



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 Tynewydd
The Pavilion
Tynewydd Park
Tynewydd
Treherbert
Rhondda Cynon Taff
CF42 5LU**

Date of inspection: May 2013

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 Tynewydd is a Welsh-medium playgroup situated in the Pavilion, Parc Tynewydd, near Treorchy in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Children who attend the setting come from the areas of Blaenycwm, Blaenrhondda, Treherbert and Treorchy.

The playgroup is registered to take up to 24 children per session and children are admitted from the age of two years. There are currently 18 children on roll, six of whom are funded by the local authority for early years education although not all were present during the inspection.

The children who attend the setting come from a wide range of family backgrounds. All children have English as their home language and four children have one parent at home who speaks Welsh. At the present time, there are no children with additional learning needs.

There are four permanent members of staff, including the playgroup leader. The playgroup leader has been in post since 2010.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in May 2012 and by Estyn in June 2007.

Summary

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

Current performance

Cylch Meithrin Tynewydd's performance has strengths that outweigh areas for improvement.

Strengths:

- planning is used appropriately to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum;
- children are well cared for and are happy and secure;
- resources are of good quality and the accommodation both indoors and outdoors is used effectively to enhance children's experiences;
- there is an effective and purposeful relationship with parents;
- practitioners work well as a team; and
- the relationship between adults and children is very good.

Areas for development:

- short-term planning is not always focused well enough to ensure that all children remain on task and persevere;
- the organisation and planning for the development of children's numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not as effective as they should be; and
- practitioners are not confident and knowledgeable enough about how to teach Welsh to young learners.

Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the playgroup leader has a clear vision for the setting and is strongly committed to ensuring that this becomes a reality;
- practitioners have a developing understanding of the importance of self-evaluation and are committed to improving quality;
- the setting makes good use of practitioners' expertise and skills in supporting children's learning;
- practitioners are willing to learn and to try new ways of working;
- the setting has used advice and guidance well to make changes to how it plans and delivers the curriculum and how it assesses children;
- the setting has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection; and
- recent initiatives, such as the development of the outdoors, have significantly improved the learning environment.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve practitioners' skills in teaching Welsh and planning for numeracy and ICT
- R2 Continue to improve practitioners' understanding of the Foundation Phase
- R3 Make better use of the evidence from self-evaluation to prioritise, plan and evaluate improvements
- R4 Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection

What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that 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?

n/a

Standards: n/a

There is no report on children's progress, standards in their skills development, Welsh language and wellbeing. This is because the number of relevant children present at the time of the inspection was too few to report on without identifying individual children.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

Practitioners offer children a good range of learning activities across all areas of learning. Provision and planning for the development of children's language, literacy and communication skills both indoors and outdoors are sound. However, organisation and planning for the development of children's mathematical and ICT skills are less effective.

Practitioners work well together as a team to provide consistency in approaches, for example in the use of questioning. They know the children well, understand their needs and generally plan appropriate tasks to meet those needs. Planning for continuous and enhanced provision is generally suitable, although it is not always focused well enough to ensure that all children remain on task and persevere.

Children have regular and timely opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and traditions when they celebrate important days, such as Dydd Santes Dwynwen and St David's Day. Practitioners use the Welsh language throughout the day well. They read stories, sing songs and encourage children to respond in Welsh. However, practitioners are not confident and knowledgeable enough about how to teach Welsh to young learners. As a result, there are not enough opportunities to extend children's skills and to encourage children's independent use of the language.

Practitioners offer children limited experiences to learn about and to understand the importance of recycling and sustainability. There are suitable opportunities for children to learn about the world in which they live.

Teaching: Adequate

Practitioners are enthusiastic and committed and have an increasing understanding of the expectations of the Foundation Phase. They use an appropriate range of teaching strategies, such as working with pairs of children or with small groups. All practitioners intervene sensitively in children's play to move learning forward, often through the effective use of questioning. For example, they encourage children to talk about their feelings by playing a matching game of faces showing different emotions. However, practitioners do not always encourage children to remain at an activity for a reasonable amount of time to consolidate or to extend their learning. On occasions, practitioners provide too much support for children, which hinders their ability to become independent learners. Overall, all practitioners manage behaviour well. Relationships between adults and children are very good.

Assessment procedures are developing well. Each practitioner supports a group of children and carries out appropriate assessment activities for their group. Practitioners' knowledge of the children, combined with assessment outcomes, is beginning to enable them to identify, and plan appropriately, for children's next steps in learning. Practitioners complete a useful record of achievement document for each child, and this is used to aid transition to the feeder primary school.

Parents and carers are kept suitably informed about their child's progress through regular informal contact with practitioners and attendance at coffee mornings.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The setting successfully promotes children's health and wellbeing. Practitioners are caring and kind and support children well through praise and encouragement. They encourage children to form positive relationships and nurture a sense of respect and tolerance towards others. Induction arrangements and daily contact with parents and carers ensure that children settle quickly into the setting and this contributes significantly to their emotional and social development. Children are given a daily opportunity to brush their teeth. However, practitioners do not successfully encourage parents to provide children with healthy snack boxes.

An appropriate range of learning experiences fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are encouraged to care for others and to share toys and equipment. They learn about the importance of caring for the environment by growing flowers in their raised beds.

The setting's arrangements for safeguarding children meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and all practitioners understand the procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues. Practitioners take considerable care to ensure the security of the building and grounds. However, a health and safety issue was raised during the inspection.

There are good processes in place to support children with additional learning needs. There is an agreed policy in place, which is monitored appropriately by the additional learning needs co-ordinator. Practitioners access professional help for children and their families when appropriate and they use this support effectively to ensure that the setting meets the specific needs of individuals.

Learning environment: Good

The setting provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for the children where all children have equal access to all activities. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the children. There are plenty of good quality resources for most areas of learning and practitioners generally ensure that they match children's needs appropriately.

The accommodation is of appropriate quality and maintained well. Practitioners make good use of the available space. Displays of children's work reflect recent learning activities and help to create a bright and welcoming environment. The setting's recently improved outdoor area is generally safe and secure and

practitioners use it effectively to provide a range of appropriate experiences across the curriculum. Although the setting makes appropriate use of visits in the locality to enhance children's learning experiences, it makes limited use of visitors to the setting.

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

The playgroup leader provides a clear vision for the setting as a nurturing, caring environment where children experience the Welsh language and culture and are happy and eager to learn. This vision is shared appropriately with staff, parents and the management committee.

The playgroup leader is enthusiastic and committed to the setting. She has worked very hard over the last year to improve her understanding of how to lead the setting to bring about improvement. For example, she has been actively involved in working with another setting to improve outdoor learning. As a result, outdoor provision has improved and children have regular access to resources, such as water and mud. Practitioners have also worked together well to improve the indoor learning environment by creating attractive displays and learning areas. The playgroup leader is beginning to evaluate the impact of her leadership informally through the assessment of improvements in children's standards and wellbeing. For example, the recently introduced key worker role has ensured that practitioners are recording children's progress appropriately and, as a result, planning for children's next steps in learning more effectively.

There are appropriate processes in place to manage the performance of practitioners. Practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are willing to adapt to new ways of working. For example, they have adapted practice to work with smaller groups of children to meet the needs of individual or groups of children more successfully.

The playgroup leader works well with the management committee and keeps them appropriately informed of the setting's progress and areas for development.

The setting is implementing national and local authority priorities, such as literacy and outdoor learning, appropriately.

Improving quality: Adequate

Self-evaluation processes in the setting are developing steadily. There are a suitable range of procedures in place to identify what the setting does well and what it needs to do to improve. However, information from self-evaluation is not always used well enough to identify priorities, to plan for improvement or to evaluate outcomes for children.

Practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of planned activities fortnightly and are beginning to consult children about their likes and dislikes. The playgroup leader also regularly takes time to 'stand back' and observe what is happening and, as a result, is continuing to make changes in day-to-day practice. For example, after one

such observation the playgroup leader noticed that during outdoor play the boys tended to play only with the wheeled toys. Wheeled toys are now limited to certain times, which means that boys are now accessing other activities, such as mark making.

The playgroup leader monitors all practitioners undertaking activities outdoors and uses this information well to encourage practitioners to use more Welsh with each other. These observations have also resulted in a better match of practitioners' skills with the activities that they lead.

Last year, all staff completed the local authority self-evaluation manual. This identified several areas for improvement, but did not result in a clear plan of action of how and when these would be addressed. However, use of the manual did encourage the leader to look at ways of improving outdoor provision, which has impacted positively on the quality of the learning environment.

Partnership working: Good

The setting works well with an appropriate range of partners to support children's learning. The playgroup leader and staff have established effective and purposeful relationships with parents to support children's progress and wellbeing. For example, parents are encouraged to use simple words and phrases in Welsh at home with their children and to undertake an appropriate range of home tasks. Parents value the strong links they have with the practitioners and feel that this contributes positively to the children's happiness and enjoyment in the setting.

There is an effective working relationship between practitioners and the local authority Early Years advisory teacher. Practitioners respond well to the advice and guidance they receive and this has impacted significantly upon the quality of the setting's curriculum planning and assessment.

The setting has established a purposeful partnership with another setting to improve its outdoor learning environment. This has encouraged the sharing of ideas and good practice and supported practitioners well in making the necessary changes. An appropriate partnership exists with the local feeder primary school, which supports children's transition to their next stage of education successfully.

Resource management: Good

The setting makes worthwhile use of staffing and resources to support children's learning. The setting manages its finances efficiently and ensures that enough good quality resources are available to enhance children's experiences in almost all areas of learning.

Practitioners are keen to develop and make relevant use of training to improve the quality of learning experiences offered. They are deployed appropriately to make best use of their experience and skills.

The setting provides a purposeful learning environment where children are well cared for and leadership is focused on sustained improvement. As a result, the setting provides 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.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Beverly Jenkins	Reporting Inspector
Huw Watkins	Team Inspector

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 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 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>

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.