



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 Cefneithin/Gorslas
The Portacabin,
Crosshands Leisure Park,
Carmarthen Road,
Crosshands,
Llanelli
Sir Gaerfyrddin
SA14 6TD

Date of inspection: March 2011

by

Wil Williams

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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Context

Cylch Meithrin Cefneithin/Gorslas was opened approximately ten years ago as part of the Carmarthenshire Children and Young People's Partnership provision. It provides Welsh-medium pre-school education for children in Cefneithin, Gorslas, Crosshands and the surrounding area. The area from which children are drawn is judged as being neither prosperous nor socially and economically disadvantaged.

Children of all ability and background are admitted to the setting. During the inspection, there were no children with additional learning needs (ALN) nor from ethnic groups registered at the setting.

The setting provides three hour sessions for five mornings a week for two to four year old children, although the number of sessions attended by individual children varies according to parental choice. Thirty four children are registered at the setting of which twelve are funded by the Partnership.

Welsh is the main language spoken at home for approximately a third of the children. The setting's main medium of teaching and learning is Welsh.

Children's education is supported by a leader, deputy leader and four practitioners. All are appropriately qualified to teach early years children.

The setting meets in a purpose-built portacabin in Crosshands Leisure Park. It includes an extensive main room, toilets, kitchen and storerooms. Although there is no designated outdoor area, the significant resources of the park are available to the children most of the time.

When children have completed their time in the setting they continue their education in the local primary schools.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in November 2010. This is its first Estyn inspection.

Summary

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

Current performance

Current performance is good because the:

- achievements of children in all areas of learning are good and continuously improving;
- leader promotes and sustains improvements very effectively;
- quality of planning and learning experiences are of a high standard;
- arrangements for supporting children's health and wellbeing are effective; and because
- setting provides good value for money.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- a positive culture of self-evaluation pervades all the setting's work;
- leaders and practitioners have high expectations for the setting's development;
- practitioners are very open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working; and because of
- an effective management committee which is influential in determining the strategic direction of the setting.

Recommendations

In order to further improve the setting needs to:

R1 sustain and build upon current good standards by focusing more clearly in self-evaluations on children's achievements; and

R2 share the findings of self-evaluation with the management committee.

What happens next?

The setting will form an action plan showing how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Judgement

Considering their age and stage of development, all children makes good progress in all areas of learning from their starting point in the setting. Most children demonstrate high levels of knowledge and understanding across all the areas of learning and cope successfully with challenging tasks. Almost all apply their skills very securely in a range of contexts and develop wider skills and personal qualities needed to take full advantage of the Foundation Phase curriculum. All children make commendable progress in gaining skills in Welsh language with a minority conversing confidently with adults and other children. Almost all persevere diligently with their tasks and respond confidently to free choice activities. The outcomes of parents' questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with the progress that their children are making.

Wellbeing: Good

Every child demonstrates a high level of interest and motivation towards learning and respond confidently to new learning experiences. All children have a secure understanding of how to become healthy through what they eat and the physical activity they undertake. All children have a close relationship with the practitioners and trust their guidance. Every individual feels safe in the setting and free from physical and verbal abuse. A very distinctive feature of the setting is the good behaviour and care shown by children towards one another. During their engagement in specific activities or in tasks of their own choice, most children co-operate amenable and demonstrate increasing levels of independence. All children enjoy their time at the setting.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Good

Learning experiences: Good

The principles of the Foundation Phase are reflected strongly in the quality of the curriculum provided for children. Through detailed planning, practitioners succeed in providing a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities for all children across all areas of learning. Every child is challenged by relevant activities which provide continuity and progression in their learning. Provision for communication, numeracy, information communications technology (ICT) and wider skills is coherent and firmly embedded into the experiences for every child. Practitioners use the indoor environment as well as the resources of the park which is on its doorstep, very imaginatively to encourage children to experiment with new experiences and develop their skills effectively. Children's learning experiences are substantially enriched by visits to places in the community and by occasional visitors to the setting. Every child is given the opportunity of being actively involved in the setting's recycling arrangements. Provision for promoting the Welsh language and the Welsh

dimension is very thorough. Children's awareness of the traditions and the cultural celebrations of Wales is developed in a very meaningful way.

Teaching: Good

Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase and have high expectations for children's learning. They provide stimulating learning experiences across all areas of learning and use a good range of teaching strategies which ensure the engagement and interest of children of all abilities. Practitioners succeed in maintaining a good balance between child-selected and practitioner directed activities. Imaginative use is made of a variety of resources to appeal to children's interest and improve learning. All practitioners are skilful in their work and make a significant contribution to the quality of children's learning. All practitioners work skilfully and make a substantial contribution towards the quality of children's learning. All staff keep detailed records of every child's progress and wellbeing across all areas of learning and this information is used purposefully to plan children's next step in their learning. Parents receive useful information about children's achievements, wellbeing and development.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There are appropriate policies and procedures in the setting for promoting healthy living and children's wellbeing. Children are encouraged to eat healthily during snacks, to care for their personal hygiene and participate in physical activities. Learning experiences promote children's personal development effectively, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are happy and secure in the company of adults at the setting and are willing to ask for help and support. Practitioners know how to respond appropriately if challenges arise in relation to unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding. Effective induction arrangements together with the close relationship with parent, ensure that children settle quickly into the setting. Children's learning needs are identified very early when they join the setting and practitioners ensure that these needs are met. When specific instances occur, practitioners are proactive in seeking assistance from specialist agencies. The setting fully meets safeguarding regulations and responsibilities and ensures the safety of children at all times. The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The setting is an inclusive community, where all children have equal access to all the areas of learning and activities provided for them. There is a strong emphasis on developing tolerant attitudes and ensuring that children and staff are free from harassment. The setting has enough practitioners, who have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the Foundation Phase curriculum. Practitioners succeed in creating a stimulating environment in which every child is able to take full advantage of the learning experience and to develop positive values and attitudes. There is an ample supply of good quality resources for all areas of learning which are carefully matched to the development and learning needs of each individual. The extensive resources of the park are used very imaginatively to enhance the curriculum and support learning in the classroom. The building is generally of good quality and are used effectively.

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

The leader's strong sense of purpose promotes and sustains improvements very effectively. Learning and teaching are managed well, and the setting's policies are implemented effectively. The leader has high expectations for securing improvement and challenging staff positively to good effect. Practitioners work together effectively as a team and have shared values about learning, behaviour and relationships. They make sure that the Foundation Phase and other national priorities, are successfully delivered. Relationships with children, parents and with some of the primary schools in the neighbouring villages are positive and contribute significantly to a sense of community. The management committee fulfils its responsibilities very thoroughly and is influential in maintaining high standards and giving the setting a strategic direction. However, there are no clear procedures for sharing the outcomes of self-evaluation with all members of the committee. Outcomes for children are good and continuously improving.

Improving quality: Good

Practitioners know their setting well and through the purposeful leadership of the leader and the management committee, are continuously self-evaluating and exploring ways to improve. Secure procedures have been established to maintain good practice and implement change in areas that require improvement. Practitioners are significantly supported by good quality continuous professional development. All are very open to new ideas and are willing to try out different ways of working and to share their knowledge with others in the setting. Self-evaluation takes careful account of the views of parents and practitioners have benefitted substantially from the professional advice of the LA link teacher. Practitioners are able to show how through self-evaluation, they have improved provision and standards of children's achievement and wellbeing.

Partnership working: Good

A very wide range of partnership activities make a strong contribution to children's achievement and wellbeing. There is a productive partnership with most primary schools in the area and there are appropriate links with a number of establishments and educational agencies. Practitioners take active steps to involve parents in the setting. Parents are regularly informed about all aspects of the setting's work with the leader taking advantage of every opportunity to include them in their children's learning. Practitioners work very well together, share information about children and know who to contact and when, if additional support is required for children. Community links and resources are used frequently and effectively to support children's learning.

Resource management: Good

The setting is well staffed to teach the Foundation Phase curriculum and staff are deployed effectively to make the best possible use of their time, expertise and experience. The leader and the management committee have a very thorough understanding of their budget and prioritise their spending in line with the setting's developmental needs. Financial decisions are evaluated extremely carefully by the leader to make sure that they have a positive effect on standards and children's progress and wellbeing. The setting provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Almost all of the seven parents' questionnaires received were positive. Parents say their children have settled down well in the setting and enjoy the learning experiences provided for them. They say that their children are making good progress in their learning and are well prepared for moving on to the primary school . Almost all parents believe that they receive regular information about their child's progress and that the setting is well run.

Responses to discussions with children

Children say they are happy in the setting and are confident to turn to any adult to ask for advice and support.

Appendix 2

The reporting inspector

Wil Williams	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)

If available, the data report can be found on our website alongside this report.