriately to make the best use of their experience and expertise. Good use is made of the available space indoors and outdoors to provide a wide range of interesting activities to encourage children to investigate and develop their skills. An ample supply of good quality resources supports the planned activities.

The treasurer of the management committee manages the limited budget carefully and the school is currently providing additional financial support while the playgroup is established. The committee considers any requests for large spending. In view of the progress made by the children from their starting points, the setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received were fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Mrs Mary Elspeth Dyas	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	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) 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 partnership's 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 3 to 7 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 which 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)	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 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.